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Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia and the Pacific

National Case Studies

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Introduction

Religious diversity is now a social fact in most countries of the world. While reports of the impact of religious diversity on European nations and North America is reasonably well known, the ways that the nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific are religiously diverse and the ways this diversity has been managed are not. This book addresses this lack of information about one of the largest, most diverse and creative regions of the world. The research and impetus for this book stems from the award to Monash University of the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific which came with a particular mandate to bring to the attention of the world the situation in these countries.

The religious diversity of each of the 27 nations included is described, the current issues outlined and the basic policy approaches to religious diversity delineated. Nations as large and complex as Indonesia and as small as Tuvalu comprise this region. As will be seen, Southeast Asia and the Pacific can be regarded as a living laboratory of types of diversity, varieties of religious mix with widely differing histories with many different approaches to managing religious diversity. While interesting in their own right, a study of these nations provides a wealth of case studies of diversity management – most of them stories of success and inclusion. The purpose of this book is to describe existing diversity and policies rather than comprehensively assess the situation or to explore all of the complex issues faced in each case.

The Rise of Religious Diversity

Recent international movements of people and ideas have spread religions across the globe, changing societies and in some cases unbalancing social and political stability. So called 'developed nations', like Australia, France and Britain, now host significant communities of second and third generation Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists which challenge long held assumptions about the superiority and hegemony of Christianity. Their challenge is joined by those of re-emergent indigenous religions and spiritualities long suppressed by colonial masters and by other new religious movements. Currently, dominant religious institutions encounter

challenges to their integrative social functions as recently arrived and newly emergent religious groups offer new choices.

These challenges are not merely theoretical. People of what had been, for many, understood to be traditional or 'normal' religions now meet, live near, and work with people of different, indeed significantly other religious views and observances. The close proximity of different religions with their different theologies, values and cultures can be either socially enriching or communally destabilising. Emerging religious diversity has increased the possibility of religious-based conflicts in local situations, but that can also spread internationally. Therefore, management of religious diversity is critical to peace and sustainability both in local communities and among the nations of the world.

Religious diversity also challenges the 'Western' notion that secular countries have no significant inequalities or tensions based on religion, or that religion is a declining factor in public discourse about social policy. As numbers of religious groups increase in the so called 'secular' countries the salience of religious identity also increases for religious people, religious groups and for governments. Religious groups become more aware of their differences, relative social advantages and relationships with each other. Religious diversity then becomes a driving force behind innovations in social policy as governments attempt to make societies inclusive of increasing numbers of groups. In this context those who have no religion may feel threatened by the rise in the salience of religious belief and practice. Given its pervasiveness and importance, religious diversity is now a critical factor in analysis of social and political stability.

Island Nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific

The focus of this book is on the Southeast Asia and Pacific Island Nations of the Asia-Pacific region including those nations from Sri Lanka to Tahiti, Japan to New Zealand. They form a distinctive part of Asia linked by the sea, known for trading, subject to various forms of colonising and missionising. They include the largest Muslim nation, Indonesia, which is a working democracy; nations presently or recently experiencing strife, including Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Fiji and Timor Leste; two significant outposts of European culture, Australia and New Zealand; and economic powerhouses like Singapore and Japan alongside rapidly developing Muslim economies such as Malaysia. Their approaches to religious diversity are as much shaped by religious belief as by economic necessity or pragmatic peace building. Ultimately, any lines drawn in this region will be seen as arbitrary and no defence of the choices made finally succeeds. Nonetheless, there is a coherence of sorts, and a context of common interests, concerns, and overlapping socio-cultural dynamics that makes the choice a propos in this instance.

The nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific have been the sites of many studies in anthropology, sociology and politics since the emergence of these disciplines in the nineteenth century. The region has very long associations with Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Chinese and a swathe of indigenous religions. Most countries of

this region are also sites of various European and United States colonial projects going back to the sixteenth century. Colonialism brought, and paved the way for, a large range of Christian denominations. The present 'Post-Colonial' era holds legacies of European rule, culture, modernisation and exploitation which are of significant relevance to current issues of religious diversity. This region has also been a fertile spawning ground of new religious groups. Some, like Soka Gakkai have taken root in and established themselves across former colonial countries of Europe and also in the United States. The region has a wonderful religious diversity emanating from great social and political forces and it is timely to review the religious composition and religious management policies of the nations of Southeast Asia.

The aim of this book is to document religious diversity and consider its consequences for social cohesion in the nations of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Here, 'social cohesion' is viewed as the process where social groups, like religions, work together with each other to support the survival, reproduction and evolution of their society with all its inequalities and problems. For example, a state of social cohesion exists between Catholics and Protestants in Australian society. Relations between the groups have at times been tense, as they are at times committed to separate rather than common goals. However, their way of engaging and integrating into society – their style of social cohesion – contributes to the reproduction and evolution of Australian society, with its various inequalities in social opportunity and freedom. For any country, analysis of social cohesion among religions, and between religions and the state, and other secular institutions; gives a richer understanding of the nation's society in the context of religion. Such analysis can also broaden understanding of why religious conditions differ between countries and how these conditions are likely to develop.

This book covers 27 Southeast Asian and Pacific Island countries, organised into three groups: the Antipodes and Japan; Southeast Asian Island Nations; Pacific Island Nations. Japan is included because it has significant influence in the region, along with Australia and New Zealand which do not belong in either of the other two categories. However, they both have increasing ties with the nations of the other two categories. This group of 27 nations gives a substantial representation of religion in the Asia Pacific region with regard to types of religious majorities, colonial backgrounds, ethnic mixes, economic development and recent histories of violence.

Each chapter considers the issues faced by each nation on regarding its religious diversity and has five sections:

Background: General descriptions of the nation's religious history, and social and political issues pertinent to local religion.

Current Religious Affiliations: The religious demography of the nation according to the most recent official statistical publications.

Managing Religious Diversity: An overview of institutional structures and government policies for the managing of religious diversity.

Current Issues: Contemporary issues with possible consequences for religious relations.

Conclusion/Summary

References: In order to facilitate access to the material relevant to each chapter, each concludes with references relevant to the nation discussed, rather than a consolidated list of references being provided at the end of the book.

The book concludes with a section of overview 'integrative' chapters that use the data in the descriptive chapters to address pertinent general issues: the state and minority religions; religious competition; religion and gender; and regional interfaith dialogue. These chapters are both informative in themselves and provide excellent examples of analytical use of the data in the descriptive chapters.

The intended audience for this book includes students, teachers, researchers, journalists, diplomats, policy makers and others interested in religion in comparative political and social contexts. The material is written for a general readership, but is informed by thorough research and presented with robust analysis. We hope the book is useful the widest number of readers and builds on the general understanding of the significance of social cohesion and religious diversity in the Asia-Pacific region.

Part I
The Antipodes and Japan

Australia

Background

Australia is, as of the 2006 census, a multi-ethnic nation of 19.8 million people (ABS 2007a). European colonisation began in 1788 when Britain created a convict settlement in the area of modern Sydney and continues to be a migrant destination country. For the previous 50,000 years Australia was inhabited by Indigenous people (Roberts et al. 1994) with spiritual beliefs significant to their social and material existences (Berndt and Berndt 1992; Carey 1996). The British introduced Christianity, bringing England's official church the Church of England or as it is now called, the Anglican Church (Breward 1988; Jupp 2001a). Christians of other denominations were also present in the early colony notably Catholics, Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians. In the early decades of the nineteenth century clergy of these denominations also arrived (Kiernan 2001; Moll 2001). A small number of Jews were also present in Australia from the first days of British settlement (Rutland 2001a).

In 1977 the Methodist and most Congregationalist Churches merged with about half of Australia's Presbyterians to form the Uniting Church (Bentley and Hughes 1996). Despite recent declines in memberships (ABS, 2004 2006, 2007a; Bouma 2006) the Catholic, Anglican, and Uniting churches remain Australia's largest religious organisations and continue to be major social institutions. Their senior clerics hold public respect and attention particularly on social, moral and ethical issues. After many generations these churches still administer some of the nation's most prestigious schools and university colleges and in recent times they have also become major providers of government funded welfare services.

Australia also hosts a large range of other Christian denominations. This is due to the country's very diverse history of migrant settlement which has included Christians from most parts of the world. The diversity of Christianity is also due to foreign evangelism particularly from the United States and the growth of local churches (Hughes 1996). Denominations with significant congregations include Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal, Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses (ABS 2007a).

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In 2006 over 60% of Australian Aboriginals claimed to practice a form of Christianity (USDS 2007).

Jews have a long and continuous history in colonial Australia arriving among convicts on the First Fleet in 1788 (Levi 2007; Rutland 2001a). Thereafter, Jews from Britain continued to arrive building Australia's first synagogue in the 1840s (Rutland 2001a). A significant wave of European Jews also arrived as refugees immediately before and after World War II. Today, Jewish communities both Orthodox and Liberal are active around Australia particularly in Melbourne and Sydney (Rutland 2001b).

The growth of other World religions has been largely due to changes in immigration policy over the last 30 to 40 years. For most of the twentieth century Christianity's dominance in Australia was guarded by a de-facto ban on non-Caucasian migration which is commonly referred to as the 'White Australia Policy'. In 1901 the newly Federated Australian Commonwealth passed The *Immigration Restriction Act* (Commonwealth of Australia 1901) allowing customs officers to effectively turn away 'undesirable migrants' notably non-Europeans. For about three quarters of a century the 'White Australia Policy' allowed very few settlers who were not Christians or Jews to enter Australia (Evans 2001). Even today decades after the 'White Australia Policy' generally ended most Australians are still of British or mainland European descent (Price 1999, 2001).

From the late 1950s the 'White Australia Policy' was gradually dismantled (Evans 2001) allowing the entry of many non-Europeans who expanded Australia's religious diversity. Prominent among the growing religions, other than Christianity, is Islam. Malay Muslims visited northern regularly Australia before European settlement to gather pearls and sea slugs (Manderson 2001). In its early colonial settlement Australia hosted a very small number of Muslim convicts and free settlers (Kabir 2004). A few small Muslim communities grew after 1860 when camel drivers arrived from the Middle East and Central Asia to work in Australia's desert inland. They settled in a few outback towns notably Maree, South Australia and Broken Hill, New South Wales (Cleland 2000; Kabir 2004). Muslims also arrived from Albania and Lebanon (Jupp 2001c; McKay and Batrouney 2001). However, significant Muslim immigration did not begin until the 1960s when Turkish settlers arrived to work in Australian factories (Babacan 2001). Significant numbers of Muslims have since settled from Lebanon, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bosnia, Iran, Albania and the Horn of Africa (Deen 2007; Jupp 2001b).

Islam is now visibly braided among the many strands of Australia's multi-faith and multicultural society. Parts of Australia now have mosques, offices of Islamic organisations, Islamic schools and Halal food stores and cafes. People in Islamic attire are an everyday sight in Australia's capital cities (Deen 2007). Muslims have also settled in some rural areas due recent government policies placing migrants in country towns (Deen 2007; Strong 2005). Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in Australia and conversion to Islam is becoming more accepted by people of European descent (The Age 2004a).

Buddhism similarly grew in Australia through the dismantling of the 'White Australia Policy'. Buddhists have lived in Australia since at least the arrival of

significant numbers of Chinese in 1850s Gold Rushes. Asian sugar cane labourers and Japanese Buddhist pearl divers also came to northern Australia in the later eighteenth century (Sissons 2001). Due to the White Australia Policy Australia had only very small numbers of Buddhists for several decades (Bouma 1992; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics 1951).

However, in the late 1970s a wave of boat refugees began arriving in Australia from Vietnam and Cambodia. Migrants from other parts of Asia followed making contributions to Australian industry, business, politics, arts and culture. With similar energy they established Buddhism as a significant Australian religion. Temples dedicated to various schools of Buddhism have changed suburban skylines and Buddhist festivals are major events (Buddha's Day 2008).

Small numbers of Hindus have lived and practised in Australia since the 1830s when they arrived as indentured labourers. Recent immigration mainly from India has supported growth of local Hinduism. Australia's first Hindu temple opened in Sydney in 1985 (Bilimoria and Voight-Graf 2001), Hinduism is the fastest growing world religion in Australia at this time (ABS 2006, 2007a). Smaller religious groups in Australia include Sikhs. The first Sikh temple or *Gurudwara* in Australia opened in New South Wales in 1968. In 2000 there were 20 *Gurudwaras* in Australia (Bilimoria and Voight-Graf 2001).

Some Australian Indigenous religions continue to be practised. All share some form of the concept of 'the Dreamtime' which narrates the 'shaping of the world by uncreated, eternal ancestor heroes' whose 'power' 'is embodied in the land, in certain sites, and in certain species of flora and fauna' (Clarke 2006, 145). Australia has other religious groups each making up over 0.1% of the population including Baha'i, Pagan and Wiccan, and Spiritualism. Smaller numbers of Australians practise Chinese religions, Theosophy, Scientology and numerous 'New Religious Groups' (ABS 2007b; Clarke 2006; Possamai 2005).

Despite its very wide diversity of religions Australia is a very secular nation compared with many others particularly the United States. In the 2006 Census 18.7% of Australians claimed to have 'No Religion' (ABS 2007a). The pervasiveness and quality of secularism in Australian social life can be perceived from various perspectives. For example, Australia has no identities in its folklore with primary religious associations. National 'heroes' tend to be sports champions, entertainers, bushrangers and racehorses and Australia has no national symbols retaining religious significance. The two national religious holidays, Christmas and Easter have at best a semi-religious significance for many Australians. Christmas and Easter are generally customary times of year to be with friends and family, forget employment responsibilities and spend money on gifts and celebrations. Christmas and Easter also have very great commercial significance as they are peak periods in the retail, hospitality and tourism industries.

Australia's system of government has some Christian associations but its culture maintains the appropriateness of a strong separation of religious institutions and the state. Parliaments open with ritual Christian prayers but parliamentarians are not required to belong to any religion group or even be religious. Within political parties and their supporters Christian groups have had significant influence at times (Bean 1999).

However, by the late twentieth century politicians were wary of being seen as 'too religious' or under the influence of their religious groups. Politicians risked alienating voters of religions different to their own and also of arousing voters' mistrust of associations between 'religion and state'. Recently however, senior politicians have openly declared their Christianity (ABC Radio National 2007a). In a televised event before the 2007 federal election the then Prime Minister, John Howard, and then opposition leader, Kevin Rudd jointly declared their Christian faiths and met with religious groups (ABC News 2007a). After the event Senator Lyn Allison leader of the minority Australian Democrats expressed reservations that still represent the secular attitude of many Australians toward government. She stated that 'separation of church and state is becoming blurred' and 'people with very strong religious views are heavily over-represented … in the Parliament' (ABC News 2007a).

Religious Affiliations

This section presents descriptions of religious identifications in Australia. All figures are from the Australian Census 2006 and 2001. The 2006 Census measured the Australian population at just fewer than 19.86 million people (ABS 2007a).

For the 2006 Census 69.5% of respondents claimed adherence to an 'adequately described religion'. Also 18.7% or 3.7 million Australians claimed 'No Religion' or adherence to Agnosticism, Atheism, Humanism or Rationalism. The percentage of Australians claiming an 'adequately described religion' declined since the 2001 Census when the figure was 72.8%. The 2006 Census also showed that Christianity was still the religion with the greatest number of adherents. Christians were 12.69 million or 63.9% of the total Australians population, a decrease from 68.0% in 2001 (ABS 2007a). The next most numerous religion was Buddhism with 418,749 or 2.1% which was up from 1.9% of the population in 2001. Islam had 340,394 followers in 2006 or 1.7% of Australians representing an increase from 2001 when Muslims were 1.5% of Australians. Hinduism had 148,130 adherents in 2006 or 0.7% of the population increasing from 0.5 in 2001. In 2006 Judaism had 88,832 adherents or 0.4% of the Census. In 2001 Judaism was also 0.4% of the Australian population (ABS 2006, 2007a).

2006 growth rates of numbers based on 2001 figures were Buddhists, 17.0%; Muslims, 20.6%; and the largest growth was 55.1% for Hindus. Between 2001 and 2006, the entire Australian population grew by a 5.8%; and Christianity had small negative growth of –0.6% declining both in numbers and in percentage of the population (ABS 2006, 2007a). Christians are on average older than members of other groups. This is particularly true of Anglicans, Uniting and Presbyterians.

The following information includes other religions with at least 0.01% of the Australian population in 2006. The largest was Sikhism with 26,429 adherents in 2006 or 0.13% of Australians. Paganism had 15,516 affiliates or 0.08% of the Australia's population. Baha'i had 12,341 affiliates or 0.06% of Australians. Spiritualism had

9,848 followers or 0.05% of Australians and Wicca had about 8,214 followers or 0.4% of the population. Aboriginal Traditional Religions had 5,374 or 0.03% of Australians and other Nature Religions, including Animism, Druidism and Pantheism totalled 5,677 or also 0.03% of the population. Followers of Chinese Religions numbered 4,372 or 0.02% of Australians. Religions with between 2,000 and 3,000 affiliates or about 0.01% of Australians were Druse, Zoroastrianism, Church of Scientology, Satanism and Theism (ABS 2007b).

Of these small religions the two fastest growing since the 2001 Census were Sikhism, 51.8% and Paganism, 45.9%. Others growing by more than 15.0% were Satanism, 24.9%; Scientology, 23.5%; Zoroastrian, 20.0%; Druse, 19.6% and 'Other Nature Religions', 17.9% growth (ABS 2007b; Government of NSW 2008).

Within Christianity denominations with greatest memberships in 2006 were Anglican and Catholic. Over 5.1 million or 25.8% of Australia's Census population identified as Catholic and 3.72 million or 18.7% identified as Anglican. The next largest were Uniting with about 1.13 million or 5.7%, Presbyterian/Reformed at 596,672 or 3.0%, Eastern Orthodox at 544,161 or 2.7% and Baptist at 316,744 or 1.6%. Other denominations with more than 1% of the Australian population were Lutheran with 251,107 or 1.3%; and Pentecostal with 219,687 or 1.1% (ABS 2007a).

Between 2001 and 2006, percentages of Australians identifying with each of the major Christian denominations fell. Anglicans, decreased from 20.7 of the Australian population to 18.7%, Catholics from 26.6% to 25.8%, Presbyterians from 3.4% to 3.0%, and the Uniting Church members declined from 6.7% to 5.7% of Australians. These large churches which were established in the early stages of British settlement are losing their market shares of the Australian populations. However, the Pentecostal churches are increasing their share having been 1.0% of the Australian population in 2001 to 1.1% in 2006 (ABS 2006, 2007a). There have also been dramatic increases in smaller religions bought by more recent migrants such as Hindus, Buddhist and Muslims. In 2006 numbers of both Buddhists and Muslims exceeded those of Lutherans and Baptists. Buddhists and Muslims have only been growing in Australia for only the last 30 to 40 years, while Lutherans and Baptists churches arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century (ABS 2006, 2007a; Harmstorf 2001; Moll 2001).

Managing Religious Diversity

For most of Australia's post European settlement history, religious diversity has not been a destabilising influence on social cohesion. Until recently the major groups seeing each other as 'different' were Christian denominations notably Catholics and Protestants. Tensions were resolved or managed within politics, the legal system or in contests between religious based sporting teams. Co-operation between Catholics and Protestants in community service projects often occurred (Dixon 2005). While a minority the Jewish population integrated successfully into Australian society even in the nineteenth century. It gave Australia its first Australian born Governor

General, Sir Isaac Isaacs and Australia's most respected general of World War I Sir John Monash (Rubenstein 2001).

However now recent increases in Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and followers of 'New Religious Movements' are changing Australia's religious composition, undermining the monopoly of Christianity and challenging the dominance of secularism in Australia's culture. Christianity now has a much slimmer majority and Christians may no longer assume their fellow Australians have the same basic religious heritage. At the same time the Australian norm of separating religion from most aspects of public life is being challenged by Muslims, evangelical Christians and other people of faith who refuse to recognise a clear boundary between secular and religious existence. On Australia's streets many Muslims, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs wear religious attire, observe other religious rules and ask for particular sensitivities, such as no shaking of women's hands by men, requesting halal or kosher food or time to pray. Other Australians particularly those whose families who have lived in Australia for generations are now required not just to accept or 'tolerate' other religions or values on religion instead they are required to accept adherents of recently expanding religions as 'equals'. The reality of religious diversity confronts all Australians with the issue of how to live with a wider range of different 'others' (Bouma 2006).

An example is recent tension over the appropriateness of Christian celebrations during the 'Christmas holidays'. Some non-religious and non-Christian Australians have expressed feelings of discomfort in the presence of Christmas celebrations held in state schools and workplaces. In response some schools and workplaces no longer have Christmas celebrations but rather 'end-of-year' social occasions (Hassan 2005; Levey 2006).

Religious Freedom, and Religious Tensions

Religious freedom is supported by Australia's Constitution. Section 116 prevents the Federal government imposing religious observance, prohibiting religious practice, or stipulating religious requirements for public office. Several states have 'charters of rights' including the right to freedom of religion and belief. All states except South Australia have enacted laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion (USDS 2007). Examples of religious discrimination have been reported in workplaces. These include instances of refusals of leave for religious holidays and services, humiliating religious jokes, refusals of promotion because of applicants' religions, prohibition of religious attire, and denial of employment for individuals who were non-religious. Religious discrimination has also been reported with respect to the availability of public events facilities and government approvals for new places of worship (HREOC 1998). Discrimination has occurred within Christian churches during the last 10 years. The most public examples are moves against the ordination of women and acceptance of homosexual clergy (Symons and Murray 2004).

In the last half century state authorities have attempted on two occasions to proscribe religious groups but neither was eventually successful. In 1965 the Victorian State Government received a report on the Church of Scientology which had been active in Australia since 1954. The report held that Scientology members were 'evil' and 'a serious threat to the community, medically, morally and socially, and its adherents sadly deluded and often mentally ill' (in Powell 1997). The state of Victoria then passed a law banning the Church of Scientology within its borders. However the law was overturned in 1974 when the Federal government granted the Church of Scientology a licence to perform marriages. In 1983 the Australian High Court recognised the Church of Scientology as a religion (Powell 1997).

In 1992 New South Wales police and the state Department of Community Service raided Sydney homes of the religious group 'The Family'. Simultaneously, Victorian police raided the group's Melbourne property. Police acting on allegations that members were sexually abusing children took 126 sect juveniles into custody (Bouma 2003, 337; Parliament of New South Wales 1993). Police later admitted having no evidence. The Family took legal action against authorities (Allison 1996) and continues its presence in Australia today.

Recent incidents of religious violence have taken place in Australia notably against Jews and Muslims. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) documented 332 attacks between 2004 and 2005 including assaults, arson and vandalism on synagogues and Jewish schools, and the spraying of Nazi graffiti on the property of Jewish citizens (Herald Sun 2005; Sydney Morning Herald 2005). In 2006 the ECAJ counted 440 Anti-Semitic attacks which represented a rise of 32.5% on the previous year (USDS Australia 2007). Attacks and discriminations have occurred against other religious groups such as Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Pagans and Wiccans (HREOC 1998).

In 1998 the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) conducted an inquiry on a proposal that Australia should adopt a 'Religious Freedom Act'. The inquiry's report held that legal protections against religious discrimination were inadequate in the Commonwealth, States and Territories. The inquiry also found that blasphemy laws were only relevant to Christians and further legislation was required against incitement to religious hatred. Australia's laws against religious discrimination were inadequate with respect to standards of the United Nations' *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance* (HREOC 1998). For example vilification on the grounds of religious belief was not unlawful in Australia. Moreover, laws protecting ethnic and racial groups were inappropriate for the protection of multi-race/ethnic religions like Islam and Christianity (HREOC 1998).

The report's major recommendation to the Attorney General's Department was the creation of specific federal legislation protecting religious freedom. However, this recommendation was not implemented by the Attorney General who stated that the government was 'not convinced' of the existence 'wide ranging problems associated with freedom of religion and belief that require such a legislative response' (quoted in Bouma 2003, 339).

In 2001 the state of Victoria passed the *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act* (2001) which prohibits acts inciting 'hatred' or 'serious contempt for or revulsion

or severe ridicule of' others on the basis of race or religion (State Government of Victoria 2001: s7 (1)). Legislation penalising acts of religious vilification also exists in Tasmania and Queensland (ABC Radio National 2005; Griffith 2006).

Government Funding of Religious Schools

In Australia there are two general school sectors, the 'government sector' and the 'non-government sector' which has about 32% of all school students (DEST 2007) and includes all religiously based schools. There are no published figures on the percentage of Australian non-government schools that are religiously based. However, the federal Department of Education Science and Training (DEST 2007) holds that 'most non-government schools have some religious affiliation' with about two thirds of the sector made up of Catholic schools. Other religious groups with schools include Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Jews and Muslims (ISCA 2006; Wilkinson et al. 2006). These schools may apply for government support. Australia is one of the few countries providing government funding of religiously based education at both primary and secondary levels.

Government funding of non-government schools including religious based schools has been a sensitive and often divisive issue for much of Australia's European history. It aggravates tense differences between Australians on social themes including religious sectarianism, elitism, social class, education standards, children's rights, parents' rights, and appropriate relations between religious groups and governments. There are religiously based schools particularly of Protestant denominations that have been among the most prestigious of all Australian schools for many generations and are institutions of the 'upper' socio-economic classes and elitists (Burke 2004b). The issue has also inspired sectarian tensions as Catholics have openly sought government assistance to have their own schools in order to preserve their Catholic identities, differences and exclusivities (Moll 1985).

In the first decades of European settlement religious based schools were in fact supported by colonial governments (Moll 1985; Wilkinson et al. 2006). However in the late nineteenth century all colonies, which would become Australian states after Federation in 1901,decided to have no special relationships with particular religious groups (Jupp 2001a). A general expression of this policy direction was withdrawal of financial support from all religious groups thereby ending government support for religious based schools (Jupp 2001a; Moll 1985; Wilkinson et al. 2006). Catholics were particularly disturbed as their *Australian Bishops' Council* held from the 1860s, that all Catholic children should be educated in Catholic schools (Dixon 2005).

Catholic lobbying for government support for their schools continued for generations. Largely due to the efforts of Archbishop Daniel Mannix federal aid to all non-government schools including religiously based schools was gradually reintroduced after the 1963 federal election (Kiernan 2001; Wilkinson et al. 2006). Soon after, non-government schools also received support from state governments

(Wilkinson et al. 2006). Today, Australian governments fund a range of religious affiliated schools across a number of Christian denominations and other faiths including Islam and Judaism (ISCA 2006; Wilkinson et al. 2006).

Between the 1990s and the early 2000s enrolments of non-government schools including religiously based schools increased (ABS 2007c) reportedly due to increasing family and parental incomes (Ferrari 2007). In 2007 the umbrella organisation Christian Schools Australia reported that its enrolments in New South Wales had increased by 25% over 5 years (Bissett and McDougall 2007). However, funding of religiously based schools remains a sensitive issue and a point of inter-religious tensions (Kelly 2004; Burke 2004a).

Current Issues

Indigenous Land Rights

Australia's physical landscape has great significance for Aboriginal people who associate certain places with their spiritual narratives and rituals. Hence, Aboriginals' sense of land dispossession is not just about loss of territory but also the vandalism of their spirituality. Until the 1990s Aboriginal land claims were largely ignored by non-Indigenous Australians. However, the Australian Federal Government's 1993 *Native Title Act* (Commonwealth of Australia 1993) formally recognised Aboriginal ownership of land with cultural and spiritual significance. Aboriginal tribal groups have since won some land claims but the process of Indigenous Reconciliation which includes recognition and respect for Aboriginal spiritual values, continues.

Islam in Australia

Relations have been delicate between Muslims and other Australians since 11 September 2001. The 2003 Bali bombings in which Islamic terrorists killed over 80 Australians and Australia's participation in the US led 'War on Terror' in Muslim countries have intensified Australians' insecurity about Muslims who have became a focus in politics and the media. While only an extremely small number of Australian Muslims have been charged with terrorism offences their arrests have included dramatic national television publicity of special police operations. A few local Muslim converts have been arrested for associating with terrorists in Pakistan and Afghanistan attracting wide media attention to the real possibility of Islamic terrorism in Australia (Gregory and Munro 2006; Sydney Morning Herald 2004; Whitmont 2007).

While most Australians accept the presence of Muslims in their neighbourhoods, for some the simple presence of Muslims is threatening. Some non-Muslims believe Islam may become the majority religion through continued high rates of

procreation and further immigration (Steketee 2007). The ambition of a miniscule proportion of Australian Muslims for an Australian Islamic state (Steketee 2007) has led some non-Muslims to view Islam as an ambitious and uncompromising religion, intent on 'taking over' Australian society and culture. These views about Islam are also promoted by some Christian groups and by a few politicians seeking political gain through 'wedge politics' (ABC News 2007c; Costello 2007). Some claim that Muslims cannot give appropriate alliance to Australia due to their expectations of their faith (Herald 2007c). A similar claim was made about Roman Catholics in the twentieth Century. The everyday presence of Islam in the form of mosques and Muslims in Islamic clothing has reawakened feelings of cultural and territorial insecurity among some Australians of European background. This has created a low level of social tension between Muslims and non-Muslims which has been magnified by the 'war on terror'.

The fear of Muslims held by a small proportion of Australians is matched by feelings of insecurity on the part of some Muslims (HREOC 2004). Incidents of cultural discrimination against Muslims have been reported since 11 September 2001. In 2002 a Muslim factory worker was threatened with dismissal for praying at work (Nixon 2002). In Melbourne during 2004 two Muslim female soccer players were reported by match referees in separate incidents for not removing their head scarves during matches (Hockley 2004; Wells and Lynch 2004). In May 2008 an application to build a Muslim school in Camden, New South Wales was vigorously opposed by locals who wanted no Muslims in their area (Emerson 2008; USDS Australia 2008).

Both Muslim and non-Muslim Australians hold concerns that tensions might escalate into violence and make Australia prone to Islamic terrorism (Hart 2007). Physical attacks on Muslims have also appeared in the media including reported assaults on Muslim women (Bouma et al. 2007; Karvelas 2003) arson attacks on mosques in New South Wales and Queensland (ABC News 2003, 2004, 2007b). For nearly a week in early 2005 'Middle Eastern' or Lebanese/Australian and 'Aussie' male youths engaged in large scale street violence around Cronulla beach near Sydney. The media generally covered the violence with a focus on ethnic differences but some reports portrayed a religious dimension to the tensions even though a very significant percentage of Australian Lebanese are Christians (Gooch 2005). Lebanese Muslim leaders made public comments on the riots and requested that Lebanese-Australian men wanted for questioning should go to police (ABC News 2006; ABC Radio National 2006; Dunn 2006). Poynting holds that the violence against the Lebanese Australians had been legitimated by the government's participation in the 'war on terror'. Government arrests at home and military campaigns abroad against Muslims left 'white-thinking citizens feel(ing) justified in personally attacking this enemy wherever they may encounter it' (2006, 88). In effect the riots were a field in which ethnic prejudice was an appropriate context for expressing religious prejudice 'the Arab other has morphed into the Muslim other' (Poynting 2006, 88).

Tension has also occurred between Muslims and other religious groups. Catholic Archbishop, Cardinal George Pell who speaking positively, claims to have 'met some wonderful Muslims' (Hart 2007) stated in 2004 that the rise of Islam was comparable to the rise of communism (Murray 2004). In 2007 Cardinal Pell claimed

'the God of the Koran or the Gods of Eastern religions' are 'radically different' 'from the 'one true God' 'proclaimed by Christianity's holy festival' (Quoted in Morris 2007). In 2006 Abu Hamza, a Melbourne Islamic cleric antagonised Australian Jews saying they had 'failed to integrate' into Australian society by concentrating in the Melbourne suburbs of Caulfield and Balaclava (Dunn 2006).

Relations between the Federal government and Muslims have been strained by episodes of mutual mistrust. In 2005 members of the government Sophie Panopoulos and Bronwyn Bishop called for the Islamic headscarf to be banned in government schools claiming Muslim women wore headscarves as an act of 'defiance' (Maiden and Taylor 2005). In 2006 the Prime Minister stated that a minority of Australian Muslims were resisting integration into Australia society and should learn the English language (Kerbaj 2006a). After Muslims denounced the Prime Minister's statement Multicultural Affairs Minister Andrew Robb accused Muslims of taking a 'victim mentality' (Garnaut 2006; Wright 2006). The Howard Government also called for Australian Muslims to depose their long standing national mufti Sheik Taj el-Din al-Hilali (Herald Sun 2007a) who was replaced in June 2007 (ABC Radio National 2007b).

Australia's federal and state governments have made efforts to improve relations between Muslims and other Australians. In 2006 the Federal government established the Prime Ministers' Muslim Advisory Group which is composed of various Muslims from around Australia. The Federal government has accepted several recommendations of the Group including the allocation of 8 million dollars for a *National Institute of Islamic Studies* to train Australians as Muslim clerics and the initiation of employment programs for Muslims costing 461 thousand dollars (ABC Television 2007; Herald Sun 2007b). State police forces have made special efforts to support local Muslims by initiating community activities seeking Muslim police recruits and assuring Muslims of protection against discrimination and violence (Bouma et al. 2007; Herald Sun 2003). In 2006, Attorney General Philip Ruddock gave a statement of tolerance stating that fundamentalist Muslims were free to preach in Australia as long as they respected Australian values and other religious groups (Kerbaj 2006b).

In March 2007 'think tank' organisation Issues Deliberation Australia/America held a 'Deliberative Survey' in Canberra where over 300 people including representatives of Islam and other religious groups discussed relations between Muslims and other Australians. The media reported the event as an 'admirable success' (Steketee 2007). The media has released positive feature stories on Muslims who are integrating successfully by participating in Australian business, law enforcement, sports and lifesaving (ABC Stateline 2004; Herald 2007c, d; Schwartz 2003; Sydney Morning Herald 2007; The Age 2004b).

Conclusion

Australia has long been a nation of religious diversity where religious tensions have rarely caused hatred and violence. Now, Australia faces substantial issues of social cohesion with regard to religion. After almost two centuries of a Christian majority

with secular lifestyles the nation is confronted with a new mix of religions and greater levels of public religious expression. In particular the highly visible presence of many practicing Jews, Muslims and Sikhs confronts Australians previously socialised into an insulated secular culture in which Christianity was by far the dominating religion. Aggravated by the 'Global War on Terror' social differences based on religion have volatile potential as many come to hold mutual suspicion and fear. Australia faces other issues in the management of religious diversity including formulation of an adequate legal framework for religious discrimination and vilification, negotiation of socially acceptable policies on faith based education, and reconciliation with Indigenous Australians including recognition of their religious lives and spiritual connections to the land. In this context many groups both citizen groups at grass-roots and those supported by government and other agencies work together to promote mutual understanding among religious groups and those of no religion.

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Japan

Background

Japan has a long history of religious and spiritual diversity. Besides its own indigenous and folk religions Japan has assimilated religions and spiritual views such as Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism and Christianity and shown a significant propensity to germinate 'new' religious groups. Historically Japan is a nation where religions are constantly absorbed, syncretised, modified and born. The Japanese are also partial to simultaneously adhering to more than one religion or holding memberships of multiple religious groups (ACA 2007; Ken 1996; USDS 2007). Many Japanese may practice across religions unconsciously since according to Ken, 'most people' in Japan 'could hardly distinguish a Shinto *kami* (local deity) from a Buddhist *bodhisattva'* (Ken 1996, 97).

A recurring theme of Japanese history is the state's use of religion as a tool of hegemony and nationalism (Hardacre 2004; Pye 2003; Sumimoto 2000). This theme is meaningful and sensitive in Japan today. Leading up to its defeat in World War II Japan's government controlled most aspects of Shinto integrating its institutions and rituals with ultranationalism to motivate the nation to support Japanese aggression. Memories of the terrible outcomes still cause anxieties within Japan and within countries invaded by the Japanese about government actions that fuse politics and religion particularly Shinto.

After World War II the Japanese focused on economic growth increasing their international competitiveness through stringent norms of hard work and efficiency becoming a world economic power by the 1970s. Although economic growth stalled in the 1990s Japan continues to be a materially rich society of 128 million people (USDS 2007) with average life expectancy of 84 years (SBS 2007). With this material wealth religion and spirituality remain part of Japanese culture and national identity. Kenji (1996) estimated that in 1996 two thirds of Japanese still visited a Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple each New Year's Day. Many attend Shinto or Buddhist temples on other customary occasions and visit sacred places like Mount Fuji (Clarke 2006, 98; Ken 1996, 108; Miller 1998; Inoue 2000). However, Inoue (2000) holds that visits to important shrines and temples have lost

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much religious significance and many such places now have facilities for secular activities like entertainment and picnic areas.

History

From the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912) until the end of World War II the Japanese state was axiomatically religious. The Emperor was viewed as an *ikigami* or living *kami* holding supreme power and being 'sacred and inviolable' (Tsuyoshi 1996, 116). However Article 28 of the Meiji constitution recognised religious freedom as long as religious practice did not upset public order or conflict with subjects' civil duties (Tsuyoshi 1996). Shinto was to fulfil a nationalistic function for the new state which planned a 'restoration of imperial rule based on unity of government and ritual' (Hardacre 2006, 282). The government destroyed Buddhist structures near Shinto shrines and removed aspects of Buddhism present in shrines (Pye 2003). In 1900 the Japanese government created an administration for Shinto taking control of over 100,000 Shinto shrines, appointing priests as government officials and making Shinto institutions public corporations under the control of the Shinto Shrine Bureau (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2007; Kenji 1996; Yuiken 1996). Shinto as practiced under the government system of administration was known as 'Shrine Shinto' or 'State Shinto'.

The government also established the *Religion Bureau* to oversee 'religious organisations' a category which included recognised organisations from Buddhism, Christianity and 13 Shinto sects which had been recognised in the decades immediately before 1900 (Kenji 1996; Shimazono 2005; Yuiken 1996). By distinction the government recognised other religious groups as 'private corporations'. These included Buddhist temples, Christian churches and 'Sect Shinto' organisations. Buddhist temples received automatic recognition while Christian groups and 'Sect Shinto' needed to apply to the government (Yuiken 1996, 201). The government suppressed religious groups based on teachings that challenged the ideology of State Shinto (Payne 2006).

State Shinto supported the narrative of the Emperor's divinity through 'indoctrination' and 'rites and rituals' (Shimazono 2005, 1088) which also supported nationalism by incorporating national symbols like Japan's flag, the national anthem and portraits of the Emperor. The government also designated special shrines as resting places of the spirits of dead Japanese soldiers called the 'Nation Protecting Shrines'. In the early 1900s the Nation Protecting Shrine, Yasukini, was visited by the Emperor and relatives of Japanese soldiers killed in military battles (Hardacre 2006, 283–284).

After World War II the United States set out to eliminate the association between Japanese ultra-nationalism and Shinto. The *Initial Post Surrender Policy for Japan* stated, 'It should be made plain to the Japanese that ultra-nationalistic and militaristic organisations and movements will not be permitted to hide behind the cloak of religion' (in Braibanti 1947, 185). In 1945 US occupying forces issued a directive,

Abolition of Governmental Sponsorship, Support, Perpetuation, Control and Dissemination of State Shinto or *The Shinto Directive* which decreed that no religion, including Shinto was to enjoy government preference (Tsuyoshi 1996). Public officials were prohibited to conduct Shinto ceremonies during business hours, no public funds were to support the propagation of Shinto doctrines and Shinto doctrines were to be deleted from all school textbooks (Braibanti 1947). State Shinto was abolished and Shinto Shrines were allowed to register as religious organisations. *The Religious Affairs Department* was then founded to support religious freedom. Its role was extended in 1949 to collect information on religion and liaise between religious organisations although it was not to control organisations' activities. The Religious Affairs Department later became the Agency for Cultural Affairs (Tsuyoshi 1996).

Article 20 of Japan's post-war Constitution (1947) guaranteed religious freedom for all citizens. The Constitution also prohibited government actions compelling the performance of religious acts and prohibited the government from conducting religious education. The *Religious Corporation Law* was then enacted in 1951 allowing religious organisations to conduct business for profit. It allowed for government status of religious organisations on three requirements: notification to the public, certification by government, and installation of officers with legal responsibility (Tsuyoshi 1996). Certified religious organisations therefore carried the same legal recognition as profit seeking corporations but with tax advantages (Hardacre 2006).

Japan's Religions

Japan has various 'folk' religious beliefs and practices some of which have been absorbed into Shinto, Buddhism and 'new religions'. Folk religions have also adopted aspects of Shinto and Buddhism. These include beliefs in the residence of spirits or *kami* in objects like mountains, rivers and fields; recognition of powers among 'diviners' and shaman who communicate with spirits and conduct healing; ancestor worship; and taboos and superstitions (Hitoshi 1996).

Shinto took its name in the eighth century from the Chinese phrase, *sin dao*, or 'way of the Gods' (Partridge 2004, 217). It is closely related to Japanese folk religion, has been influenced by Daoism and Confucianism (Clarke 2006) and has been 'reconstructed' at various times with respect to narratives on Japanese national identity (Pye 2003). Shinto narratives include the folk concept of spirits or *kami* (Partridge 2004, 217) but also recognise Japan's emperors as descendants of the sun god, Amaterasu (BBC Religion & Ethics 2004), although the emperor is no longer held to be divine (Partridge 2004). Japanese villages have Shinto shrines believed to contain at least one *kami* associated with their locality. Tokyo has a national shrine dedicated to the royal family, the Meiji Jingu, where people pray for the Emperor. There are also shrines at which visitors mainly pray for success in business. In Japanese culture Shinto is the major source of rites associated with life stages, such as 'coming of age', marriage and success in study or business (Pye 2003).

Buddhism arrived in Japan in the sixth century from Korea (Tamaru and Reid 1996, 224). During the Tokugawa Shogunate (1600–1868) Buddhism of the Nichiren school was the government's preferred religion (Clarke 2006, 310) and all adults had to register as members of state administered Buddhist temples (Noriyoshi 1996). In 2006 the Japanese Government recognised 151 schools of Buddhism including Narabukkyo, Zen, Tendai and Nichiren (USDS 2008). In Japanese culture Buddhism is the major source of rituals associated with death (Pye 2003).

Jesuit missionaries introduced Christianity to Japan in 1549 and by 1614 there were 3,000 Christians in the country (Norihisa 1996, 67). However, persecution of Christians had already started in 1587 when foreign missionaries were expelled from Japan and local Christians received an order to recant. Some Christians were crucified before the end of the 1500s (Norihisa 1996). In the 1600s Christianity was outlawed by the Tokugawa shoguns who believed Christians were more loyal to their religion than the state. Then for about two hundred years Christianity was practiced out of public view. The Japanese who covertly practiced Christianity are now referred to as 'hidden Christians' or 'Kakure Kirishitan' (Clarke 2006; Mullins 2004; Norihisa 1996; Sumimoto 2000).

Foreign Christian missionaries were allowed to enter Japan again in the 1850s even though Christianity was still outlawed. In the late nineteenth century the Russian Orthodox Church and several Protestant churches established themselves in Japan (Norihisa 1996). In the 1870s diplomatic pressure from Western nations caused the Japanese government to officially lift bans on Christianity (Mullins 2004; Norihisa 1996). 'Hidden Christians' had by now also absorbed aspects of folk religion like ancestor worship. Some joined the official churches while others continued their 'Kakure Kirishitan' forms of worship (Mullins 2004).

Japan has germinated much of its own religious diversity (Shimzono 2006). Since at least the early nineteenth century Japanese society has continued to spawn what are loosely called 'new religious groups' which have expanded Japan's range of spiritual narratives. Basically each of these groups is organisationally separate from the major institutions of Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity. But Earhart (1989 in Clarke 2006) holds that Japanese new religious groups have no 'substantial break or discontinuity' with 'old religion' Shinto, Buddhism and folk religions (1989 in Clarke 2006, 302). New religious groups are rather 'a reformulation of the unified world view of Japanese religion that enables members to go back to the heart of their tradition while at the same time going forward into the future' (Earhart 1989 in Clarke 2006, 302). Similarly Inoue (2000) sees groups that developed before the 1970s as having 'infrastructures' based on the rituals and beliefs of Buddhism, Shinto and folk religions but 'accommodat(ing) those elements to a new modern condition' (2000, 22).

Shimazono (2004, 72) gives three categories of new religious groups in Japan. The first practice 'Syncretic Shintoist' religions worshipping supreme deities and incorporating the traditions of Japanese folk/indigenous religions. They include Tenrikyo (Teaching of Heavenly Truth) and Omoto (Great Origin) both founded in the nineteenth century (Starmmler 2004a). Tenrikyo began in 1838 when a farmer's wife, Nakayama Miki, claimed to be possessed by supreme deity, Oyagami or 'God the Parent'. The religion was originally recognised by the Meiji regime as a 'Sect Shinto'

organisation. Followers perform daily communal rituals of clapping, dancing and singing to communicate with Oyagami. They acknowledge their deity's ultimate power and strive for spiritual freedom from greed and other vices disrupting communal joy and a spiritually satisfying life for the individual. Tenrikyo has an organisational base in Tenri City and in the late 1980s claimed to have about 1.7 million followers (Bouma et al. 2000; Miller 2004; Shimazono 2004, 72; Reader 2004a).

Shimazono's second category of new religious groups is those based in Buddhism with a primary theological reference to the Lotus Sutra being influenced by the thirteenth century Japanese monk, Nichiren. The Lotus Sutra holds that 'final truth' is uncomplicated and can be understood by all people (Shimanozo 2004, 84). It is commonly believed that Nichiren held that Buddhist practice could be very simple, a critically effective aspect being the chanting of the title of the Lotus Sutra, the *daimoku*, 'praise the scripture of the lotus blossom of the wonderful Dharma' (Payne 2006, 242). Groups in this category include Soka Gakkai, Rissho Koseikai, Reiyukai, Bussho Gonenkai Kyoda, Myocikai Kyodan and Hommon Butsuryushu (Shimanozo 2004).

Soka Gakkai, the Value Creating Society was founded in 1930 as a lay movement within Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism and originally called Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, the Value Creating Education Society. In 1979 the organisation disassociated with the Nichiren Shoshu school of Buddhism and is now called Soka Gakkai International. One of its basic philosophies is that individuals should not develop passively under the direction of teachers. Rather, they should be active in finding the course of their own development and learn through experience. Members chant the *daimoku* each day and have regular meetings at which they discuss their experiences of spiritual development. Followers diligently study Nichiren's texts and proselytise among non-members challenging the beliefs of their authorities. Soka Gakkai's style of prosleytisation is considered inappropriately aggressive in Japan. In the 1980s Soka Gakkai claimed to have over 17 million members (Shimazono 2004, 72). It has chapters around the world, and actively promotes world peace and awareness of global issues (Miller 2004; Shimazono 2004; Reader 2004b).

Shimanozo's final group of 'new religious groups' in Japan, 'Other', are associated with other schools of Buddhism, other religions including Christianity, or are more eclectic or esoteric (2004, 72–73). Seicho no Ie (House of Growth) combines Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity (Staemmler 2004b) and worships a number of identities including Jesus and Socrates (Ken 1996). More recent groups with eclectic roots in Japanese religions are Agonshu, Kofuku no Kagaku and Mahikari. Agonshu was established in 1978 and combines Buddhism, yoga, meditation and Japanese mountain religion (Reader 2004d). Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyodan (BMK: World Religious Organisation of True Light) was founded in 1959 by Okada Kotama. Its breakaway religion is Sukyo Mahikari which combines Shinto and millenarianism, believing that the world is heading for renewal. Veneration of ancestors is important and adherents believe they have the power to shine a divine light from their hands in the ritual, *okiyome*, by which they can purify other people, animals and objects. Sukyo Mahikari claims a membership of nearly 5,000,000 (Staemmler 2004c, 257–258). Some recent Japanese groups claim associations

with outer space. Yamato no Miya's leader claims to receive messages from beings on other planets. The group, Zushi Yo Yo claim to receive visits from UFOs to their headquarters in Zushi city (Inoue 2000, 25).

Political activity by new religious groups has been significant since the 1950s. Soka Gakkai ran fifty three successful candidates in the 1955 local government elections winning seats in Yokahama and Tokyo wards. Soka Gakkai also successfully fielded three candidates in the national election for the House of Councillors in 1956, a further six in the 1959 elections, and nine in the 1962 elections. The fifteen Soka Gakkai members in the House of Councillors then formed a voting bloc calling themselves the Clean Government Association which in 1964 became a political party. In 1967 the Clean Government Association won 25 seats in the House of Representatives and became the third largest opposition party (Tsuyoshi 1996).

Religious Affiliations

As Japanese individuals often declare multiple adherences, aggregate figures of religious identification exceed the national population which was 128 million in 2007 (USDS 2007). In 2005 Japan reported 107 million Shintoists; 89 million Buddhists; 3 million Christians, about 120 thousand Muslims and approximately 2 thousand Jews, most of whom are visitors. About 10 million follow 'other religions' and Japanese 'new religious groups' 'including Tenrikyo, Seicho no Ie, Sekai Kyusei and Perfect Liberty' (USDS 2008). In December 2006 the Agency for Cultural Affairs recognised 182,468 certified religious groups (USDS 2007). However, religious groups are not required to register with the government. In 2008 the US State Department estimated that registered and unregistered groups totalled almost 224,000 (USDS 2008).

Reader (2004, 224) holds that, contrary to government figures up to one quarter of Japan or almost 30 million people belong to a 'new religious group'. Membership statistics are generally supplied by the groups themselves and have not been independently validated. However, Shimanozo prepared membership figures for 1987 (2004) finding the largest group to be Soka Gakkai with over 17 million people. Rissho Koseikai was second with 6.2 million and Seicho no Le and Reiyukai each had about 3 million. Of Shimanozo's three categories of new religious groups the one attracting most adherents was the Buddhist Lotus Sutra/Nichiren group (Shimazono 2004, 73). Since the 1980s the strength of new religious groups in Japan has declined (Clarke 2006).

Managing Religious Diversity

The Agency for Cultural Affairs prepares literature on the management and administration of religion and religious diversity. It conducts workshops to help certified religious organisations comply with their corporate responsibilities (USDS 2007).

After the Aum Shinrikyo attack of 1995 the Japanese government changed the *Religious Juridical Persons Law* (RJPL) in order to allow the government to investigate religious organisations with regard to assets and in profit making activities (USDS 2007; Yuiken 1996).

Current Issues

There are two ongoing issues in Japan. The first is anxiety about reviving state support for Shinto. This issue is particularly sensitive with respect to acts of honouring of dead Japanese war criminals and implied support for Japan's World War II policies. The second issue is possible violent actions by new religious groups and questions about how groups suspected of violence can best be monitored without threatening general religious freedom.

State Support of Shinto and Implied State Support of World War II Policy

The Yasukini Shrine was built by the Meiji government and consecrated as a place for veneration of Japan's war dead (Hardacre 2006). Yasukini means 'peace' (yasu) or the 'land' (kuni). Almost 2.5 million war dead are enshrined in writing at the site. In 1979 it was also consecrated as resting place for spirits of World War II soldiers including war criminals. Officials and politicians argue that the war criminals that are enshrined are not honoured for their crimes but for their service to the Emperor which is also service to the land, or Japan. All the spirits of the war dead whether of war criminals or not have equal status (Pye 2003, 7). Visits to shrines containing war criminals are not necessarily gestures of support for the crimes of those whose spirits are present. Pye (2003) holds that as the living will become *kami* themselves the spirits of ancestors must be cared for. They must have some affiliation otherwise they may wander and even cause misfortune for the living. The spirits of war criminals similarly should receive recognition in Shrines. The living may also wish to ask favours of *kami*.

Visits to the Yasukini Shrine by Prime Ministers of Japan are generally seen by locals as neither a religious act nor an act of reverence to the country's ultra-nationalistic past (SBS Japan 2007). However, an official Prime Ministerial visit occurred in 1985 brought protests from China and other countries who claimed the Japanese government was supporting war crimes committed by its military in World War II (SBS Japan 2007). When elected in 2001 the new prime Minister, Koizumi promised to visit Yasukini every year in a move which was taken as positive by supporters of the Shrine and those who felt a need to defy China (Economist.com/Global Agenda 2006). The government has also proposed taking over the shrine removing its status as a place of religious worship and disassociating Yasukini with the war

criminals (Economist.com/Global Agenda 2006). Such an act would violate the separation of religion and state leaving the way for future governments to move toward state religion (Pye 2003).

Public anxiety over this issue has also occurred in smaller public contexts. In 1975 the city of Mino and the Municipal Board of Education used public funds to shift a monument for dead Japanese soldiers from a municipal school to public land. Families of war casualties, with assistance from local government employees paid for an *ireisai* ceremony, a Shinto ritual for the souls of dead soldiers. A group of housewives living close to the ceremony filed civil action against the city holding that its actions were contrary to the Constitution's declaration of separation of religion and state. The Osaka High Court ruled against the complainants arguing that the monument was not a religious object and that participation by the Board of Education in the *ireisai* was a 'social formality' rather than a religious act (Tsuyoshi 1996, 135).

Members of Japanese groups persecuted before 1945 voice opposition to government support of Shinto or government participation in Shinto observances for the war dead. Similarly, Japanese academics have opposed movements toward the promulgation of state symbols in Shinto. However, Shinto's priesthood 'overwhelmingly favours a return to the pre-war situation' (Hardacre 2006, 285).

Violent Actions by New Religious Groups

Since terrorist incidents in the late 1990s by the group, Aum Shinrikyo or Aum Supreme Truth, 'guru-led movements' have attracted suspicion from authorities (Clarke 2006, 316). In the early 1980s Shoko Asahara was a member of the 'God of Light Association' before leaving and joining Agonshu. He also studied yoga and sold Chinese medicines. Claiming to have levitated and received a visit from a spirit or *kami* in 1984 who instructed him to create a new world Asahara then started a yoga school. He claimed messianic status, began publishing books and in 1986 created the forerunner of Aum Shinrikyo, Aum Shuinsen no Kai. After visiting Tibet and having another spiritual experience in 1987 Asahara changed the name of the group to Aum Shinrikyo (Kenji 1996). Ashara forecast major armageddon and taught that murder was justified as it prevented victims increasing their 'bad karma'. In the late 1980s Aum Shinrikyo had around 10,000 members in Japan including several thousand in Russia (Miller 2004; Onishi 2004). Aum Shinrikyo stood 26 candidates for the 1990 national elections but all failed (Miller 2004).The organisation then constructed a commune at Mount Fuji and manufactured the very harmful sarin gas. Asahara claimed responsibility for management of the coming Armageddon (Miller 2004).

In 1990, Aum Shrinrikyo murdered a family, the father of which was a lawyer involved in legal action against the sect (Miller 2004, 262). In 1995 Aum Shinrikyo conducted a gas attack on the Tokyo subway in which 12 people died and over 5,000 were injured. Thirteen members of Aum Shinriko, including Asahara, received death sentences while six others received terms of life imprisonment. One hundred and

eighty other members received jail sentences of up to 10 years. These sentences were also for murders besides those associated with the subway attacks leaving Aum Shinrikyo criminally associated with the deaths of 27 people (Onishi 2004). Since 2000, the group has used the name Aleph, denounced violence and Asahara and paid compensation to victims (New York Times 2004; Onishi 2004; Shimazono 2004; USDS 2002). The group was deregistered immediately after the attacks losing its religious corporation privileges and has paid compensation to victims and families. In 2002 the group claimed membership of only 1,208 (USDS 2004).

The Aum Shinrikyo attacks occurred soon after the Kobe earthquake and during an economic recession. Members included highly educated people who according to Onishi (2004) would be expected by most Japanese to be 'fulfilled' individuals and unlikely to be seduced by a dangerous leader like Asahara. Two popular explanations for Aum Shinrikyo's successful recruitment of highly educated young people were 'mind control techniques' and social alienation (Miller 2004). Sakurai (in Norrie 2007) claims that Japan has a higher propensity to develop 'cults' as Japanese society is highly competitive and people are motivated to seek escape or 'salvation'.

In 2007 Japan had another violent incident involving a 'new religious group' when members of the sect, Kigenkai were accused on violently murdering a member in an act of punishment. The victim's husband and daughters were accused of having participated in the assault (Norrie 2007).

There has also been alleged state discrimination against the Unification Church and Jehovah's Witnesses. Both churches have alleged that authorities do not respond to their complaints of forced deprogramming of their former members. In 2003 the Japanese Supreme Court ruled that deprogramming was illegal for members of the Jehovah's Witnesses but rejected the Unification Church's case (USDS 2003). In 2007–2008 the Unification Church faced civil suits for extortion and kidnapping. In one case the Unification was ruled against but won two other cases (USDS 2008).

Conclusion

Religious diversity is not likely to be a threat to social cohesion in Japan. Japanese society has demonstrated an endemic capacity to host religious diversity and blend religious beliefs without social disruption. Any future moves by governments to elevate Shinto to preferred status as desired by some in the Shinto clergy are likely to be interpreted by other religious groups as a path to the spirit of ultra-nationalism. Fearing renewed marginalisation or even proscription the non-Shinto groups may resist efforts to elevate Shinto.

Japan has no firebrand charismatic religious figures generating social antagonism. However, small new groups offering religious or spiritual service to individuals feeling alienated from Japan's highly disciplined society may be a source of social disruption. The Aum Shinrikyo attack demonstrated that new religions can be

highly insular and develop anti-social ideologies. Pye (2003) argues that general provision of religious education may be advantageous not just in promoting religious cohesion but in making people less vulnerable to the 'confessional' indoctrination of sects like Aum Shinrikyo.

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New Zealand

Background

Aotearoa–New Zealand is a nation in the southern Pacific comprising two main islands. A former British colony it became a self governing dominion in 1926 accepting full independence in 1947 (SBS 2004). The 2006 Census reports that New Zealand's population was approximately 4 million of whom 67.6% described their ethnicity as 'European', 14.6% as Maori, 9.2% as 'Asian', and 6.2% as 'Pacific Island' (Nachowitz 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2007). New Zealand has two official languages, English and Maori (CIA 2008; New Zealand Police 2005). The government now uses the Maori word for New Zealand, *Aotearoa* in official documents and on public occasions (New Zealand Police 2005). The government also uses a Maori term, *Pakeha,* to refer to New Zealanders of European background.

Due to colonial association with Britain most New Zealanders with a religious affiliation are Christian; and the country's religious diversity can mostly be recognised among Christian denominations. The 2006 Census recognised 79 Christian denominations including four Maori Christian denominations. New Zealand also has adherents of the other world religions, Maori Indigenous religions, nature religions and new religious movements. In 2006, the National Census categorised 43 religions in addition to Christianity (Statistics New Zealand 2006).

New Zealand's law explicitly supports religious freedom thereby facilitating harmonious religious diversity. The New Zealand *Bill of Rights* 1990 recognises the right 'to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief' (s13) and the right 'to manifest' 'religion or belief in worship, observance, practice or teaching, either individually or in community with others, and either in public or in private' (s15). The *Bill of Rights* also protects the rights of minorities to practice their chosen religions (s20) (Ministry of Justice 2004). Also under New Zealand law religious perspectives can claim priority over human rights standards, within religious communities. For example, religious communities are not legally constrained from limiting offices to only men or heterosexuals and adults may refuse health care on the grounds of religious belief (HRC 2008a). New Zealand has no laws specifying a

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separation of 'church and state' (HRC 2008b). Legislation also acknowledges Maori 'spiritual interests' in environmental and scientific issues (Ahdar 2003: 636).

The government funds religiously based schools under the *Private Schools Conditional Integration Act* 1975. Private schools including religiously based schools receive state funding for operational costs within the same administrate framework as state schools. This occurs on condition that religious schools meet state educational standards and have the same form of governance as State schools where decisions are made by elected Boards of Trustees (ABC 2008). New Zealand also celebrates national holidays for the Christian festivals of Christmas Day, Good Friday and Easter (Department of Labour 2004).

Despite the presence of religion in legislation and culture New Zealand can be considered a 'secular society'. First, New Zealand also has no 'state religion' (HRC 2008b). Second, in recent Censuses significant percentages of New Zealanders have claimed to have 'No Religion'. In 2006 those nominating 'No Religion' were almost 1.3 million, or 34.7% of respondents answering the religion question, or 32.2% of the entire resident population (Statistics New Zealand 2006).

History

Maori began settling in New Zealand from about the late thirteenth Century CE (MCH 2007a). Maori have long had a very clearly defined social structure in which religion with its narratives, songs and rituals is significant. Power and authority, or *mana* is recognised in people and objects. Laws among family and tribal units are administered by significant religious persons, or *tohunga,* with divinely sanctioned power disrespect for which invites misfortune (Hanson 1990; New Zealand Herald 2004a; New Zealand Police 2005).

The earliest recorded European contact was in 1642, when Dutchman Abel Tasman visited and named the islands New Zealand. In 1769 Englishman James Cook arrived and proclaimed British annexation. By the 1790s a small number of other sailors from Britain, Italy and France sailors had also visited and private British sealing activities were occurring at Dusky Sound in the South Island. Among colonial nations Britain had the strongest interest in New Zealand given Cook's declaration of annexation and the proximity of the east coast of Australia which was the British colony of New South Wales (MCH 2007b, 2008b; McLintock 1966a).

British based churches were the very first to operate in New Zealand. In the early 1800s the Church of England and the Methodists arrived as missionaries. Samuel Marsden, senior minister of the Church of England in New South Wales took a small party to the Bay of Islands in 1814 holding a service on Christmas day with Maoris at Rangihoua near modern Auckland. The party set up a mission and a school for Maori children. The Anglican Church of Aotorea/New Zealand dates its existence to this event and it was a Maori dominated church until the commencement of European settlement in the second half of the eighteenth century. Samuel Leigh

founded the first Wesleyan Methodist mission in 1823 in Whangaroa near the Bay of Islands (Lineham and Davidson 1995; MCH 2008a).

Monsignor Jean Baptiste François Pompallier and a small party initiated a French Catholic mission at Hokianga which is also close to modern Auckland in 1838. In the same year Anglicans and Methodist missionaries agreed on respective territorial areas. By 1839 the Anglicans had 11 mission stations and the Wesleyan Methodists maintained ten. By 1844 The Catholics had established 15 stations. The Methodists and Anglicans saw the Catholics as ‘new comers’ and were concerned by their presence (Lineham and Davidson 1995; MCH 2008a).

The early missionaries as representatives of their churches are significant in New Zealand colonial history. Missionaries and their families were among ‘early pioneers’ who settled before formal colonisation. The missionaries were significant among Pakeha in having early contact with Maori. Missionaries actually lived alongside Maori engaging in cultural and religious dialogue without the ability or intention of intimidating the Maori with force. This environment was empowering for Maori who received Pakeha and accepted Christianity on their own terms (Lineham and Davidson 1995). The first recorded baptism of a Maori occurred in 1825 conducted by the new leader of the Rangihoua Anglican mission Reverend Henry Williams. Anglican missionary George Clarke estimated in 1845, that 43,000 Maoris attended Anglican churches, 16,000 Methodist churches and 5,000 Catholic (MCH 2008a). The missionaries' success made Christianity a major field of dialogue between Pakeha and Maori.

In the late 1830s the New Zealand Company, a private British concern, formed to administer a settlement scheme in New Zealand. The British officially extended juridical power to New Zealand although this had little effect while British legal officers and soldiers were not present. Formal British colonisation of New Zealand began in 1840 when British Consul, Captain William Hobson signed the *Treaty of Waitangi* with 40 Maori chiefs on the North Island on 6 February 1840. The chiefs accepted the British sovereign, recognised their status as British subjects and received the protection of the Crown. The *Treaty* recognised Maori ownership of the land but gave the Crown first rights to lands the Maori wished to sell. Eventually, all but 39 chiefs in New Zealand signed the Treaty. In 1841 New Zealand officially became a British Crown colony (MCH 2007d, 2008c,d).

Missionaries took a significant role in *Treaty* negotiations. Anglican missionary, Revered Henry Williams interpreted for Hobson when he explained the Treaty to the initial party of chiefs. Monsignor Pompallier attended a negotiation meeting prior to the signing and asked Consul Hobson that the Treaty give all peoples in New Zealand the right to choose their religion. Hobson replied that all religious beliefs and practices would be recognised and protected including those of Maori. Although this promise does not appear in the written *Treaty* its inclusion is accepted as a ‘verbal’ provision' and is alluded to as the ‘Fourth Article’ (Adhar 2006; New Zealand Police 2005). Religious freedom therefore has a foundation in the terms of Pakeha colonisation and subsequent relations between Maori and Pakeha.

In the decades after the signing of the *Treaty of Waitangi* tension grew between Maori and Pakeha who grew in number and demanded further land (Webster 1979). Extended land wars began in 1859 in Taranaki and 1863 in Waikato (MCH 2007c).

Maori saw missionaries as supporters of the colonial government and in fear of violence the missionaries fled their stations (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

In 1840 Rev. John Macfarlane of the Presbyterian Church came to Wellington as pastor for Scottish settlers on a ship, the Bengal Merchant. New Zealand's first Church of England bishop was George Selwyn who arrived in Auckland 1842 when there were 1,100 practicing 'registered members' of the Church (Lineham and Davidson 1995). Within the Roman Catholic Church, New Zealand became a diocese in 1842 with Pompallier as Vicar Apostolic. Then in 1848 the Catholic Church divided New Zealand into the dioceses of Auckland and Wellington. Pompallier remained and was consecrated Bishop of Auckland (Scott 1911). Also in 1848 the Free Church of Scotland began settlements in Otago and Southland. Other Christian denominations present from the mid-1800s were the Churches of Christ, Plymouth Brethren and the Quakers (Adhar 2006). Most churches of the period were financed by congregations who also financially supported the clergy. Proliferation of Christian churches in New Zealand was from an early stage and significantly related to settlers' willingness to pay (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

Some Maori have also adopted and reinterpreted Christian narratives making sense of their identities, power and destinies. In 1857 the Maoris elected a king, Wiremu Tamihana Tarapipi Te Waharoa who was a Christian and who accepted the title, King Potatau I. In justifying his royal position to Colonial authorities King Potatau made extended references to the Bible (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

New Christian Movements formed among the Maoris some politically and militarily organised. A formative movement founded by Te Ua Haumene from Taranaki in the 1860s was Pai Marire, or Hauhau as called by Pakehas. Baptised by the Wesleyans, Te Ua claimed power to conduct miracles. For Hauhau Maoris were like the 'People of Israel' of the Old Testament holding a covenant with God for the return of their land. Hauhau prophecy held that Pakehas would be evicted and dead Maori would be reborn. The movement engaged the colonial government in military action from 1864 and 1865 (Lineham and Davidson 1995; McLintock 1966b; Webster 1979). Subsequent Maori Christian movements would retell this narrative.

Ringatu which signifies the Hauhau worship gesture of an 'upraised hand' was founded by Te Kooti Rikirangi. Te Kooti fought for the colonial government against *Hauhau* in 1865 at Gisborne but was arrested by government for spying (Webster 1979). While detained among Hauhau prisoners on the Chatham Islands Te Kooti had a 'conversion experience' becoming convinced of his ability to channel the words of Jehovah. Among other prisoners Te Kooti conducted Anglican religious services reported to be 'tinged with Hauhau superstition' (Webster 1979: 102). He convinced fellow prisoners of his status as a Christian prophet. Te Kooti then organised a mass escape from the islands by hijacking a sea vessel. He returned to the mainland and mounted successful guerrilla attacks on government forces attracting fame and more Maori supporters. Remaining at large he received a Crown pardon in 1883. As with Hauhau, Te Kooti taught that the Maori had a covenant with the God of the Old Testament by which they would one day take back their lands from the Pakeha. Among Te Kooti's prophesises was the coming of a leader of the Maori (Lineham and Davidson 1995; New Zealand Police 2005; Webster 1979).

In the early 1900s Rua Kenana Hepetipa, son of a Ringatu officer, claimed to be Te Kooti's prophesised leader. Rua attracted significant support and built a settlement in the Urewara Ranges of the North Island. His prophesies including a personal visit by Edward VII to end Pakeha settlement led to the *Tohunga Suppression Act* 1907 which criminalised the deception of people through claims to supernatural powers including prophecy and healing. Rua was arrested and imprisoned after a police raid at his settlement (Hanson 1990; Lineham and Davidson 1995; New Zealand Police 2005; Webster 1979).

Sectarian antipathy between Catholics and Protestants was social fact of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To many Protestants, Catholics lived in what seemed a 'separate society'. Catholics had their own schools and uncompromising attitudes on Catholic marriage, always requiring a Catholic priest for the valid marriage of Catholics, even when one spouse was not Catholic. Tension over this issue later motivated the *Marriage Act* 1920, which made it illegal to question the validity of any marriage (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

In 1877 the colonial government passed the *Education Act* accepting responsibility for universal primary schooling, rescinding all subsidies to religious based schools. The *Act* required that education would be 'entirely of a secular character' (Adhar 2006). Catholics campaigned against the *Act*; and with Catholic children in state schools, became anxious about Protestant proposals for the inclusion of 'religious exercises' and prayers at school assemblies (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

In 1917, the Protestant Political Association (PPA) claimed the Postmaster General – former Prime Minister and Catholic, Joseph Ward – had been intercepting its mail on sectarian grounds. The matter inspired a Royal Commission which raised anti-Catholic feeling among Protestant voters and Ward lost his seat at the 1919 election. Then in 1922, Assistant Catholic Bishop of Auckland, James Liston made a public speech that newspapers reported as anti-British and Bishop Liston was charged with sedition. While found not-guilty, Bishop Liston received a 'warning' from the jury (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

Co-operation and moves toward union have occurred for over a century among New Zealand Protestant churches. In the 1920s, the Protestant churches founded the Council of Religious Education (CRE) and the National Missionary Council (NMC). The National Council of Churches (NCC) was founded in 1941. It included the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, the Associated Churches of Christ, Society of Friends and the Salvation Army. In the later 20th century some of these efforts included the Roman Catholic Church. For example, in 1968 the Joint Working Committee of the NCC and the Catholic Church was created. The NCC itself was replaced in 1987 by the Council of Churches of Aotearoa (CCANZ) in which the Roman Catholic Church is a participant.

A Baptist Union was created in 1882 and a Congregationalist Union in 1884. Most Congregational churches unified with the Presbyterian Churches in 1970 (Lineham and Davidson 1995). In 1895, The Bible Christians and the United Free Methodists joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church. They were joined by the Primitive Methodists in 1913 to form the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand was organised in 1862, splitting into Northern

and Southern churches, but reunited in 1901. The Presbyterian Church then proposed negotiations for union with the other evangelical Protestant churches, the Methodists and Congregationalists. This plan was cancelled in 1904 by conservatives in the Presbyterian Church (Lineham and Davidson 1995).

From the late 1800s Maori Christianity absorbed new denominational influences and created more of its own movements. A significant Maori Christian movement arose after World War I. Faith healer and 'Mouthpiece of God' Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana first opened his church in 1920. Ratana rejected the use of medicine arguing that lack of faith caused sickness and death. He also rejected ancient Maori belief in *tohungaism* the belief in the divinely sanctioned power of a significant religious person. After receiving initial support from the Anglican and Methodist Churches Ratana was then 'excommunicated' by Anglican bishops. However he attracted Anglican members and was also assisted by Methodists. In the 1930s and 1940s the Ratana Church became very politically active and won seats in Parliament (Lineham and Davidson 1995; New Zealand Police 2005).

In 1926 most Maori remained were affiliated with Christianity. Maori religious affiliations were Anglican 34.1%, Ratana 18.2%, Catholic 13.4%, Methodist 6.4%, Ringatu 6.0%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 5.4% and Presbyterian 1.0% (Lineham and Davidson 1995). With high affiliations, Maori were making significant inroads into the clergy. In 1919 the Methodist Church began admitting Maori ministers to District Synods. In 1925 the Anglican Church created the position of Suffragan (Assistant) Bishop of Aotearoa for Maori. Later in 1955 the Presbyterian Church instituted a Maori Synod in 1955 with a Maori moderator.

Maori continued to receive increased recognition in other Christian churches and in 1947 the National Council of Churches instituted a 'Maori Section' to address social and health problems of Maoris. The Methodist Maori Division was created in 1973 with a Maori minister, Rev R.D. Rakena, in charge. In 1983 the Roman Catholic Church established a Maori body – Te Runanga Hahi Katorika Ki Aortearoa (Lineham and Davidson 1995). The Anglican Church followed a similar path in the early 1990s by creating a fully autonomous Maori church structure alongside parallel ones for Pacific peoples on the one hand, and everyone else (Pakeha), on the other. Each of the three culturally-oriented 'tikanga' is headed by an Archbishop.

By the late 1800s some Christian schools, together with at least one run by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, offered formal education to Maoris. The Anglican Church founded Te Rau College in Gisborne in 1883 to train Maori ministers (Lineham and Davidson 1995). By the early twentieth century the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints could claim about 10% of all Maori (Underwood 2000).

Religious Affiliations

Unless otherwise indicated, all following percentage figures are based on the number of Census respondents who clearly answered Census questions on religious affiliation. It should be noted that the 2006 New Zealand Census allowed respondents to nominate up to four religions and 'more than one' ethnicity (Nachowitz 2007).

For the 2006 New Zealand Census 55.6% of respondents nominated a Christian denomination. This was a decrease from 60.6% in 2001 and 71% in 1991 (Nachowitz 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2007). This figure included people nominating 'Maori Christian' denominations such as Ratana and Ringatu. The second largest group for the entire 2006 Census were those nominating 'No Religion', at 34.7% increasing from 29.6% in 2001 and 21.0% in 1991 (Nachowitz 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2007).

Between 1991 and 2006 affiliations to the Anglican Church decreased from 23.0% to 15.0% of respondents; Catholics from 15.6% to 13.6%; 'Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed' from 17.3% to 10.7%; and Methodists from 4.4% to 3.3% of Census respondents (Nachowitz 2007).

For the same period percentages for some smaller Christian denominations have increased. Between 1991 and 2006 Pentecostals increased from 1.6% to 2.1%; Evangelicals from 0.16% to 0.37%; and Orthodox 0.13– 0.35% (Nachowitz 2007).

Census results also show increasing percentages of the population identifying with non-Christian religions. Between 1991 and 2006, Hinduism increased from 0.6% to 1.7% of the New Zealand population; Islam from 0.2% to 1.0%; Buddhism increased from 0.4% to 1.4; Spiritualism/New Age 0.2– 0.5%; Sikhism 0.06– 0.25%; Judaism from 0.1% to 0.2%; Indigenous Maori Religions 0.01– 0.06%; and Zoroastrianism 0.0– 0.03%.

Between 1991 and 2001 the entire resident population of New Zealand increased by 19.4% (Statistics New Zealand 1996, 2008). Growth percentages for Christian religious groups between 1991 and 2006 were greatest for: Evangelicals at 168.0%; Orthodox, 210.0% and Pentecostal at 59.6% (Nachowitz 2007). For non-Christian Religions growth percentages between 1991 and 2006 were Islam at 491.7%, Sikhism 361.3%, Buddhism 310.2%, Spiritualism/New Age 281.1%, and Hindu 257.0% (Nachowitz 2007).

Growth of non-Christian religions is significantly associated with recent immigration. Among those identifying as Hindu or Muslim in the 2006 Census almost half of both groups, 49.8% of Hindus and 48.0% of Muslims, had been living in New Zealand for less than 5 years. Similarly among Buddhists over one third or 36.1% had lived in New Zealand for less than 5 years (Statistics New Zealand 2007).

Managing Religious Diversity

The National Statement on Religious Diversity

Since at least 2004 New Zealand has been working toward a 'National Statement on Religious Diversity'. The Statement's aim is to recognize New Zealand's increasing religious diversity and to generate a nationally recognised document through which New Zealanders can recognise their own rights and those of others for religious belief and practice. The idea was initiated by New Zealand's delegation to the first Asia-Pacific Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation in 2004 (HRC 2007a).

In 2006 a multi-faith Reference Group was set up by the Race Relations Commissioner released a draft statement for public comment and consultation. As a result of a consultative process, an amended Statement was endorsed by the February 2007 National Interfaith Forum "as a basis for further dialogue" and with the intention that various religions and faith organisations be invited to respond ahead of a review to take place toward the end of 2009. The Statement has eight points of principle (HRC 2007a, 2008b):

1. Equal treatment of all religions by the state
2. The right to freedom of religion and freedom from discrimination
3. The right of 'faith communities' to 'safety and security'
4. The right of freedom of expression with responsibility
5. Recognition and accommodation of religious beliefs and practices in education, the workplace, and in the delivery of public services
6. The responsibility of schools to teach an understanding of religion so as to portray New Zealand's religious diversity
7. The appropriateness for debate on religion to take place, within the law and without violence
8. The responsibility for Government and religious communities to work toward respectful relations

Consideration of Maori Spiritual Perspectives

It is standard practice for New Zealand's public administrators and at least in some cases private firms to consider spiritual perspectives of Maoris in decision making. In matters of environmental development the *Resource Management Act* (RMA)1991 requires that Maori cultural concerns which can involve matters of spiritual belief associated with places receive formal consideration (Ahdar 2003: 619; HRC 2008a). In 2002 a sub-tribe group voiced concern that a proposed highway through the Waikato could disturb a *taniwha* or mythic swamp/river creature (Ward 2002). In response, the firm constructing the highway redesigned an embankment. Transit New Zealand, which oversees such roading projects, stated its serious recognition of claims of Maori in respect to the cultural belief in *taniwha* (Ward 2002). By contrast, in 2000 Maori in the far North took unsuccessful action against the government to stop construction of a prison on land they held to be important to a *taniwha* (Adhar 2006).

The *Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act* 1996 reserves similar respect for Maori culture. In 2001 a group of Maori attempted to block a genetic engineering project to produce cows whose milk would contain human protein. They held that the combining of animal and human genes would be offensive to their spiritual beliefs. The Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) was obliged under the RMA *Act* to consider Maori perspectives approved the project. However, in this case ERMA held that the potential benefits to the wider population were greater than potential dangers to Maori spirituality (Adhar 2006).

Current Issues

The Statement on Religious Diversity

The Statement on Religious Diversity continues to stimulate public discussion and debate. Its development has bought discussion of religious diversity into the public realm at interfaith conferences (Stuart 2007), in public statements by interest groups (HSNZ 2007), newspaper articles and through comments in the media by the general public (HRC 2007b). One issue that emerged has to do with the recognition of New Zealand's Christian heritage. Evangelical churches, including in particular Destiny Church New Zealand, have protested the Statement's proclamation of the historical fact that New Zealand has no state religion, claiming that a small group of secular policy makers are imposing a multi-religious identity on the majority of New Zealanders (Tamaki 2007) and giving inappropriate status to non-Christian religions (Destiny Church 2007). The Director of the Vision Network of evangelical churches objected to the draft Statement's requirement that school children be educated about a range of religions as this, similarly, would obscure 'the significance of the Christian faith for our nation and the type of society we have' (Collins 2007c). In a general response on the issue of Christianity's status Anglican Bishop Richard Randerson claimed he supported and recognised the 'significant role of Christianity in the life of the country' but did not consider Christianity a 'state religion'. Therefore he felt the draft Statement was not inappropriate (Collins 2007c).

In 2007 the Race Relations Commissioner was positive about the discussion and remarked that it had 'lifted the game' of interfaith 'engagement' (HRC 2007b; Stuart 2007). In June 2007 all 21 of New Zealand's Catholic and Anglican bishops made a statement jointly supporting the Statement (Anglican Church 2007; Collins 2007b). Despite concerns of others, the bishops held the Statement would not constrain them in criticising the government, promoting their faith, or recognising the role of Christianity in New Zealand's colonial history (Anglican Church 2007). The Statement, produced for the New Zealand Diversity Action Programme with support of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO, has been published in booklet form under the title 'Religious Diversity in New Zealand' and includes a Preface by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Helen Clark, and Dame Silvia Cartwright, a former Governor General, in her capacity as Chair of the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO.

Religious Vilification and Violence

A series of anti-Semitic episodes of vandalism occurred in 2004. In a single attack in Wellington vandals desecrated Jewish 113 headstones and burned a prayer

chapel. Three weeks before 16 Jewish gravestones were vandalised at another Wellington cemetery. The attacks were reported in news services around the world and condemned by the New Zealand parliament which unanimously endorsed a motion condemning anti-Semitism (Boyes 2004; Gardiner 2004; Randerson 2004a). A headstone was also desecrated in Wanganui later in 2004 (New Zealand Herald 2004b; USDS New Zealand 2005).

Acts of religious vilification have also occurred against Muslims. In July 2005 an Auckland mosque was vandalised just after the London bombing and bringing condemnation from the Prime Minister. Two men were sentenced to prison. In September 2005 a man was sentenced to six months prison for sending religious hate mail to members of the Somali community. Then in November 2005 a man was jailed for 15 months for abusing Muslims at a bus stop in Dunedin (New Zealand Herald 2005; Tunnah 2004a; USDS New Zealand 2005).

New Zealand has a long history of racial and religious accommodation but some New Zealanders have claimed to recognise discrimination within their national culture. Anglican Bishop Richard Randerson, a facilitator of the 2007 Regional Asia-Pacific Interfaith Dialogue held in Yogyakarta, warned that 'anti-migrant attitudes' in popular discourse showed that 'prejudice and ignorance lie close to the surface' (Randerson 2004b).

Islamic Terrorism

As for many countries, the possibility of Islamic terrorism is a security and public safety issue in New Zealand. However, New Zealand has not sustained any Islamic terror attacks or been shown to have associations with attacks elsewhere. However, Muslim Afghan refugees living in Auckland were accused in 2000 of planning a terrorist attack on Australia's Lucas Heights' nuclear reactor during the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Despite efforts to gather evidence through raids the accusations were not substantiated (Andrews 2000; Inglis 2000).

In the same year, Director of the US Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare Yossef Bodansky warned that New Zealand was a 'staging post' and 'cleaning station' for Islamic terrorists (Wall 2000). The warning was backed by US Congressman Saxby Chambliss but then rejected by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (Black 2001). Whilst vigilance is maintained, nothing sinister has so far come to light.

Christianity and Conservative Politics

Public statements, actions and political lobbying by conservative Christians have concerned some New Zealanders. Attracting media attention has been the Pentecostal group, Destiny Church New Zealand, which holds that New

Zealand should formally recognise itself as a Christian nation and uphold 'Christian' family values that discount formal unions of homosexuals, abortion and prostitution (Destiny Church 2007; Collins 2007c). In 2004 Destiny Church organised a Wellington march opposing the upcoming Civil Union Bill recognising same sex unions. The march was joined by non-church members increasing to an estimated 6,000 participants. Young male Destiny Church members wore black shirts and raised their hands chanting, 'Enough is enough' causing some onlookers to see similarities with German Nazi rallies of the 1930s. The marchers were met at Parliament by some 2,000 supporters of the Civil Union Bill, but the groups did not confront each other violently (TV New Zealand 2004).

Destiny Church's position was supported by some conservative politicians (TV New Zealand 2004). When protesting in 2007 against the Statement of Religious Diversity, Destiny Church members were joined by the Vision Network of evangelical churches (Collins 2007c). The Destiny Church also has had a political party (Onenews 2007). Lineham (2004) holds that Destiny Church could be indicative of a significant social current of conservative Pentecostalism with potential influence on New Zealand politics. He points out that given the number of Pentecostals in New Zealand in 2004, Destiny Church's march on Parliament could have attracted a total of 20,000 supporters. In 2004 Barton (2004) estimated that New Zealand had about 300,000 conservative Christians across all denominations.

Pentecostal groups have existed both inside and outside the major denominations the later including the Assemblies of God and New Life Centres (Lineham and Davidson 1995). Pentecostal and evangelical churches have increased followings in recent Census counts and actively voiced their religious perspectives on general social and political issues (Collins 2007a; Statistics New Zealand 2008). However, they remain at comparatively small percentages of the population. It remains to be seen whether conservative Christianity, whether Pentecostal, Evangelical or otherwise, becomes a significant force of political and perhaps socially divisive force. Barton (2004) claims the conservative Christian vote is 'splintered' across various political parties and not likely to 'galvanise' into a single voting bloc.

Minority Religions and the Law

New Zealand encounters problems regarding the flexibility of its legal system with respect to the ways of minority religions. In 2004 two Afghani born Muslim women attracted continuing public attention and discussion when in a court of law they refused to remove their veils and show their faces (Devereux 2004; Tunnah 2004a). Muslim communities from Afghanistan and Somalia hosted a conference in 2004 to discuss their religion with other New Zealanders (Tunnah 2004b; USDS New Zealand 2004).

Conclusion

New Zealand's cultural and religious inclusivity is to a critical extent the outcome of long negotiation between Maori and Pakeha for mutual respect. Christianity has had an integral role in this process which will continue as New Zealand deals with new social and political circumstances. Currently one new circumstance is migration from Asia and Africa which is producing growth in non-Christian religions. However, there have been no serious tensions between these minorities and greater New Zealand society. In an issue which could marginalise non-Christian religions the Destiny Church seeks recognition of Christianity as the 'state religion'. However, social relations between religions remain generally amicable and religious violence is 'extremely rare' (USDS 2005). The promulgation of an official policy of tolerance and inclusion to all religious groups and those of no religion sets the ground work for harmonious and respectful relations among New Zealand's religious groups.

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Part II
Island Nations of South East Asia

Brunei Darussalam

Background

Brunei Darussalam means 'Brunei, Abode of Peace'. Known more simply as 'Brunei', the nation is a small, young and prosperous coastal state of almost 5,800 km^2 on the island of Borneo. Islam is Brunei's official religion, and 'plays a central role in the life of every Muslim in Brunei Darussalam' (Trumbull 1984; SBS Brunei 2007; Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007a).

Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries Brunei was the centre of a sultanate ruling over modern Sarawak and some of the Philippines. However, the sultanate's geographical range dwindled after Brunei became a British protectorate in the late nineteenth century. Brunei's current government acknowledges a cultural association with the 'Old Malay World' or 'Malay Civilization' (Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007b). Full independence was achieved from Britain in 1984 and the country has since been ruled by Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah the 29th monarch of his dynasty. The legal system is based on Islamic and British law with *Shariah* and non-*Shariah* courts. The official language of Brunei is Malay (SBS 2007).

In 2004 Brunei's government estimated the national population as 357,800 with about two thirds being Malay and almost 12% Chinese. Brunei has a high portion of young people. In 2004, 41% of the population were less than 19 years old and only about 2% were over 65 years. With respect to its economic wealth Brunei is the third largest producer of oil in South East Asia and forth largest producer of liquid natural gas in the world. The country has one of the highest per capita GDPs in Asia, its citizens pay no income tax, and they receive free medical services (Schottmann 2006; Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007c, e).

Currently the Sultan holds multiple cabinet posts including Prime Minister, Minister for Defence and Minister of Finance (CIA World Leaders Brunei 2006). On taking office as full independent ruler in 1984 the Sultan publicly criticised local Muslim leaders for their efforts to introduce rigorous Islamic practices such as gender segregation at public events. *The New York Times* noted that women appearing on national television had ceased wearing the *hijab* (Crossette 1986).

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The Brunei government publicly rules by a national philosophy it calls *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB) or 'Malay Islamic Monarchy'. The government claims the philosophy is many centuries old. It acknowledges the essential importance of three institutions: Malay culture, Malay Monarchy and Islam. MIB is described by the government as:

> a blend of Malay language, culture and Malay customs, the teaching of Islamic laws and values and the monarchy system which must be esteemed and practiced by all. … The nation hopes that through the true adoption and practice of the MIB philosophy, the purity of Islam, the purity of the Malay race and the institution of Monarchy can be maintained and preserved as a lasting legacy for future generations (Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007d).

The Constitution recognises Shafi'ite Islam as Brunei's 'official' religion and the Sultan of Brunei as national 'head of the Islamic faith'. Section II of the Constitution also provides for a Religious Council to advise the Sultan on Islamic affairs. Brunei recognises *Shariah* law as appropriate for Muslims. The *Shariah* system is maintained by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Identity cards for residents show which individuals are Muslims and therefore subjects of *Shariah*. People have been detained for being too physically close to members of the opposite sex and alcohol drinking (Government of Brunei Darussalam. 2007a,f; SBS 2007; USDS 2008).

The government attempts to restrict activities of Muslims it considers 'deviationist' having banned such Muslim groups or leaders as Al-Arqam, Saihoni Tasipan, Al-Ma'unah and Abdul Razak Muhammad. In 2008 the Brunei government banned further 'deviant' sects Tariquat Mufarridiyyah, Silat Lintau and Qadiyahiah. The government imposes jail penalties on anyone encouraging these sects. It has also published requests to the public to beware of radical Muslim preachers and Christian evangelists (USDS 2006, 2007, 2008).

Courses on Islam and the MIB are required in all government schools by the Ministry of Education and private schools have voluntary courses in Islam. All schools are prohibited to teach courses on Christianity. During school time Muslim and non-Muslim female students of government schools are required to wear Muslim attire including a head covering or *hijab*. At citizenship ceremonies all people including non-Muslims must wear national dress which includes Muslim head coverings. Muslims are not allowed to marry non-Muslims unless non-Muslim partners convert to Islam for which permission is required from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Converts to Islam receive incentives from the Government including support for finance and shelter. Muslim women have significant rights in divorce under the *Emergency (Islamic Family Law) Order* 1999. They are able to initiate divorce proceedings and if divorced by their former husbands may apply for maintenance. Divorced mothers retain custody of their young children (Emory Law School 2007; USDS 2005, 2007).

Since 2005 registered Chinese temples have been permitted to celebrate Chinese New Year outside their premises and may perform lion dances. In 2006 the Sultan and members of his family officially attended Chinese New Year celebrations (USDS 2006, 2007).

Religious Affiliations

About 67% of Brunei's population is Muslim. Larger minority religions are: Buddhist, 13%; Christianity, 10%; and Indigenous beliefs, 10%. Other religions include Baha'i, Hinduism, Taoism, Sikh and Judaism. In 2007, Brunei had 109 Muslim places of worship, including prayer halls and mosques; seven Christian Churches and a small number of Chinese and Hindu temples (CIA 2007; SBS 2007; USDS 2007).

Managing Religious Diversity

Brunei's constitution upholds the primacy of Islam while the government espouses respect for other religions holding that religious tolerance is an Islamic principle (Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007a). In 1993 Brunei signed the ASEAN *Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Human Rights*, supporting religious freedom (Shelton 2003). However, prosleytisation by other religions is not permitted and Christian missionaries do not officially conduct operations in Brunei (USDS 2007).

Under the 2005 *Societies Order* religious groups outside Shafi'ite Islam are required to register with the government and supply members' names. Religious groups failing to register with the government can be charged for 'unlawful assembly', which can include financial penalties, arrest and imprisonment (USDS 2006).

Foreign non-Islamic clergy have been refused entry to Brunei and the importation of religious literature including Bibles is forbidden. Non-Islamic religious organisations are technically without the right to repair, extend or build new places of worship (USDS 2006). In 2001 the government arrested seven Christians for 'cult activity' under the *Internal Security Act*. *Christianity Today* reported that the Christians were arrested for having 'participated in a well-organised prayer program'. Police confiscated 'Bibles, Christian literature…. and other Christianity related items' (Taylor 2001). In 1998 the Religious Affairs Department confiscated religious objects such as crucifixes and Buddha statuettes from jewellery stores. The government also enforces bans on alcohol (Asiaweek: Hong Kong 1998) and monitors supermarkets and restaurants to ensure they are preparing food to Halal requirements (USDS 2005). The government also frequently monitors and censors articles on religions and has obscured images of crucifixes (USDS 2008).

Current Issues

Brunei has relatively high cohesion between religions but official interfaith dialogue is limited. 'Various religious groups coexist peacefully' but Muslims are discouraged 'from learning about other faiths'. The only recent interfaith dialogue between government officials and local Buddhist and Christian leaders occurred in

Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2004 at the first of what are now annual meetings of the heads of faith of Southeast Asia (USDS 2005, 2006).

Conclusions

In matters of religion Brunei's social cohesion is achieved by a theocratic monarchy and legal system where two thirds of the population belong to the state religion, Shafi'ite Islam. The government and legal systems claim legitimacy with reference to ancient Malay and Islamic institutions and applies socially progressive policies. The government demonstrates respect for minority religions but limits their capacity to compete with Islam. Brunei's high wealth and high living standards may promote consent to theocratic rule.

For the foreseeable future Brunei's religious diversit is unlikely to generate frictions that threaten social cohesion as a majority of the population identify with the state religion and show no antagonism to adherents of other religions. There are no reports of significant dissatisfaction among adherents of minority religions who are recognised by the state.

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Timor Leste

Background

The Democratic Republic of Timor Leste takes up the east side, and a small section of the north-west coast of the island of Timor, which is about 430 km from north of Australia. The word, 'Timor Leste' is a Portuguese term and the country is also referred to in Tetum as 'Timor Lorosa'e'.

In the island's long history, invaders and migrants have arrived from Asia, Europe and Africa. Today, Timor Leste has several ethnicities and languages. The two official languages, however, are Portuguese and Tetum. Timor Leste's ethnic groups are of Malayo-Polynesian and Melanesian-Papuan ancestry. According to the 2004 Census national population was 923,198, over 50% of whom were under 20 years old (Government of Timor Leste 2006b; National Statistics Directorate. 2007a).

From the early 1500s Timor Leste was part of Portugal's colonial sphere. In 1975, Indonesia absorbed the territory, renaming it as the province of Timor Timur. The locals voted to secede from Indonesia in 1999 and accepted independence in 2002. Indonesian invasion, occupation and relinquishment involved much human displacement, violence, death and destruction of property. Timor Leste is currently rebuilding politically, economically and socially with support from other countries. Its shares in undersea oil and gas reserves are a source of economic and strategic importance (CIA 2008).

Timor Leste's Constitution guarantees freedom of religious practice and teaching; and protects individuals from religious persecution (Government of Timor Leste 2002, s16 (2), s45). There is no state religion but over 90% of Timorese identify as Roman Catholic (National Statistics Directorate 2007b). The Roman Catholic Church played a critical role in Timor Leste's independence struggle with Indonesia and retains significant influence and respect. A number of Catholic holy days are public holidays: Good Friday, Assumption Day, All Saints Day, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and Christmas Day. Timor Leste also has some Protestant Christians and Muslims who the US State Department report as having had significant political influence in the military and government (USDS 2007). However, 'the (Catholic) church remains the dominant national institution outside government and a major force for integration across ethno-linguistic lines' (Wurfel 2004: 216).

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The island of Timor was probably first visited by the Portuguese in the immediate years after their conquest of Malacca in 1511. The island was then already a significant exporter of sandalwood being part of Chinese and Indian trading networks. It had a number of kingdoms, languages and cultures, but none was significantly influenced by Islam, Buddhism or Hinduism making conversions easier for Catholic missionaries who played a formative role in Portuguese colonisation. An early settlement was the mission of the Dominican Friar, Antonio Taveira, who arrived in the 1560s. By 1640, there were 22 churches and ten missions (Dunn 2003; Taudevin 1999).

Catholic priests had extensive contact with local peoples who respected the priests as sensitive mediators with colonial authorities (Dunn 2003: 40). Neither the Catholic Church nor the Portuguese forced Timorese to convert but Timorese of high status were pressured to send their children to Catholic schools and Christianity became a religion of 'social elites' (Dunn 2003). For some local Timorese, allegiance to Portugal was a spiritual relationship. Through the ritual of 'blood pact' tribal chiefs mixed their blood with wine and drank on oaths of loyalty to Portugal. For some tribes Portuguese flags received in these rites became totem objects (Nicol 2002).

The Dutch claimed West Timor in 1749 after the Battle of Penful. The Portuguese then made Dili their centre of colonial administration in 1769 (Taylor 1991). Portuguese and Dutch claims were overlapping until a formal boundary was made in 1914 (Greenlees and Garran 2002). Few outside cultural influences entered Timor Leste during Portuguese rule. Social life in villages was influenced by animistic spiritualities including belief in spirits of dead people which could be good or bad. Village sorcerers interpreted the spiritual powers of people, objects and animals. Timorese were still practicing such beliefs in the 1980s (Dunn 2003).

Japan occupied Timor Leste in World War II and was responsible for the deaths of about 13% of Timor Leste's population (Taylor 1991: 14). The Portuguese returned after the war and forced locals to work in the territory's rebuilding. Education was again the responsibility of the Church and by the middle 1960s the Catholic Church still ran 60% of primary schools. The Portuguese ran schools for people of Portuguese background and the Muslim and Chinese communities also had their own schools. By the 1970s there had been only limited 'Timorisation' of the government bureaucracy, as higher education for Timorese was very limited (Taylor 1991) due to the absence of a local university (Wurfel 2004). However, Jesuits ran the major educational institution in the country, the seminary, Nossa Senhora de Fatima, at Dare which overlooks Dili. The seminary was attended mostly by Timorese some of whom became significant political figures including Archbishop Belo and Xanana Gusmao (Dunn 2003; Taylor 1991; Kohen 2001; Wurfel 2004). A sense of 'national identity' only became discernible in Timor Leste in the early 1970s, when Timorese began returning from stints of education overseas (Wurfel 2004: 202).

In May 1974 the new Portuguese government undertook a policy of relinquishing colonies. The major political parties in Timor Leste were the Social Democratic Union or FRETILIN, Unia Democratica Timorense or UDT, and the Associacao Popular Democratica Tomorense or APODETI which had the support of Indonesia. When the Portuguese officials left FRETILIN held government. In November 1975 after the

Indonesian military (TNI) made incursions into Timor Leste FRETILIN attempted to attract international support by declaring independence but this immediately provoked the TNI to invade. At the time of the invasion Timor Leste was one of the world's poorest countries and life expectancy was only 35 years (Nicol 2002; Taylor 1999).

In 1975 only a third of the population had been baptised into the Catholic Church (Dunn 2003). The Portuguese Catholic bishop of Dili, Dom Jose Joaquim Ribeiro strongly opposed FRETILIN seeing the party as too left wing. The TNI intimidated priests with violence and entered churches to make arrests. Many priests fled to the country's interior living in FRETILIN controlled areas. Some were captured and deported to Portugal where they spoke publicly in support of FRETILIN and about Indonesian atrocities. 'The percentage of the population who were (Catholic) church members more than doubled in the years of the Indonesian occupation' (Wurfel 2004: 213). Timorese resistance to TNI generated a stronger relationship between FRETILIN and the Catholic Church.

Being aware of TNI violence against locals Bishop Dom Jose Joaquim Ribeiro retired in 1977. The next Bishop of Dili was Martinho da Costa Lopes a former member of the Portuguese National Assembly and the first Timorese hold the bishopric. The Indonesians called on the Vatican for his retirement which occurred in 1983. Bishop Lopes was replaced by Bishop Carlos Belo who was publicly critical of the TNI. In 1984 Bishop Belo sent a report on Indonesian violence to the Vatican which voiced concern to its Indonesian ambassador (Taudevin 1999). In 1985, the Council of Priests in Dili released a written statement claiming that Indonesia was pursuing the territory's ethnic and cultural extinction. Then in 1989 Bishop Belo wrote to the UN calling for a referendum on independence (Wurfel 2004). Bishop Belo was under continual surveillance from the Indonesians who violently harassed Catholic priests and their congregations (Taylor 1999).

Dozens of young Timorese were killed by Indonesian soldiers in Motael 1989 after marching to a cemetery to acknowledge the murder in the local church of a student by Indonesian backed militia (Taylor 1991). Pope John Paul visited Dili in 1989 and conducted mass. In his sermon the Pope acknowledged the violence of Indonesia's occupation (Taylor 1991: 156). The Indonesians made arrests among those waving independence banners and chanting independence slogans (Kohen 2001: 49).

By the late 1990s Timor Leste was becoming an administrative and diplomatic problem for the Indonesians who had a serious national economic crisis. The Indonesians were also under diplomatic pressure when in 1996 Bishop Belo and exiled resistance leader Jose Ramos-Horta were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Indonesia's President Habibe agreed to an independence vote (Nicol 2002). Bishop Belo ordered his church to protect the Timorese and help them cast their independence votes. Many took refuge on church properties (USDS 2007).

The people of Timor Leste voted affirmatively for independence in August 1999. The Indonesians withdrew violently, allowing armed pro-Indonesian militias to rampage and about 200,000 people fled across the border to Indonesian West Timor (USDS 2007). The period around the independence vote saw about 70% of the country's economic infrastructure destroyed as militias undertook a scorched earth policy. Up to '90%' of the population was 'displaced by Indonesian forces' in the months before and after the referendum (Kohen 2001: 47).

In early September 1999, three priests and hundreds of sheltering people were massacred near a church at Suai. Nuns and seminarians were also killed by militia near Laga. The Indonesian army attacked the diocesan offices which contained the church's historical archives. Militia fighters with support of the Indonesians attacked Bishop Belo's residential compound setting it on fire and killing ten people. The Bishop reported the atrocities to the Pope who 'rebuked' Indonesia and called for international peace keepers (Kohen 2001). Seven thousand five hundred peace keepers entered the country and the United Nations governed until May 2002, when Timor Leste formally accepted independence (ABC 2008; Kohen 2001; USDS 2007).

During Indonesia's 24 year occupation 'virtually every citizen had had a family member killed' by the TNI as 'one third of the population died' (Wurfel 2004: 211). The TNI attempted to dismantle Timor Leste society, dispersing and destroying villages, relocating people and causing famines by bombing crop lands (Kohen 2001). In Dili, all important buildings were destroyed (ABC 2008). However, the Indonesian occupation was a germinating factor in the current state of Timorese nationalism as it integrated a society of different ethnicities and languages in common resistance (Wurfel 2004). Due significantly to its role in the independence movement the Catholic Church is currently a very strong social and political institution. In 2006 Prime Minister Jose-Ramos Horta stated that the Catholic Church would be consulted on 'all major decisions' (USDS East Timor 2007).

Religious Affiliations

For the 2004 Census, religion figures were published for the ages of 6 years and older. Catholics were by far the majority religious group at 96.5%; second highest was Protestant/Evangelical at 2.2%; then 'Traditional', 0.8%; Islam, 0.3%; Buddhism, 0.1% and just under 200 Hindu (National Statistics Directorate 2007b). 'Most citizens' also continue to practice Indigenous animistic spiritualities (USDS 2007).

The numbers of Protestants and Muslims declined significantly after the 1999 independence referendum as Indonesian officials were of these religious backgrounds. A local Protestant church remains, Christian Church in Timor Leste – Gereja Kristen Timor Timur – which in 2001 was led by Rev Arlindo Marcal, a human rights supporter (Aditjondro 2001). Of all Protestant groups remaining, Assemblies of God 'is the largest and most active' (USDS 2007).

Management of Religious Diversity

The government requires religious organisations to register with the Minister of the Interior when a majority of their members are not Timor Leste citizens. Such groups must supply the government with a membership list (USDS 2007). From August 2007 religious organisations were required to register with the State

Secretary for Public Security (USDS 2008). Extensive management of religious diversity is not a pressing issue given the large majority of Catholics.

Current Issues

Since independence there have been some reports of religious violence and discrimination. In December 2002 arsonists attacked An'nur Mosque in Dili prompting Bishop Basilio do Nascimento to apologise to Muslim leaders (Donovan 2003). Protestant evangelists have also claimed discrimination in regional areas, claiming they require permission from villages to proselytise and build chapels (USDS 2007).

Another issue has been the status and support of religious education in schools. In 2005 the Timor Leste government removed religious education from the compulsory list of subjects, revoked state funding and designated the subject for 'after school' teaching. Two Catholic Bishops wrote a letter of disapproval and asked the government to always consult the Catholic Church in making decisions on major issues. The bishops also organised a large demonstration lasting three weeks protesting the government decision. The demonstrators only stopped after the Government reinstated religious education to the core school curriculum (Anonymous 2005).

Conclusion

In the wake of its terrible secession from Indonesia, Timor Leste remains vulnerable to civil unrest through violence between competing political groups. The recent shooting of President Jose Ramos Horta is a demonstration of underlying tension (Howarth 2008). However, Timor Leste appears to have no major religious tensions.

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Indonesia

Background

Indonesia is an archipelago of over 17,500 islands. Of its 245 million people, 86% – about 210 million – are Muslim which is the largest population of Muslims in any single nation (CIA 2007; Encyclopædia Britannica 2007). Since colonial independence in 1945 Indonesia has been a secular state that recognises religious freedom. The preamble of the 1945 constitution states the five-point ideology, called *Pancasila* which has survived as a philosophy of the Indonesian state. Its basic principles include: (1) Belief in one supreme God; (2) Humanity which is civil and just; (3) United Indonesia; (4) Wise representation of democracy; and (5) Social justice for every Indonesian citizen' (Republic of Indonesia 2007; Waddell 2004).

Although Muslim traders perhaps from India, Arabia, Persia or China visited Indonesia in the immediate centuries after the life of the Prophet Islamic kingdoms in the Archipelago were only founded later in the thirteenth century (Bakti 2000). European colonisation of Indonesia began with the Portuguese in the sixteenth century followed by the Spanish, and finally the Dutch who by 1910 governed all of Indonesia (Bakti 2000; SBS 2004). The Japanese invaded in World War II and after their defeat Soekarno who was a co-leader of the political organisation Patai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) declared Indonesia independent and claimed the presidency. Over the next 4 years Soekarno's troops fought both the Dutch and the Indonesian Islamic Army formed by the group Darul Islam who wanted Indonesia to be an independent Islamic state. The Republic of Indonesia was inaugurated in 1950 (SBS 2004).

Soekarno's vision for Indonesia did not include an Islamic government as he considered this inappropriate for a unified Indonesia. From the 1950s Islamist politicians were marginalised from power (Abuza 2003) while issues outside religion became more important to Indonesian nationalism including the economy, race and culture. By the early 1960s Islam and Indonesian nationalism had no significant association (von der Mehden 1963: 10, 109, 209–210, cf. 41). Darul Islam gained 'special region status' for the province of Aceh in 1959 which gained some autonomy including the power to administer *Shariah* law (Abuza 2003: 62, 66).

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Indonesia was politically unstable between 1950 and 1957 when it had six governments and in 1959 Soekarno declared martial law and ruled by presidential authority (SBS 2004) commencing a period of tension in both domestic and international affairs. The two most powerful institutions were the Partal Komunis Indonesia (PKI) which was the Indonesian Communist Party and the Indonesian military competed for influence. Soekarno's associations with communism disturbed Muslim leaders who aligned with anti-communists in the Indonesian military (Abuza 2003). Indonesia alienated itself from western bloc nations in foreign affairs by engaging in military confrontation with Malaysia in 1963, maintaining close relations with the People's Republic of China and leaving the United Nations in 1965 (SBS 2004).

General Suharto successfully overthrew Soekarno in 1965 with the support of local Muslim organisations. Islamic leaders and members of the youth wing of the conservative Muslim party, Nhadlatul Ulama, led the significant killing of about half a million accused communists, most of whom were Muslim (Abuza 2003; Hefner 2007; Woodward 2007). However, while Suharto used support from powerful Muslims to win power he excluded them from his New Order government (Abuza 2003). Further, Suharto made calls for Islamisation of government illegal by requiring all religious groups to support *Pancasila* (Abuza 2003; Eickelman and Piscatori 2004; USDS Indonesia 2005; Waddell 2004). Access to education and western consumer items increased under Suharto. His government also prohibited Indigenous religions (Hefner 1999).

For much of Suharto's rule Indonesian Muslims recognised the primacy of *Pancasila* but Islam's social and political power grew significantly as mosques and Islamic schools were the largest forums for political discussion and debate (Abuza 2003). State Islamic Institute Colleges began teaching in the 1960s and increased the number of people educated in Islamic theology. The Department of Religion also increased its building program of mosques and *madrasahs* (Hefner 1993). The decrease in practice of Indigenous religions effectively left a space that became occupied by Islam (Hefner 1999). From the 1980s religious participation among Muslims such as attendance at Friday prayers increased as did the number of mosques (Woodward 2007; Hefner 2007). Globalization of communications also aided Indonesian Muslims' awareness of issues confronting Islam in Europe and the Middle East (Woodward 2007). With growing availability of education significant numbers of 'devout Muslims' entered government employment in the 1980s (Hefner 1993: 8).

Muslim secessionists campaigned in Aceh between 1976 and 1979 and again in 1989. Killings and atrocities by the military in Aceh saw secessionists gain support from Muslims in other parts of Indonesia. Recognising the growing significance of Islam Suharto founded an Islamic Bank, increased authority of *Shariah* courts, removed bans on the headscarf, promoted Islamic military staff and increased funding for Islamic schools and Islamic broadcasting (Abuza 2003). The military Islamic faction split into Islamic and nationalist factions (Woodward 2007). The Aceh government has made efforts to educate citizens about Shariah as some retailers have continued operating during prayers and people have appeared in public without appropriate Islamic attire. Usually offences bring only a lecture although in 2007–2008 Aceh Shariah authorities carried out 36 canings for gambling (USDS 2008).

In 1997 and 1998 there was serious violence committed against Chinese most of whom were Christian. About 400 Christian churches mostly belonging to Chinese Christians were damaged or destroyed (Hefner 2000). There has been a social narrative of an unfair income distribution to Christian Chinese at the expense of Muslims (Hefner 1999). Conservative Muslim leader Ahmad Soemargono made public attacks on Christians and Chinese as 'enemies of Islam'. Conspiracy theories also circulated that affluent Chinese were attempting to bring down Suharto. These styles of attacks disturbed 'Muslim moderates' and consolidated their opposition to Suharto and calls for 'Reformasi Damai' or peaceful reform (Hefner 1999: 61). The *New Order* government lost power in 1998, amid the Asian economic crisis and religious and ethnic violence (USDS 2007; Woodward 2007).

Since 1931 *Shariah* courts have adjudicated for Muslims on marriage and divorce matters. After 1945 the *Shariah* courts received power to adjudicate in non-criminal cases concerning endowments of land for pious purposes or *waqf* (Falaakh 2003). However, lobbying has also occurred for constitutional changes making Indonesia's entire legal system *Shariah*-based the latest occurring in 2002 (Falaakh 2003; Hosen 2005: 419–420). These moves have failed to bring about general changes but *Shariah* is instituted to varying degrees in the laws and regulations of some provinces, regencies and the Tangerang suburb of Jakarta (Falaakh 2003). Tangerang has banned the consumption of alcohol and public demonstrations of affection between opposite genders for Muslims and non-Muslims (USDS 2006).

A presidential decree established formal *Shariah* courts in Aceh in 2003 for Muslims only (USDS 2003). During 2006 local Aceh authorities caned over 100 people for consuming alcohol, gambling or being alone with a person of the other gender who was not a relative. In 2003 South Sulawesi imposed a by-law obligating Muslims to wear Islamic dress, read the Holy *Qur'an,* and abstain from alcohol and narcotics. Eighteen of South Sulawesi's 22 regencies administer various *Shariah* laws (USDS 2007).

The institution of *Shariah* law has caused 'deep-seated concern' among moderate Muslims and non-Islamic religious bodies who claim it will undermine tolerance and pluralism (USDS 2003). The US State Department reports that *Shariah* law has also affected the social position of women by legitimising male polygamy and failing to enforce alimony payments to female divorcees (USDS 2005). Hefner (2007: 43) reports that electoral support for Islamic political parties has decreased but an Islamist 'fringe' continues as witnessed by Muslim violence in Maluku, North Maluku and Central Sulawesi.

Religious Affiliations

Currently about 86% of Indonesians or about 210 million are Muslim, the majority being Sunni (CIA 2007). Indonesia's Shi'a Muslims estimate their population at between 1 and 3 million (USDS 2007). Islam in Indonesia has two major streams: Traditionalist and Modernist. Traditionalists usually associate with *madrasahs* or Islamic boarding schools and follow charismatic leaders. The largest Traditionalist

group, Nahdlatul Ulama which means 'The Awakening/Revival of the Scholar-Preachers' claims over 40 million members. Modernists adhere to orthodox interpretations of Islam while accepting modern scholarship principles and techniques. The largest Modernist organisation is *Muhammadiyah* which means 'Followers of Muhammad' and claims about 30 million adherents (USDS 2007). Organisations outside the Traditionalist and Modernist streams include the Liberal Islam Network, which encourages individual interpretations of Islam, Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia which wants a new international Caliphate, and the Indonesian Mujahidin Council which has ambitions of imposing *Shariah* law on all Indonesia (Kingsbury 2005; USDS 2007).

Approximately 10% or 27 million of Indonesians are Christian of whom about 70% are Protestants and 30% Catholic (USDS 2007). Charismatic Christian groups are also present in Indonesia and there are about 350 foreign Christian missionaries working mainly in Papua and Kalimantan. Papua is a majority Christian state where about 58% of the population are Protestant (USDS 2007).

About 1.8% of Indonesians or about 10 million people are Hindu (USDS 2007). Hinduism is the majority religion of Bali where 90% of the population are adherents. The Tamil community of Medan on the island of Sumatra also has a significant Hindu population. Hare Krishna and followers of spiritual leader Sai Baba are also present in small numbers and some Indigenous faiths incorporate Hinduism. Indonesia also has between 10,000 and 15,000 Sikhs (USDS 2007).

Buddhists make up roughly 0.8% of Indonesia's population. Approximately 60% of Indonesian Buddhists practise Mayahana Buddhism while 30% are Theravada and the remainder practice other forms including Tantrayana, Tridharma and Kasogatan. Ethnic Chinese constitute 60% of the Buddhist population. The Confucian population is still not counted in the national Census (USDS 2007) but there is a Confucian representative organisation called the Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia. Since 2000, the government has allowed celebrations of Chinese New Year (USDS 2007).

About 0.2% of the population identify with other religions. The Baha'i community is reported to number thousands but validated figures are not available. Small Jewish communities exist in Surabaya and Jakarta. Animism is still practiced in Java, Kalimantan and Papua by up to 20 million people (USDS 2007).

Managing Religious Diversity

Indonesia has a Ministry of Religious Affairs which recognises only six official religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Groups within these officially recognised religions must follow government directions concerning religion (USDS Indonesia 2007, 2008).

Since 2006 the government has required all Indonesian citizens to carry a national identity card which include their religious affiliation. Only one of the six religions recognised by the national government may be listed on the individual's

card. Birth and marriage certificates also may only carry references to one of the six recognised religions. Members of other religions are forced therefore to misrepresent themselves on official documents. For example, many Sikhs have misrepresented themselves as Hindus, and animists have listed themselves as Muslims (USDS 2006, 2008).

Groups adhering to other faiths can register with the Ministry for Culture and Tourism as 'social organisations'. For example, the *Church of Scientology* is registered as a 'social organisation' (USDS 2005). An Indigenous belief system, *Aliran Kepercayaan* is recognised as a 'cultural manifestation' rather than as a religion. Adherents register with the Ministry of Education and clerics may act officially as marriage celebrants (USDS 2006, 2007). The 1985 *Social Organisations Law* obliges religious groups and NGOs to recognize *Pancasila* thereby obliging them to recognise the importance of democracy and social justice for all Indonesians (Astuti 2008).

According to the *Ministerial Decree on the Construction of Houses of Worship* any religious group building a place of worship needs signatures of 90 members and 60 signatures from people of other religions or religious groups in the local community. In Tangerang West Java Hindus have reported being unable to build a temple due to lack of signatures (USDS 2008). The *Guidelines for Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions* obliges religious organisations to receive approval from the Ministry of Religious Affairs before accepting support from foreign donors. The government also holds a legal monopoly on the organisation of the *Hajj* pilgrimage for Muslims to Mecca being responsible for protection of pilgrims and they issue the special *Hajj* passport (USDS 2007, 2008).

Conversion between faiths is allowed (USDS 2005) but under the *Guidelines for Propagation of Religion* most forms of proselytising is not permitted (Hefner 1993; USDS 2007) on the grounds that it may increase religious tension (USDS 2005). However, television proselytising by religions named in the Constitution occurs without restriction. In fact television proselytising has great popularity and the Islamic tele-evangelist, Abdullah Gymnastiar claims 80 million viewers (USDS 2005). Individuals and groups are able to publish religious literature but may only distribute to their co-religionists. The spreading of religious hatred and acts of blasphemy are both punishable by jail (USDS 2007).

Foreign missionaries can only practice in Indonesia with approval of the national government, relevant local governments, and local religious authorities. Foreign missionaries may work in Indonesia for a maximum of 2 years. State restrictions also exist on the building or restoration of houses of worship. Houses can only be used for worship with the consent of the local community and approval from the *Ministry of Religious Affairs*. Religious organisations must obtain permits to hold public events (USDS 2007).

In 1962 the Federal government proscribed the Baha'i faith as being 'contrary to Indonesian culture' and has since proscribed other religious groups including Jehovah's Witnesses (Boyle and Sheen 1997: 205). The Council of Indonesian Ulama has banned Islamic groups including Jamaah Salamullah, Ahmadiyya and Dar'ul Arquam for extremism. In 2003 the government did not enforce the proscription on Dar'ul Arquam (USDS 2003) allowing its members to distribute *Halal* goods (USDS 2005).

The Federal government has collaborated with interfaith and multi-faith groups including the Indonesian Anti-Discrimination Movement and the National People's Solidarity organisation (USDS 2007). In 2004 the Indonesian and Australian governments organised the International Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation which included religious leaders from a number of Asia-Pacific nations (USDS 2005). Indonesian Vice President, Jusuf Kalla, met with Christian and Muslim leaders in Central Sulawesi in 2006 asking the groups to reconcile their violent differences and assuring locals of armed protection (USDS 2007). Several terrorism-related arrests were made in Central Sulawesi in 2008 and police were active in protecting Christian prayer houses and churches (USDS 2008).

Much government administration of religion occurs at the regional level. Governments of West Nusa Tenggara and West Java have issued their own proscriptions against Ahmadiyya, a heterodox form of Sunni Islam that many Muslim'swoud regard as heretical (USDS 2008).

Current Issues

Legal and Legislative Issues

As identity cards list only religions recognised by the state Indonesians of other religions are formally misrepresented. Members of such faiths either convert to a recognised religion or allow their cards to falsely list state recognised religions which will then be listed on their marriage registrations and children's birth certificates (USDS 2007).

Recent tension has also occurred in Indonesia's Federal parliament on religious issues. The *Anti-Pornography and Pornographic Action Bill* was first placed before federal parliament in 2004. It proposed to outlaw any public conduct, art or mass media deemed sexually explicit. The bill created tension between parliamentarians supporting and opposing *Shariah* law. Revised in 2006 and the bill was renamed the *Pornography Bill*. Opponents saw the bill as a means to implement a *de facto Shariah* law. Similar tension over *Shariah* occurred when the Ministry of Women's Empowerment announced it would consider banning all polygamy among male officials of the state (USDS 2007).

Inter-Religious Tensions

Within Indonesia there are a number of social tensions associated with religion. For example, there have been tensions over places of worship. The US State Department cites reports that in 2006 20 Christian Churches were closed by militant Muslim groups around Indonesia (USDS 2007). Protestant groups hold they have problems obtaining community consent to build churches. Muslims also protest that they are

obstructed in building mosques in Christian-dominated Papua and North Sulawesi (USDS 2005).

Since 2003 the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) has attacked nightclubs, bars and billiard halls in Jakarta. It is unclear whether religion motivated the violence as there were 'strong indications' of extortion and 'kickback rackets' (USDS 2005). The government indicted FPI leader, Habbib Rizieq for inciting violence in a 2002 incident. In a 2004 attack on a bar in South Jakarta, four members of the FPI were arrested (USDS 2005).

Islamic Terrorism

Since 2002 there have been two terrorist bombings in Bali. The first occurred in October 2002 when terrorists bombed two nightclubs killing 202 people and injuring 196. The second attack occurred in 1 October 2005 at three Bali restaurants killing 22 people and injuring 100 (AUS EMA 2006). The attacks were conducted by Islamic group, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) which is committed to an Islamic superstate in Southeast Asia. The government has arrested and prosecuted a number of people over the attacks (USDS 2003).

JI have also received accusations of involvement in other terrorist acts including the Christmas 2000 bombings throughout Indonesia which killed 19 people (USDS 2003). In August 2003 a car bomb exploded outside the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta killing 12 people and injuring 100 (USDS 2004). In September 2004 10 people were killed and over 100 injured when a bomb exploded in the grounds of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta (USDS 2005). The attack was allegedly carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and *Negara Islam Indonesia* and six people were prosecuted in 2006 (USDS 2007).

Three Christian school girls were beheaded by Jemaah Islamiyah members in November 2005 in Poso, Central Sulawesi (USDS 2007). In the same month a task force of Islamic figures including Muslim scholars, members of Indonesia's two largest Islamic organisations, and representatives of Indonesia's Ulama Council issued a fatwa against 'jihad terrorism'. The task force also planned to distribute anti-terrorism pamphlets and 'monitor books and publications' promoting interpretations Islam supporting violence (Scarpello 2005). Since late 2007 the federal government has convicted over 50 people of terrorism and the courts have ruled that Jemaah Islamiyah is a 'forbidden corporation' (USDS 2008).

Religiously Based Confrontations

Since the late 1990s hostilities between Muslims and adherents of other religions have occurred. These included riots targeting homes, businesses mosques, churches, and Hindu temples (USDS 2003; Bertrand 2004: 94, 102). Riots occurred in Ketapang, Jakarta in November 1998, motivating further violence in Kupang,

Ujung Pandang and West Java (Goss 2004). Also in 1998 in Kalimantan and Sulawesi Christian militia killed hundreds of Muslims (Hefner 2007). In 2005 vandals attacked Hindu temples in Bali (USDS 2005). In 2006 the state executed two Christian men for religious violence in Poso (USDS 2007).

Formerly known as the 'Spice Islands' the Maluku Islands have approximately 2 million people, about half Muslim and half Christian. The region has had continual religious violence since the founding of the activist group, Republic of South Maluku (RSM) in 1999 when Indonesian nationalist supporters clashed with people sympathetic to RSM. The Maluku conflict is related to redistribution of traditional Christian land in North Halmahera, North Maluku to Muslims. In January 1999 an altercation between a Christian bus driver and a Muslim passenger may have sparked violence between Sulawesi Muslims and Ambonese Christians (Wilson 2001). By August 1999 the fighting had spread to North Maluku possibly aggravated by discontent over government plans to divide the province. Between 1999 and 2001 estimated fatalities were more than 5,000 (USDS 2003; Wilson 2001).

In May 2000 after the massacre of approximately 500 Muslims in Tobelo, Halmahera Island, thousands of Laskar Jihad (LJ) members travelled to the region (Wilson 2001). LJ attacked the village of Duma and killed at least 200 Christians. A July 2002 bombing at a shopping mart in a Christian neighbourhood injured 53 people (USDS 2003). Intra-religious violence also occurred as in the case of members of *Coker*, an Ambonese Christian gang, admitting bombing Christian targets between 2000 and 2002. By May 2003 approximately 9,000 people were displaced from the Maluku Islands (USDS 2003). At a 2004 rally in support of a separatist group over 40 people were violently killed (Brown et al. 2005: 17).

By 2005 the US State Department considered the region 'relatively calm' (USDS 2006). In the following year damaged and destroyed buildings including mosques and churches were being restored and replaced. The Maluku government sponsored an event called 'The Friendship Bridge' which included people involved in the conflict. During the event reconciliation talks occurred between Christian and Muslim leaders (USDS 2007). In Maluku Christian and Muslim leaders have continued to work for better relations. Government projects are still under way to replace or restore churches lost or damaged in the violence. The Maluku government has also sponsored a workshop on 'National Unity Building and Awareness of Conflict and Terrorist Threats' (USDS 2008).

Hefner (2007: 43) holds though that violence in the area continues. From late 2007 to late 2008, 12 Christian churches were violently attacked by Islamic agitators or closed through public pressure from residents. Such incidents occurred in Bekasih, Bandung and Tangerang (USDS 2008).

Persecution of Religious Minorities

In 2005 the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) issued eleven *fatwa* against 'liberal Islam'. One stated that 'Islamic interpretations based on liberalism, secularism and pluralism 'contradict Islamic teachings''. Another *fatwa* forbade Muslims to pray with people of

other faiths (Ridwan 2005). The MUI publicly stated its opposition to religious pluralism claiming it undermined Islam's status as the 'absolute truth' (Unmacht 2005).

During September 2002 in Selong, East Lombok thousands of orthodox Muslims burned an Ahmadiyya mosque and nearby dwellings and businesses. A month later in Lombok 13 houses were burned when a mob forced members of the messianic Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute (LDII) to leave the village. Then in West Java two Ahmadiyya mosques were attacked by orthodox Muslims. Also in December 2002 orthodox Muslims clashed with the LDII in the Central Sulawesi village of Moutong, which ended with two people dead and seven dwellings burned (USDS 2003). The MUI then issued a fatwa in 2005 declaring Ahmadiyya deviant. In 2007 members of Ahmadiyya asked the Australian government for asylum (USDS 2007). Then in 2008 the Coordinating Board for Monitoring Mystical Beliefs in Society (Bakor Pakem) declared Ahmadiyya heretical and asked the government to force its members to disband. In response the government disallowed any proselytising activities by Ahmadiyya while also outlawing vigilante attacks against the group (USDS 2008). Over 1,000 people rallied in Jakarta in June 2008 to support Ahmadiyya. Over 70 people were injured when the demonstration was attacked by members of Islamic groups including Islamic Community Forum (USDS 2008).

The MUI has also issued *fatwas* of deviancy against other Islamic groups Islam Sejati and Jamaah Alamulla. In 2007 the MUI pronounced guidelines for deviance including recognising prophets after Muhummad and teaching that five daily prayers are unnecessary. The US State Department holds that *fatwas* facilitate discrimination against groups by both governments and citizens. Between 2007 and 2008 a number of buildings belonging to unorthodox Muslim groups were attacked (USDS 2008).

The Liberal Islam Network (JIL) has made repeated calls for freedom of interpretation of Islam and promotes peace between Muslims and adherents of other religions. Its members have faced and engaged militant Islamists at public meetings (USDS 2007).

Conclusion

Indonesia's only current major problem of religious diversity is the existence of Muslim activists willing to conduct terrorism against adherents of other religions. Indonesian security has cracked down upon and hopefully discouraged further terrorist violence. Religious tensions have erupted in Maluku between Muslims and Christians, but that violence has decreased significantly and hopefully tensions will be resolved with consultation.

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Malaysia

Background

Malaysia's territory spreads between two major land masses with a total area of 329,750 km^2. Apart from some small islands Malaysia consists of West Malaya on the Malay Peninsula and East Malaya which is a large section of the island of Borneo. The population in 2007 was 27.2 million (DSM 2007) 42% of whom lived in urban areas (SBS 2007). Malaysia is a nation of relatively young people as in 2000 a third of the population was below the age of 15 and the median age was 23.6 years. In the same year only 4% were 65 years or older (DSM 2001). In 2000 major ethnicities were Malays and Indigenous at almost 60%; Chinese 24%; and Indian, Pakistan, Sri Lankan 8% (SBS 2007). Religion and ethnicity are generally associated in Malaysia (Hefner 2007) as Malays are usually Muslim; Chinese are usually Buddhist or of a Chinese religion, and Indians are Hindu. The official language is Bahasa Melayu (SBS Malaysia 2007).

Islam was bought to Malaysia by traders and Sufis in the thirteenth century. By the fifteenth century Malaysia was 'predominately Muslim' (Armstrong 2000, 94). The British began colonies around the current territory of Malaysia from the seventeenth century. Britain created the Federated Malay States in 1896 and by 1914 had established protectorates over neighbouring sultanates gaining influence over the entire area of modern Malaysia. The Japanese occupied Malaya in World War II (CIA 2008; SBS 2007).

Independence from Britain was gained in 1957. At the time it was called the Federation of Malaya. In 1963 Singapore left the Federation. Malaya was joined by the states of Sabah and Sarawak and the new state entity became Malaysia. The present government is a coalition of fourteen parties called the Barisan Nasional (BN). The most senior party of the BN is the Malay based United Malay's National Organisation (UMNO). Other major BN parties are the ethnic based Malaysian Chinese Association and Malaysian Indian Congress. These parties have been the senior partners of Malaysia's government since Independence in 1957 (Abuza 2003; Barisan Nasional 2007; Government of Malaysia 2007a).

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During British rule (1896–1857) Malaysia's Chinese and Indian populations increased significantly until World War II. However at independence the British 'handed control' (Hefner 2007, 41) to the Malays or *bumiputras,* sons of the soil, and UMNO was the major government party. By agreement with the local Chinese UMNO gave Malays preference for public sector employment while the Chinese concentrated on business and achieved a majority share of economic wealth. In 1970 the Malays' share of national wealth was only 2.5% (Abuza 2003, 50). Hence Muslims were significantly poorer than other religious groups even though they were the largest.

Economic inequality caused ethnic and racial tensions between Malays and Chinese that lead to significant violence in 1969. The government then set out to improve the economic situation of Malays with their program, the New Economic Policy which adopted a general mission of eliminating economic inequality on racial/ethnic grounds and therefore also religious grounds. This was pursued through affirmative action that promoted the chances of Malays in education and corporate ownership. A strong Malay Muslim middle class had formed by the 1990s and by 2003 Malays' share of national wealth was 30% (Abuza 2003, 50; Hefner 2007). However in 2003 the *bumiputras* in rural areas still had incomes significantly below Malaysia's national average. They supported the continuation of programs supporting Muslim Malay interests (Abuza 2003).

The Constitution gives Malaysians freedom of religion (Government of Malaysia 2007b) but recognises Islam as the religion of the nation. It states that 'Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other beliefs may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation' (cited in Boyle and sheen 1997, 219). Abuza (2003) holds that 'Islam in Malaysia has always been synonymous with tolerance and pluralism' (2003, 48). Malaysia's King who acts on advice from the government is the 'Islamic Religious Head for the States of Penang, Malacca, Sabah, Sarawak, and the Federal Territories' (Government of Malaysia 2007d).

The Government also accepts an administrative role in supporting Islam through the Department of Islamic Development which oversees the development of 'progressive' Islam 'in line with the Malaysian vision' with respect to 'laws', 'regulations' and 'Islamic affairs' (UNICEF 2008). The State administers Shariah Law through Shariah courts that have authority for all Muslims in Malaysia (USDS 2008). The *Shariah* Court is responsible for administering family law and rulings on religious issues for Muslims (USDS 2003). Islamic education is compulsory in schools for Muslim children and only private schools can offer non-Islamic religious education. All Muslim civil servants are required to attend state-approved religious classes. Non-Muslims are strictly prohibited from proselytising among Muslims (USDS 2007) although Islam can be propagated to Non-Muslims (Guan 2005, 633). The *Shariah* Court has been accused of giving less credibility to testimony of females prompting complaints from women's advocacy groups about the conduct of divorce cases. The Attorney General's Office has announced that it will make appropriate amendments to the Islamic Family Law Act (USDS 2003).

Hefner (2007) observes that Malaysian Islamists are generally averse to violence preferring to accomplish change through elections. However, Abuza holds that

Islam had become increasingly 'uncompromising' in Malaysia since the 1970s. This was attributable to a continuing dissatisfaction among Muslim Malays with their share of economic wealth and increasing Islamic fundamentalism within *dakwahs* or Islamic student groups in universities (Abuza 2003, 48, 52,53).

The major Islamist political party in Malaysia is the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) which is not part of the BN. Since 1955 PAS has consistently enjoyed 30% of votes in Peninsula Malaysia. It has also governed the state of Kelantan for most of the period since independence (Tong 2007). PAS has held significant support where rural Malays had few benefits from the New Economic Policy. PAS has a system of Islamic schools and since the 1970s has called for Malaysia to become an Islamic state (Abuza 2003).

UMNO has attempted to compete with PAS by establishing its 'own Islamic credentials' (Abuza 2003, 53). In 1981 the new Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammed set up the Islamic Consultative Body to advise on the appropriateness of government policies and administration to Islam. Then in 1984 the Prime Minister announced that he would 'Islamicise government machinery' to pursue the 'inculcation of Islamic values in government' (Islam 2005, 126). In 1988 the Prime Minister elevated the power of the *Shariah* Court over Muslims facilitating the addition of the following clause to the Constitution 'Civil courts shall have no jurisdiction in respect of any matter within the jurisdiction of the *Shariah* Courts' (Kuppusamy 2006a). Malaysia also took new priorities in foreign relations becoming more focused on its membership of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, rather than the Commonwealth (Abuza 2003). The Mahatir government established major new Islamic institutions such as the Islamic Banking and Finance Institute, the Institute of Islamic Understanding and the International Islamic University Malaysia (Guan 2005, 634).

However Mahathir did not wish to appear as 'uncompromising' as other Muslim politicians. In 1996 and 1997 he spoke against proposals for *hukum hudud*, God's Punishment including amputations, lashes and stoning (Hamid 2005), and enforcement of Muslim dress codes. Mahathir also attempted to place the *Shariah* Court under the control of the Federal Government so that states governed, or influenced by PAS could not make interpretations of *Shariah* rulings that undermined Federal government policies (Abuza 2003, 59).

After the 1998 arrest of Mahathir's deputy, Anwar Ibrahim significant numbers of Malay Muslims switched their support from UNMO to PAS. Within 10 months membership of PAS increased 20%. Abuza holds that a significant number of those joining PAS were only protesting the treatment of Ibrahim rather than supporting PAS's mission for an Islamic state (Abuza 2003). However, PAS took a firm standpoint on the implementation of *Shariah* law proposing a bill in Federal Parliament in 1998 that instituted punishment for conversion from Islam to another religion with the death penalty (Abuza 2003). In the 1999 elections PAS also won the state of Terengganu and 27 seats in the Federal parliament which is the most seats of any opposition party (Khalid 2007).

With PAS increasing its power, Prime Minister Mahathir declared in 2001 that Malaysia 'fulfils the condition of an Islamic State' (Guan 2005, 634). Not satisfied

PAS sought to islamicise more of Malaysia's government and judiciary. In 2002 the PAS government of Teregganu stated that it would alter its constitution to introduce *hukum hudud* (Abuza 2003). PAS also introduced dress rules for tourists, closed 'pubs, karaoke centres, unisex hair salons and gaming outlets. He also enforced gender segregated aisles at supermarket counters' (Guan 2005, 635). In PAS controlled Kelantan 120 Muslim women were fined in 2002 for violating the Islamic dress code (USDS 2003).

In October 2003 Prime Minister Mahathir was succeeded by Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Taking a disarming stance against PAS Badawi announced a new perspective on Islam, *Islam Hadhari* or 'civilisational Islam' which is basically 10 axioms for governance:

1. Faith and piety in Allah
2. A just and trustworthy government
3. A free and independent people
4. Vigorous pursuit and mastery of knowledge
5. Balanced and comprehensive economic development
6. A good quality of life for the people
7. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women
8. Cultural and moral integrity
9. Safeguarding natural resources and the environment
10. Strong defence capabilities (Badawi 2004 and 2005).

In 2004, the Prime Minister described *Islam Hadhari* as a form of Islamic governance where 'in accordance with these principles' 'our laws and policies have been and continue to be formulated and reviewed – that is laws, and policies that represent the best interests of society' (Badawi 2004). Badawi promoted *Islam Hadhari* as a 'progressive and inclusive' Islamic perspective that would encourage economic growth and better relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (Khalid 2007, 145). The government actively promoted *Islam Hadhari* in schools and the public service (USDS 2007) and also strongly in the states of Perlis, Kedah, and the PAS governed states of Terengganu and Kelantan (Tong 2007; Khalid 2007). *Islam Hadhari* impressed non-Muslim Malaysians and was praised by British Prime Minister, Tony Blair who described Malaysia as a 'model Islamic country' to be 'emulated by the rest of the Muslim world' (Khalid 2007, 146).

Coming up to the 2004 election the image of PAS became socially and politically regressive. Prime Minister Badawi described the perspective of PAS on Islam as 'reactionary and exclusive' (Khalid 2007, 145). The Malaysian press portrayed PAS as anti-feminist, anti-progress and sympathetic to Afghanistan's Taliban. In the 2004 national elections PAS lost 21 seats in Federal Parliament retaining only six. PAS also lost government of the state of Terengganu and suffered a significant decrease in support in the state of Kelantan (Tong 2007; Khalid 2007).

Since the 2004 election PAS has maintained its stance on Islamicisation in the states where it has held power. It has also attempted to reform its image and appear socially and politically progressive. During 2006 the PAS government of the state of Kelantan issued dress codes for all women including non-Muslims working in restaurants

and retail requiring *hijab* and covering for the rest of the body except the hands and face. Non-Muslim women were also informed they could be fined for dressing 'sexily'. Advertisements in which women were deemed to be dressed inappropriately would no longer be permitted (USDS 2007). At the national level PAS has claimed to expound a more moderate form of Islam. The party has accepted non-Malays as 'associate members' and discussed the possibility of non-Muslim candidates and women members of the PAS Supreme Council (Kuppusamy 2006c).

In February 2007 Prime Minister Badawi criticised Islamic departments of some state governments for attempting to police the private lives of Muslim citizens. No state has since pursued programs of investigation into citizens' private lives but behaviour in public such as physical contact between unmarried Muslims is still punishable by religious authorities (USDS 2007).

While UMNO and PAS pursue 'moderate' or 'progressive' Islam all Muslims in Malaysia are subject to *Shariah* law in religious and family matters (USDS 2005). Hence they face restrictions on lifestyle that may seem imposing to individuals who support the primacy of civilian law. Malay are considered life long Muslims by the Constitution (USDS 2008). However, they may only practice Islam as determined by the *Shariah* Court and are subject to its rules even if they prefer secular life styles. In 2005 100 Muslims were arrested in a Kuala Lumpur nightclub for 'indecent behaviour' and attending an alcohol-serving venue although charges were subsequently dropped (USDS 2005). The distribution of various media among Muslims in Malaysia is affected by *Shariah* Law particularly with respect to publications of religious themes. The 2004 film, 'The Passion of the Christ' was banned for Muslims possibly due to the appearance of an actor representing Jesus (USDS 2005). Further In 2005, the Prime Minister declared that Malay-language Bibles must be inscribed with the words, 'Not for Muslims' (USDS 2005).

The pre-eminence of *Shariah* for Muslims also creates divisions within Islam. In 2005 the Federal Parliament passed the *Islamic Family Law Act* to standardise *Shariah* family laws around the country (USDS 2007). However, Muslim feminists and moderate Muslims opposed the law claiming it made 'divorce and polygamy easy' and allowed 'husbands to lay claim to the wife's properties even freezing the bank accounts of former spouses and their children' (Kuppusamy 2006a). The protests motivated the government to postpone gazetting the law and order a review. However, by June 2007 the review had not been completed (People's Daily Online 2006; USDS 2007).

The Federal Government has undertaken to place a requirement on Muslim converts, to declare their new religious commitment to their families and certify that they had done so. This was intended to phase out disputes on the religious status of dead people in related inheritance cases and disputes over appropriate funeral rites. The action was also intended to stop disputes in divorce cases over religious status of convert partners and therefore their rights to child custody (USDS 2008). If a Muslim wishes to convert to another religion, a Shariah court must first rule that they are apostates. Since such a ruling is rare and can carry a severe penalty conversions from Islam are almost impossible to obtain (USDS 2008).

Religion is noted on national identity cards. Muslims must have a photograph of themselves and their spouses. Non-Muslims have their religions on a computer chip in the card. Marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims is not recognised by the government. Unmarried people are not allowed to have 'close' physical proximity. There are religious police who conduct raids at places where Muslims are suspected to be engaging in unacceptable proximity with members of the opposite sex and consuming alcohol (USDS 2008).

Religious Affiliations

For the 2000 Census, Islam was the most common religion at 60.4% of Malaysia's population. Other religions were Buddhism 19.2% of the population, Christianity 9.1%, Hinduism 6.3%, Confucianism/Taoism/other traditional Chinese religion 2.6% (DSM 2001) and folk/tribal animistic religions 1% (NIFC 2008). For the previous Census of 1991 figures were similar with Islam at 58.6% of the population, Christianity 8.0%, Hinduism 6.4%, Buddhism 18.4% and Confucianism/Taoism/other traditional Chinese religions 5.3%. The last group displays the only significant change.

All Malays are officially Muslim at birth (USDS 2007) and Muslims are also found among other ethnicities including Punjabi, Tamil, Guajarati and Malayali and 'tribal people' people. Most Muslims are *Sunni*, although some are *Shi'a* (NIFC 2008).

Significant Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Methodists and Anglicans with increasing numbers of Pentecostals. In the states of Sabah and Sarawak about 40% of the populations are Christian (NIFC 2008).

Managing Religious Diversity

Malaysia celebrates its religious diversity with public holidays for all the major religions. They include the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Wesak Day a Buddhist festival, Deepavali a Hindu festival and Christmas Day (USDS 2007).

The government attempts to influence the state of religion and religious diversity by offering both status and resources. The Federal government encourages all organisations to 'register' with the Registrar of Societies or an appropriate sub-body of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism. Registration entitles organisations to government grants (USDS 2004) and if a space of worship is unregistered the government is empowered to order its demolition (USDS 2007). The federal government refuses to register the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and the Jehovah's Witnesses. However such groups can register as companies under the Companies Act but receive no funding (USDS 2008).

Recent attempts by government and non-government groups to arrange inter-faith dialogues have failed due to Islamist intimidation of the Federal government. In 2005 the Malaysian Bar Council arranged a national conference to discuss a draft law for a National Inter-Faith Commission. The purpose of the commission was to ‘allow for greater interfaith relationships’ and to ‘avoid conflicts arising out of misunderstandings’ between religious groups. However, Islamic NGOs boycotted the conference arguing that the National Inter-Faith Commission would undermine ‘existing religious authorities’. The youth wing of PAS protested that the Commission would allow discussion of sensitive Muslim issues by non-Muslims. After the conference the Prime Minister Badawi announced that the ‘National Inter-Faith Commission’ would not be formed due to ‘heated debates reported in the press’ (Guan 2005, 629–630).

However, public dialogue between religious groups has occurred. For example, the National Human Rights Commission organised interfaith dialogues in 2002 and 2003 (USDS 2004). In 2007 the government created the National Unity Advisory Panel (NUAP) which seeks to promote unity among different social groups including religious groups. The NUAP has representatives from all major religious groups who are able to express concerns to the government (USDS 2007).

Local governments have the power to remove religious buildings and statues that are unregistered. Some governments have demolished old unregistered Hindu shrines and temples which had usually been built before independence on formerly private land. This has attracted complaints from Hindu groups and some cases have been contested successfully by Hindus in the courts (USDS 2008).

The Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Taoists claims the government is restricting visas for foreign clergy who are aged less than 40 to exclude religious agitators. The government did reduce the visiting periods for foreign Hindu clerics, musicians and sculptors, but under pressure from Hindu groups the government announced that it would grant more visas to Hindu clerics. The government had previously called upon non-Islamic clergy to train more locals and reduce their dependence on religious trainers overseas (USDS 2008).

Current Issues

While freedom of religion in Malaysia is protected by the Constitution, the primacy of Islam and its influence on the Federal and state governments can be restricting and sometimes discriminatory for adherents of other religions. Such states of affairs could result in significant tensions.

For example, the Federal government proscribes religious teachings it considers inappropriately ‘deviant’ from Islam and adherents of ‘deviant groups’ can be detained and ‘rehabilitated’ (USDS 2007). In 2007 on the Islamic Development Department web site the Federal government listed 56 religions or religious groups espousing ‘deviant’ religious teaching (USDS 2007). The deviant groups included

the Muslim sect al Arqam and the Baha'i religion. In 2006 107 people were arrested in Kuala Lumpur for suspected membership of al Arqam and its leader was placed under house arrest (USDS 2007). In 2005 'Sky Kingdom' a commune with 2,000 members, was raided by religious authorities and police. A *Shariah* Court charged members with 'practicing a cult officially declared deviant'. The leader, former Muslim, Ayah Pin was described by the Minister for Islamic Affairs as a person who may have 'misled ignorant Muslims in country areas' (Kuppusamy 2006b). The Federal government also monitors the activities of Malaysian's minority of *Shi'a* Muslims (USDS 2007).

Muslim family law as administered through the *Shariah* Court also has the potential to restrict religious freedom. For example, *Shariah* does not allow marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims (Government of Malaysia 2007c). Also, Malaysia's *Shariah* Courts have been reluctant to permit Muslims to convert to other religions. During 2006–2007 'several' Malaysian Muslims were detained for attempting to convert to the religions of their marriage partners' (USDS 2007). Hence non-Muslim partners in mixed marriages are under pressure to convert to Islam and Muslims wishing to convert to their partner's religions face the reluctance of the *Shariah* Court. In 2007 Islamic authorities of the state of Selangor annulled a 21 year marriage in which a Muslim woman had married a Hindu man. Islamic authorities declared the marriage illegal and detained the wife and children 'for rehabilitation'. In a further outcome the High Court awarded custody of the children to the father to be raised as Hindus (Mackinnon 2007).

A case which attracted national attention concerned a Malay, Ms Lina Joy who took baptism in the Catholic Church in order to marry a Catholic man. She then applied for a new identity card from the National Registration Department wishing to list her religion as Christian. However, the Department refused to recognise Ms Joy as a Christian unless she produced a certificate from the *Shariah* Court confirming her status as a convert from Islam. However, The *Shariah* Court refused to recognise her conversion and issue a certificate. Legally she remained a Muslim undermining the validity of her marriage to a Christian. In 2001 Ms Joy unsuccessfully took the matter to a lower civilian court which ruled that 'as a Malay she exists under the tenets of Islam until her death' (Prystay 2006). Ms Joy then appealed to the Malaysia Federal Court claiming the decision of the lower court violated the Constitution by not recognising her religious freedom to become a Christian (Kuppusamy 2006b). The case became socially divisive in the period before the Federal Court decision. Non-Muslims saw the prospect of a successful appeal as a victory for civil law while Islamists saw an unsuccessful appeal as confirmation of the ascendancy of *Shariah*. In May 2007 the Federal Court rejected the appeal claiming the decision was only appropriate for the *Shariah* Courts. A Federal Court judge stated 'You can't at a whim and fancy convert from one religion to another… The issue of apostasy is related to Islamic law, so it's under the *Shariah* Court. The civil court cannot intervene' (Hamid and Azman 2007).

This case poses two issues with regard to the relationship between religious diversity and social cohesion. The first concerns the place of Islamic law within Malaysian law and how it may 'impose' on non-Muslims. The parliamentary

opposition leader holds (in Kuppusamy 2007a) 'The judgement does not end the Muslim/non-Muslim divide but has instead widened it by introducing Islamic principles into secular, constitutional matters'. Bishop Paul Tan of the *Christian Federation of Malaysia* held that the decision was part of a trend whereby civil courts had been transferring legal questions to the *Shariah* Courts (Kuppusamy 2007a). Hence there is potential for religious tension as non-Muslims sense Islamic law encroaching on their freedoms under civil law.

However, in May 2006 the Shariah court in Penang allowed a Buddhist who had converted to Islam to revert to Buddhism. After being left by her Iranian husband the woman claimed she had only converted for marriage and had never been a practicing Muslim. In its ruling the court admonished the local religious council for not overseeing the woman's conversion (USDS 2008).

Conservative Muslims see moves to publicly emphasise constitutional religious freedom as an encroachment on *Shariah* law and a challenge to 'Islam's pre-eminent position in Malaysia' (Kuppusamy 2006d). Heated confrontation has already occurred. Thirteen non-government organisations both Muslim and non-Muslim have formed the lobby group, 'Article 11', their title being the name of the constitutional provision guaranteeing religious freedom. Members are concerned that Islamic laws are gaining priority over civil rights upheld by the constitution. On at least three occasions in 2006 'Article 11' forums were disrupted by large crowds of Muslin protestors (Kuppusamy 2006d). Prime Minister Badawi then banned 'Article 11' from participating in public forums arranged by other organisations (Prystay 2006). The Prime Minister also told religious NGOs of all faiths to refrain from public exchanges that could disturb social cohesion between religious groups (USDS 2007).

The second and related issue is the status and fate of non-Muslims who have converted from Islam without the sanction of the *Shariah* Court, that is the 'apostates'. As is shown above apostasy investigations have lead to annulment of marriage and removal of children. Furthermore, some clerics and PAS have advocated that apostates and converts should be caned and rehabilitated or even executed. Considering that converts no longer consider themselves Muslims such penalties are legal impositions by a *Shariah* Court on the religious freedom of non-Muslims to practice their own religions or to not practice Islam. Since *Shariah* has a certain amount of ascendancy over civil law many Malaysians do not have Constitutional protection to practice religion as they wish. Increased powers to the *Shariah* court are of concern non-Muslims who fear erosion of their civil protections.

The above issues of religious diversity are rooted in understandings of the government and the Federal Court judiciary of the concept of 'religious freedom'. The government and Federal Court see the Federal Constitution's support for religious freedom as relevant only to Malaysian citizens outside Islam who as long as they do not offend Islam are free to practice their religions. However, Malaysian Muslims are not covered by the Constitution's provision for religious freedom in as much as they are arguably not free to choose an alternative religion even if it is freely practiced by Malaysia as under *Shariah* law the freedom to change religion arguably does not exist for them. Also, religious freedom does not apply to any religionists including Muslims whose religious practices offend local Islamic authorities.

Conclusion

The Federal governments' form of Islamic rule, *Islam Hadhari* is not likely to alienate other religious groups and threaten social cohesion in the near future. However, in the context of Malaysia's legal system moderate Muslims and non-Muslims sense a threat to their civil freedoms from the *Shariah* Court. Moves to preserve civil freedoms have similarly threatened conservative Muslims who support Islam's status as the ultimate source of law and the primary social institution of the nation. Such feelings of mutual threat may be a source of future social instability.

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Papua New Guinea

Background

Papua New Guinea (PNG) includes the eastern half of the large island of New Guinea and about 600 surrounding islands. Larger islands are Bougainville, Buka, New Britain, New Ireland and Manus. PNG's estimated population in 2008 was just under 5.8 million. The last Census in 2006 found the population to be largely regional with only about 16% living in urban areas. The capital, Port Moresby had about 145,300 people. The major ethnic groups are Melanesian, Papuan, Negrito, Micronesian and Polynesian (SBS 2008; CIA 2008).

The cultural diversity of PNG is enormous. According to AusAid PNG has about 700 different cultural groups some living very remotely from others (AusAid 2007). The *lingua franca* is Melanesian Pidgin while English is the language of education and government. However, PNG also has over 800 Indigenous languages (CIA 2008; Gibbs 2006). Nearly all the population nominate themselves as Christian, but PNG has great denominational diversity and also hosts Indigenous religions, Bah'ais and Muslims (National Statistical Office 2000 in Gibbs 2006).

The earliest recorded visits by Europeans occurred in the sixteenth century. Portuguese sailor, Jorge de Meneses arrived in 1526 and a Spaniard, Ynigo Ortiz, visited in 1546. In the following centuries Europeans continued to visit but colonisation and Christianisation did not begin until half way through the 1800s. Catholic and other Christian missionaries came from the 1840s and British explorers laid claim to the island of New Guinea in 1873. In 1885 PNG was partitioned between Germany in the north and Britain in the South. Australia accepted responsibility for southern PNG in 1902 and occupied the German north in World War I. The combined southern and northern areas were governed by Australia until World War II when the Japanese invaded. After the war PNG reverted to Australian control and accepted Independence in 1975 (BBCNews 2007a; Gibbs 2006; SBS 2008).

Since Independence PNG has not achieved political or social stability without foreign support. The present government of Michael Somare which came to power

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in 2002 is the first to complete a full term. A significant portion of PNG is poor, as 40% of people receive less than US$1 daily and survive on agricultural subsistence. The country has a high rate of infant mortality at over 53 per 1,000 live births and the general literacy rate is 57.3%. About 2% of PNG's population live with HIV/AIDS giving the country the highest official rate in the region. Health, transport and education services are difficult to access. Successive PNG governments have also been confronted by armed separatism on the island of Bougainville – an agreement finally being made with rebels in 2001 (AusAid 2007; BBCNews 2007a; SBS 2008).

In 2004 PNG agreed to accept Australian police, civil servants and judges to deal with violence. Street crime in Port Moresby, notoriously conducted by gangs had forced the middle classes and diplomats to live in walled and barbed wired districts while 'two thirds' of the population were in 'shanty towns'. Locals accused police of major corruption and unemployment was approximately 70% (BBCNews 2004a, b, c). In 2006 the PNG government declared a 'state of emergency' in the province of Southern Highlands, a key area of natural resource deposits, to restore civil order and end corruption (BBCNews 2006).

Indigenous Beliefs

Lawrence reports that with exceptions Indigenous religions throughout PNG have several common aspects. First, the cosmos is perceived as a 'finite physical realm' with no extra dimensions of existence, like heaven or hell. Hence, supernatural beings like deities and spirits of the dead are 'corporeal' and exist in earthly proximity to humans. Second, rituals for spirits of the dead are common. Ancestors are society 'custodians' who legitimate tribes' rights to their territory. Also spiritual narratives are generally taught to boys in initiations and belief in sorcery is almost 'universal' (Lawrence 2005b).

Before Independence PNG achieved attention with neighbouring Melanesian nations as a host of 'cargo cults' who worship in expectation of significant material rewards of goods or 'cargo'. In the 1960s a 'cargo cult' from New Hanover famously believed that the only person knowing the location of their 'cargo' was US President, Lyndon Johnson who they attempted to purchase from the US and install as their king. Cargo cults continue to exist in New Guinea as in other parts of Melanesia (Billings 2002; Lawrence 2005a; Post-Courier Online 2008).

Christianity in PNG

Starting with Catholic missions in the late 1840s PNG has received missionaries from a very large range of Christian denominations. The early missionaries faced serious threats from malaria, cannibals and Australian plantation owners attempting

to appropriate labourers. A significant concord was brokered by the Colonial Administrator of British PNG known as the 'Sphere of Influence Agreement'. The Anglican Mission, London Missionary Society and Methodist Mission which would include the Wesleyans agreed to separate territories of operation (EPNGA 2008; Gibbs 2006). The Sacred Heart Mission of the Catholic Church declined to participate but the Agreement was influential in the long term presence of each denomination within the tribal/ethnic groups of their assigned areas (USDS 2007)

Other denominations also began missions. The Society of the Divine Word a Dutch organisation began its operations in 1896. Lutherans began missions in 1887. After World War I Lutheran missions were run by Australian and US missionaries (EPNGA 2008). Other organisations to commence operations before World War II were the Liebenzell Evangelical Mission, Seventh Day Adventists and the Unevangelised Fields Mission which is now the Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea (Gibbs 2006).

PNG suffered much death and destruction in World War II and the post war reconstruction attracted various new Christian denominations. These included Baptists, the Nazarene Church, the New Tribes Mission Assemblies of God, the Four Square Gospel Church, the Apostolic Church, Christian Revival Crusade, the Salvation Army and the Evangelical Brotherhood (Gibbs 2006).

The London Missionary Society (LMS) in PNG became a church in 1962, the Papua Ekelesia. In 1968 it amalgamated with the Methodist Church to form the United Church of Papua and the Solomon Islands from which the Solomon Islands members separated in 1996. The United Church now runs health centres, primary schools, high schools and pastoral training colleges (Gibbs 2006). Currently, the older established churches are losing members to renewalist organisations many of which have commenced operating only recently in PNG (USDS 2008). These organisations include: the Revival Centres; Christian Life Centre, Christian Mission Fellowship, Christian Outreach Centre, Christian Revival Crusade, and the Evangelical Christian Fellowship Church (Gibbs 2006; USDS 2007).

There are several inter-church bodies in PNG some international and others domestic including the Evangelical Alliance; Melanesian Association of Theological Schools, the National Council of Pentecostal Churches, the Evangelical Alliance, the Melanesian Council of Churches and the Papua New Guinea Council of Churches. The Papua New Guinea Council of Churches excludes Seven Day Adventists and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and does no interfaith work with non-Christian organisations (Gibbs 2006; EPNGA 2008; USDS 2007).

Missionary societies continue to operate without special restrictions and in 2007 the New Tribes Mission had the largest number of missionaries in PNG with 390. The Bible has been translated into 163 Indigenous PNG languages for the Department of Education by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (USDS 2007).

Islam is a very recent religion to PNG and has only a few thousand adherents. The Islamic Society of Papua New Guinea (ISPNG) claims that the first person to convert to Islam on PNG territory was a former Scottish national who converted in 1982. The ISPNG also claims that the first PNG born convert became a Muslim

in 1986. Currently the ISPNG claims four branches and Muslims live in a number of places on the mainland including Port Moresby and the islands of New Ireland and New Britain. The Port Moresby mosque can hold 1,500 people (USDS 2007).

The PNG government holds that Baha'i also live throughout the country and are from various levels of society. Baha'i missionaries were operating in Madina, New Ireland in the early 1950s, and after initial successes spread their religion to the mainland. The Government also holds that Baha'i support social development programs including adult literacy ventures (EPNGA 2008; Were 2005).

Religious Affiliations

In the 2000 Census 96% of respondents nominated their religion as a denomination of Christianity. Roman Catholics were 27.1%, Evangelical Lutheran 19.5%, United 11.5%, Seventh Day Adventists 10.1%. Pentecostal Church 8.6%, Evangelical Alliance 5.2%, Anglicans 3.2%, Baptists 2.5%, Jehovah's Witnesses 0.4%; Churches of Christ 0.4% and Baha'i 0.3%. Participants nominating 'No Religion' were 0.6% (National Statistical Office 2000 in Gibbs 2006). Gibbs has also published Census figures which are broken down in greater detail. showing Assemblies of God 2.7%, The Apostolic Church, the Evangelical Brotherhood and the Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea each with 2% of the entire population (Gibbs 2006).Other churches and faiths with significant memberships were Four Square Gospel 1.5%, Brethren, 1.0%, South Seas Evangelical 0.9%, Nazarene 0.6%, and Life Centre and New Tribes, 0.5% (Gibbs 2006: 93).

The US State Department claims that PNG also has about 14,000 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints or 0.3% of the population, and approximately 2,000 Muslims (USDS 2007). The CIA further claims that 34% of the population hold Indigenous beliefs (CIA 2008).

Managing Religious Diversity

Despite a reference in the Constitution's preamble to the nation being one of 'Christian principles', PNG has no state religion. Religious freedom is supported by the Constitution in Section 45. Accordingly, PNG citizens have the right to freely choose their religious beliefs and practices including those of Indigenous religions. No person has the right to intervene in the religious life of another. In particular, no person may impose their religion on another (Government of Papua New Guinea 1975). The government has a Department of Family and Church Affairs. The US State Department sees this agency as merely 'reiterating the Government's respect for church autonomy' (USDS 2007).

Public holidays are celebrated for Christian festivals of Easter and Christmas (USDS 2007). The government policy on religious education for public schools is

to allow one hour of instruction a week given by members of a church nominated by parents. Parents can elect for their children to be exempt (USDS 2007).

Administratively, the government's main involvement with religious organisations is the distribution of funding to church-established schools and health services (USDS 2007). In 2000 Christian churches provided 47% of elementary schools, 53% of primary schools and 30% of secondary schools. Churches run two universities, vocational schools and technical colleges. Churches also run significant numbers of health care centres with government support (Gibbs 2006; USDS PNG 2007).

Current Issues

PNG's severe problems which include crime, corruption, political and economic instability, HIV infections are not associated with the state of religion. Further, there are no immediate potentials for religious based troubles. PNG has no emerging religious movements with potential to cause social tensions. While minor attacks have occurred against Muslims there have been none reported for a few years (USDS PNG 2005, 2006, 2007). While established Christian churches compete intensely with new evangelical churches no violent confrontations or simmering tensions have been reported.

Given PNG's major social and cultural diversity national level discussions can be misleading as conditions for religious based instability may exist in individual regions. There has only been one recent incident involving religion. In late 2007 the national government declared a state of emergency in Northern Province due to cyclone flooding. The Puwo Gawe religious group in Ambasi has been accused of theft and obstructing relief efforts after taking emergency supplies intended for other victims. Members claimed the supplies were personal gifts from their dead relatives who they believe will be resurrected in 2010. In early 2008 military personnel policing the emergency effort destroyed Puwo Gawe's 18 room rest house in Ambasi as 'a lesson' to anyone disrupting emergency operations (The National 2007; Mercer 2007; Post-Courier Online 2008).

This incident demonstrates that cargo cults may with reference to their beliefs conduct illegal activity bringing them into conflict with legal authorities. However the actions of Puwo Gawe and the destructive actions of the military occurred within the extraordinary circumstances of a state of emergency. The incident demonstrates no general potentials for confrontation and wider social disruptions.

Religion has also played a role in peace-making and peace-keeping in PNG particularly in the case of recent conflict on the island of Bougainville. In this case women, strongly religious women were instrumental in keep the hostile groups apart and bringing them to the peace talks. 'They refused to submit to the threats and abuse inflicted on them by combatants from both sides of the civil war. As they moved between the factions, they became effective bridge builders and peace makers, promoting respect for human life and reconciliation' (Momis 2007).

Conclusion

PNG has major political, administrative and social problems that have already disrupted social cohesion but religion has not been a contributing factor. In PNG religion does not motivate pathological social action like acts of violence. Further, religion cannot be observed generating conditions of social atrophy like corrupt or incompetent governments.

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Philippines

Background

The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,000 islands with a total population of about 80 million people. The Philippines were ruled by Spain from the late 1500s, the United States from 1902 and the Japanese for 3 years of World War II. It then gained independence from the United States in 1946 (Government of the Philippines 2007a). The two largest islands are Luzon in the north and Mindanao in the south, which historically has been a Muslim area (PFRPL 2007). Islam, which first came to the Philippines between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, now has about 4 million adherents, which is about 5% of the total population (Abubakar 2005; Government of the Philippines 2007b; PFRPL 2007). The Spanish bought Roman Catholicism to the Philippines in the sixteenth century and today over 80% of Filipinos are Catholic. Indigenous and hybrid religious beliefs and practices are also present (USDS 2007).

Organised religion has significant influence on politics in the Philippines. In the 1980s the Roman Catholic Church mobilised public opinion against President Marcos contributing to his fall (Astorga 2006; Barry 2006; Scarpello 2006). Recently, Protestant groups and Catholic organisations not controlled by the Catholic Church have also gained political power. Brother Eddie Villanueva head of the Protestant group, Jesus is Lord, won 6.2% of votes in the 2004 presidential election (Barry 2006).

Religious violence on Mindanao which is home for most of the Muslim minority has occurred since the Spanish attempted to Christianise local Muslims over 400 years ago (Abuza 2003). Conflict occurred again later when the United States abolished all sultanates in the Philippines depriving Mindanao of an Islamic government (Abubakar 2005; Milligan 2003). Violence between Muslims and the United States continued to 1920 and casualties of Muslims were in the 'thousands' (Milligan 2003, 471). In the 1930s the United States re-settled Christians from Luzon to Mindanao diluting the Muslim population. This policy continued into the Marcos period (Abuza 2003), and by the 1960s Muslims in Mindanao were no longer a majority as Christians acquired political and economic dominance (Abuza 2003). In consequence, Muslims became resentful, regarding their land and cultural identity as threatened (USDS 2008).

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However, Islam in Mindanao was resilient and gained strength as thousands of young Muslims from the area studied in Manila and Egypt. The first *madrasahs* in the area were initiated from about 1950. In the 1970s significant funds began arriving from overseas destinations like Libya for schools, mosques and the salaries of Islamic religious leaders (Abuza 2003).

Since the 1970s 120,000 people have reportedly died due to political or religious violence in Mindanao and the neighbouring Muslim province of Sulu (ICG 2005). The 'Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao' (ARMM) was established by the Aquino government in 1990 without consultation with rebel groups. In a plebiscite the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Tiwi and Sulu joined (ARMM 2007). Then in 1996 the national government signed a peace agreement with separatist group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The government also negotiated with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) signing an 'Agreement on Peace' in June 2001 (USDS 2003; Milligan 2003). A further plebiscite in 2001 saw the addition of two provinces of Basilan and the city, Marawi (ARMM 2007). In July 2008 the Philippine government drafted another agreement with the MILF to expand the ARMM to include a further 712 villages greater autonomous power and a greater share of revenues. At the time of writing the agreement has not been signed (BBCNews 2008).

Religious groups of different faiths have participated together to confront poverty, tension and violence in Mindanao. Such groups have included 'The Interfaith Group' which comprises Protestants, Muslims and Catholics; the Peacemakers Circle Foundation and the Bishops-Ulama Conference (USDS 2008).

Religious Affiliations

The 2000 Philippines Census reported that the national population was approximately 80 million of whom 92.6% were Christians. Roman Catholics were 81.0% of the entire Philippines population and Protestants 7.3%. Two locally created churches were significant minorities. The Iglesia ni Kristo, Church of Christ was 2.3% of the total population and Aglipayan, the Philippine Independent Church 2.0% (PFRPL 2007). According to the 2000 Census 5.1% of the population was Muslim, most being Sunni. About 0.1% of the Philippines population was Buddhist. Only 0.5% claimed to have 'No Religion' or selected the option 'Don't Know' (PFRPL 2007).

In 2006 the Protestant charismatic group Jesus is Lord had an estimated 1 million followers. In the same year a charismatic Catholic group, El Shaddai, had some 2 million registered members. In 2001, Couples for Christ, another charismatic Catholic group, reported 1.4 million registered members (Kessler and Ruland 2006, 78).

Managing Religious Diversity

The present Philippines Constitution authorises 'the separation of Church and State' (Government of the Philippines 1987a: Article 2, Section 6) and obliges the national government to 'respect freedom of choice in religion' (Government of the Philippines

1987b: Article 3: Bill of Rights, Section 5). The state offers tax exemptions for religious groups that register with the Philippines Securities and Exchange Commission and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (USDS 2007). Muslims are subject to the rulings of *Shariah* courts on non-criminal matters. A significant numbers of judgeships on the Islamic courts were vacant in 2008. The Philippines has national holidays on various Christian festivals and since 2002 has also held an official holiday at the end of the Islamic fasting period Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr. In 2008 the government formed the Council on Interfaith Initiatives to manage government interfaith initiatives (USDS 2005, 2007, 2008).

The government's National Ecumenical Consultative Committee (NECCOM) facilitates contact and discussion between the major religious communities. Members represent the Catholic Church, Filipino Muslims, Iglesia Cristo, the Aglipayan and Protestant groups. NECCOM and the government have met to discuss social and political issues, including tensions in Mindanao (USDS 2003).

The Office of Muslim Affairs arranges *Hajj* pilgrimages to Mecca, supervises endowment properties and supports maintenance of Muslim centres and economic development projects in areas of Muslim majorities. The Department of Education provides appropriate Islamic teaching resources for public schools with Islamic majorities including Arabic language classes. Also, the Madrasah Development Coordinating Committee administers financial assistance to *madrasahs* from both local and overseas sources. There are more than 2,000 registered Islamic schools or *madrasahs* in the Philippines over half being in Mindanao. The national government is currently attempting to integrate *madrasahs* into the Filipino school system. In 2008, the majority of *madrasahs* did not satisfy standards for accreditation by the government. Some Muslim students attend Catholic schools, but face no obligatory Catholic religious instruction (USDS 2007 and 2008).

Current Issues

The US State Department reported in 2003 that parliamentarians in the national governments were largely Christian. An under representation of Muslims was also occurring in senior civilian and military positions. However, the Arroyo government attempted to improve the religious balance by appointing a Muslim cabinet secretary and a Muslim jurist to the court of appeals (USDS 2003).

Violence between Christians and Muslims continues in the Philippines as Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Rajah Solamain Movement (RSM) want the expulsion from Mindanao of all non-Muslims (Abuza 2003; USDS 2007; Human Rights Watch 2007). Leadership of MILF is dedicated to continuing negotiating with the government but potentially dissatisfied members may join ASG or RSM (Human Rights Watch 2007). The MNLF has also been involved in recent violence with the Philippines military. Since the autonomy agreement was signed in 1996 no improvements in standards of living have occurred in the Autonomous Republic of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) which remains the poorest in the Philippines. In the early 2000s

the ARMM was remitting 60% of its revenues to Manila and receiving only 10% in return (Abuza 2003). As noted above a new agreement to expand and empower the ARRM was drafted in July 2008 but it is yet to be signed (BBCNews 2008). Significant violence has also occurred outside or the ARMM in Manila and Davao City.

The ASG still advocates an independent Islamic state in the southwest of Mindanao. However, Muslim leaders have challenged the ASG's credibility as an Islamic organisation, calling it actions, 'un-Islamic' (USDS 2008).

Among the publicised recent incidents of violence were the April 2003 bombing of a wharf in Davao City killing 16 people and injuring 50. In the same month there was also a raid by the MILF on the mainly Christian town of Maigo with over 13 civilians dead and the taking of 100 hostages who were later rescued by Government forces (USDS 2003). In February 2005, 500 followers of jailed former MNLF leader, Nur Misuari attacked government forces in Jolo and other Sulu areas. Simultaneously, intense fighting between the MNLF and the military began over the murder of a Moro rights advocate, his wife and son. Military operations led to the displacement of 50,000 residents (USDS 2005). In April 2007 there was resurgent fighting around Jolo, between Philippines military and the ASG and the MNLF. Within a month about 60,000 people had been displaced (Human Rights Watch 2007).

Numerous recent incidents have occurred mainly involving ASG and RSM. In February 2004, 116 passengers of a super ferry were killed by a bomb while outside Manila Harbour en route to Mindanao. Authorities believe that ASG and RSM were behind the attack. On St Valentine's Day 2005 three bombs exploded almost simultaneously in Manila and in General Santos City and Davao City in Mindanao. Fatalities were four in Manila, three in General Santos City and one in Davao. Total wounded were over 100. Responsibility for the attacks was claimed by RSM and ASG. In April 2007 ASG kidnapped and demanded ransom in Jolo, Sulu for seven men of whom six were road workers. When the local government failed to respond to ransom demands the ASG beheaded the captives (Human Rights Watch 2007). In June 2007 a splinter of the MILF abducted and ransomed a Catholic missionary in Payao, Zamboanga Sibugay (USDS 2008). A number of incidents occurred in Mindanao in 2008. For example, a Cathedral in Zamoanga City, Mindanao suffered a bomb attack,and a Catholic priest was kidnapped and murdered in Tawi-Tawi.

Conclusion

While some progress has occurred the status of Muslims in the southern islands continues to be an issue that has disrupted social cohesion not just in the ARMM but also in major urban centres including Manila and Davao City. The situation will improve if Filipino governments can reach peaceful accommodations with armed groups.

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Singapore

Background

Singapore is a rapidly changing city state with a significant transient population. The 2000 Census counted 4.02 million people, 18% of whom were non-residents. Between the last two Censuses in 1990 and 2000 the resident population increased from 2,735,900 to 3,263,200 or by 19.2%. For the 2000 Census Singapore's major ethnic groups were Chinese 76.8%, Indigenous Malay 13.9%, and Indians 7.9%. Religion and ethnicity are highly associated in Singapore as for generations most Buddhists and Taoists have been Chinese and nearly all Hindus were Indian and nearly all Muslims were of Malay ethnicity (Statistics Singapore 2007a). In 2000 Christians were about a seventh of the resident population and most were Chinese. Singapore celebrates mutual religious respect through national holidays devoted to Islamic, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist festivals or holy days (USDS 2007).

Singapore is a young nation having accepted national independence only in 1965 after British colonialism, Japanese invasion, autonomous colonial status, and membership of the Malaysian Federation. The People's Action Party (PAP) has been the governing political party of Singapore since 1959 (SBS 2004) and continues to dominate electoral politics. In the 2006 election it won 82 of the 84 parliamentary seats, although its share of the popular vote had decreased since 2001 (USDS 2008; Haas 1989).

For over 40 years the government has followed its formula for social cohesion in Singapore which calls for respect for ethnic and religious differences but primary loyalty for the nation. The first statement of this principle was a National Pledge issued in 1966. Singaporeans making the Pledge declared they would unite with others regardless of 'race, language or religion' in 'justice and equality' to gain 'happiness, prosperity and progress' for Singapore (Expat Singapore 2007).

In 1991 the government tabled a white paper in parliament entitled 'Singapore's Shared Values' which the parliament accepted after amendments. The white paper reaffirmed the government's vision of a Singapore united by mutual respect for

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ethnicity, race and religion but with final loyalty to the nation. The 'Shared Values' included (1) 'nation before community and society before self, (2) community support and respect for the individual, (3) the family as the basic unit of society, (4) consensus in place of conflict and (5) racial and religious harmony' (National Library Board Singapore 2001). The rationale behind promoting these values was to

> identify key common values that all racial groups and faiths can subscribe to and live by. Outside of these Shared Values each community can practise its own values as long as they are not in conflict with national ones (National Library Board Singapore 2001).

On the basis of this policy, the PAP has set up departments and boards of authority to maintain government influence over religions. When perceiving threats to social cohesion the PAP has also imposed restrictions and penalties on religious individuals and groups.

Two issues are pertinent to Singapore's current management of its religious diversity and both have primarily affected Muslims. The first is Singapore's participation in the global war on terror which has the potential to alienate local Muslims. The second is the government's efforts in economic development, including education.

Religious Affiliations

The Singapore government has released the following figures for residents aged 15 years or older. In the last Census held in 2000 the most numerous religious group was Buddhism with approximately 42.5% of the population, an increase from 31.2% in 1990. Most of Singapore's Buddhists are Mahayana (SMICA 2004). Islam was 14.9%, a slight drop from the 1990 percentage of 15.3. Christianity was 14.6%, a rise from 12.7% in 1990. Taoism was 8.5%, having declined significantly from the 1990 figure of 22.4%. In 2000 4% were Hindu. Singaporeans declaring 'No Religion' amounted to 14.8%, a small rise on 1990 of 14.1%. Most Singaporeans claiming 'No Religion' in national censi since 1980 have been Chinese (Statistics Singapore 2007b).

Singapore also has minority groups of Sikhs, Jews, Zoroastrians, Confucians and Jains (USDS 2007). Local Singaporeans also engage in 'folk practices' such as 'spirit-medium ship and magical healing' and syncretism of such beliefs and practices with Islam (Clammer 1991, 39).

Recent changes in the religious makeup of Singapore were most significant among the Chinese. The percentage of Chinese aged 15 and over practicing Buddhism increased from 34.9% in 1990 to 53.6% in 2000. Christianity also became the second largest religion among Chinese at 16.5% which represents a steady increase since 1980 and 1990 when the percentages were 10.9 and 14.3. Taoism dropped to 10.8% among the Chinese, having been 38.2% in 1980 and 28.4% in 1990. The religious makeup of the other major ethnic groups, Malays and Indians, has varied only insignificantly since 1980 (Statistics Singapore 2007b).

Managing Religious Diversity

Singapore's constitution clearly addresses the issue of religious freedom by recognising the rights of citizens to practise their various religions while also emphasising the importance of the greater public interest. Section 12 declares that Singaporeans will not suffer religious discrimination. Section 15 declares the right of every citizen 'to profess, practise' and 'propagate' their religion. Religious organisations can 'manage their own affairs', 'establish institutions for charitable purposes' and acquire property in accordance with the law' (Kong and Yeoh 2003, 76). Section 15 though holds that this set of freedoms 'does not authorise any act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality' (Government of Singapore 1963) thereby disallowing any religious group to act contrary to social interests.

The *Presidential Council on Minority Rights* (PCMR) set up under the Section 69 of the Constitution examines all bills before Parliament considering possible disadvantages for ethnic groups thereby also considering implications for the major religions. The PCMR also responds to complaints from ethnic/religious communities (Kong and Yeoh 2003; USDS 2007).

Section 152 of the Constitution recognises Malays as the 'Indigenous People of Singapore' and requires the government to 'promote their political, educational, religious, economic, social, cultural and language interests' (Government of Singapore 1963). Section 153 requires the government to 'make provision for regulating Muslim religious affairs and for constituting a Council to advise the President in matters relating to the Muslim religion' (Government of Singapore 1963). The government fulfils this obligation under the *Administration of Muslim Law Act* (1966) (AMLA). The AMLA recognises the Islamic Religious Council or *Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura* (MUIS) as advisor to the President on Islamic issues. 'MUIS' mission is to broaden and deepen the Singaporean Muslim Community's understanding and practice of Islam while enhancing the well-being of the Nation (Tan 2007, 25). MUIS administers much everyday life for Muslims. It certifies *halal* food, holds responsibility for mosques and Islamic education (Tan 2007, 25) and drafts an official weekly sermon (Boyle and Sheen 1997). MUIS is a model for the government's relations with other religious groups as the government also takes advice from a Sikh Advisory Board and a Hindu Advisory Board (SMICA 2004).

The AMLA also contains rules for mosques and religious schools and recognises MUIS as administrator of the *Shariah* law Court, established in 1958. The AMLA also sets regulations for the *Shariah* court on Islamic conversions, marriage, divorce and property acquisition, *zakat* or tithing, and offences such as co-habitation outside of marriage. Section 145 of the ALMA empowers Singapore's President to appoint 'presidents' to the court who may issue discretionary directions on court procedure (Government of Singapore 1966b: Part III; USDS 2007).

MUIS also controls all Islamic schools or *madrasahs*. The *madrasahs* have management committees appointed by the Singapore Ministry of Education on MUIS's advice. In 2007 Singapore had six full time *madrasahs* with 4,000 students

and 27 part-time mosque *madrasahs* giving religious education to government school students. The six full-time *madrasahs* provide education in non-religious subjects and students may sit for exams recognised by Singapore's education system, such as the Primary School Leaving Examination and Cambridge Board General Certificate of Education for secondary school students (Ismail 2006; Tan 2007). In formally recognising the status of Muslims and allowing *Shariah* law Singapore also assures its Muslim neighbours, Indonesia and Malaysia of a respectful attitude to Malays and Islam (Kong and Yeoh 2003).

In the 1970s and 1980s Singapore's government took punitive action against religious groups and religious figures who it perceived as threats to social cohesion. It disallowed entry to Singapore to three foreign Islamic leaders deeming them provocative due to their political speeches (Government of Singapore 1989; Kuah 1998). The Government has also used the *Societies Act* (Government of Singapore 1966a) to 'deregister' religious organisations or basically make them unlawful. The Act allows the responsible minister to dissolve 'any registered society' 'being used for unlawful purposes or for purposes prejudicial to public peace, welfare or good order in Singapore' (Government of Singapore 1966a). In 1972 it de-registered the Jehovah's Witnesses for not recognising compulsory military service and not allowing their members to salute the Singapore flag (USDS 2007). The government has also proscribed the distribution of printed materials by the Jehovah's Witnesses. A first offence can attract 1 year in prison (USDS 2008). The Unification Church was also deregistered in 1982 losing the right to hold public congregations and no longer receives state financial benefits. The Government took this action over negative British newspaper reports about the group (Brann 1998). The government recently deemed a comic strip, 'The Little Bride', to be critical of Islam and charged its producers with sedition (USDS 2008).

Hill contends that the Singapore government uses 'moral panic' as a technique of 'social maintenance' including the management of religion and religious diversity. That is, the government 'manufactures' crises and controls associated media messages to justify its actions in controlling religious groups. For example, in 1987 the government exposed what it called a 'Marxist conspiracy' and arrested members of a Catholic institution for belonging to a 'clandestine Communist network'. The government arranged for those arrested to gave televised confessions an exercise in which the government sought legitimisation for the arrests and its continuing surveillance of religious organisations (Hill 1999, 78–89).

In 1989 the government tabled a White Paper on religious harmony in Parliament. The document referred to the above 'Marxist conspiracy' stating that increasing religious proselytisation and activism could disrupt Singaporean society and politics. It also stated that 'religious harmony' was 'essential' to Singapore's 'survival as one nation'. The state must be 'strictly secular' and the government must take its authority from the Constitution 'not from any divine or ecclesiastical sanction'. The government must 'not be antagonistic to the religious beliefs of the population' and 'remain neutral' in its relations across religious groups 'not favouring any of them in preference to the others' (Government of Singapore 1989).

The White Paper proposed the *Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act* (MRHA) in response to 'a definite increase in religious fervour' and a concern that 'competition for followers and converts is (was) becoming sharper and more intense' which could lead to 'friction and misunderstanding' between religious groups. The Paper concluded that:

> aggressive proselytisation and exploitation for political and subversive purposes poses serious threats to religious harmony, racial harmony and public order. Unless all religious groups exercise moderation and sensitivity in their efforts to win converts and maintain a rigorous separation between religion and politics, there will be religious friction, communal strife and political instability in Singapore (Government of Singapore 1989).

When the MRHA was passed in 1990 the 'Presidential Council on Religious Harmony' (PCRH) was created to 'monitor religious matters and to consider orders made against individuals' (Hill 1999, 88). The PCRH includes representatives of major faiths and mediates between religious groups and the government allowing 'self-imposed restraints' (Kuah 1998). The PCRH is empowered to constrain religious groups from 'exciting disaffection against' the state, and creating 'ill will' between groups (Kong and Yeoh 2003, 77).

The MRHA can impose fines and prison sentences and does not allow judicial review of cases. The responsible government Minister is also empowered to place restraining orders on religious officials who cause 'enmity' between religious groups (Hill 1999, 88; Government of Singapore 1990). While religious leaders may be involved in politics as individual citizens they are not allowed to participate as representatives of their religious groups (Government of Singapore 1990; Kong and Yeoh 2003).

In 1996 the Singapore Court of Appeals upheld the Jehovah's Witnesses right to practise and propagate their faith. Members have not since been arrested for proselytising or organising private gatherings but they are still banned from distributing written material (USDS 2007).

The government has also promoted religion in efforts to cultivate social cohesion. To 'harness religion' for 'moral education' the Singapore government introduced a compulsory secondary school subject 'Religious Knowledge' in the early 1980s in which students could study any World Religion (Lele 2004). The unintended consequences were that students became more aware of their ethnic identities and differences and more students participated in Christian evangelism. The government abandoned the programme in 1989 (Beckford 2003). Since 1997 the school subject 'Civics and Moral Education' has been compulsory with students learning facts about the major local religions. The subject teaches only 'common moral teachings directly relevant to the inculcation of national values' 'highlighting the commonality' of the religions and basic facts about places of worship and religious symbols (Tan 2007, 32).

In 2003 Singapore's government consulted with religious representatives and the public and adopted the *Declaration on Religious Harmony* (DRH). The DRH has five points of action for each person in Singapore: (1) to always recognise Singapore's secular state, (2) to promote social cohesion, (3) to respect freedom of religion, (4) to grow 'common space' while respecting diversity and (5) to 'foster inter-religious communications' (Government of Singapore 2003).

The government also facilitates interfaith relations by sponsoring inter-ethnic programs such as the *Community Engagement Programme* (CEP) (Singapore United 2007) which it initiated in reaction to the London bombings of 2005. The CEP brings people of different cultural organisations together in an attempt to decrease the likelihood of a local terrorist attack and to co-ordinate these communities in developing terrorist response plans (Anonymous 2005; Singapore United 2007; Jayakumar et al 2007).

Under the *Internal Security Act* (1960) Singapore's government is still empowered to ban publications, entertainments and exhibitions and place orders of 'preventive detention' (Government of Singapore 1960). The government requires permits for outdoor assemblies of five or more people and licences must be obtained for distribution of cinematographic material. In 2005 two members of Falun Gong were required to spend a week in prison for refusing to pay fines for illegal assembly and not obtaining clearance from the Board of Film Censors to distribute computer video disks. The government also remains intolerant of religious beliefs that legitimate defiance of state laws. In 2006, 15 male Jehovah's Witnesses were placed in armed forces detention for not participating in compulsory military service (USDS 2006 and 2007).

Current Issues

Islamic Terrorism and Islam in Singapore

Two current factors, Islamic extremism and the 'war on terror', have the potential to create alienation between Singapore's Muslims and other citizens thereby destabilising social cohesion. Under its *United Nations Act* (2001) Singapore has pledged to follow all UN Security Council resolutions on anti-terrorism. However, a minority of Singapore Muslims sympathise with Islamic terrorist group, *Jemaah Islamiya* (JI). JI holds that Muslims are marginalised by the Singapore government and that Muslims should not have contact with non-Muslims (Hussain 2005 in Tan 2007).

In 2002, the government claimed success in disrupting a JI plot to bomb the US embassy in Singapore. Thirty four people were arrested including Singaporeans who had completed obligatory military service (SBS 2004; Tan 2007). In response to public concern the government noted growing religiosity among Muslims and asked Islamic clergy to identify extremists (Abuza 2003). One hundred and twenty two Muslims leaders responded with condemnation of the plots, rejection of 'ideological extremism' and 'reaffirmation of commitment to Singapore' (Hassan 2006). In 2003 the Religious Rehabilitation Group (RRG) was formed to de-programme those arrested in the JI terrorist incident and offer education to Muslims on extremism. The RRG also counselled the relatives of those arrested who also received financial and other support from local mosques (Hassan 2006; Tan 2007).

In early 2006 the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) and missionary organisation, Perdaus initiated the 'Asatizah Recognition System' which sets out 'pre-requisites for certification and registration' for Islamic religious teachers. Under the system teachers considered as guilty of misconduct can be omitted from the database of 'recommended teachers' (Hassan 2006).

MUIS with the support of the Minister in charge of Muslim Affairs, Yaacob Ibrahim has initiated the Singapore Muslim Identity Project 'to develop the Muslim community to be religiously profound and socially progressive', 'holding strongly to Islamic principles while keeping pace with modern society, appreciating other civilizations and learning from other communities'. A publicised initiative of the project was a booklet for Muslim Singaporeans containing ten qualities that Muslims should hope to achieve to become both better Muslims and better Singaporean citizens (Ng 2006).

Education is another area in which Muslims could become alienated from other Singaporeans. In 1999 the government proposed setting minimum national standards of school education to better prepare students for employment. Under the proposal primary school education offered by Singapore's six full time *madrasahs* is under pressure. The *madrasahs* may only continue primary education after 2010 if they can meet standards acceptable to the government in the 'Primary School Leaving Examinations' (Ismail 2006, 70). If the *madrasahs* fail to meet the standards their students will be required to attend state schools. Ismail holds this will be the 'beginning of the end' (2006, 70) for full-time *madrasahs* as most parents will not wish to send their children to *madrasahs* for high school education after primary school in the state system. The situation has received an aggressive response from the Malay Muslims who after 9/11 have sensed prejudice and fear (Tan 2007). In October 2007 the Minister in Charge of Muslim Affairs announced that three of the *madrassahs* were co-operating with the Islamic Religious Council (MUIS) to make changes to meet the new standards (Ibrahim 2007).

Government Management of Inter-Religious Relations

Through successful and long implementation of its policies the government continues to be final judge on the appropriateness of public actions by religious persons and groups. The government remains empowered to impose penalties on those it deems errant. Some of the penalties like the detainment and accusations of treason against Catholics would be unacceptable in other countries like Australia and New Zealand. The lack of power of the accused and the Singapore government's 'muscular' and demeaning style of punishment (Kuah 1998) would be seen as Orwellian and draconian. According to Hill (1999) the government legitimates this 'macho-management' style of religion with a Hobbesian discourse arguing that its powers and management style are necessary to prevent 'anarchy' (1999, 72). Hill contends that the government periodically supports its discourse by raising fears of potential

dangers, reminding the populace of Singapore's fragility and taking actions it labels as pre-emptive to major dangers (1999, 75).

The government has not encountered major resistance to this long established style of management. However, assuming the PAP remains in power and continues its style of religion management it may one day encounter significant resistance from a religious group that wants less government oversight and is unwilling to accept the government as an ultimate authority in what is acceptable and what is not.

Conclusion

The Singapore government has firmly practiced and reset its policy on managing religious cohesion for over 40 years without significant resistance. As the government pursues economic development and strives to control religious expression there may be further incidents of tension between the government and religious groups and possible punitive action against religious figures confronting the law or offending the government. The government has significant influence on the administration of Islam and has received public support from Muslim organisations and clerics since September 11, 2001. The Singaporean government has acted to support Muslims' inclusion by initiating the *Community Engagement Programme* and making the *Declaration of Religious Harmony*.

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Sri Lanka

Background

Sri Lanka is an island republic of about 65,000 km^2 located 22 miles south of India. (CIA 2008; ABC Radio Australia 2008) In 2005 the population was 20,743,000 (United Nations Statistics Division 2008). Sri Lanka has been a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society for two millennia and currently has three national languages Sinhala, Tamil and English. Between the early 1500s and 1948 Sri Lanka successively hosted three European powers: the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. In 1948, Sri Lanka then gained full independence from Britain and became a member of the Commonwealth of Nations (Government of Sri Lanka 2008a).

For many decades tension increased between the two largest ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamils. In the early 1980s it erupted into a terrible civil war which has not ended. The Sinhalese who are generally Theravada Buddhist have maintained dominating numbers in the national government. The minority Tamils are mainly Saivaite Hindu (USDS 2007) and are anxious for equal status and opportunities. Significant territory is now administered in the north by Tamil separatists (BBCNews 2008). The significance of religion in the violence is complex and arguably secondary to ethno-historical factors.

The 2001 Census counted Sri Lanka's ethnic composition as: Sinhalese 82%, Sri Lanka Tamil 4.3%, Indian Tamil 5.1%, Sri Lanka Moor 7.9%, Malay 0.3%; and Burgher and 'Other', both 0.2% (Department of Census and Statistics 2008a). While most Sinhalese are Buddhist and most Tamils are Hindu (USDS 2007) both groups have minorities of Christians (Deegalle 2006a; Peebles 2006). The 'Sri Lanka Moors' are Muslims who claim descent from Arabs who came to Sri Lanka as merchants or are Muslim migrants from India. Burghers are descended from colonial Portuguese and Dutch but may also have ethnic ancestry from one of the major groups present in Sri Lanka, Sinhalese or Tamil. It is assumed that most Burghers are Christian (Peebles 2006).

Chapter II of the Constitution gives Buddhism 'the foremost place' in Sri Lankan society and it is 'the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana' (Government of Sri Lanka 2008c) – the Sasana being the 'universal

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Buddhist community or church that transcends ethnic and other boundaries' (Obeyesekere 2006, 142). However, the Constitution also upholds freedom in religious belief and practice. Article 10 recognises the 'freedom' of each Sri Lankan 'to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice'. The right to practice a chosen religion is recognised by Article 14(1) which declares that each Sri Lankan has 'the freedom, either by himself or in association with others, and either in public or in private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice or teaching' (Government of Sri Lanka 2008c).

Religious and Political History Before 1900

Under different historical narratives both Sinhalese and Tamils are recognised as the first colonisers of the Island. The Sri Lankan government currently holds that the forebears of the modern Sinhalese, or 'Aryans', came from Northern India building 'settlements' before the coming of 'an invader' from Southern India in the second century BCE, implicitly referring to the Tamils (Government of Sri Lanka 2008b). Alternatively, Wilson (2000, 177) claims that archaeological evidence shows that Dravidians, i.e. Tamils 'were the first settlers on the island'.

More important for Buddhist Sinhalese is an ancient text, the *Mahāvamsa* or Great Chronicle, written in the Buddhist scholarly language Pali. The *Mahāvamsa* narrates a history of Sri Lanka between sixth century BCE and fourth century CE. Some parts are of 'brilliant scholarship' and worthy examples of historical research (Peebles 2006, 13) while others contain *mythos* of 'magical connections of the Buddha' and Sri Lanka giving the entire Island a special Buddhist sacredness (Obeyesekere 2006, 138). According to the *Mahāvamsa* the Buddha flew through the air to Sri Lanka three times, purged the land of demons and converted certain inhabitants, the Naga or snake beings. 'It is as if the land is consecrated as a place where Buddhism will flourish' and is therefore sacred (Obeyesekere 2006, 138). The *Mahāvamsa* also describes victories by Buddhist kings over invaders from Southern India who can be seen as the ancestors of the Tamils (Veluppilai 2006). Some Sinhalese Buddhists accept the *Mahāvamsa* as 'revealed truth' (Peebles 2006; Little 1994).

Another source of information on ancient Sri Lanka is the 1,300 ancient inscriptions in the Brāhmi script found in southern Sri Lanka and at Anuradhapura in the central north. They date from the third century BCE to the tenth century CE. In the seventeenth century BCE Anuradhapura was 'a town' (Peebles 2006, 17) with a significantly large population relative to other centers in South Asia. By the third century BCE Anuradhapura was a city state with a monarchy. Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka in 247 BCE by a delegation to Anuradhapura from the Indian Emperor Ashoka. The delegation included Ashoka's daughter and son Mahinda. They ordained Buddhist monks and bought gifts including a relic of the Buddha. Anuradhapura thence became a centre of Theravada Buddhism (Peebles 2006).

Invasions from southern India occurred in the first century BCE and Anuradhapura was ruled at various times by monarchs from among these invaders called 'Damila'

or Tamils (Fuglerud 2001). The Lambakanna dynasty ruled between the first and fourth centuries CE in comparative peace. For the next several centuries there were more invasions from southern India and Anuradhapura was ruled by both Tamils and Sinhalese. The Sinhalese moved to the southwest and Tamils spread across the island's north (Peebles 2006).

In the tenth century, Southern Indian invaders of the Saivite Hindu faith took Anuradhapura and moved the capital of the kingdom southwest to Polonnaruva. After about 1100 the Anuradhapura kingdom fell back into Sinhalese hands under Vijayabahu I. The Polonnaruva kingdom was abandoned in the late thirteenth century after epidemics and further invasions. The Sinhalese had been relocating to the southwest and a Tamil kingdom was by now in the island's northwest. The island was ethnically, linguistically and religiously divided (Peebles 2006).

The Portuguese arrived in 1505 taking over the foreign trade commerce of Muslims and therefore mainly interested in ruling coastal regions. Roman Catholic missionaries arrived after 1534 and began converting locals. The Portuguese discriminated against non-Christians and destroyed some of their temples.

The Dutch expelled the Portuguese in 1656. They persecuted Catholics but allowed both *Shariah* law which they had already codified in Java and Tamil law. By the end of the eighteenth century a class of Dutch and Portuguese Burghers who are locals of European ancestry lived in Sri Lanka. They attended Dutch Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches. These 'Europeans' had privileges in commerce and land ownership. Both the Portuguese and Dutch had made adherence to Christianity an essential requirement for government employment (Peebles 2006).

In 1796 after France occupied the Netherlands the British expelled the Dutch authorities. The British made the island except the highland Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy a crown colony in 1798. Missionaries from various British organisations including the Church of England Missionary Society, Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists arrived from 1805. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions also began operating in Sri Lanka at this time. The British gained control of Kandy in1815 and effectively controlled the entire island. The British renamed the island Ceylon. They built economic infrastructure, started plantation industries and established church administered schools (Little 1994).

The Portuguese and Dutch had administered Tamil and Sinhalese areas separately (Wilson 2000). However, the British administered all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka together. They categorised locals by 'race' collecting information separately for each recognised group and formalising distinct and juxtaposed racial and ethnic identities (Peebles 2006). A general perception existed among Sinhalese that Tamils and Christians were favoured by the British and enjoyed better access to education and government employment (Clarance 2007). However, the British promoted the idea that the Sinhalese were of a superior culture due to having a language with origins in Sanskrit like European languages (Little 1994; Peebles 2006).

Approximately 100 Protestant ministers including some local non-Caucasians were practicing in Sri Lanka in 1848 (Peebles 2006). These Christians engaged in very aggressive religious competition against Buddhists by preaching and

pamphleteering in the Sinhalese language and openly proclaiming the superiority of Christianity over Buddhism. They started schools which displaced Buddhists schools and lobbied the colonial government for special privileges. In the 1860s Buddhists began responding by publishing their own pamphlets and engaging in public debate with Christians. Skilled Buddhist debaters like Mohottivatte Gunananda attracted great attention among fellow Buddhists and inspired a Buddhist revival. Buddhists became more ascetic and industrious and engaged in political activity and social reform. The Sinhalese Buddhist revival also created a narrative of superiority to people of other religions including the Tamils. An influential Buddhist activist and nationalist was Anargarika Dharmapala, who personally advocated intolerance of Muslims (Little 1994). A parallel revival of Hinduism also occurred as Hindu schools opened and Hindu printing presses published scholarly books on Saivite Hinduism (Little 1994; Peebles 2006).

The Sinhalese/Tamil Civil War

The recently concluded civil war between the Sinhalese dominated government and Tamil separatists was generally about issues of political status, territorial rights and autonomy. In various peace negotiations the Tamils demanded 'recognition … as a distinct national entity' and 'an identified … homeland whose integrity' is 'guaranteed', with an 'inalienable right to self determination' (Peebles 2006, 155). There have been some notable reported attacks on religious places and groups but the US State Department (USDS 2007) emphasises that 'religious persecution has not played a major role in the conflict' and therefore, while the sides are of different religions their ethnic differences have been the main social factor in tension leading to civil war.

While ethnicity is the major difference between groups religion has set a context for the Sinhalese resistance to Tamil demands, Sri Lankan Buddhists see an essential spiritual association between Sri Lanka and Theravada Buddhism as set out in the *Mahāvamsa* and will not allow any part of the Island to fall under the hegemony of non-Buddhists (Deegalle 2006b; De Silva 2006). Tamils do not see their position as religiously inspired. However as Hindus, Tamils can interpret Sinhalese elevation of Buddhism over other religious viewpoints as a statement of Sinhalese superiority over Tamils.

Successive Sinhalese dominated governments legislated to consolidate the Sinhalese as the dominant ethnic group. In 1960, the government made Sinhalese the nation's official language. Later in 1972 Sinhala Buddhism gained formal pre-eminence over other religions when Sri Lanka adopted a new constitution giving Buddhism 'the foremost place' among faiths, and requiring 'the state to protect and foster Buddhism' (Peebles 2006, 124). The government also reduced quotas of university places for Tamils and banned the importation of Tamil books and films.

For many Tamils, a separate Tamil state was regarded as a way of overcoming their minority status (Veluppilai 2006). The 1978 Constitution prohibited advocacy

for secession of territory from Sri Lanka, and Tamil separatists were unable to pursue their cause legally. Violent militants became the most powerful members of the separatist movement (Peebles 2006).

In July 1983, members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked an army patrol in Jaffna. The attack incited a week of mob violence against Tamils in Colombo resulting at least 360 deaths and displacement at least 100,000 Tamils from their homes (Clarence 2007; Peebles 2006). The LTTE took control of the Tamil separatist movement and began employing suicide bombers against the Sinhalese. Government security forces sometimes responded with attacks on civilian Tamils. LTTE attacks on Sinhalese civilians became more common and violence also occurred between Sinhalese and Tamil civilians. The LTTE became the de facto government of Sri Lanka's northern peninsula (Peebles 2006). Over 60,000 people have died in the conflict since 1983 (USDS 2007).

Religiously based attacks certainly occurred. In 1990 LTTE forces attacked mosques in Kattankudy and killed over 120 Muslims. In the same year the LTTE also ordered all Muslims in Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mulaithivu and Vavuniya to leave in 5 days, thus displacing over about 46,000 people. There have also been deadly attacks on Hindu clerics and a Buddhist statute ceremony. The LTTE have also been accused of requisitioning Christian Churches (Peebles 2006; USDS 2007, 2008).

After 2003, progress occurred toward a permanent cease fire with agreement for autonomy of Tamil held areas (Peebles 2006). However, violence recommenced in 2006 (CIA 2008) and in 2008, the government announced its abandonment of the ceasefire (BBCNews 2008; USDS 2008). The Buddhist group, Sarodaya has lobbied resiliently for peace by conducting peace marches from the south of the island to Jaffna convening mass peace meditations, creating camps for Tamil refugees and creating a Peace Centre. A peace gathering in 2002 in Anuradpahura attracted a multi-faith crowd of half a million people (Bond 2006).

As of mid-2009, the war has effectively come to an end with the Buddhist Sinhalese claiming victory and taking over all remaining areas formerly held by Tamil forces.

Political Activity by Buddhist Monks

Sri Lanka has about 37,000 Buddhist monks. Individual monks are known as *bhikkhu* and the collective monastic community is referred to as the *sangha*. There are three major orders: Siyam Nikaya, Amarapura Nikaya and Ramanna Nikaya. About half the monks belong to Siyam Nikaya and about 12,000 belong to Amarapura Nikaya. The orders often use each other's facilities and are dedicated to Sinhalese heritage and the continued unity of the *Sangha* (de Silva 2006).

The *Sangha* has opposed government negotiations with LTTE which it views as a terrorist organisation. It has also strongly advocated action to address the practice of what it considers 'forced' conversions by evangelical Christian groups (Deegalle 2006b; de Silva 2006). In 1996 monks formed the Jathika Sangha Sabhava or National Sangha Council to gain a political lobby group. In 2001 Venerable

Baddēgana Samitha abbot of Dutugämunu Vihāra was the first Buddhist monk elected to national Parliament (Deegalle 2006b).

In 2002 monks formed a new organisation called the Jathika Sangha Sammelanaya or National Sangha Assembly (NSA). The NAS assembly was against proposed concession of territory to LTTE (de Silva 2006). Then in the 2004 election 200 monks of the NSA stood for seats on behalf a new political party, Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) or National Sinhala Heritage Party and nine were elected (Deegalle 2006b).

The JHU political manifesto has 12 principles, the first being that Sri Lanka 'should be ruled according to Buddhist principles and the protection of the Buddhasasana (Buddhism) should be the foremost duty of any government' (Deegalle 2006b, 246). Sri Lanka should therefore be a 'Buddhist state' (Deegalle 2006b, 243) or as explicitly stated in the manifesto, a 'Sinhala state' (Deegalle 2006b, 246). The JHU's manifesto also holds that the government should protect the rights of other religious groups, the government should uphold the welfare all ethnic groups, political power may be decentralised, but the state must not devolve power to others (Deegalle 2006b). These principles are of course contrary to the demands of Tamil separatists who want their own state on the island.

In 2005 the JHU advocated changing the Constitution to state that 'The official religion of the republic is Buddhism. Other forms of religions and worship may be practiced in peace and harmony with Buddha Sasana'. This generated concern among bodies such as the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) who had noted increased violence in Sri Lanka against non-Buddhists (USCIRF 2005b).

Religious Affiliations

The 2001 Census counted Buddhists as 76.7% of the population, Muslims 8.5%, Hindus 7.8%, Roman Catholics 6.1% and 'Other Christians' 0.9% (Department of Census and Statistics 2008b). In the 1981 Census Buddhists had been fewer at 69.3% and Hindus almost twice as numerous at 15.5% (Department of Census and Statistics. 2008b). It is unclear whether the 2001 Census covered areas controlled by Tamil separatists and the significant differences could be due to the coverage of government areas only which would omit very significant numbers of Tamil Hindus.

Most Muslims in Sri Lanka are Sunni although Ahmadiyya Muslims are also present. 'Other Christians' include Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witness and various Evangelical churches (USDS 2007).

Managing Religious Diversity

Within Sri Lanka's public bureaucracy is the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Moral Upliftment (MRAMU). A function of the MRAMU is 'the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes to inculcate religious values

among people in order to create a virtuous society' (MRAMU 2007). Within the Ministry there are separate Department of Buddhist Affairs (2008), Christian Religious Affairs, Hindu Religious and Cultural Affairs and Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs (Government of Sri Lanka 2008a).

The Department of Muslim affairs arranges travel to the annual *Hajj* pilgrimage, registers *madrasahs*, ensures availability of water and dates during Ramadan, recognises 'notable Muslims', supports employment of Muslims, regulates curricula of Arabic colleges, *madrasahs* and pre-schools, administers funding and registration for mosques, and administers Muslim charitable trusts or *waqfs* (Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs 2008b). In 2004 the Department also organised the National Conference on Minority Muslims in a Plural Society (Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs 2008a).

Religious organisations may 'register' as corporations and operate under the same taxation and accountability laws as commercial corporations. Places of worship including temples, churches and mosques may register as charitable organisations. The government only gives permits to foreign religious workers who are associated with registered organisations (USDS 2007).

All public school students must study a religion, choosing between Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. The state recognises religious diversity by celebrating official national holidays for Hindu New Year and *Deepawali*, Christianity's Good Friday and Christmas, and Islam's *Hajj* and *Ramadan* (USDS 2007).The Sri Lankan legal system also includes *Shariah* law (SBS 2008).

Current Issues

'Forced' Conversions

The USCIRF noted reports of 'unethical' conversion activity by 'some groups' doing aid work among victims of the 2004 tsunami'(USCIRF 2005a). The Buddhist group, *Jayagrahanaya* has published literature on 'conversions' by evangelical Christian groups who allegedly target vulnerable Buddhists and Hindus (Deegalle 2006b). Deegalle (2006a) claims that such concern is widespread across the Sri Lankan public and therefore not just among Buddhist monks. Christian groups including the Catholic Bishops Conference have condemned 'unethical conversions' conducted by evangelical Christian groups (USCIRF 2005a). Buddhist attacks on Christian churches and clergy have been linked to this issue (USDS 2007).

In 2004, the JHU proposed a private members bill against 'forced' conversions. The government then prepared another draft which the USCIRF found 'essentially prohibit(ed) any and all attempts to convert another person – even inadvertently' (USCIRF 2007, 253). The bill imposed prison sentences for

attempting to convert a person by 'the use of force or by allurement or by any fraudulent means' and failure by any participants in a conversion to report the incident to the government (USCIRF 2005a). The Sri Lankan Supreme Court ruled the bill unconstitutional (USDS 2007). But in May 2005 the JHU reintroduced the bill unchanged (USCIRF 2007). The bill was still under review of a parliamentary standing committee and was still unpassed as of June 2007 (Owens 2007).

Violence Against Christians

There have been over 300 reported violent attacks by Buddhists on Christian churches and Christian clergy since 2003 (USDS 2007). The USCIRF holds that the attacks have been mainly upon evangelical churches; although Protestant and Roman Catholics have also been targets (USCIRF 2007). In 2004 clergy from among Buddhists and Catholics undertook meetings to discuss mutual tolerance between their religions.

In 2007 parishioners of the Christian Centre of Bandaragama in Columbo were assaulted with stones during a church service (USDS 2007). In February 2007 at Polunnaruwa Buddhists held a meeting at their temple to discuss the removal of Christians from the city. Police attended the meeting which ended without violence but some attendees advised Christian clergy to desist from further religious practice in the neighbourhood or 'face consequences' (USDS 2007). In 2006 in central Sri Lanka, about 200 persons, led by three Buddhist monks attacked a children's home run by the Dutch Reformed Church (USCIRF 2007).

In the Middeniya, Hamantota District during 2008, the Buddhist temple started a petition against the local chapter of the Assembly of God. The local school also held a meeting to oppose Christianity and promote a rally against Christians. The school principal warned students to refrain from attending church services. At the rally monks burned an image of the Virgin Mary and a cross. There were a number of similar anti-Christian incidents between 2007 and 2008 (USDS 2008).

Attacks on Ahmadiyya Muslims

The Ahmadiyya Muslim community has suffered attacks, reported to be perpetrated by other Muslims offended by the Ahmadiyya practice of Islam. In 2006, in Negombo, Ahmadiyyas claimed a Sunni group killed a member of their community. Then in 2007, also in Negombo, Ahmadiyyas reported that Sunnis were threatening to take over their mosque (USDS 2007).

Conclusion

To obtain social stability Sri Lanka must actively develop policy and programmes to enable Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus to live together in Sri Lanka. A Sinhalese victory will not of itself settle these issues. Given the existence of religious diversity, its management remains a problem. The basis of the dispute which underlay the civil war may be resolved if the government can successfully compromise on points seen by monks and other dedicated Buddhists as non-negotiable such as the pre-eminence of Buddhism, and the non-division of Sri Lanka. The other immediate important issue is anti-Christian feeling which has been associated with a number of violent incidents, and the introduction of anti-conversion legislation into Parliament. Whether or not this legislation becomes law, anti-Christian sentiment remains and the potential exists for further violence against Christians.

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Thailand

Background

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy on the western Indo Chinese Peninsula. Formerly Siam, Thailand has 73 provinces and borders Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia. In 2004 Thailand's population was about 64.9 million. In the same year, 75% of the population were ethnic Thai, 14% ethnic Chinese and the other 11% were Khmer, Mon and Indigenous (SBS 2004). The present King, Rama IX took the throne in 1946 and is the world's longest reigning monarch (RTEW 1996). While Thailand is a majority Buddhist nation it has an extended history of religious diversity and tolerance. According to the draft constitution of 2007 the Thai King remains the 'upholder' of all religions practiced by the Thai people (Government of Thailand 2007, S9). While the monarchy has remained a stable institution Thailand has had periodic political upheavals including coups and civil unrest. In 2008 Prime Minister Somchai Wongsawat was forced from office after violent demonstrations and a ruling by the Constitutional Court (BBCNews 2009).

The Thai government dates its nation's history to the kingdom of Sukhothai which was established in the north of modern Thailand by 1238. The state religion of Sukhothai was Buddhism (Government of Thailand 2008; Mahidol 1996). Thai culture spread when Sukhothai was absorbed into the southern kingdom of Ayutthaya after 1350. While Ayutthaya was largely Buddhist its kings protected religious freedom as long as Buddhism was not offended (Government of Thailand 2008; Ishii 1994). The present Thai royal dynasty, the Chakri has ruled since 1782 when the new capital became Ban Kok or 'Village of Wild Plums'. At the time Thailand was known as Siam. In the late nineteenth century Siam became a bureaucratic monarchy, centralised its government and formalised its borders. It was the only South East Asian nation never colonised by Europeans (Government of Thailand 2008; SBS Thailand 2004). In 1902 Siam expanded to the south, formally incorporating the Malay Muslim sultanate of Patan. Siam now had territory where Malay Muslims were the majority (ICG 2005).

After a bloodless coup in 1932 a constitutional monarchy was established under King Rama VII (SBS 2004). Under the new Constitution, the King became the

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'upholder of religion' and was responsible for protecting all religions practiced by Thai peoples (Ishii 1994, 456). Siam then became Thailand in 1939 (CIA 2007; RTET 2008). In World War II Thailand gave diplomatic and military support to the Japanese (SBS 2004) but Malay Muslim leaders in the southern provinces supported British efforts in Malaya (Harish 2006).

Since the late 1950s separatist Malay Muslims have rebelled in the southern provinces while the Communist Party of Thailand conducted an insurgency from the middle 1960s until the 1980s. During and after the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia Thailand also became a major destination for Cambodian refugees. Thai governments adopted renewed constitutions in 1978, 1991 and 1997 (SBS 2004). The most recent coup occurred in 2006. In 2007 a new draft constitution was created (Government of Thailand 2007) and Thais elected a new government (USDS 2007).

Almost 95% of Thais are Buddhist and practice Buddhism as an essential aspect of their culture (Statistics Thailand 2008a). At least once during their lives, Buddhist males in Thailand customarily live as monks for up to 3 months. The Thai public service grants leave for this purpose. Thai Buddhist temples also function as local schools, hospitals and community centres (Government of Thailand 2008). National holidays are celebrated on all Buddhist holydays (Mahidol 1996).

Islam came to Thailand from the fourteenth century when Muslims from places like Persia, China and India arrived to conduct business or escape persecution. Yusuf (2007) classifies Thailand's Muslims according to three categories with respect to region, language and ethnicity. In Yusuf's first category are the ethnic Malay Muslims from Thailand's southern-most provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat. With part of Songkhla these provinces were jointly the former Malay Sultanate of Patani – spelt with a 'single t'. Their first language is Malay and they comprise about 80% of all Muslims in Thailand. In the late 1990s the economies of the southern provinces performed below national results for household income and gross national product (Croissant 2005). In Yusuf's second category are the ethnic Malays Muslims from the west and upper southern areas such as Songkhla and Satun. Their first language is Thai. Yusuf's third category holds the central Thailand Muslims of various ethnic origins; including Chinese, Cambodian and Indonesian whose first language is also Thai (USDS 2008; Yusuf 2007).

The government allows Muslim employees to leave work for Friday prayers and gives paid leave for the *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca. The King attends annual Islamic celebrations and appoints a 'State Counsellor for all Islamic Affairs', the *Chularajamontri* (Harish 2006; Mahidol 1996). For legal cases involving family matters Islamic judges or *Qadis* advise state courts in the Muslim majority provinces (Harish 2006; ICG 2005).

Christianity was brought to Thailand in the sixteenth century by the Portuguese while French missionaries came to Thailand in the seventeenth century (Ishii 1994). Today most Christians are Catholics but Thailand has strong Protestant churches including The Church of Christ in Thailand which dates to the 1930s (USDS 2007).

Religious Affiliations

Thailand's 2000 Census recorded 94.6% of Thais, or about 57 million people, as Buddhist (Statistics Thailand 2008a). Most Thai Buddhists are of the Theravada school but there are small groups of Mahayana Buddhists mainly of Chinese and Vietnamese ethnicity. Buddhism in Thailand also includes practices of animism, ancestor worship and Brahmanism (Government of Thailand 2008; Kitiarsa 2005). Clergy of Theravada Buddhism in Thailand belong to two main schools, Mahanikaya and Dhammayuttika the latter being a nineteenth century reform movement (USDS 2008).

The 2000 Census counted almost 2.8 million Muslims, or 4.6% of the population which was an increase from 4.1% on the 1990 Census (Statistics Thailand 2008a,b). Most of Thailand's Muslims are Sunni. In 2007 there were 2,289 registered mosques in the southern most provinces and a total of 3,567 in all Thailand. Only 1% of registered mosques are Shia's (USDS 2007).

The 2000 Census also counted 439,000 Christians or about 0.72% of the population. There are five recognised 'Christian organisations': Catholic Mission of Bangkok, the Evangelical Fellowship of Thailand, the Saha Christchak who are Baptists, The Church of Christ, and Seventh-Day Adventists. The organisation with most churches is the Church of Christ, which has over 500 (USDS 2008).

The 2000 Census also counted approximately 4,860 Confucians and 2,900 Hindus. Almost 20,000 Thais identified with 'Other' religions. Only 6,000 respondents claimed 'No Religion' (Statistics Thailand 2008a). Indigenous people hold and practice a range of syncretic religious beliefs (Government of Thailand 2008). In 2002 there were 920,000 Indigenous people in nine tribal groups, practicing syncretic spiritualities (USDS 2008).

There are also recent alternative figures for the distribution of religions in Thailand. However, the US State Department claims that credible estimates by academics and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) place the percentage of Buddhists are a slightly lower percentage of the entire population at 85–90% and Muslims at close to 10% of the entire population. The Religious Affairs Department counted the number of Christians at 360,800 or 0.5% of the population. The Sikh Council has estimated that 70,000 Sikhs are resident in Thailand; and the Hindu organisations estimate that Thailand has 95,000 Hindus (USDS 2008).

Managing Religious Diversity

Although most Thais are Buddhist and the Constitution requires that the King be Buddhist (Government of Thailand 2008) Thailand's political culture has long recognised and supported religious diversity. The Constitution authorises the government to 'patronize and protect' not only Buddhism and but also 'other religions' and to 'promote good understanding and harmony among followers of all religions'

(Government of Thailand 2007, S78). In accordance with this the Thai government supports interfaith dialogue by funding interfaith meetings, public education programs and inter-religious harmony campaigns. Buddhist, Muslim and Christian missionaries proselytise or work freely in Thailand. For individuals religious identification on identity cards is optional (Government of Thailand 2008; USDS 2007).

The Religious Affairs Department (RAD) recognises five religions: Buddhism, Islam, Brahmin-Hinduism, Sikhism and Catholicism, which includes Protestant Christian denominations. Within these religions groups can register with the RAD. The Prime Minister has a 17 member Subcommittee on Religious Relations with one representative of each recognised religion and government employees from various agencies. The state financially supports Buddhist and Islamic educational institutions, clerical and administrative staff positions, and maintenance of temples and mosques. Christian, Brahmin-Hindu and Sikh organisations also receive funding for buildings and special projects (USDS 2007; Government of Thailand 2008).

Religious organisations can only register with the RAD if they meet given criteria. They must have over 5,000 members, as indicated by the national census, a distinctive theology, be politically inactive and recognized by one of the existing official ecclesiastical groups. Conceivably, other religious groups may be recognised. Registered organisations receive state subsidies, tax exemptions and preferential allocation of resident visas. No additional groups have been granted official recognition since 1984, but unregistered religious organisations nevertheless operate without government interference (USDS 2007).

School students receive religious instruction throughout primary and secondary levels, learning about all five recognised religions. Academic courses on religion at religious schools can be attended by public school students who earn credit towards their public school grades (USDS 2007).

Current Issues

Islam and Muslim Separatism

The Malay speaking Muslims of the southern provinces have a history of ‘second class status’, ‘political neglect’ and exposure to ‘harsh assimilation policies’ from the national Thai government (ICG 2005). Opposition and separatist movements among the Malays have operated since the early 1900s (ICG 2005; Croissant 2005).

Harish (2006) argues that, initially, Malays were incited by the Thai government’s lack of respect for their ethnicity and culture. When Thailand took control of Patani in 1902 the locals retained cultural, family and commercial links with British Malaya. However the Thai government substituted Malay officials with Thais and in 1921 made attendance at Thai language schools compulsory leading to a Malay rebellion (Harish 2006; ICG 2005; Macan-Markaar 2005). At the close of World War II some Malays unsuccessfully petitioned Britain to liberate the former Patani for incorporation into British Malaya (Harish 2006; ICG 2005).

Then, in 1948, about a quarter of a million Malays in Thailand petitioned the United Nations for the transfer of the provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat and Yala to the Federation of Malaya. This was also unsuccessful (ICG 2005).

In the late 1950s, the Barisan Nasional Pembebasan Patani (BNPP) became the first organisation to take up armed struggle for Patani independence (ICG 2005). Then in the early 1960s, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) formed after the Thai government imposed secular reforms on schools. The mission of the BRN was also an independent Patani. The Patani United Liberation Organisation (PULO) was created in 1968 and sought an independent Islamic state for Patani (ICG 2005) bringing an explicit religious dimension to the separatist campaign.

General unrest continued in Thailand's south through the 1970s and 1980s (ICG 2005). The 1980 Thai government under General Prem Tinsulanonda abandoned assimilation policies and supported cultural rights and the insurgency faded by the mid 1990s. In 1995 Afghan war fighter Nasori Saesaeng formed the *Mujahideen Islam Patani* (GMIP), demanded an Islamic State in Southern Thailand and declared support for *Al Qaeda* (Harish 2006). The New Pattani United Liberated Organisation (NPULO), a breakaway from PULO emerged in the 1995 and also sought an Islamic state (ICG 2005; Harish 2006; Yusuf 2007). The separatist movements became increasingly radicalised as significant numbers of Muslims from southern Thailand attended higher education in the Middle East encountering extremist ideas (Croissant 2005; Harish 2006). While some returned to Thailand intending to improve the conditions of their fellow Malay Muslims others supported the separatist insurgency (Yusuf 2007). There had also been a general growth in Islamism in Asia since the Soviet Afghani war (Abuza 2003). By 2001 hostilities had resumed (Croissant 2005; Harish 2006; Zissis 2007).

By 2005 the largest armed separatist group was a militant faction of the BRN, the Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Coordinate (BRN-C) (ICG 2005) which fights for an Islamic state. The leader Shafie Mansur (Lopez 2007) is believed to recruit from Muslim schools (Zissis 2007). As yet none of the Islamist groups have deliberately attacked foreigners indicating that they are not operating with global terrorists like Al Qaeda or Jemaah Islamiyah (BBC 2006b).

Since the renewal of violence from 2001 religious separatists tensions in Southern Thailand have caused major casualties and significant social dislocation. The International Crisis Group reports that between January 2004 and mid 2007 a total of 2,600 people died in incidents related to the tensions between southern Muslims and the Thai government (ICG 2007). Since 2004 separatist actions against government schools have resulted in the death of 18 teachers and closure of 58 schools (Wehrfritz 2007).

By 2004 the provinces of Narathiwat, Pattani, and Yala had had over 2,000 attacks and 1,000 deaths (Harish 2006). On 28 April 2004 groups of Muslim separatists left Krue Se mosque in Pattani and attacked a security post. This lead to an armed confrontation at the mosque in front of a large crowd and the Thai army killed 31 people. On the same day other small groups of separatists proceeded from southern mosques to attack check points, army bases, and police stations in other parts of Pattani, Yala, and Songkhla. The casualties from these other attacks included 105 militants, five soldiers, and one civilian killed (ICG 2005; USDS

2005). In October 2004 a protest outside a police station in Tak Bai saw the horrific suffocation of at least 85 Muslim boys and men who were detained, bound and loaded into over-crowded trucks (ICG 2005; Wehrfritz 2007).

In August 2004 the serving Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra declared martial law in Narahiwat, Pattani and Yala (BBCNews 2004). Almost 2 years later in June 2006 Thailand's National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) published a report holding that the troubles were not religious (RTCGSA 2006). It also recommended the establishment of a body to mediate in the conflict, recognition of Malay as an official second language and establishment of *Shariah* law (BBC 2006a). The report also recognised that material disadvantages and a failing justice system were factors in the violence. In November 2006 the interim Prime Minister issued a public apology for the deaths in Tak Bai (Pathan 2006) and for Thaksin's responses to the violence (Zissis 2007). The government noted that it was upgrading standards of education in the southern provinces and stimulating the economy with low interest loans and improvements to the transport system (RTCGSA Saudi Arabia 2006).

The proposals of the NRC report have yet to be implemented as the violence continues. In 200, the province of Narathiwat was averaging four violent deaths per day (Wehrfritz 2007). Attacks were on government property and personnel, Buddhist monks and civilians both Muslim and Buddhist (USDS 2007). Muslim leaders have described the murders of Buddhist monks as reprisals for arrests and deaths of Muslims (USDS 2006). About half of the Muslim separatist attacks have targeted Muslims who have collaborated with the government (Mydans 2007). Mydans reports that some areas in the southern provinces are 'no-go zones' for Thai police. And Buddhists, as a minority in the southern provinces, feel threatened and are themselves establishing militias (USDS 2007). Buddhist monks are regularly escorted or guarded by soldiers (USDS 2006). Also, some Buddhist and Muslim villages have ceased contact and 'entire Buddhist communities' have also fled in a 'de facto ethnic cleansing' (Mydans 2007). The International Crisis Group sees the increasing operations of village militias – particularly those that are poorly trained, badly commanded and without accountability to the government – as a further threat to social instability (ICG 2007).

In recent years tensions have persisted. The US State Department (Thailand 2008) holds that the Muslim clerics in the southern provinces receive extra surveillance due to the local moves for political separation and there have been some arrest. In Pattani province, in August 2007, militants exploded a powerful bomb killing a store owner and badly injuring two monks and six soldiers. In February 2008, a Chinese shrine was bombed and a soldier killed (USDS 2008).

Falun Gong

There have been arrests of Chinese Falun Gong members. This sect has been subject to harassment and arrest in the People's Republic of China. In 2007, Chinese Falun Gong members were arrested after they distributed leaflets to tourists from

China and, in February 2008, others were arrested for staging a sitting protest at the Chinese Embassy. Then, in March 2008, Falun Gong members from China distributed literature outside the Chinese Embassy and were arrested and listed for deportation either back to China or another country (USDS 2008). Chinese would see these actions as appropriate, thus Thailand's diplomatic relations with China are now a context for the issue of religious freedom in Thailand.

Conclusion

In most of Thailand religious differences pose no threat to social cohesion. However, tensions between ethnic Malays and Thais in the south are to a significant extent a conflict between Muslims and Buddhists as, since the 1990s, some rebel groups have fought for an independent Islamic state. With levels of violence inducing fear and threatening to escalate, the Thai government must urgently achieve progress in achieving peace and social cohesion between Muslim Malays and Buddhist Thais in southern Thailand. The government has made efforts to negotiate an end to violence and implement culturally and religiously sensitive social policy but these efforts were disrupted by the 2006 coup. An urgent priority of future governments should be to resume peace efforts.

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Part III
Pacific Island Nations

Cook Islands

Background

The Cook Islands lie in the South Pacific Ocean and are about 240 mi^2 in area. There are 15 islands in the group and the capital is Avarua, on the island of Rarotonga (CIA 2008; SBS 2004).

The 2008 estimated population is almost 22,000 people most of who are Maori-Polynesian and live in the southern eight islands. The median age in 2001 was 25 years, and the major ethnic group was Cook Island Maori at 88%. English is the official language with Cook Island Maori language also spoken (CIA 2008). Significantly, twice as many Cook Islanders live in New Zealand as live in the Cook Islands (BBCNews 2008a,b).

The Cook Islands were settled in about the thirteenth century CE by peoples from French Polynesia and Samoa. The first report of a European sighting was in 1596 by the Spaniard, Alvaro de Mendana. The group of islands was visited by James Cook in 1773 and half a century later and was given his name. Britain declared the Cook Islands to be a protectorate in 1888 and in 1901 New Zealand annexed the territory. Since 1965 the Cook Islands have been in a state of 'free association' with New Zealand. Cook Islanders hold New Zealand citizenship and New Zealand holds responsibility for the Cook Islands' defence. The Cook Islands has a Parliament with 24 elected seats. The head of state is the British Monarch and there is an elected prime minister (Cook Islands Government 2008; DFAT 2008).

The major export is black pearls. Tourism is very important economically and there is also some food processing industry. Many people on the Cook Island's effectively subsist. The unemployment rate in 2005 was 13%. However, recent economic reforms have stimulated investment (CIA 2008; CITC 2008a; SBS 2004).

Missionaries from the London Missionary Society arrived in 1821 (Cook Islands Government 2008). The Cook Islands London Missionary Society Church (CILMSC) was operating in all the Cook Islands by 1852. In 1968 the CILMSC became the autonomous Cook Islands Christian Church (WCC 2006).

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Religious Affiliations

According to the 2001 Census the distribution of religious adherents was Cook Islands Christian Church, 56%; Roman Catholic, 17%; Seventh Day Adventists, 8%; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 4%, and ‘Other Protestant’ 6% (CIA 2008). Also present are the Apostolic Church, the Assemblies of God, and Jehovah’s Witnesses (CITC 2008b). Baha’i local assemblies have operated on Rarotonga since 1956 (Hassall 2005).

Managing Religious Diversity

Section 64(1) of the Constitution recognises a right to practice the religion of choice without discrimination (University of the South Pacific 1998).

Current Issues

In 2005 and 2006, local clergy were upset by the association of a few MPs with the Unification Church, or ‘the Moonies’. A small group accepted trips to the International Federation for World Peace in Korea which was paid for by the Unification Church. Those who went were denounced by Pastor Tutai Pere, a prominent clergyman who claimed that the Unification Church should not be allowed to establish itself in the Cook Islands (Kurai-Marie 2006). Wilson (2007) describes the complex ways traditional and Christian methods of peace-making and peace-keeping have both been used and in some ways merged to successfully reduce violence and promote harmony.

Conclusion

The Cook Islands is a small nation that is most concerned with its economic growth and survival. Social cohesion is not threatened by any significant matters pertaining to religion.

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Fiji

Background

Fiji is an archipelago of 332 islands and 500 islets lying north of Auckland, New Zealand by approximately 1,770 km. The largest and most populated islands are Vitu Levu and Vanua Levu. In 2007 Fiji's Census counted a population of 835,230, almost evenly distributed between urban and rural areas. The major ethic group at 57.0% were Indigenous Fijians, a Melanesian people. The second largest group at 37.8% were Indian Fijians who are mostly descendants of colonial period economic migrants from India (AusAid 2007; SBS 2008; Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008).

Fiji's economy is not dependant on foreign aid and has high levels of national income compared to neighbouring Pacific island nations. However, around one third of the population have incomes inadequate for their essential needs. Squatter settlements exist in urban areas but poverty is more common in rural Fiji (AusAid 2007). Education is compulsory for Fijians aged between 6 and 15 (SBS 2008) and about 98% of Fiji's schools are 'non-government', being run by community management authorities and religious organisations (Education and Training International 2008).

The oldest non-Indigenous form of religion in Fiji is Methodist Christianity which remains the majority religion of Indigenous Fijians and the majority religion of Fiji (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008; Newland 2006). Other religious groups with significant adherents are Hinduism, Catholicism and Islam. Hinduism and Islam were introduced by nineteenth century Indian labourers – the ancestors of modern Indian Fijians – and maintained by their descendants. Hinduism remains the largest religion among Indian Fijians. Almost all Muslims in Fiji are Indian Fijians (Kikkert and Dexter 2007). Catholicism arrived in the nineteenth century and is practiced mainly by Indigenous Fijians but also by some Indian Fijians and Fijians of European ancestry. Fiji has retained indigenous religious rituals like Kava drinking (Fiji Government Online 2008a).

Indigenous Fijians hold a sense of injustice for themselves based on the perception that the migrant descended Indian-Fijians have an inappropriately high share of economic and social capital. While indigenous Fijians hold 83% of Fiji's land, 'many … see their land … perpetually threatened, especially by Indo-Fijian (Indian-Fijian)

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cunning and rapacity' (Tomlinson 2007, 539). For decades indigenous Fijians have 'resisted the idea of allowing Indians a say in governing the country' (Srebrnik 2002, 192). Fiji has had four coups in its recent history: two in 1987; another in 2000; and in December 2006. It is currently experiencing political unrest. Each coup was initiated by Indigenous Fijians and each was related to tensions with Indian Fijians. The coups have been accompanied by ethnic violence although there have been only 'marginal' incidents of death (Prasad and Snell 2004, 545). The coups also changed Fiji's former international image as an attractive and peaceful place, to that of a nation of political instability and economic uncertainty (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). While the coups are largely based in inter-ethnic tension they have also had religious dimensions. Indigenous Fijians who are also Christian 'religious nationalists' often see Indian Fijians as 'pagans and heathens' (Premdas 1991 quoted in Srebrnik 2002, 194).

History

Waves of Melanesian migrants began entering Fiji from the west about 1200 BCE (Robertson and Sutherland 2001). Around 1000 CE, their descendants resisted invasions from Tonga and Samoa but later developed trading relations with Tongans who also came to Fiji to fight as mercenaries. Famous European seamen Abel Tasman, James Cook and William Bligh sailed close to Fiji in 1643, 1774 and 1789 respectively. After Bligh returned to Fiji (Fiji Government Online 2008b) European traders began visiting to load sandalwood and sea cucumber (Newland 2006).

In 1835 missionaries came to Fiji from the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS). Catholic missionaries arrived in 1844, and operated areas away from the WMS. Then in the 1850s a high chief, Cakobau who controlled much of Fiji's west was converted to Methodist Christianity. Ma'afu, a Tongan chief who controlled much of East Fiji also converted to Methodism (BBCNews 2008) and the Tongan word for religion, *lotu,* has been used ever since to denote Christianity, or just Methodism. Lower chiefs soon accepted Methodism and Fijians hold even today that, 'the *lotu* belongs to the chiefs' (Newland 2006, 333). Methodism became associated with Fijian tribal social hierarchy and Fijian identity. Methodist Churches are usually built on the highest ground in villages and chiefs sit at the front of congregations. By the 1870s the WMS ran schools in most villages and many Indigenous children learned to read in vernacular language. At the same time Catholic missionaries established Marist Brothers schools. Schooling was popular among Indigenous Fijians who enjoyed reading the stories of the Bible (Newland 2006).

In the 1860s a rise in world demand for cotton attracted Europeans planters and Anglican and Presbyterian clergy followed (Kikkert and Dexter 2007). A tribal war began between the people of chief Cakobau and the Kai Colo tribe in 1867 (Kikkert and Dexter 2007). Further tensions between tribes led the Great Council of Chiefs to ask the British for colonial rule. In 1874, the Great Council of Chiefs signed the *Deed of Concession* to the British. This document obliged

the British to make decisions in consultation with the Great Council of Chiefs (Newland 2006).

The first governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Gordon, arrived in 1875 and pardoned all the hill tribes ending the tribal wars (Fiji Government Online 2008b). He also gave all unowned land to Indigenous Fijians in perpetuity. Wishing to limit the employment of native Fijians on plantations Gordon imported indentured Indian labourers who began arriving in Fiji in 1879 and bought Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. The number of Indian labourers increased significantly and by 1921 Indians were 40% of Fiji's population (Ali 2004). Already in 1916, Anglicans, Muslims and Hindus were running schools for Indians. The British administered Indigenous and Indian Fijians separately (Prasad and Snell 2004).

During their early migrations Indian Muslim and Hindu labourers worked together and fraternised in their common language, Hindi. They celebrated each others' religious festivals (Hock 2006, 411) and inter-married (Ali 2004). When Indian labourers finished their contracts they were prohibited from purchasing land. Given this restriction many either started businesses or, if they worked the land, took up long-term land leases (Kikkert and Dexter 2007). When indentured labour ended in 1920 Hindu and Muslim Indians tended to work alone, interacted less and assumed distinct social identities (Hock 2006).

The Fiji Muslim League (FML) was established in 1926 to protect Sunni Muslims from Hindus and Shi'a Muslims. Also in the 1920s *Ahmadiyya Islam* advocated separation of their group of Muslims from other Muslims as well as Hindus and Christians establishing their own schools and lobbying for a separate government and legal system (Hock 2006). In the late 1950s an umbrella group called , Sanatan Dharm Pratinidhi Sbha (SDS) was formed to representi 'mainstream' Hindus (Hock 2006, 393; Shree Sanatan Dharm Pratinidhi Sabha 2008).

When Independence from Britain was accepted in 1970 (BBCNews 2008) parliamentary seats were allocated according to ethnicity (Lal 2002**)**. Fijian governments were still obliged to receive advice from the Great Council of Chiefs. Initially, the parliament had two major political parties, the National Federation Party largely an Indian organisation and the Alliance Party which was a coalition of Indigenous Fijians, Europeans and Indians with an Indigenous Fijian majority. By the time of political independence Indian Fijians had advantages in education, employment and over-representation in business. At the same time Indigenous Fijians owned most land as communal property and had majority presence in the military, police and public service (Prasad and Snell 2004).

In May 1987 Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka a Methodist lay preacher and third highest army commander took control of Parliament with the intention of 'making Indigenous Fijians politically dominant'. He claimed his action was divinely inspired (Heinz 1993) and announced that Christianity was the official religion of Fiji (Newland 2006). Dissatisfied with political progress Rabuka conducted another coup in September 1987, pronounced that Fiji was a republic and renounced the country's membership from the Commonwealth (BBCNews 2006). Seeking 'religious legitimacy' (Heinz 1993, 418) Rabuka then announced the *Sunday Observance Decree* which required Christians and non-Christians to forgo recreation

and entertainment, public gatherings, work and commerce on Sundays. Public transport was not to run and the day was to be one of 'worship' and 'thanksgiving' (Heinz 1993, 418). However, Rabuka received pressure to repeal the *Sunday Observance Decree* which he did gradually (Heinz 1993).

In 1988 a group of Methodists including lay and clergy publicly rejected the repeal of the *Sunday Observance Decree*. They set up 70 roadblocks in Suva, searched cars, prevented Sunday entertainment activities and disrupted commercial vehicles and public transport. Protestors met with Rabuka and offered themselves for membership in new government, advocated a Christian state and claimed they would continue the protest indefinitely. Rev Josateki Koroi, Methodist Church president, formally disassociated the Methodist Church from the roadblock campaign. However, one protestor was Rev Manasa Lasaro, Methodist Church General Secretary (Heinz 1993). Lasaro was suspended by Koroi but Lasaro's supporters locked Koroi out of the church headquarters, installed a new president and reinstated Lasaro. The courts then decreed that Koroi was still president. Protestors staged a second round of roadblocks on Christmas Day 1988. Police arrested about 150 protestors including Rev Lasaro and other clergy (Heinz 1993).

The new Constitution of 1997 gave the Great Council of Chiefs power to nominate the President and Vice President (Lal 2002). In 1997 Mahendra Chaudry became the first Indian Fijian prime minister. Taking a 'pro-worker stance' Chaudry promised to make changes to business and labour regulations and his government was immediately disliked by Indigenous leaders. In May 2000 indigenous Fijian nationalists staged a civilian coup, storming Parliament and taking the Prime Minister and several other government members as hostages. Coup leader, George Speight, demanded the removal of the government, delegation of executive power to the Great Council of Chiefs and a role for coup leaders in a new government (BBCNews 2000b). The coup leaders looked to the Christian churches for support. Coup strategist, Colonel Ilisono Ligairi, attempted to justify his actions with a reference to the divine stating, 'I believe my God tells me to do this' (ABC 2000) and George Speight allowed himself to photographed while praying (BBCNews 2006).

The coup lasted 56 days while coup supporters inflicted looting and violence on Indian Fijian businesses around Suva (BBCNews 2006, 2008; SBS 2008). Around the country about 4,000 workers were laid off due to halts in sugar production and drops in foreign tourists (BBCNews 2000a). The military imposed martial law and Fiji was suspended by the Commonwealth (BBCNews 2008). On instructions of Great Council of Chiefs Fijian President, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, sacked Prime Minister Chaudry and installed an interim government which had only one Indian Fijian (BBCNews 2000c, 2008; Prasad and Snell 2004). The siege ended when coup leaders signed an agreement with the military after conducting a 'long Fijian prayer' on the Parliament lawns (BBCNews 2000d).

The 2000 coup was significantly undermined by Christian churches. The Christian Mission Fellowship (CMF) demanded that Speight release the hostages (Newland 2007). The Methodist Church called George Speight a 'terrorist' (Newland 2006, 332) while other churches also condemned the coup and asked for the return of looted items. Twelve evangelical churches met to pray and ask God's

forgiveness believing the country was in turmoil because the church was 'in chaos' (Newland 2006, 331, 2007).

In July 2000 interim Prime Minister, Laisenia Qarase addressed the Great Council of Chiefs presenting the *Blueprint for the Protection of Fijian and Rotuman Rights and Interests and the Advancement of their Development* (Qarase 2000). The document outlined a national mission to increase opportunities for Indigenous Fijians in business, employment, use of government services and education. The *Blueprint* became a set of programmes for assistance to Indigenous Fijians (Fiji Government Online 2005). The Methodist Church backed the new government and therefore the *Blueprint* (Weir 2000). Ministers of the Methodist Church had also prayed at the swearing in of government ministers (Newland 2007).

In September 2006 military chief Frank Bainimarama claimed the coup had created a 'culture of disrespect' which had resulted in a breakdown of law and order including the desecration of Hindu temples. He criticised the Methodist Church for supporting the government (CBA 2007). Then in December 2006 Bainimarama staged a coup against the elected government when it considered pardoning leaders of the 2000 coup. This was the fourth coup since 1987. In February 2007 the Assembly of Christian Churches in Fiji (ACCF) led by the Methodist Church issued a statement titled, 'Here We Stand', condemning the coup as 'treasonous act' responsible for increases in poverty. The Methodist Church further claimed that all acts of the military coup leaders were illegal and the Christian Mission Fellowship placed newspaper advertisements condemning the coup (Commonwealth Broadcasting 2007; Newland 2007). The Roman Catholic Church labelled the coup as illegal but backed the 'multicultural views expressed by the military and interim government' (Newland 2007, 2). Also, the Roman Catholic Church labelled the ACCF as hypocritical for not condemning the 200 coup leaders with the same virulence (Newland 2007).

The coup was condemned by several nations and the Commonwealth again suspended Fiji. In 2007 Bainimarama sacked the Great Council of Chiefs after they did not approve his new government (BBCNews 2006, 2008) and claimed that the Council was being manipulated by the Methodist Church (Newland 2007). In October of 2007 Bainimarama appointed himself and Catholic Archbishop Petero Mataca as heads of a 46 member council responsible for 'Building a Better Fiji' and eroding problems of racial difference. The council included members of Indian Hindu organisation Sanatan Dharm and he Christian Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (Fraenkel 2008). This was part of a process Bainimarama calls 'The People's Charter' which is opposed by the Methodist Church (DFAT 2008; Dorney 2008). The Archbishop has attracted strong criticism inside and outside his church for accepting the appointment (Newland 2007). Bainimarama has accused the Methodist Church of opposing the charter to pursue its own 'political agenda' and 'whip up Fijian emotions' (Newland 2007, 21). Bainimarama has been accused of major braches of democracy and is opposed by the Methodist Church (Commonwealth Broadcasting 2007). Fiji remains politically unstable and in 2009 Bainimarama again dissolved parliament, disbanded the courts and set himself up as the government.

Religion in Fiji Today

Weir (2000, 50) explains that the Methodist Church is an essential aspect of Indigenous Fijian identity which is a conceptual and symbolic trinity between '*Vanua* (Land), *Lotu* (church) and *Matanitu* (state)'. When threatened Indigenous Fijians rely on the churches – usually the Methodist Church – for loyalty which they expect should supersede loyalty to the Fijian state (Weir 2000, 50). Methodists Joseteki Koroi and Sevati Tuwere have challenged Indigenous paramountcy in the Methodist church putting forward ideas of equality among all Christians without reference to their ethnicity (Weir 2000). The Methodist Church also gives services in Hindi for Indian Fijian members (Newland 2006).

The Methodist Church has recently lost significant numbers of members to Pentecostal churches. Many individuals who have joined the new churches have effectively rejected Methodism seeing it as part of a 'socio-political order' that is now 'unacceptable' (Newland 2004, 15). In 2003 the Methodist Church responded by calling on the government to restrict entry of foreign church missions (Newland 2006). However, the Methodist Church publicly welcomed the Church of Scientology to Fiji in 2006 affirming that that 'every religious body had its own beliefs and should not be criticised for what it believes in' (Newland 2006, 352; Rina and Ferris 2006).

The Catholic Church now gives services in various languages including Fijian, English, Hindi, Rotuman and Banaban. Catholic parishes are advised by local councils of lay persons. Husband and wife catechists may become church leaders in their villages (Newland 2006). In the early 2000s the Catholic Church had more schools in Fiji than any other religious group (Newland 2006, 382). The Church has shown sensitivity to the issue of religious diversity as in 2007 Catholic Archbishop Petero Mataca launched the pamphlet, *Guidelines for Religious Tolerance* (*Fiji Times* 2007).

The Anglican Church which began in Fiji in the 1870s had mostly European clergy until the 1960s. However the Church then instituted a new policy that resulted in Pacific Islanders and Indians becoming a majority of the clergy by the early 1970s. Recently the Anglican prayer book was translated into Samoan, Tongan and Hindi (Newland 2006). In 2003 the Assembly of God (AOG) which has been present in Fiji since 1926 (Newland 2006) had 290 Churches categorised on ethnic lines: 40 for Indian Fijians; 236 Indigenous Fijians; and 18 for 'General Ethnic' (Newland 2006, 357). However, the AOG has also lost members to 'new' evangelical churches' (Newland 2006). These 'new' churches have mainly commenced operations in Fiji since Independence and propagated increasingly since the 1987 coups. They include: Apostles Gospel Outreach Fellowship International, Christian Mission Fellowship, Christian Outreach Centre, Evangelical Fellowship of Fiji, New Life Centre and World Wide Church of God. The Salvation Army also commenced operations after Independence in 1973 and now has about ten churches. It has membership mainly from lower social classes and has lost recently lost members to 'new' evangelical churches

(Newland 2006). Apart from the recent growth of new evangelical churches' another significant trend in Fiji is the Christianisation of former Hindu and Muslim Indian Fijians (Hock 2006).

The Fiji Council of Churches (FCC) was established in 1964 and became a forum of cooperation and dialogue between the Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Samoan Congregational and Roman Catholic churches, as well as the Salvation Army and the Fiji Baptist Mission. The FCC works to increase interfaith understanding and conducts activities with Muslims and Hindus. Almost no Pentecostal Churches have joined the FCC claiming that Muslims and Hindus worship a 'different God'. The Methodist church and the Salvation Army also refuse to co-operate in interfaith activities with Muslims and Hindus (Newland 2006, 339).

After the 2000 coup, fourteen Fiji's churches including the Methodist Church, the AOG and the Christian Mission Fellowship, formed the ACCF. The organisation was created to unify indigenous Fijians who it was hoped would deal more positively with the other ethnic groups. The ACCF was also created with the intention of converting non-Christians (Newland 2006). The organisation emphasises that the God of Christianity is different to the God of Muslims and the gods of Hindus. It also holds to the political paramountcy of Indigenous Fijians (Newland 2007). This position makes interfaith activity inappropriate and the ACCF supported bills of the post coup government, which favoured the economic interests of indigenous Fijians (Newland 2007).

Several Fijian churches are also members of the Pacific Conference of Churches that started in Western Samoa in 1992 and is now based in Suva (Newland 2006). The Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA) was formed in 2007 with the objective of building a 'compassionate, just and inclusive society' (ECREA 2007, Clause 5).

Most Hindus are counted by the Fiji Census as 'Santan' but there is also smaller Hindu organisations and movements. Arya Pratinidhi Sabha or Arya Samaj (AS) has operated in Fiji since 1904. It is part of the 'reform Hindu' movement and has only 'a couple of hundred active members' (Hock 2006, 399). The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) arrived in the 1970s and opened its first centre in Lautoka. It has 'about 1,000 officially registered and initiated members' (Hock 2006, 402). Brahma Kumaris (BK) came to Fiji in 1983 and they have centres in Suva, Lautoka and Nausori. Shri Sathya Sai Baba (SSB) commenced operations in Fiji in 1988 although adherents have been in Fiji since 1969 (Hock 2006).

The largest category of Muslims, as counted by the Census, is Sunni. Fiji also has small numbers of Ahmadiyya who believe that their Indian founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, is a promised Messiah. The organisation has a world headquarters in Lahore (Ali 2004). Another minority group, Ahl-i-Hadithis, are descendants of Indian Wahabist Muslims. Miladis incorporate Hindu rituals and observe prayers for the dead. Tablighis comprise a recent Indian Islamic revivalist group which aims to bring Muslims back to 'pristine Islam' (Ali 2004, 147).

Religious Affiliations

The 2007 Census reports that 64.4% of Fiji's population claimed to be Christian which was an increase from the 58% reported in 1997 and 27.9% were Hindu which was a decrease from the 33.7% reported in 1997. Muslims were 6.3%; Sikhs, 0.3%; and Baha'i, 0.1%. Indigenous Fijians were 86.9% of Christians; while Indian Fijians made up 99.5% of Hindus, 99.0% of Muslims and 100.0% of Sikhs. Those nominating, 'No Religion' were 0.9% of the population (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009).

Among Indigenous Fijians 99.2% were Christian, 66.6% being in the Methodist Church and 13.3% in the Catholic Church. Among Indian Fijians, 76.7% were Hindu, 57.0% identifying with Sanatan Hinduism. Also among Indian Fijians, 15.9% were Muslim and 0.9%, Sikh. Christianity was the religion of 6.1% of Indian Fijians. The largest Christian group among Indian Fijians was Methodist at 1.6% of the Indian Fijian population. Assemblies of God were 1.4%; and Catholics, 1.0% (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008; Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008). In 2007, the US State Department estimated that about 60% of Fiji's small Chinese population were Christian, while others are Confucian (USDS Fiji 2007).

Of the entire population Christian denominations published in the 2007 Census Methodists were 34.6%, Catholics 9.1%; Assemblies of God 5.7%, Seventh Day Adventists 3.9, and Anglican 0.8%. The 2007 Census figures show a significant decrease in numbers identifying with the Methodist Church and some increases in Pentecostal/Evangelical churches(Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2009).

Anglicans and Presbyterians were the only Christian groups for which Indigenous Fijians were a minority; and for these groups the majority ethnicity was 'Other'. Indians-Fijians of formed significant portions of two Christian groups, being 29.5% of Baptists; and 38.0% of the group, Gospel (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008). The first Baha'i local assembly was established in Suva in 1950 (Hassall 2005).

Managing Religious Diversity

Fiji's Constitution (in Disability Rights Education and Defence Fund 2000) affirms religious freedom for all citizens. Section 35 (subsections 1, 2, 3) recognises each Fijian's right to choose their religious beliefs, practice their chosen religion, and be provided religious instruction. According to Section 35 (subsection 5) school students are not obliged to have religious education or attend religious ceremonies. However, Section 35 (subsection 4) allows the government to limit religious practice to protect 'the rights and freedoms of others' and to protect 'public safety, public order, public morality or public health' or 'to prevent a public nuisance'. Section 30 (subsection 2(d)) allows the government to legislate against public expression promoting antagonism between 'races or communities' including 'hate speech' (*Constitution of Fiji* in Disability Rights Education and Defence Fund 2000). Section 5 of the

Constitution stipulates a definite institutional separation between 'religion and state'. However, it also asserts – in the same sentence – an essential association between 'religion' and 'good government'.

Although religion and the State are separate, the people of the Fiji Islands acknowledge that worship and reverence of God are the source of good government and leadership (*Constitution of Fiji*, Section 5; in Disability Rights Education and Defence Fund 2000). This Section therefore deems religious commitment as a necessity for government. It also empowers religious organisations indirectly. Of all institutions in Fijian society, religious organisations are most qualified to advise, condone, criticise and condemn the government, with reference to the religious appropriateness of its actions. This is significant to ethnic relations as the large religious organisations also represent ethnic interests and can legitimate or encourage political actions benefiting their ethnic constituencies without being responsible for such actions. With respect to the 2000 coup, Weir points out that the Methodist Church 'leadership deplores the methods used but is happy to back the results of the coup' (Weir 2000, 50).

The state expresses respect for all three major faiths (Christianity, Hinduism and Islam) and observes national holidays for Christmas and Easter, the Hindu festival of Diwali, and Muhammad's birthday (Fiji Times 2005). The Fiji Human Rights Commission 'promotes equal opportunity for religious minorities and groups' and also functions to ensure the state does not implement assimilations policies that may see religious minorities absorbed by the 'dominant culture' (Shameem 2003).

The Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity (MNR) was established after the 2000 coup. One of its objectives is 'to promote understanding amongst religious organisations and unity within the Christian Churches' (Ministry of National Reconciliation and Unity 2002, 13). The Ministry works with the ACCF and is also involved with Hindu and Muslim groups. However, in 2006 the MNR was still headed by Methodists and seen as exclusive of non-Christian faiths (Newland 2006). 2004 was Fiji's National Year of Prayer and Fasting and the MNR organised a number of events around Fiji. In June 2005 the MNR organised a multi-religious forum titled, 'Consensus Building on Religious Understanding and Cooperation'. At the forum religious leaders endorsed mutual respect between their faiths (Singh 2005).

In 2005 the Fiji Government denied entry to the leader of the Unification Church, Dr Su Moon. The government claimed 'his doctrines were misleading, repugnant and divisive and would affect the peace, good order public safety and public morality of the Fiji Islands' (Biumaiono 2005).

Current Issues

Desecrations of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh religious sites have occurred sporadically in the previous 20 years (Shameem 2003). During the 1987 coup members of Methodist Youth firebombed two Hindu temples, a Sikh *gurdwara* and a Muslim

mosque (Srebrnik 2002, 194). For example, in 2001 Hindu places of worship were vandalised or burgled, and a Catholic church was desecrated. In 2003 a mosque was burgled (USDS Fiji 2006). In 2004 these incidents increased with 48 being reported which mostly involved unidentified assailants desecrating Hindu temples (USDS Fiji 2005). In September 2006 Catholic Vicar, Father Beni Kaloudau, held that desecrations of Hindu temples were 'sad' and confirmed that his church taught members to 'respect other religions and their places of worship' (Fiji Times 2006). Then in November 2006 the *Fiji Times* reported further pre-meditated' violations against Hindu Temples 'not executed under the influence of liquor' by 'young Christian men' motivated by a belief in Christianity's 'unique validity'.

The *Fiji Times* called for Christian churches to be more assertive in discouraging inter-religious violence. It also warned that Hindus may start retaliating (Vunileba 2006). Police have maintained that recent attacks have not been religiously inspired but rather are robberies (Radio New Zealand 2006). On the other hand, Hindus reported that the attacks are indeed religiously inspired since they involved major vandalism, arson and desecrations (Ekadashi 2008; Hinduism Today 2004).

Conclusion

The major factor constantly threatening social stability in Fiji is the ethnic tension between Indigenous and Indian Fijians. This tension has a religious dimension as Indigenous Fijians are generally Christian and Indian Fijians are mostly Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The Methodist Church is a very significant institution of ethnic politics. It is essentially linked with Indigenous Fijian identity, and continues to act as Indigenous Fijians' political voice and an authority on the appropriateness of the government. Sections of the Methodist church have also advocated universal application of their versions of Methodist principles and even called for a 'Christian State'. In 2007 Catholic Church Archbishop Petero Mataca charged that some Christian clerics 'condemn and look down on non-Christian religions' (Fiji Times 2007). However, there are no current indications of impending inter religious violence that could be systematic.

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French Polynesia

Background

French Polynesia is a set of archipelagos in the Pacific Ocean that lie across over 5 million km^2 or the area of Western Europe. The country has five major island groups: Tubai Islands; Tuamotu Archipelago; Society Islands, Gambier Islands and the Marquesas Islands. Within these there are also minor island groups such as the Austral Islands. The main island of French Polynesia is Tahiti in the Society Islands and the capital is Papeete. Of French Polynesia's 121 islands, 76 have no inhabitants and Tahiti has almost 70% of French Polynesia's population (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006). The official languages are French and Polynesian (BBCNews 2008; DFAT 2008a; CIA 2008).

The mainly Polynesian population was estimated at about 283,000 in 2008; median age being almost 29 years and life expectancy 76.5 years. Ethnic Chinese are 12% of the population; local French, 6%; and 'metropolitan French', 4% (CIA 2008). Polynesians call themselves Ma'ohi (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006). The head of state is the French President, but a French High Commissioner resides in the territory. French Polynesia also has an elected President. In 2008 the President of French Polynesia was Gaston Flosse who had had four presidential terms in the previous 25 years (BBC 2008). The main industries are tourism, fishing, pearling, land agriculture and phosphates. French Polynesia also receives considerable aid from France (DFAT 2008b). However the main employer is the public service which is supported by the Centre for Nuclear Experimentation of the Pacific and the Tahiti-Faa'a international airport (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

Polynesians first migrated to the islands of modern French Polynesia from 200 BCE. Magellan first visited Tuamotu in 1521 and sporadic European visits occurred for the next 200 years as the rest of modern French Polynesia was visited by Dutch and English. In 1842 Tahiti became a French protectorate in 1863 and gradually the rest of modern French Polynesia fell under French colonial control. In 1880 French Polynesia became a French colony. Following World War II, French Polynesia became a French overseas territory in 1946. In 2003 changes to the French Constitution increased French Polynesia's autonomy (DFAT 2008a; Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

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Missionaries from the London Missionary Society arrived in Tahiti on 5 March 1797, which is now a public holiday in French Polynesia (Tahitipresse 2002). LMS missionaries baptised King Pomare II in 1819 and began consolidating Christianity in Tahiti, Moorea, the Leeward Islands and the Austral Islands. In 1863 LMS activities were taken over by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) also a Protestant organisation. A century later in 1963 the missionary church accepted full autonomy from the PEMS and became the Evangelical Church of French Polynesia (EEPF) being administered by pastors of Polynesian background rather than missionaries. In 2004 it became known as the Ma'ohi Protestant Church (MPC) and in common speech is simply referred to as the 'Protestant Church' (Ernst 1996; Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006; WCC 2006).

The MPC is the largest religious organisation in French Polynesia. Some parishes have incorporated Polynesian culture in worship services such as the use of breadfruit and coconut. Ministers have trained in the Hermon Theological College in Papeete as well as in Fiji and Europe. Since 2003 the MPC has the ordained female pastors (Ernst 1996; Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

Catholic missionaries arrived in 1834 in the Gambier Islands converting King Maputeoa. In 1839 the Catholics began a mission on the Marquesas Islands. Catholic schools encouraged the conversions of families wanting higher social status through education. The Catholic Church had been conducting charismatic prayer services since the 1970s. In the 1990s the Catholic Church had a significant revitalisation movement among members who were 'born again'. It continues today as a major charismatic force within the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church remains strong on the Marqesas and Gambier archipelagos and is the likely religion among people of French European background. It is the second largest religious organisation in the country (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) began a mission in the Austral Islands south of Tahiti in 1844, and by 1852 the LDS had about 2,000 converts. Memberships did not rise about this level for over a century. In the 1970s the LDS intensified its missionary activity and temple building. By the 1980s the LDS had 6% of the Polynesian population. Fer and Malogne-Fer (2006) attribute this success significantly to the LDS's promise to unite people with their dead relatives in an afterlife. The LDS style of recruitment utilised converts effectively. For example, all converts were asked to informally co-ordinate recruiting networks by holding meetings at their homes among prospective converts. Sanitos, the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, also operates in French Polynesia. The Seventh Day Adventist Church began its mission on Raiatea in the Society Islands in 1894. In 2003 there were over 12,000 members including adults and children (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

Chinese plantation workers constructed a Buddhist temple in 1876 in Papeete. The Chinese also practiced ancestor worship. Chinese families began converting to Christianity after World War II when many sent their children to Catholic schools. A less affluent class of Hakka Chinese in Bethel on the island of Papeete joined the Polynesian Protestant Church which became the EEPF in 1963. In early 1961 these Hakka Protestants received a visit from a charismatic Pentecostal preacher of the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union, Pastor Leland Wang. During

his visit Pastor Wang baptised about 50 of the Chinese congregation and the following year his son-in-law, Pastor Hong Sit, arrived. By the end of 1963 almost 300 of the Chinese Hakka community had undergone immersion baptism. They created a distinct Hakka Protestant identity that was a social agent for pluralist Protestantism in French Polynesia. In 1967 the Hakka Protestants split from the EEPF in Bethel and became the Alleluia Church in 1967. The break was due to the Hakka's practice of immersion baptism and their ethnic differences from other members who were mainly Polynesian (Fer 2005).

The Alleluia Church spawned the Polynesian branch of the Church of the New Testament, or the Church of Tahiti, and also the Assemblies of God Polynesia, which is now the largest Pentecostal church in French Polynesia. The Assemblies of God have co-operated with such para-church organisations as Youth with a Mission and the Association of Christian Surfers in developing evangelical campaigns (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006). Fer and Malogne-Fer report that most members of the Pentecostal churches are formerly from the Polynesian Protestant churches; they have chosen to leave those churches after encounters with spiritual healing and because they decide that they had to freely choose their own church in order to be saved.

Another Pentecostal church, the Church of the Full Gospel, was formed in 1999 headed by a US pastor from the Assembly of God in Maui, Hawaii. In 2001 the Calvary Chapel Church was founded. It is another Pentecostal church and an affiliate of the Foursquare Gospel Church (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006). A small Jewish community has existed since the 1960s comprising Jews of French background. Chinese religions have long been observed in Tahiti. There is a now also a small number of professionals of French background practicing Tibetan Buddhism. A number of new religious movements have small groups of followers in French Polynesia including the Raelians and the Children of God. Baha'i were in French Polynesia from the late 1950s but did not start to Consolidate until the 1980s (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

Former ties of family and clan are being undermined through intermarriage across different islands and religions (Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006). However, in 2006 a new social unit had become significant in French Polynesia, 'the voluntary association' which can take the form of a sports club or artistic group. The significant aspect of these 'voluntary associations' is that that people join by choice rather than being born into membership. Fer and Malogne-Fer hold that these entities have a social function in that they allow cultural affiliations but on the basis of personal choice. Some are run by churches.

Religious Affiliations

The MPC, formerly the EEPF, is the only Church called 'Protestant' in French Polynesia. In 2008 religious affiliations were: Protestant 54%, Roman Catholic 30% and 'Other' 10%. Six percent had 'no religion' (CIA 2008). However, Fer and Malogne-Fer (2006) estimate that, more accurately, Protestant and Catholics were recently equal at about 40% each.

According to a 2000 survey by cited by Fer and Malogne-Fer (2006), the LDS were 6.5%; Seventh Day Adventists, 5.8% and Sanito (Reorganised LDS), 3.6%. Assemblies of God French Polynesia were 0.65%, Assemblies of God French Polynesia USA, 0.04% and the Alleluia Pentecostal Church 0.01%. The 'Dissident Protestant Churches – breakaways from the Ma'ohi Churches were 0.5%. Baha'i were 0.2% (Fer and Malogne-Fer (2006). It is not unusual for Protestants to receive baptism in Pentecostal churches. Fer and Malogne-Fer also reported that the Protestant churches were growing at a rate behind that of the total French Polynesian population. However, some faiths were growing at faster rates than the national population. These include the Catholic Church, the LDS, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Pentecostal churches.

Managing Religious Diversity

French Polynesia's constitution is the French Constitution which respects any religion that in turn respects the civil law. The government places constraining rules on the residence status of foreign missionaries (CIA 2008; Fer and Malogne-Fer 2006).

Current Issues

There are no reported threats to social cohesion in French Polynesia through religion. However the religious social landscape is changing slowly with smaller religious groups, namely The LDS and Pentecostals, growing while the major faith of Protestantism gradually declines.

Conclusion

French Polynesia is a political extension of France in the Pacific Ocean and has no current social problems related to religion. In the future, the more widespread styles of Christian faith – Catholicism and Protestantism – may be in a minority. This change though will take time and it poses no immediate threats to social cohesion.

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Kiribati

Background

Kiribati is a group of atolls and islands on the equator. Formerly called the Gilbert Islands Kiribati accepted independence from Britain in 1979 when it also became a republic. In the same year Kiribati also acquired the nearby Phoenix and Line Islands from the United States. Kiribati is geographically dispersed over 3.5 million square kilometres of which only 811 km^2 are land (CIA 2007; Tenten 2006).

The population which is mainly Micronesian was estimated by the CIA in 2008 to be 110,356 with a median age of 20.6 years and life expectancy of almost 63 years. The economy is based on the export of copra, fish, tourism and foreign aid and is fragile due to isolation and lack of skilled labour. Kiribati's capital is Tarawa and its main language is Gilbertese (CIA 2007; Tenten 2006).

The Gilbert Islands were first settled by Austronesian people from about 2000 BCE. Between 1830 and 1890 the Islands were visited by various European whalers, traders, beachcombers, seekers of plantation labour and European Christian missionaries. The British declared the Gilberts to be a protectorate in 1892 and placed them under the same local administration as the Ellice Islands, modern Tuvalu. By 1916 the Gilbert, Ellice and Phoenix Islands were single crown colony. The area was a theatre of battle in World War II having been invaded by both Japanese and American forces (Tenten 2006).

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) arrived in the Gilbert Islands in 1850s winning converts and setting up schools. The London Missionary Society (LMS) then came in the 1870s. LMS missions were more successful as they employed Samoans who better integrated with village communities. The LMS received ABCFM missions in 1917 and the independent Kiribati Protestant Church, established in 1968 with local clerics.

Catholic Missionaries arrived in the 1880s and quickly made significant numbers of conversions in the northern islands. In 1925 the Catholics began establishing schools and in 1963 the first Indigenous Kiribati became Catholic priests. The first Indigenous bishop took office in 1979 (Tenten 2006).

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The Seventh Day Adventists have been present in Kiribati since 1947 (Tenten 2006). Baha'i have been in Tarawa, Kiribati since the early 1950s (Hassall 2005). In the early 2000s they had consolidated firmly with 11 Local Spiritual Assemblies and 40 Baha'i groups (Tenten 2006). The Assemblies of God (AOG) have been active in Kiribati since 1979. They remain small with only 200 members but are very active in social welfare, confronting social problems like alcoholism (Tenten 2006).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) has operated in Kiribati since the 1970s. A group of students converted to The LDS Church while studying at the denominational school, Liahona College, in Tonga. On returning to Kiribati the students became missionaries and engaged in further recruiting and offshore missionary work, also encouraging fellow members to be politically active. Tenten (2006, 475) estimates that members of the LDS Church of Kiribati background including those living in other countries number almost 9,000.

The Kiribati National Council of Churches (KNCC) is the only multi-faith body. It comprises basically the Kiribati Protestant Church and the Catholic Church. It has been active in confronting social issues including prostitution and HIV infections (WCC 2006).

Religious Affiliations

In 2005, Kiribati's religious makeup was Roman Catholic, 55%; Kiribati Protestant Church, 36%; LDS, 3%; Seventh Day Adventists, 2%; and Baha'i, 2%. Roman Catholics and Protestants are mainly found in the northern and southern islands respectively given the operations of nineteenth century church missionaries (Kiribati National Statistics Office 2009). Smaller churches included the Church of God with about 400 members; the AOG, 200 members; Jehovah's Witnesses, 240 members; and the New Apostolic Church, the Kiribati New Testament Pentecostal Church, and the Unification Church with unknown and probably even smaller memberships (Tenten 2006).

The membership of the Catholic Church as a percentage of the entire population has continued to increase at a greater rate than the overall population of Kiribati. In contrast the Kiribati Protestant Church has continued to grow at a rate less than that of the population. The LDS has recently increased by 26.1%. In 2002 Seventh Day Adventists were 1.7% of the population with 1,401 adherents (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development 2007; Tenten 2006).

Managing Religious Diversity

Kiribati is a mainly Christian nation but it has no state religion (CIA 2007; USDS 2007), nor are religious groups required to register with the government. The Constitution supports religious freedom and Kiribati has holidays for National

Gospel Day, Easter and Christmas. Public functions including meetings of governments have interdenominational prayers conducted by some Christian clergy.

Current Issues

There are no substantial threats to social cohesion with respect to religious issues. There have been sporadic reports of villages denying access to non-mainstream religious groups (USDS 2008).

Conclusion

Kiribati is undergoing slow change due to the differential growth rates of its religious communities. However, religion is not currently a significant factor in social social stability.

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Marshall Islands

Background

The Marshall Islands are a chain of 30 atolls and 1,152 islands in the North Pacific Ocean. The estimated population in 2008 was 63,200 with median age of 21 years and life expectancy of 71 years. The overwhelming ethnic group is Marshallese at 92.1% who are of Micronesian stock. The official languages are Marshallese and English. There are major cultural differences between inhabitants of different islands. The capital city is Majuro. Most Marshall Islanders identify as Christians (BBCNews 2008a; CIA 2008; SBS 2004; Tenten 2006c).

The economy of the Marshall Islands is based on agriculture centered on the production of coconuts, melons and breadfruit. The Marshall Islands has a modest but growing tourist industry and has received significant US aid. The unemployment rate in 2000 was estimated at 31% (CIA 2008). The Marshall Islands have environmental problems including lack of drinking water, lagoon pollution and effects of US nuclear testing (Tenten 2006).

Micronesian settlers came to these islands in about 2000 BCE. Portuguese and Spaniards arrived in the 1500s CE and Spain made a claim for the territory in 1592. The name 'Marshall Islands' refers to a British naval captain, John William Marshall, who arrived en route to Australia in 1788. Germany purchased the Marshall Islands from Spain in 1885. At the beginning of World War I Japan took the Marshall Islands from Germany and retained a League of Nations mandate after the War. From 1947 the Marshall Islands were the eastern part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and administered by the United States. The territory was the site of the Bikini Atoll nuclear tests after World War II. The Marshall Islands became an independent republic in 1986 under a compact of Free Association with the US which retains responsibility for the Islands' defence. Consequently the US Army retains access to waterways for military purposes and a missile test site (BBCNews 2008b; CIA 2008; SBS 2004; Tenten 2006).

In the 1850s missionaries arrived from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) as part of a greater scheme to convert Micronesia.

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In the 1860s Hawaiian missionaries also arrived as part of the ABCFM operation. The mission church developed a 'congregationalist' style of ecclesiastical administration with democratic participation by committees. Their efforts ended warfare between islands and clans. By the 1950s the church had adopted the name 'The United Church of Christ' (UCC). It gained full autonomy from the ABCFM in 1972 and has its own theological school. After losing members in the 1960s and 1970s the United Church of Christ increased its membership between 1992 and 1999 from 51.9% of the population to 54.8%. The Reformed Congregational Church was formed in reaction to the more liberal theology of the UCC (Tenten 2006).

Catholic missionaries of the Sacred Heart Order came to The Marshall Islands in about 1898. These were Germans who built schools and churches while also doing Bible translations. Catholic missionaries from the US carried on the work after World War II. In the early 1990s the Catholics maintained five schools and over 1,000 students. However by 2005 there had been no Indigenous Catholic priests in the Marshall Islands. The Catholic Church has been a strong political and social voice (Tenten 2006c).

The Assemblies of God (AOG) commenced significant activity in the Marshall Islands in the early 1960s. The AOG was at first opposed by the UCC but they survived with the support of influential locals. Various miracles including healings are a featured aspect of the AOG's services. By the early 1990s the AOG had a membership of about 10,000 and 32 churches. It now has a Bible school. Tenten (2006c) claims that significant numbers of converts to the AOG are former members of the UCC. The Bukot Non Jesus (looking for Jesus) Church (BNJC) and the Full Gospel Churches are organisations that have broken from the AOG, the later claiming over 700 members. The Light of Jesus Church and the Marshallese Pentecostal Church are breakaway organisations, formerly with the BNJC (Tenten 2006).

Jehovah's Witnesses have practiced in the Marshall Islands since the 1960s and by the early 2000s claimed to have 700 members. The Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) also arrived in the 1960s when they began a school. In the early 2000s the SDA had ten schools in the Marshall Islands (Tenten 2006). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) commenced operations in the Marshall Islands, the late 1970s. The LDS claimed over 3,500 members in 2002 and by 2005 had six chapels and a centre for family history research.

In 2001 the government was forced to clarify its relationship with the Unification Church after agreeing to host the International Inter-Religious Federation for World Peace. The government claimed that hosting the event was in the interests of world peace and acknowledged that the leader of the Unification Church, Reverend Moon had promised a $1 million donation for a high school (Marshall Islands Journal 2001a).

The local ecumenical body is the National Council of Churches. It comprises the Catholic Church, the UCC, the LDS and SDA, having commenced in 1991. The government encouraged formation of the National Council of Churches by promising to fund schools of religious organisations that took part in the formation of an ecumenical body (Tenten 2006).

Religious Affiliations

According to the 1999 Census, Marshall Islanders identifying as members of the UCC were 55% of the total population. AOG were 25.8%; Roman Catholics, 8.4%; Bukot Non Jesus, 2.8; LDS, 2.1; Reformed Congregational Church, 1.4; and SDA, 0.9%. Smaller Christian groups included SDA; Full Gospel and Jehovah's Witnesses. Baha'i were 0.6% and a very small number of Muslims were present (CIA 2008; USDS 2007).

Churches showing growth in membership were the LDS which had increased from 2.0% in 1992 and the AOG which had increased from 20.0% in the same period. The Reformed Congregational Church, Baha'i and SDA, each declined in memberships (Tenten 2006).

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution grants the right of 'free exercise' of religion and restrictions on religion cannot be imposed by governments unless religious activity interferes with 'public peace' and 'safety' or imposes on the 'rights of others'. Further the government may fund religious organisations in providing non-profit services for education and health (Constitution of the Marshall Islands 1998 (S1)). The Constitution also prevents the government from enacting laws that discriminate on the basis of religion (Constitution of the Marshall Islands 1998 (S12)). Religious organisations are not required to register with the government (Marshall Islands Journal 2001b). Government schools have no religious education. Included in public holidays are Christmas Day, Gospel Day – the first Friday of December – and Good Friday are public holidays.

Current Issues

Currently, there are no issues of social concern associated with religion.

Conclusion

The Marshall Islands are undergoing changes that are common to other island countries in that the LDS and the AOG are increasing their numbers. However there are no indications that religion is a factor with potentially negative influence on social stability or social cohesion. The major national issues of the Marshall Islands concern economic and environmental problems, for which the Christian Churches may have a positive social role to play.

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Federated States of Micronesia

Background

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a 1,700 mi section of the Caroline Islands which lie north of the equator in the Pacific Ocean between Palau and the Marshall Islands. FSM's 607 islands constitute four states: Yap is the most western; Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, the most eastern. The capital city and seat of national government is Palikir in Pohnpei. Indigenous people own most land in FSM though family trusts (Daye 2006; Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008a).

The last national Census of 2000 counted a total of 107,008 people of whom 53% were under 20 years old. The distribution between major Indigenous ethnic groups was Chuukese/Mortlockese, 49.5%; Pohnpeian, 24.6%; Kosraean, 6.3%; Yapese, 5.2%; and Yap Outer Islands, 4.6%. FSM's official language is English but there are also eight major Indigenous languages including Yapese, Chuukese, Pohnpeian and Kosraean. All children must attend school until Grade 8. About 97% of the population is Christian and are split roughly evenly between Catholics and Protestants (Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008b,c; CIA 2008; Daye 2006).

Current social, economic and political issues in FSM are unemployment which is estimated at 22% in 2000. FSM supports a slowing tourism industry, suffers from the depletion of fish stocks, relies on continuing aid dependence on the US, and faces serious climate change threats. By standards of economically developed countries FSM has significant poverty. In the early 2000s annual income was less than US $1,000 for about 44% of FSM residents. Also about 60% of consumed food came from subsistence fishing and farming. Shortages of clean running water are not unusual (BBCNews 2008; CIA 2008; Daye 2006).

History

Portuguese and Spanish sailors briefly sailed through the Caroline Islands in the sixteenth century. However, it was not until the nineteenth century that European boats passed frequently sometimes leaving castaways and deserters. Germany and

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Spain disputed control of the Caroline Islands and in 1885 the Pope awarded the Islands to the Spanish. The Caroline Islanders rebelled against their colonial rulers and after 14 years of confrontations Spain sold the Caroline Islands to Germany (Daye 2006; Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008d).

At the start of World War I in 1914 Japan annexed the Caroline Islands and continued as rulers after the War's end. Japanese migrants eventually became more than double the Indigenous population. Due to the Japanese presence the Caroline Islands sustained significant destruction in World War II. Then in 1947 the United Nations incorporated the Caroline Islands into the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands which included the Marshall Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands. The US accepted an appointment of Trustee (Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008d).

After years of dialogue and negotiation among the Trust Territory Islands the current islands of the FSM decided jointly to seek independence. The *Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia* came into being in 1979 and Independence became formal in 1986. Under the *Compact of Free Association*, signed with the US in 1982 the US has remained responsible for FSM's defence and security and continued to supply development aid. The *Compact* which was renewed in 2004 also allows FSM citizens to live, work and study in the US. Up to 15,000 FSM citizens, or about 14% of the total population, are currently living in US territories (BBCNews 2008; CIA 2008; Daye 2006; Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008c,d,e).

Religious Background

For the Indigenous religions of Pohnpei 'lesser Gods' or *ani* are associated with mundane objects and beings like small animals and trees and these 'lesser Gods' are able to harm living people. 'Greater Gods' are associated with more powerful things such as thunder. Priests of the Greater Gods take the roles of oracles, entering trances and answering questions (Damas 1985). For the Indigenous religion of Chuuk there are two realms of deities the 'upper realm' or sky and the lower realm which is below the earth and sea. The upper realm is inhabited by heavenly deities and the lower realm is inhabited by the creator of the islands and the guardian of fish. Humans, spirits and demons live in a dividing space between upper and lower realms. Spirits which associate with objects such as trees, reefs and driftwood, can take human form and may harm people. Differently, spirits of the dead are benevolent as long as they are not offended (Goodenough 2002).

In 1837 a French Catholic priest lived on Pohnpei for 6 months. However, the first formal Christian mission was a joint venture in the 1850s by the largely Congregationalist organisations, the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and the Hawaii Missionary Society (HMS). Nakayama (1987 in Daye 2006) holds that Indigenous conversions to Christianity were often associated with chiefs' hopes for trade opportunities. Damas (1985, 44) describes how the

ABCFM obtained ‘total conversion’ on the atoll of Pingelap – now in the state of Pohnpei after the ‘paramount chief’ chief accepted Christianity. In respect for their new faith the Pingelap Christians banned smoking, alcohol consumption, gambling and working on Sundays (Damas 1985).

The Spanish acquisition of the Caroline Islands in 1885 bought increased numbers of Catholic missionaries. The Spanish attempted to expel all Protestant missionaries in 1890 provoking violence between these missionaries and the Spanish military. German administrators continued to favour Catholics missionaries but the Japanese supported the Protestants and expelled German Catholics while allowing operations by Spanish Jesuits (Daye 2006). In the most recent counts of religious affiliations in FSM Roman Catholics and Protestants were still the largest Christian denominations in FSM. Since World War II other Christian Churches have also entered the country (CIA 2008; SBS 2004).

Religious Affiliations

Today FSM’s population is 97% Christian with 50% being Roman Catholic and 47% Protestant. Church attendances are ‘generally high’ and churches are significant to social life (USDS 2007). Protestants are largely represented by members of the United Church of Christ (UCC) which was the nominated church of 40.1% of the 2000 Census population. The Catholic population includes Filipino Catholic immigrants, while Indigenous religions are still practiced. (CIA 2008; Daye 2006, 518; SBS 2004; USDS 2007).

In Kosrae, 96% of locals is Protestant while Pohnpei has approximately even numbers of Catholics and Protestants. Chuuk and Yap are both about 40% Protestant and 60% Catholic. Other active churches in the FSM are the Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Calvary Baptist Church, Church of Christ, Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Filipino Iglesia Ni Cristo. Baha’i have also been in the FSM since at least 1971 and FSM has a small number of Buddhists (Daye 2006; USDS 2007).

The Roman Catholic Church maintains a Jesuit high school and an agricultural school. It also administers the Micronesian Seminar, a centre for pastoral training and social research. The UCC has at least one secondary school in FSM (Daye 2006).

Management of Religious Diversity

Article 4, Section 2 of the *Constitution* prohibits the government from creating a religion or obstructing the ‘exercise’ of religious practice. Article 4, Section 2 also specifically permits the government to support non-government schools including religious schools for non-religious purposes. Hence, despite the strong separation of religion and state, governments may fund religious based schools. Public schools

do not provide instruction in religion (Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008e; USDS 2007).

National holidays are celebrated for Christmas and Good Friday. The government also allows missionaries to practice freely. Possibly as a global demonstration of his government's commitment to Christianity the President, Emanuel Mori attended the 2008 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC which was addressed by George W Bush (Government of Federated States of Micronesia 2008f). The US State Department reports that Protestant churches have formed an Interdenominational Council in the last few years to address incidents of 'social problems' (USDS 2007).

Current Issues

FSM currently has no social or political problems associated with religious diversity. Factors more likely to upset social stability are unemployment, aid dependence and climate change. There are no emerging religious issues or factors that may aggravate or broaden pressures on FSM society.

Conclusion

Religion is not currently disruptive to the social stability of the FSM. Social cohesion with respect to religion is not marginalising to any particular groups and there are no reports of inter-religious or intra-religious tensions.

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Nauru

Background

Nauru is a phosphate-rich island in the South Pacific located 42 km south of the Equator (DFAT 2008). It is 21 km^2 in area and is 'one of the world's smallest independent, democratic states' (DFAT 2008). Nauru's population is estimated to be 13,800 in 2008 with ethic groups being Nauruan 58%, other Pacific Islanders 26%; Chinese, 8% and Europeans, 8%. Median age is 21 years and life expectancy is 63.8 years (CIA 2008). Most people live on the coast and the official language is Nauruan which does not resemble any other language in the Pacific. English is generally understood on the island. The small nation has no official capital city (BBCNews 2008; DFAT 2008; CIA 2008; NTDED 2007).

For many years Nauru earned export income from phosphate mining but operations have significantly declined as stocks have depleted which has left the government in major debt. Consequently, the economy is suffering and public services are deteriorating. The estimated unemployment rate in 2004 was 90%. Current industries include offshore banking, a developing tourism industry and new reserves of phosphates are being explored for future mining (CIA 2008; DFAT 2008; NTDED 2007). Main occupations are phosphate mining, public administration, transport and education (CIA 2008). Nauru's parliament has a single chamber with eighteen seats and is popularly elected. The head of state is the President (CIA 2008).

The first recorded visits by Europeans were from 1798 by whalers and traders. Nauru was administered by Germany from the late nineteenth century and phosphate was discovered in 1900. Nauru was annexed by Australian forces at the beginning of World War I and administered after the war by Britain, New Zealand and Australia in partnership. The Japanese occupied the Nauru in World War II after which the territory came under Australian administration. Nauru became independent in 1968 (NTDED 2007).

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Religious Affiliations

Nauru's population figures are not itemised in detail for religious groups. For the 2002 Census about two thirds of the population was reported to be 'Protestant' while the rest were reported as Roman Catholic. The only two registered Protestant churches were the Nauru Congregational Church and the Kirbati Protestant Church. The latter church was largely made up of Kiribati phosphate workers who were sent home in 2006. Hence the Kirbati Protestant Church has probably lost a significant portion of its members. Nauru also had small numbers Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) and Jehovah's Witnesses (CIA 2008; USDS 2007).

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution upholds religious freedom but the government can take action contrary to this right in order to defend public safety, order, morals or national security (Constitution of Nauru 1998 (S11, 1 and 4)). The government has used this clause to restrict proselytisation by foreign religionists. For example, in the early 2000s officers of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints were refused entry to the country (USDS2007) although since 2007 the government has issued visas to members of both churches to meet with co-religionists (USDS 2008). The Constitution also requires that no person under the age of 20 can be subject to religious education without their consent or the consent of their parents (Constitution of Nauru 1998 (S11, 3)).

The government maintains a general system of religion registration for religious organisations. The Roman Catholic Church, the Nauru Congregational Church and the Kirbati Protestant Church are registered with the government allowing them to conduct birth, death and marriage ceremonies (USDS 2007).

Current Issues

The US State Department reports that there are no major religious tensions in Nauru. Some Roman Catholics and Protestants have voiced dissatisfaction over the presence of certain 'foreign' religionists in the country. However, religion has not posed any significant threats to social stability and social cohesion (USDS 2007, 2008).

Conclusion

Nauru is a small country with serious economic issues. However, religious diversity among its Christian denominations is relatively limited and not a major social issue.

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New Caledonia

Background

New Caledonia is a set of islands and atolls in the Pacific Ocean located about 2,000 km northeast of Sydney of which the main island is Grand Terre. Other islands within New Caledonia are the Loyalty Islands group, the Ile des Pins and the Belep archipelago. New Caledonia is a ‘special territorial entity in the French republic’ (SBS 2004; Zocca 2006, 271) with a local elected president, while the head of state is while the president of France. Currently the nation is in a period of political change as independence referenda are planned starting in 2013 and 2018 (SBS 2008). The capital is Noumea.

In 2008 the estimated population of New Caledonia was 224,800; the median age was 28 years; and life expectancy was almost 75 years (CIA 2008). The major ethnic groups are Melanesian, 42.5% and European, 37.1%. Other ethnicities include Wallisian – from Wallis Island – Polynesian, Indonesian and Vietnamese (CIA 2008). Most Europeans are of French descent. Indigenous Melanesians proudly accept the name, ‘Kanaks’, and most live on Indigenous reserves. Most non-Indigenous residents live in the south particularly around Noumea (Zocca 2006). The official language is French but there are also 28 Indigenous languages. Hence the population is largely under thirty and ethnically varied with a significant portion of Europeans. Major industries are nickel mining and tourism. New Caledonia also receives aid from France (WCC 2006; BBC News 2008; CIA 2008; DFAT 2008).

The area of modern New Caledonia was first populated by Melanesians from approximately 1500 BCE and later by Polynesians. James Cook sighted Grand Terre in 1774 and named it New Caledonia. New Caledonia was administered by France from 1853 and until the 1890s as a penal colony (SBS 2004). French convicts were encouraged to settle. Algerian convicts bought Islam to New Caledonia. When convict labour was no longer available the administration encouraged the migration of labourers from Vietnam who bought Buddhism (Zocca 2006).

During World War II France recruited military units from New Caledonia and the US set up a base in Grand Terre that was visited by thousands of US military service people. After the War the Indigenous population received French citizenship

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but was allowed to live by 'customary laws'. Significant violence occurred between Europeans and pro-independence Kanaks in the 1980s (SBS 2008; Zocca 2006).

The London Missionary Society sent Samoans to New Caledonia from 1840. French Catholic missionaries arrived soon after from 1843. As in other parts of the Pacific early missionaries were murdered by locals. After taking control of New Caledonia in 1853 French administrators disallowed LMS activities on Grand Terre, however the LMS remained active on the Loyalty Islands creating a school for Indigenous people. After French Catholics arrived in the Loyalty Islands the two groups had violent altercations. French Troops arrived and eventually LMS activities were taken over by the French Reformed Church who later operated on the main island after 1895. The Missionaries bought new diseases and aggressive Kanaks suffered reprisal attacks by the French military (Zocca 2006).

However, by 1930, most indigenous people were Christian and after World War II the French Reformed Church in New Caledonia accepted autonomy and became the Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands. The Free Evangelical Church of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands broke away in 1958. The Catholic Church ordained Indigenous priests from 1946. By the 1970s Kanaks were pressuring churches to state their political standpoints regarding independence (Zocca 2006).

Other denominations and religions have also been present. Seventh Day Adventists missionaries arrived in 1925; Jehovah's Witnesses came in 1950; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in1961; and the New Apostolic Church arrived in 1982 (Zocca 2006). In the 1980s and 1990s several 'new religious movements' started recruiting in New Caledonia including the Church of Scientology, the Unification Church, Soka Gakkai, Krishna Consciousness, and Mahikari. Under pressure from Paris these groups have been 'monitored' by the local government (Zocca 2006, 285). Pentecostal Churches are also increasing in number and the major Protestant church, The Free Evangelical Church, has adopted Pentecostal modes of worship including public healing and adult baptisms (Zocca 2006).

Ecumenical activities such as prayer meetings among the Protestant Evangelical churches, which may also include the Catholic Church, are not uncommon. Catholics and Evangelicals also participate in education initiatives. Pentecostal churches do not tend to engage in interfaith activity. Many smaller churches and the Baha'i have been accused of stealing members from other religious groups which has bought about tension between some faiths (Zocca 2006).

Religious Affiliations

Approximate Religious affiliations are Roman Catholic 60%, Protestant 30%, and 'Other' 10% (CIA 2008; SBS 2008). Locals also practice various indigenous beliefs (BBC News 2008). The World Council of Churches reports that the Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands is the largest of the Protestant churches (WCC 2006). It had an estimated 32,500 members in 2003, most of whom were Kanaks (Zocca 2006).

Zocca (2006) estimated that in 2003 Pentecostal Churches made up 1.4% of the population with the largest group being the Assembly of God. Other major Pentecostal groups were, according to Zocca (2006), El Shaddai Congregation, Ni-Vanuatu Assembly of God and the Neil Thomas Ministries which is based in Melbourne. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) was 0.7%; Jehovah's Witnesses were 0.8%; and Muslims were 2.5%. New Caledonia has long had small numbers of Jews but they have no district Rabbi and only one synagogue (Zocca 2006). Baha'i local assemblies have operated in Noumea since 1962 (Hassall 2005).

Between 1988 and 2003 the population had an annual growth rate of 2.4%, but according to Zocca (2006) the Catholic Church, Protestant Evangelical Reformed churches, Adventists, and Muslims each grew by lower rates. By comparison groups expanding at greater annual rates were Pentecostal Churches, 14.9%; LDS, 3.9%; Jehovah's Witnesses, 20.7; and Baha'i, 6.0% (Zocca 2006).

Members of the Pentecostal Churches are mostly Kanaks, while most LDS members are French Polynesian, although new members are largely Kanaks. The closest temple of the LDS is in Fiji and they have a genealogy centre in Noumea. They also sponsor public sport and entertainment, host welfare services and support members in education and employment (Zocca 2006). The Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is known as Sanitos in New Caledonia. The organisation ordains female clerics and accepts homosexuals as members. It has about 300 members (Zocca 2006).

In researching the flow of worshippers from the Protestant Evangelical churches to the smaller organisations Zocca (2006) found that people were attracted to the more enthusiastic modes of worship and baptism by immersion. Zocca also found that church unity is not an important issue for New Caledonian Protestants who are more likely to be interested in personal salvation and feel less bound to stay in the established Protestant Churches. Zocca also holds that for Indigenous people living outside their 'traditional cultures' in towns the smaller churches allow a 'loosening of bonds' with customary life, empowering them in their present social environments (Zocca 2006, 294).

Managing Religious Diversity

New Caledonia is subject to French principle of *laicite* – definite separation of State and Church. As a consequence state schools offer no religious instruction and the government bureaucracy cannot seek information on citizens' religious identities (Zocca 2006).

Current Issues

Religion is a not currently a significant factor with respect to social stability. If religious groups were to become closely involved with pro- or anti-independence movements religion could become a significant factor for social stability. Independence referenda are to be held in a few years but no religious groups have become highly involved.

Conclusion

The religious landscape of New Caledonia is changing as people turn to the Pentecostal, LDS and other churches. The country has some potential for volatility on the issue of independence but religion remains insignificant to continued stability.

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Northern Marianas

Background

The Northern Marianas lie in the Pacific Ocean above the equator and include 14 islands. The main islands are Rota, Tinian and Saipan. In 2006 the estimated population was 86,600, median age being 30 years and life expectancy 76.5 years (BBCNews 2008; CIA 2008).

The Northern Marianas form a political unit that has a very close relationship, indeed a 'political union', with the United States' (CIA 2008). While it has an elected governor and senate and its own constitution, the people of the Northern Marianas have US citizenship, their head of state is the US President, and their law is subject to rulings of the US Federal Court (SBS 2004). The capital is Siapan.

Between the end of World War II and 1978 the Northern Marianas were part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and administered by the US (SBS 2008). Previously the islands were administered by Spain, Germany and Japan (SBS 2008). The Northern Marianas was a major battle site between Japanese and US troops in World War II (Marianas Visitors Authority 2008).

The entire Marianas islands which include Guam were settled by Indo-Malaysian groups about 3,000 years ago. They later became known to Europeans as Chamorros. Magellan reached Guam in 1521 and the first Spanish missionary, Catholic Friar Sanvitores, began a missionary colony in 1668. There was both conflict and intermarriage between the locals and colonists who included Spanish soldiers, Mexicans, the Tagalogs who are a Filipino ethnic group, and Micronesians from the Caroline Islands. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Spain sold the Marianas to Germany. The islands were invaded by the Japanese in World War I and thousands of Japanese settled (Marianas Visitors Authority 2008).

The major ethnic groups according to the 2000 Census were 'Asian', 56%; Pacific Islander, 36.3%; Caucasian, 1.8%; 'mixed', 4.8%; and 'other', 0.8%. The Northern Marianas is a multilingual nation as Philippine languages, Chinese and Chamorro are each spoken by over 20% of the population. English, 'Pacific Island', and 'other' languages are each the first language of about 10% of the population (CIA 2008).

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Foreign workers make up about 30% of the labour force. The major industry is tourism but the Northern Marianas also have agriculture including coconuts and breadfruit. In 2005 the garment industry was the greatest source of exports and also employed significant numbers of foreign Chinese workers (CIA 2008). The garment industry has contracted since 2005 eliminating significant numbers of jobs for the foreign Chinese (SBS 2004).

Religious Affiliations

The CIA (2008) reports the 'majority' of Marianas Islanders are Catholic, and that folk-religion is also practiced.

Managing Religious Diversity

The government of the Northern Marianas appears not to have any policies regarding the management of religious diversity.

Current Issues

Religion is not a disruptive factor to social stability. The country appears to have a society with no pressures toward disruption, such as movements for independence or experiences of ethnic tension.

Conclusion

The society of the Northern Marianas operates smoothly. There are no major social issues and religion appears not to be a force with the potential to inspire negative social events.

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Palau

Background

Palau is in the Northern Pacific ocean located South East of the Philippines. It is the most western part of the Caroline Islands and has over 300 islands in six groups. Its area is relatively small at 458 km^2 and is about two and a half times bigger than Washington DC (CIA 2008). It is a constitutional republic (SBS Palau 2004).

The estimated population in July 2008 was 21,000 with a median age of 32 years and life expectancy 71 years. The capital is Melekeok and the major language is Palauan but according to the 2000 Census other significant languages are English, Filipino, Japanese Carolinian, Chinese, and 'Other Asian' (CIA 2008). The major ethnic group is Palauan which is a hybrid ethnicity combining Micronesian, Malayan and Melanesian. In the 2000 Census Palauan were 70% of the population while Filipinos were 15%, Chinese 5%, Carolinian 1%, and 'Other Asian', 2% (CIA 2008).

Palau was part of the US administered United Nations Trust Territory set up after World War II. As part of the Caroline Islands, Palau shares much modern colonial history with the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) being colonised in turn by Spanish, German, and Japanese before post-World War II administration by the US (BBC 2007). It was a major site of US Japanese battles in World War II. Palau gained independence in 1994, is a member of the United Nations and a member of the South Pacific Forum (SBS 2004). It maintains a 'compact of free association' with the United States whereby the US maintains two military bases and takes responsibility for the nation's defence. The capital is Melekeok and the largest city is Koror (CIA 2008; SBS 2004).

Palau's tourism industry is still growing and it mainly exports agricultural products and tuna (SBS 2004). Inhabitants of Palau have a relatively high per capita income are about 50% greater than the Philippines (CIA 2008). It still receives substantial aid from the US and Taiwan (BBC 2007).

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Religious Affiliations

As at the 2000 Census the major religious groups were Catholic at 41.6%, Evangelical Church at 22.9%, and 'None' or 'refused' at 16.4% of the population. Modeknegi, an Indigenous religion was 8.8%; and Seventh Day Adventists, 5.3%. Jehovah's Witnesses were 0.9%; Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, 0.6% and 'Other Protestants', 0.4%. At that time Palau also had a small population of Bangladeshi Muslims (CIA 2008).

The distribution of religions differs across Palau's states. Evangelicals were 70% in Ngchesar but only 4.3% in Hatohobei. Modeknegi was 64.5% in Kayangel, and Catholics varied between 100% in Sonsori to 91.3% in Hatohobei and 8.2% in Ngatpang (Palau Office of Planning and Statistics 2004, 83).

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution denies governments the right to 'impair' religious freedom. The government may not establish a state religion but it cannot give funding to religious schools for non-religious purposes (Constitution of the Republic of Palau 1979, S(1)). Further the government may not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their religion (Constitution of the Republic of Palau 1979, S(5)). However, the government does not allow religious instruction in public schools (USDS 2007).

Religious organisations must obtain charters as non-profit organisations. This is to the advantage of religious organisations which become exempt from tax. Foreign missionaries need a permit from the Office of Immigration. Christmas day is a public holiday (USDS 2007).

Current Issues

Religion is not a factor in any negative social issues in Palau.

Conclusion

Palau has a stable society. Its stability is under no threat or adverse influence from religious groups.

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Samoa

Background

Samoa is a mainly Polynesian nation whose territory comprises nine volcanic islands. It is located roughly 3,000 km north-east of Auckland, New Zealand. Two islands, Savai'i and Upolu, comprise 99% of the nation's territory (BBCNews 2007). The capital is Apia. Formerly known as Western Samoa and located near to modern American Samoa the territory adopted the more simple title of Samoa in 1997. The CIA estimated the population in July 2008 at 217,000. Most people live in urban areas while increasing numbers of Samoans have been leaving the country. The median age is 20.6 years and life expectancy is 71.5 years. Ethnic Samoans make up 93% of the population and people of mixed European and Polynesian blood are seven% (CIA 2008).

The main industry is agriculture, the most significant crops being coconut, bananas and coffee products. The county is a site of food processing industries and the production of automotive parts. Large sources of revenue for the economy are foreign aid and money sent home by Samoans working abroad (CIA 2008; SBS 2006). Land is held in trust by tribal chiefs for families and is a major aspect of family identity. Pressures to sell 'customary' land for urban development threaten the institutional status of families (Ernst 2006a).

New Zealand had managed Samoa since the start of World War I in 1914 when it took over from Germany. Samoa achieved independence from New Zealand in 1962 and, indeed, was the first Pacific Island nation to gain independence (Ernst 2006a). The Samoan state is a constitutional monarchy in which Monarchs are Head of State. Monarchs are not appointed for life but are chosen for 5 year terms by the Legislative Council which is headed by the Prime Minister (SBS 2006).

Samoan society is 'devoutly Christian' (BBCNews 2007). Samoans are under strong peer pressure in their villages to participate in church services and contribute to church funds. Most religions and Christian denominations in Samoa have incorporated local customs (USDS 2007). A common motto is, 'Samoa is founded on God' (WWRN 2002). Further, Ernst (2006a, 547) holds, 'it would be hard to find any other nation in the world where society and the churches are so closely interwoven'.

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John Williams, a member of the London Missionary Society, came to Samoa in 1830, with Tahitian converts. He quickly won local converts and proclaimed the *Lotu Tahiti,* or Church of Tahiti, as the Church of Samoa, which then consolidated and grew. At the same time, Christianity was spreading through the efforts of others. A Samoan by the name of Saivaaia went to Tonga around 1828, converted to Wesleyan Christianity, returned and began spreading his faith. A Methodist missionary, Peter Turner, arrived in 1835. He left in 1839 when the LMS and the Methodist Church agreed that Samoa would be the 'field' of the LMS while Fiji and Tonga would be exclusive to Methodist Church missionaries. However, Turner left behind a church of 3,000 members and 80 chapels. The London Missionary Society claimed to have schools and chapels in most villages by 1841, and in 1844 the LMS established the Malua Theological College (Ernst 2006a).

The LMS was self sufficient but it did not become autonomous until 1961 when its church became the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) and locals began running and financing all affairs. A split occurred in 1980 when the Church's District of American Samoa decided to become autonomous, its members claiming that they were contributing too much to the support of the CCCS infrastructure in Western Samoa. The CCCS had six schools in 2005. Villagers select and financially support their ministers with whom they expect a close and life long relationship (Ernst 1996, 2006a).

Given that Peter Turner had left behind a consolidated mission in 1835, Methodism was able to survive his departure. Samoa's Methodist Church also had support from Tongan Methodists. The mission officially opened again in 1855. In 1868 the Methodists opened the Piula Theological College which still operates today. The Samoan Methodist Church became officially independent in 1963. The Church has been able to largely support itself through school fees, donations and rents. In the early 2000s the Church has three secondary schools and a primary school. It has synods not only in Samoa but also in Australia and New Zealand (Ernst 1996, 2006a).

Catholics arrived in 1845 with the work of a group of Marist Brothers which included French and Samoans. Tension existed between the Catholics and Protestants until the Second Vatican Council of 1962 since when ecumenism has been a feature of the Catholic Church. The liturgy of the Mass, since Vatican II in the vernacular, was in Samoan and certain aspects of local culture were also incorporated. Most Catholic priests in Samoa are Samoan. In 2002 there were 42 religious and diocesan priests, 110 Marist Brothers and Sisters, and at over 600 seminarians. The Catholic Church has become more independent of overseas donors and in 2001 raised about 35% of its own budget. In each village Church finances are managed by committees of lay people (Ernst 2006a).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) arrived in 1888 and had 80 members in 2 years. The Book of Mormon was first translated into Samoan in 1902. By the 1950s the LDS had 7,000 members. The LDS have a small number of schools through which they have converted significant numbers of members. The LDS has a large temple in Pesega and offers satellite broadcasts of church services. It also has over 400 employees and grants scholarships and humanitarian aid. Ernst holds that the LDS may be the largest church in Samoa in a century (Ernst 2006a). Ernst (2006b) also estimated that in 2005, LDS were 16.5% of the population in American Samoa.

Seventh Day Adventists have been in Samoa since at least the early twentieth century but only had 250 members by the 1950s. By 2001 they had 92 places of worship and included over 6,000 members. Jehovah's Witnesses have grown from the 1950s to over 1,300 members (Ernst 2006a).

The Assemblies of God (AOG) first came to American Samoa in 1926. In 1952 AOG missionaries received permission to work in Western Samoa and in 1967 an AOG branch was finally set up there. The AOG is the fastest growing church in Samoa and has been able to draw on the material resources of other branches of the AOG around the world. The Samoan AOG now trains female pastors and over 1,000 Samoan members live in other countries (Ernst 2006). Other Pentecostal/Charismatic groups include the Samoa Peace Chapel which was initiated by the AOG in the 1970s, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Worship Centre Christian Church.

There are also small numbers of Baha'i, Jews and Muslims (USDS 2007). In 1953 the territory government of Western Samoa refused entry to a Baha'i missionary claiming that the 'comparative peace surrounding religious matters' might be disturbed (Hassall 2005, 209). Later the King, Malieatoa Tanumafili II, became the first monarch anywhere to convert to Baha'i.

In 2007 representatives of the Church of Scientology arrived in Samoa on a publicised 'good will tour' to promote their beliefs among villagers. The representatives also had a well publicised promotion event (Netzler 2007). There was a protest march at a Scientology meeting on the grounds of government buildings in Apia although the march was peaceful (USDS 2008).

In 1969 the National Council of Churches in Samoa was formed by the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, and the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. It now also includes the Baptist Church, the Church of the Nazarene, the Congregational Christian Church of Jesus, and the Ecumenical Fellowship of Women among its ten members. The NCCS has funded programs confronting social problems like AIDS and domestic violence (Ernst 2006a).

Religious Affiliations

According to the 2001 Census religious affiliations were Congregationalist, 34.7%; Roman Catholic, 19.7%; Methodist, 15.0%; LDS, 12.7%; AOG, 6.6%; Seventh Day Adventist, 3.5%; and Worship Centre, 1.3% (CIA 2008).

A number of other Christian groups are also present, including the Church of the Nazarene, the Voice of Christ, Peace Chapel Baptists, Samoan Evangelists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Full Gospel, and the Elim Church. Even smaller Christian denominations include the Independence Church of Tonga, the Free Church of Tonga, Alofa Tunoa Pentecostal Church, and the New Apostolic Church. The Anglican Church is also represented, though in comparatively small numbers (Ernst 2006a).

Ernst (2006a) reports significant defections from the Congregational Church which between the Census of 1961 and 2001 dropped from a national population portion of

54.5% to 34.7%. Increases in adherents of The LDS have been significant growing since 1961 from 6.3% to a portion in 2001 of 12.7. Smaller Pentecostal churches have also had relatively significant growth, for example the Worship Christian Centre, which already has over 1% of the population but is only 10 years old. Ernst notes that the Samoan branch of the AOG had the highest growth rate of any church since the 1970s and in 2002 had 64 churches and two Bible colleges. Both the AOG and the LDS have significant numbers of Samoan members living outside the country.

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution upholds freedom of religion with provisions banning discrimination and persecution on religious grounds. Although there is no state religion, the Constitution describes Samoa as a nation based on 'Christian principles'. Faith-based schools may be formed but students must not be forced to receive religious education or participate in worship of religions other than their own (Constitution of the Independent State of Western Samoa 1960 (S11, S12 and Introduction)). Public events customarily commence with Christian prayer (USDS 2007).

Current Issues

Religious freedom, which is guaranteed in the Constitution, is currently being challenged within village societies. Since the late 1990s a number of village governing groups have taken very decisive and aggressive action to stop unapproved Christians from operating in their area.

For example, at the extreme end, a group of chiefs in a Samoan village tortured five men and destroyed their homes in1998 for practicing a religion that was not Methodism. The men claimed to be holding a Bible study and prayer meeting in a home. The chiefs had decreed that Methodism was the only religion to be practiced in the area of their village of Salamumu, on the island of Upolu. The men were tied up and dumped two kilometres away from the village and their families were barred from returning to their homes. The Salamumu chiefs were attacked in the media by leaders of the Catholic Church and the Congregational Christian Church (Radio Australia 1998a, b).

In August 2000, 54 members of a Bible school from the village of Falealupo on the island of Savai'i were jailed for violating a village limit on the number of Bible classes per week. The Samoa Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Bible school citing the Constitution's guarantee of religious freedom. The Bible study class had been threatened with expulsion from the village on being released from prison. A similar incident occurred previously in another Savai'i village, Saipipi (Sagpolutele 2000). In September 2000 the Lands and Titles Court told the group and their families numbering over 200 people to leave Falealupo and removed the house in which they conducted the illegal Bible studies (Lesa 2000). Also in September 2000, Samoa's National

Council of Churches asked for a Constitutional change to limit the number of different religious groups in the country. The National Council cited threats to the authority of village Chiefs and the stability of Samoan society and requested formal powers for village chiefs to limit church numbers (Polu and Keresoma 2000).

Another incident occurred in Falealupo in 2002 when villagers allegedly threatened to remove 40 residents for holding a Bible study class in a 'faith not considered mainstream'. The Council of Chiefs had granted the group the right to conduct Bible studies in 1987 but on a limited scale (Radio New Zealand 2003). The group then built a school that was demolished by the Village council and people in the class were forced from their homes and taken from the village in a truck (Samoa News 2002). The families relocated to Apia and were reported to be 'enjoying relative peace' and had no plans to take action against the Falealupo Chief's Council (Tavita 2002). In 2003 the Supreme Court declared the action of the Council as unconstitutional (Radio New Zealand 2003)

In April of 2002 five people where banished from the village of Lotoso'a for attending AOG services outside the village. The only acceptable religious groups in Lotoso'a are The Catholic Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and The Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (Samoa News 2002). However the Council mediated with the groups and the matter was settled after a court ruled that the worshippers could return to the village as long as they held their services elsewhere (Radio New Zealand 2004). The village of Samaamea banned 'new religions' in 2002 (WWRN 2002).

In 2007 the *Lands and Titles Court* ruled that a Seventh Day Adventist group had to gain traditional permission from senior village figures in the village of Safa'atoa Lefaga before holding a religious service. The court held that traditional practices have priority over personal freedoms given by the Constitution (USDS 2007).

Conclusion

In Samoa there there are conflicts between the national Constitution and village authorities with respect to religious belief and practice. This has led to violence and repression of groups outside those approved by village governments. While the violence is not likely to fracture social cohesion of the nation it is leading to denials of religious freedom for adherents of denominations and religions which are relatively new to Samoa. Potential therefore exists for greater repression and resistance if these religious groups grow or inspire aggressive resistance.

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Solomon Islands

Background

The Solomon Islands are a chain of 922 islands and atolls (AusAid 2007) east of Papua New Guinea. The major islands are Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Malaita, Santa Isabel, Choiseul and Makira (Global Education 2007). The capital city is Honiara. The CIA's (CIA 2008) estimate of the national population for 2007 was 566,842 with a median age of only 19.1 years. The 1999 Census found that 94.5% of the population was of Melanesian ethnicity; while 3% were Polynesian; and 1.2%, Micronesian (CIA 2008). The official language of the Solomon Islands is English but Melanesian Pidgin is the most common. The Solomon Islands also has over 90 Indigenous languages (Ernst 2006; Global Education 2007). In 1999 over 90% of the population were Christian and the Anglican Church of Melanesia was the largest church with about third of the total population (Ernst 2006). 'Customary' or Indigenous religious beliefs are also practiced (Fugui and Butu 1989).

In 1893 the eastern Solomon Islands became a protectorate of Britain while Germany administered the western Islands. Germany ceded its area to Britain in 1899 putting all the Solomons under British control (DFAT 2008). In World War II, the Solomon Islands suffered heavy fighting between the Allies and Japanese (CIA 2008). The Solomons achieved self government in 1976 and full independence in 1978 (BBCNews 2007) immediately joining the Commonwealth of Nations. The British monarch continues to be the head of state (DFAT 2008).

In 1998 ethnic tensions turned to violence in Guadalcanal between locals and settlers from Malaita. The locals believed the Malaitans were acquiring an inappropriate share of Guadalcanal's land and gaining an unfair share of employment. The Isatubu Freedom Movement (IFM) – believed to be largely Catholic (Ernst 2006) – claimed to represent the Indigenous people of Guadalcanal and evicted about 20,000 Malaitans. The Malaitans responded by forming the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) (BBCNews 2007). In 2000 the MEF and some police abducted Prime Minister, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, motivating his resignation (BBCNews 2007). This incident was significant as it demonstrated the government's inability to protect even itself. Violence between the ethnic militias continued for 4 years (DFAT 2008).

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By 2003 civil order had declined further and the Prime Minister, Sir Allen Kemakeza formally approached Australia for assistance. A scheme involving Australia and New Zealand was arranged under the title the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). RAMSI included economic aid and troops who disarmed ethnic militias (CIA 2008). More violence and civil rioting occurred in 2006 when Snyder Rini became Prime Minister prompting Australian and New Zealand to join forces with local authorities to restore order. In December 2007 Derek Sikua became the new Prime Minister (DFAT 2008).

The violence has been largely inter-ethnic rather than inter religious. However, in 2003 missionaries were killed in the fighting. A further six Anglican missionaries of the Melanesian Brotherhood were murdered in August, by the Guadalcanal Liberation Front (BBCNews 2007; Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation 2008). In addition, religious groups and in particular the Anglican religious orders of The Melanesian brotherhood, the Society of St Francis, the Sisters of the Church and the Sisters of Melanesia were directly involved in securing and end to hostilities and peace building (Carter 2007). They did this by offering places of sanctuary, tending to the wounded and bereaved, not taking sides and not retaliating when one of their own was injured of killed in the fighting (Carter 2007, 246–255)

In recent years the Solomon Islands' economy has shown steady growth but over 80% of the population still subsist on fishing and agriculture (AusAid 2007) and health and domestic sanitation services are inefficient (Ernst 2006). Education is not compulsory. While most children attend primary school not all attend high school and there are no universities (Ernst 2006). The Solomon Islands currently have environmental problems of deforestation and dying coral reefs (CIA 2008). Civil unrest has also been a major problem and Australia and New Zealand have on request of the government sent security assistance.

The first recorded European contact with the Solomon Islands occurred in 1568 when the Spanish sailor, Alvaro de Mendana arrived at Santa Isabel and Franciscans celebrated mass on the shore (Ernst 2006; Fugui and Butu 1989). The first Christian missionaries came much later in the 1840s when a team of French Marist Brothers arrived to begin what would be an unsuccessful mission. Melanesian Anglican missionaries then arrived in the 1850s and probably due to being of the same ethnicity as the locals managed to establish a long term station (Ernst 2006). Now known as the Church of Melanesia this Anglican Church is the largest in the Solomon Islands and in the early 1990s was first or second largest church in most provinces (Ernst 1996). Methodist missionaries first arrived in the Solomons in 1902. In 1968 the Methodists merged with the Congregationalists and formed the United Church (Ernst 1996).

Between 1870 and 1914 about 30,000 male Solomon Islanders left to work in sugar plantations in Fiji and Australia (Ernst 2006). In Australia local Christian evangelical groups like the Queensland Kanaka Mission (QKM) successfully converted many of these labourers. The QKM was a non-denominational organisation and later became the South Sea Evangelical Mission (Burt 1994, 107).

The Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church has operated in the Solomon Islands since 1914. Today the organisation has several schools, medical facilities and disaster relief programs. Jehovah's Witnesses have been actively recruiting the Solomons

since the late 1940s. Their literature was banned from the 1950s until the 1970s. They have since consolidated with a number of assemblies but have had trouble expanding given their disciplinary expectations on members.

The Christian Outreach Centre – a ‘charismatic fundamentalist’ – church has operated in the Solomons in affiliation with its Australian branch since 1989. It has a Bible college. The AOG arrived in the early 1970s and has grown to include a number of assemblies and has opened a Bible college. The Rhema Family Church in the Solomon Islands is a breakaway organisation from the Church of Melanesia which began operating in the 1980s. It is affiliated with the Rhema Churches of Australia and the United States. The Christian Outreach Centre, AOG and the Rhema Church have collaborated (Ernst 1996) although the AOG have resisted efforts to interchange clergy (Ernst 2006). The Church of the Living Word split from the Rhema Family. The first members of the Church of Nazarene began working in the Solomons in 1982 and by the early 2000s had about four ministers and a school. It has close links with the Church of Nazarene in Papua New Guinea. Other viable and noteworthy churches include: The Bible Centre, which is a breakaway group from the South Sea Evangelical Church; the Christian Revival Crusade; and the Kingdom Harvest Ministries International (Ernst 1996, 2006).

Today, Christian denominations are concentrated in different areas according to the distribution of past missionary activity. The Western Province has a large portion of United Church members; Guadalcanal has a significant portion of all Roman Catholics, and the city of Honiara holds a large portion of the Anglican Church of Melanesia (Ernst 2006; USDS 2007). The major ecumenical organisation is the Solomon Islands Christian Association which includes the Church of Melanesia, the South Sea Evangelical Church, the United Church, the Roman Catholic and the Seventh Day Adventist Church (Ernst 1996, 2006).

‘Customary’ or Indigenous religious beliefs of the Solomon Islands recognise the concept of mana: the ‘spiritual power that assists people to achieve success in their aims and activities’ (Fugui and Butu 1989, 78). Mana can manifest in objects or people and is associated with material rewards, leadership, wisdom, courage, spiritual strength and righteousness. It is commonly believed that spirits of the dead remain on the earth staying close by the living. Spirits of the dead may also enter the bodies of animals. Solomon Islanders may keep the skulls of their deceased kin from whom they sometimes ask for favours. Magic and sorcery are also common aspects of Indigenous beliefs (Fugui and Butu 1989).

Religious Affiliations

Official statistics from the Solomon Island Government were not available at the time of writing. However, according to a US State Department’s 2007 report the Anglican Church of Melanesia represented 35% of the total population; Roman Catholics, 19%; South Sea Evangelical, 17%; United Church, 11%; and SDA, 10% – hence about 92% of the Solomon Islanders were members of one of this group of

five churches. There were also small percentages of LDS, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unification Church members, Indigenous Christian churches, as well as Muslims and Baha'i (USDS 2007).

There were just over 2000 Baha'i in the Solomon Islands in 1999. Baha'i local assemblies have been in Honiara since 1957 (Hassall 2005). Evangelical churches were converting increasing numbers of Solomon Islanders from their 'Customary Religions' (CIA 2008; Ernst 2006; USDS 2007). The 'No Religion/Not Stated' category comprised 2,203 or 0.5% of the total population (Ernst 2006).

Ernst (2006) reports that between 1986 and 1999, the Solomon Islands population increased by 43.4%. All the larger Christian Churches increased their memberships by percentages that were not significantly different except for Seven Day Adventists who had a significantly greater increase of 62.2%. Census participants nominating, 'Customary Beliefs' decreased by 56.8%.

The category,' Other Religions' was only 17,729 in 1999 but had increased from 4,079 in 1986, or by 323.6%. The 1999 figure included recent converts from 'Customary Beliefs' to Evangelical and Pentecostal Christian groups. Such evangelical churches included Christian Outreach; Assemblies of God; the Church of the Living Word; the Baptist Church; and the Rhema Church. None of these churches had members in 1986. Hence there had been increases in memberships among evangelical and Pentecostal Christian groups.

Managing Religious Diversity

The Solomon Islands' Constitution acknowledges citizens' rights to religious freedom. The Department of Home Affairs requires formal registration from all religious groups (USDS 2007).

Some schools are administered by religious organisations including the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of Melanesia, the United Church and the South Seas Evangelical Church. Faith-based schools receive subsidies on government approval of their curricula. Public schools have a non-compulsory hour of religious instruction every day. Religious education is usually planned and taught by churches. Non-Christian religion instruction is permitted but was not occurring in 2007 (Ernst 2006; USDS 2007).

The Solomon Islands government declared 2008 the Year of the Bible (Kuy 2008). A version of the Bible was printed in Solomon Islands Pidgin and Bible readings were sponsored by the government on public radio (ABC Online 2008). The government also promised $400,000 for further associated projects (ABC Online 2008; Kuy 2008).

Current Issues

Religion has not been a negative factor in the social and political problems of the Solomon Islands. No reported violence or other tensions between groups is occurring with respect to religion per se. Further, there are no emerging or potential religious

threats to social stability. Religious groups have been active in promoting peace and reconciliation among otherwise disaffected groups.

Conclusion

The Solomon Islands is recovering from major social and political problems. Principal churches seem to have good relations and are able to work together. The resources of churches and their cooperation may support the Solomon's progress in achieving stability and national self reliance. Consistent with this goal, the Anglican Church of Melanesia has announced programs to teach skills in business management, leadership, and agriculture (Gito 2008).

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Tonga

Background

Known also as 'the Friendly Islands' (CIA 2008), Tonga has about 170 islands in an area comparable to that of Japan. Religiously, Tonga is a 'deeply conservative Christian country' BBCNews (2008).

The 2006 census reports Tonga's population as 101,991 with a median age of 22 years and life expectancy of 70 (Tonga Department of Statistics 2009). Almost all Tongans are Polynesian. Tonga is a former British protectorate which received full independence in 1970. The capital is Nuku'alofa. The official language is Tongan but English is the language of government administration. There is significant migration to Australia, New Zealand and the United States (CIA 2008; Vakaoti 2006).

Tonga's system of government is influenced by traditional political structures and norms (CIA 2008). Tonga is the only remaining Island nation with a local monarchy (BBCNews 2008). The King appoints the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. The parliament has a Legislative Assembly with 32 seats of which nine are elected. Other seats are occupied by 'nobles' and officers appointed by the King (CIA 2008). In 1999, the Crown Prince of Tonga attacked Christianity and its influence on Tongan law claiming that the country had 'laws inspired by totally medieval interpretations of the scriptures' (Pacnews 1999).

Most of the population lives on subsistence agriculture (SBS 2004). On reaching 16 years of age males may claim a parcel of about 3 ha of land (Vakaoti 2006). Tonga also imports a significant amount of food and the country has relatively high unemployment, inflation and pressures for political reform (CIA 2008). The departure of many potentially skilled people is a factor inhibiting economic development (Vakaoti 2006). Tonga's exports are mainly agricultural and the nation depends on foreign aid and remittances from Tongans working overseas. Tonga also has a tourism industry (SBS 2004).

Although Wesleyan missionaries first arrived in Tonga in 1797 Wesleyan Christianity only made significant numbers of conversions from1834 the year remembered as the 'Tongan Pentecost' (Vakaoti 2006). The future King George Tupou I was among the first converts and much later in 1885 he created the Free

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Church of Tonga (FCT) as a separate institution from the Wesleyan Mission. Most Tongans followed their King into the new Church.

In 1924 most members of the FCT reunited with the Free Wesleyan Church to form the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga (FWCT). It became the largest church having 58% of the population in 1931. The King remains the head of the FWCT which now also manages a number of schools. Vakaoti (2006) points out that the FWCT has become more progressive having ordained female ministers since 1990. However, it is now declining in membership due to emigration and the rise of 'new' churches.

At the time of the1924 reunification some FCT members chose to remain separate as the FCT and formed a group that broke away in 1928 forming the Church of Tonga (CT). The FCT split again in 1979 when members left to form the Free Constitutional Church (FCC).

In 1978, the Tokaikolo Christian Fellowship (TCF) broke from the FWCT. The TCF has expanded to New Zealand, Australia and the USA. First leader Rev. Senituli Koloi was a charismatic healer. The TCF now has a number of schools (Vakaoti 2006).

The Roman Catholic Church began to grow significantly in 1851 and has become a major church in Tonga. It has indigenous pastors and is active in social issues and social welfare. It runs health clinics and schools. The Anglican Church has been active in Tonga since the early twentieth century and is a public voice on social issues (Vakaoti 2006).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) first sent missionaries in 1891 and again in 1907. Legislation was passed to exclude missionaries from the LDS in 1922 but rescinded in 1924. A school was founded in 1953 and Tongan LDS missionaries went overseas in 1978. Converts can receive education in the USA and the church provides support with housing in Tonga (Vakaoti 2006).

Seventh Day Adventists came to Tonga in 1899. They maintain a small number of schools, a weekly radio program and have a declining membership. The Jehovah's Witnesses have been present in Tonga since the 1960s and they were officially recognised by the government in the 1980s. The Salvation Army is also present with about 200 members and is noteworthy for their concern about social issues like crime and substance abuse (Vakaoti 2006).

Baha'i local assemblies have been active in Nuku'alofa since 1958 (Hassall 2005). They currently claim about 3,500 members but have no temple in Tonga (Vakaoti 2006)

The Assemblies of God (AOG) first came to Tonga in 1966. After 1976, the AOG grew by 20% annually and in 1996 had over 1,000 members including significant numbers of converts from the majority Wesleyan churches and the Catholic Church. In 1992 it has 16 pastors practicing full time (Ernst 1996; Tonga Department of Statistics 2002). The Church on the Rock began in Tonga under the supervision of the AOG in the early 1990s. In 2005 it had about 100 members. It may be the only cross cultural church in the country having Chinese members for whom it conducts some services in Mandarin (Vakaoti 2006).

The New Apostolic Church was only registered in 1994 and in 2005 had about 60 or 70 members. The New Life Church, a Pentecostal church, arrived from New Zealand in the 1970s. In 2005 it had about 180 members. The Tonga Fellowship Revival had about 100 members in 2005. The United Pentecostal Church came to Tonga in 1984 and in 2005 had approximately 200 members (Vakaoti 2006). Vakaoti (2006, 636) holds that the 'new churches' are characterised by 'a conservative stand focusing solely on individual spirituality without any interest in social or political issues'.

In 1973 the Tonga National Council of Churches was created. Today members are the FWCT, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the FCC. The FCT is an observer (Vakaoti 2006).

Religious Affiliations

The 2006 Tongan Census figures report that those identifying with the FWCT were 37.3% which was down from 41% a decade earlier, Roman Catholic 15.6%, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 16.8% a substantial increase from 13.8 a decade ago, The FCT 11.4%, The CT, 7.2%, Tokaikolo Christian Church 3.0%, Seventh Day Adventists 2.5%, AOG 2.5%, Anglican 0.7%, and 'All Others', 2.5% (Tonga Department of Statistics. 2009). Tonga also presently has very small numbers of Muslims and Hindus (USDS 2007) and unofficially a significant number of Baha'i (Vakaoti 2006).

Between 1986 and 2006 the AOG increased their percentage of the total population from 0.6% to 2.5% and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from 12.2% to 16.8% (Tonga Department of Statistics 2009).

The US State Department (USDS 2007) reports that a 2006 Free Wesleyan survey indicated that the Church had declined to 35% of the population as members. Membership numbers had been dropping for the Free Wesleyan church since at least 1976 (Vakaoti 2006).

The formal category of 'All Others' grew steadily from 1966 when the percentage was 0.8% to the 1996 level of 2.5%. AOG had grown steadily from 0.0% in 1966; and Seventh Day Adventists and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had also steadily increased in terms of their population percentages (Tonga Department of Statistics. 2002).

Managing Religious Diversity

Tonga's constitution supports freedom of religious conscience and practice, as long as religion is not used to 'commit evil and licentious acts' as or justify conduct that is 'contrary to the law and peace of the land' (Constitution of Tonga 1998, S5). Sunday is recognised as 'Holy Sabbath Day' by the Constitution and people may

not practice business regardless of their religion although there are exemptions recreation and tourist businesses. (The Constitution of Tonga 1998, S6)

Religious groups can register with the government for tax purposes. However, broadcasts on the Tonga Broadcasting Commission (TBC) including preaching on radio and television must be in ‘mainstream Christian tradition’ (USDS 2007). TBC policy requires that on air preaching be confined to the ‘Biblical Jesus’ and the ‘Historical Jesus’ and recognises that attacks on other churches are an abuse of privilege. In 2004 the TBC was accused of disallowing followers of Baha’i and members of the LDS from mentioning the names of the founders of their religions (Matangi Tonga 2004).

Current Issues

There are no significant religious issues threatening social cohesion.

Conclusion

Tonga is a very Christian country of mainly Wesleyan (Methodist) and Catholic adherents. Like other nations of the Pacific, Tonga is experiencing growth from ‘new’ Christian denominations. Presently though, there have been no reports of incidents or building issues that threaten social stability.

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Tuvalu

Background

Tuvalu is a chain of nine coral atolls in the central Pacific lying north of Fiji. The largest island is Vaitupu while the capital island is Fanafuti. The islands are spread over an area that is 580 km in length and covers 26.6 km^2. In size and position, Tuvalu is 'one of the smallest and most remote countries on Earth' (CIA 2008; Tenten 2006). The 2008 estimated population was 12,177, with median age 25 and life expectancy 69 (CIA 2008). Formerly the Ellice Islands and part of a greater British protectorate from 1892, Tuvalu accepted independence under its current name in 1978. It has an elected government with a prime minister. The English monarch remains head of state (BBCNews 2008).

Polynesians comprise 96% of Tuvalu's population. Most other people are Micronesians while there are some Europeans. Languages are Tuvaluan, English, Samoan and on the island Nui, Kiribati. Tuvaluans attribute great value to personal land ownership, seeing land as the most materially permanent and culturally meaningful of possessions. Greater land ownership means greater capacity to farm the giant taro crop. Also land is associated with the institution of the family, being distributed by fathers to children (CIA 2008; Tenten 2006).

Tuvalu is classified as one the 'world's least developed countries' (MCTT 2008). It has poor soil, no mineral resources and virtually no exports. Most people exist on subsistence sea farming and remittances from relatives working abroad. Most employed people are in the public service and a significant portion work on merchant ships abroad. The nation receives substantial international aid from Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Japan and Korea. Tuvalu also receives substantial fishing treaty payments from the United States (CIA 2008).

Settlement of the islands of Tuvalu probably took place in two waves. The first came 2,000 years ago, and a second wave about a thousand years later. Several centuries after the second wave, people of the eight inhabited islands had come to see themselves as a collective. By the 1830s the coasts of all nine islands of modern Tuvalu had been mapped by Europeans. In the 1860s a Samoan Pastor of the London Missionaries Society came to Tuvalu. Soon after that European labour

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recruiters called ‘blackbirders’ also started arriving. The German government took an interest in the Ellice Islands from the 1870s establishing an agreement with the chief of Funafuti for the protection of German trade. After the treaty expired the Ellice Islands along with the Gilbert Islands or modern Kiribati became a British protectorate in 1892 later becoming a colony along with the islands of Tokelau (MCTT 2008; Tenten 2006).

Missionaries from the London Missionary Society arrived in 1865 and had Christianised the entire area by 1878. The early church was administered from Samoa and services were delivered in Samoan language. The process of ‘de-Samoanising’ the church did not begin until 1958 and the Church of Tuvalu was finally recognised in 1969. It took the title of Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (EKT) in the 1980s.

Catholicism did not arrive in Tuvalu until 1944 when a US Marines chaplain arrived at the war-time Marines’ base. In 1950 two Sacred Heart missionaries came to Tuvalu and a priest was stationed in 1965. About 4 years later the priest left believing that the Catholic Church was destined to fail in Tuvalu. Today the Catholic Church still has no resident priest but Tuvalu falls under the administration of the Catholic Church of Samoa and has a small piece of land, maintains a non-denominational school and a congregation of 120 people (Tenten 2006).

Jehovah’s Witnesses have been in Tuvalu since the 1960s. In 2006, there were 50 full members of the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) arrived in 1985 and by 1987 had about 50 members. It has not raised its membership since. The Assemblies of God (AOG) have operated in Tuvalu since 1990. The AOG’s initial efforts to construct buildings were opposed by members of EKT. However, the AOG is now a viable Church in Tuvalu and has accepted the ordination of women. In contrast to the solemn ceremonies of the EKT the AOG presents vibrant services with electric musical instruments. As in other countries the AOG supports education of members and it incorporates aspects of traditional Indigenous culture. The Open Brethren have about 40 families in their membership. Tuvalu has no ecumenical or inter-faith bodies (Tenten 2006).

Religious Affiliations

The 2002 Census reported that 91% of Tuvaluans claimed affiliation with the EKT church also called the Church of Tuvalu. The Seventh Day Adventists had 183 members; Baha’i, 177; and the Tuvaluan Brethren Church, 166. There were also smaller numbers of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Catholics, Apostolic, LDS, New Testament Church, Ahmadiyya Muslims and Baptists (USDS 2007; SPC 2005).

Most Tuvaluans are therefore Protestant. Chiefs of each of the nine islands are members of the Church of Tuvalu (USDS 2007). Tenten (2006) claims that in 2002, the Assemblies of God numbered 160 or 1.7%. Also Tenten (2006) estimated that in about 2005, Ahmadiyya Muslims numbered about 50 but were declining.

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution of Tuvalu recognises liberty regarding practice of religion, or 'lack of religion' (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S11(1)) and religious belief (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S23(2)). Religious communities are entitled to have places of worship and own schools, 'at their own expense' (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S23(3)). No one attending an educational institution is required to receive religious instruction, take part in religious ceremonies or take an oath contrary to their religious beliefs (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S23(4), S23(5)). People may not be discriminated against on the basis of their religion or 'lack of religion' (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S27 (1)). The Constitution also recognises that the country is a 'state based on Christian principles' (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, Preamble).

The Chief Justice of Tuvalu has recognised the power of island councils to restrict religious freedom when religion 'could threaten traditional mores and practices' (USDS 2007). In fact the Constitution recognises 'cultural, social, civic, family or religious obligations, or other obligations of a non-legal nature' (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S10(3)). The Prime Minister is responsible for religious affairs (Constitution of Tuvalu 2008, S75(1).

Current Issues

As in Samoa, there have been conflicts between local councils and new churches. A group from the Tuvalu Brethren Church arrived in the Nanumanga Council area in 2003 and recruited members who refused to make contributions to the EKT church. The Nanumanga Council then told the Brethren to 'stop advocating their religion'. The leader of the Brethren group was stoned by locals and police and eventually left. He later took legal action against the Council claiming violation of his fundamental rights as given by the Constitution (Olowu 2005).

The High Court held that the Council of Elders had not acted inappropriately because the actions of the Council who were not involved in the harassment were not contrary to the Constitution. This is because Section 29 of the Constitution allows restrictions on human rights if they 'directly threaten Tuvaluan values or culture' (Olowu 2005). In 2007 the Brethren Church was challenging the Chief Justice's ruling on the power of councils of elders to restrict religious freedom to protect their tribal traditions.

In 2006 the Nanumanga Council of Elders gave termination notices to five council workers who were members of the Brethren Church. The Council had officially banned all 'new churches' (USDS 2008). Also in 2006 the Funafuti Council of Elders prohibited the establishing of 'new churches' and banned the construction of Brethren churches and meetings and worship by Brethrens (USDS 2007). In 2006 the High Court made a temporary injunction against the Council disallowing actions against the Brethren Church (USDS 2008).

Conclusion

Tuvalu's main problems are associated with its limited economy and geographic isolation. Religion is a minor issue in Tuvalu generally. However, all Island Councils have chiefs who are members of the Church of Tuvalu and have been in conflict with 'new churches' over the last few years. It has not yet become a national issue threatening social stability although an aggressive and resistant 'new church' may inflame tensions to greater levels and across all the islands.

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Vanuatu

Background

Vanuatu is located over 2,000 km north east from Sydney, Australia, and has a total area of 14,800 km^2. It has 13 islands and 70 islets. The majority of the population lives on the four main islands of Tanna, Efate and Espiritu Santo. The capital, Port Vila, is on Efate. Vanuatu frequently has volcanic eruptions and earthquakes (BBCNews 2008; CIA 2008; SBS 2004; Zocca 2006).

Vanuatu was formerly named by Captain James Cook as the New Hebrides and was administered by the British and French from the nineteenth century and was formalized in 1906 as an Anglo-French Condominium. Vanuatu then became independent from both France and Britain in 1980. There is still mistrust between Anglophones and Francophones, the former being largely Protestant and the later Catholic. After independence many church schools were taken over by the government (Zocca 2006).

Vanuatu is a Melanesian country that was probably settled about 2,000 years before the arrival of Europeans (CIA 2008). Successive waves of pre-European settlers arrived in Vanuatu from about 3000 BCE (Zocca 2006). Portuguese sailor Pedro Fernandez de Quiros arrived in Espirito Santos in 1606. The islands were visited by French Explorer Bougainville in the 1760s and then mapped by James Cook in 1774. Sandal wood was discovered in the area in 1825 and traders arrived although they were greeted with hostility by the locals. In the late 1800s thousands of young men from Vanuatu were 'blackbirded' to work on plantations in Fiji, Australia and Samoa. In the meantime French, Australian and British settlers began settling farming (Zocca 2006).

The estimated population in 2008 was 215,400 with median age of 24 and life expectancy of 51 years. There are over 100 local languages spoken in Vanuatu but the main languages are pidgin Bislama, French and English. The majority ethic group is Ni-Vanuatu at 98.5% (BBCNews 2008; CIA Vanuatu 2008; SBS 2004; Zocca 2006).

The economy depends on foreign aid, some agriculture and tourism, while the bulk of the population practice subsistence agriculture. In 1999 only about half the

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people of Vanuatu were aged over 15 had finished their primary education (Zocca 2006). About 16% of Vanuatu's national exchange is obtained through tax haven services to foreigners. The head of state is the president and the country has an elected parliament with a prime minister (BBCNews 2008; CIA 2008; SBS 2004).

The first recorded Christian missionaries in Vanuatu were from the London Missionary society and arrived in 1839. In 1843 and 1847 Catholic Marist Brothers also came. The missionaries encountered malaria, frequent murderous attacks from locals and some early missions were abandoned. The Catholic missionaries eventually proved most successful in part because they permitted the melding of elements of animistic religion with Catholicism. European planters also arrived and a joint French and English military force gave them protection (Vanuatu Tourism 2008a,b). Presbyterians came in 1848 and began to successfully proselytise. They later opposed the practice of 'blackbirding'. An Anglican mission based in New Zealand began work in the New Hebrides in 1849 and created a post in Vanuatu on Mota in 1861. Presbyterian and Anglican missionaries divided the locations of their mission work in Vanuatu between themselves in 1881.

A new mission of Marist Brothers arrived in 1887 and consolidated the work of previous Catholic missionaries. In 1905 the Churches of Christ arrived, followed by the Seventh-Day Adventists in 1912 who established a 'training school' in the 1920s. The Churches of Christ converted New Hebrides plantation workers in Queensland who then became the first Churches of Christ missionaries to Vanuatu (Zocca 2006). Missionaries were often confronted with violence. They also introduced diseases to the New Hebrides and the Indigenous population declined significantly (Zocca 2006).

From late 1939 a religious movement grew up around an elusive charismatic healer who called himself John Frum – sometimes pronounced John 'Brum' – and flourished on the island of Tanna. He disappeared after telling chiefs that they would acquire wealth if they relinquished the cultures of foreigners. The John Frum movement functioned as a bastion against Presbyterian political influence in Tanna and saw the almost total desertion of Christianity on the island (Zocca 2006).

During World War II there were Allied military bases in Vanuatu and about half a million military personnel visited. At the end of the war about 36% of the land was owned by non-Indigenous people. There were a number of events in the religious life of the islands in the years following the war. The Apostolic Church began operating in 1946 and the first Indigenous Catholic Priest was ordained in 1955. Baha'i local assemblies have operated in Port Vila since 1960 (Hassall 2005).

In 1967 the New Hebrides Council of Churches was initiated by the Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic Churches. The Council later became the Vanuatu Christian Council. The Assemblies of God (AOG) arrived in 1968 from the US and in 1976 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints began operating in Port Vila. In the 1980s local Catholics began to associate more with English rather than French foreigners by for example receiving English speaking Dominican Sisters. The Catholic Church received its first indigenous Bishop in 1990 (Zocca 2006).

Churches were thoroughly involved with events of national independence. In 1973 the Presbyterian Church publicly advocated an end to the Condominium. Sections of the Catholic Church were upset by the Presbyterians' declared position

which in turn alienated the Catholic Church from independence supporters. A number of Catholic priests and Catholic lay people were arrested after independence. The Vanuatu Christian Council wrote to the government complaining of its actions against the Catholics. The first head of the new government, Walter Lini was a former Anglican minister. The government charged exorbitant fees to grant foreign missionaries permission to operate in Vanuatu and gave inadequate funding to Catholic schools (Zocca 2006).

The AOG Vanuatu is part of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship and the South Pacific Evangelical Alliance. It has spawned a number of breakaway churches including the Christian Mission Centre and the Word Church. The AOG runs Bible classes, crusades and 11 schools and had about 13,200 members in 2004 (Zocca 2006). Other Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches with similar activities and facilities include: Neil Thomas Ministries, 7,900 members; The Apostolic Church with about 4,000; The Christian Mission Centre 3,000; The United Pentecostal Church International 1,500; Foursquare Gospel Church in Vanuatu 1,500; The New Covenant Church of Vanuatu 1,000; and the Bible Church in Vanuatu 120 members (estimated membership figures for 2004 from Zocca 2006).

Vanuatu Christian Radio broadcasts 24 h each day of the week. Its programs are mainly hosted by Pentecostal Churches including the United Pentecostal, the Churches of Christ and the AOG (Zocca 2006).

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) had over 2,000 members in 2004. The LDS have a 'large and beautiful' church in Port Vila (Zocca 2006, 248). The organisation also engages in welfare work. It has no schools but grants scholarships among its members (Zocca 2006). In 2004, the Jehovah's Witnesses had less than 400 members in Vanuatu. Members engage in ongoing recruitment activity. They have no schools and refrain from interfaith activity.

The Vanuatu Christian Council now includes Apostolic Church, the Catholic Church, the Church of Melanesia, the Churches of Christ and the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu. Observer churches are: AOG and the Seventh-day Adventist Church (WCC 2008). It has been active in areas including education and interfaith conferences and prayer events (Zocca 2006).

Religious Affiliations

Zocca (2006) made estimates on religious affiliations for Vanuatu for 2004 along with comparisons with previous Census. The largest religious group in 2004 was the Presbyterians at 29.8%. The next largest churches were the Anglicans and Seventh Day Adventists, respectively at 13.4% and 13.3%. Roman Catholics were 12.7%; AOG, 6.2%; Churches of Christ, 4.2% and the Neil Thomas Ministries, 3.8%. Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints, United Pentecostal and Jehovah's Witnesses were respectively 1.0%, 0.7% and 0.2% – all three churches having expanded since 1999. Baha'i were 1.0% with 2,000 members and more numerous than Muslims with 100 and the Hindus with 120 (Zocca 2006).

The Vanuatu Census also has a category titled, 'Customs' which included present members of the John Frum movement and other 'nativist movements' which were 5,500 or 2.6% in 2004 having declined from 5.6% in 1999 (Zocca 2006). Zocca (2006) holds that 'Customs' groups may operate more directly as political movements and members may belong to other religious groups in the Census. The John Frum movement has split into three groups (Zocca 2006).

Smaller Christian groups are also present and expanding in Vanuatu (WCC 2006). Those that have come from overseas include: Christian Life Centre, Christian Revival Crusade, and the Four Square Gospel Church. There are a number of breakaway churches including the Presbyterian Born Again, Full Gospel Bible Assembly and the Apostolic Life Ministry. These 'new' churches have not been as successful among the French educated Ni-Vanuatu who are mostly Catholic. However significant numbers of French educated Ni-Vanuatu have joined 'Customs' groups (Zocca 2006).

Significant growth churches were the AOG, who progressed from 4.3% in 1999 to 6.2% in 2004; the Seventh Day Adventist Church, from 10.7% in 1999 to 13.3% in 2004. Neil Thomas Ministries grew from 2.1% in 1989 to 3.8% in 2004 (Zocca 2006). Between 1999 and 2004 the Presbyterian Church decreased from 31.6% to 29.8%. The Catholic Church decreased from13.1% to 12.7%. Both churches had been progressively decreasing since 1967 when the Presbyterian Church was 39.8% of the population and the Catholic Church was 16.0%.

Churches in Vanuatu are concerned and active with social causes such as education, welfare, living conditions and substance abuse. There is debate within the churches on the appropriateness of the traditional practice of kava drinking. Clerics from Presbyterians and Anglican churches are associated with party politics. Since the mid 1970s between 15% and 25% of Vanuatu's population shifted church membership (Zocca 2006).

Zocca (2006) attributes the success of 'new' Pentecostal and Evangelical churches to their aggressive recruiting styles using personal invitations to events where preaching is conducted using impressive public address systems and gospel music. Preachers often convince prospective members with very aggressive styles of preaching. The practices of speaking in tongues, spiritual healing, and immersion baptism have also attracted many new members. Zocca (2006) also attributes the success of these churches to greater involvement of ordinary members in church activities.

Managing Religious Diversity

The Constitution upholds religious freedom and non-discrimination (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu 2008, (S5)). There is no state religion even though the Constitution commits the nation to 'Christian principles' (Government of the Republic of Vanuatu 2008, (Introductory Statement)). Religious organisations were

required to register with the government but this system was ended in 1997 (Zocca 2006). The government does not monitor missionary activity (USDS 2007).

In 2003 about one quarter of school students attended Christian church schools to which the government provides funds. There are non-Christian religious schools in Vanuatu but they are not entitled to government assistance. Christian Council Churches provide weekly religious instruction in government schools (Zocca 2006; USDS 2007).

Current Issues

As in other parts of the Pacific all religious activity must be done with the approval of local community leaders (USDS 2007). However, there have been no reports of incidents of significant tension or violence between local communities and representatives of new religious groups.

Conclusion

Vanuatu like other Pacific Island nations is experiencing a gradual change in its religious landscape with the growth of small revivalist churches and the slow decrease in influence of established institutions. As yet this change has generated no reported tension or violence or threats to social stability.

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Part IV
Integrative Chapters

Minority Religious Groups and the State

All nations have religions whose adherents might be called ‘religious minorities’. In Australia, a mainly Christian nation (ABS 2007a) Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism, are ‘minority religions’ because relatively small numbers of people adhere to these religions. As groups, adherents of minority religions may be socially vulnerable to marginalisation or discrimination, given their smaller numbers. Minority groups may have problems practicing their religions; they may be unable to participate in general aspects of social life; or they may encounter deliberate discrimination. However, this is not necessarily the case as some societies, like Japan, exhibit styles of cohesion whereby minority religions groups integrate without suffering disadvantage. This chapter will consider the circumstances of minority religious groups in the countries of this volume, to gain a comprehensive appreciation of social cohesion and religion across the countries of this book.

The first section of the chapter reviews the concept of ‘minority religious groups’. Next is an analysis of ‘minority religious groups’ in countries categorised according to their ‘major religions’, of which there are three in the region: Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. The final two sections identify and discuss factors of social cohesion that that are significant in the circumstances of minority religious groups.

Religions and Religious Groups

Here we make the distinction between religions and religious groups. ‘Religions’ are broad faiths, like Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Religions are often practiced by many ‘religious groups’ which are organised collectives or denominations and sects, like Roman Catholics or Theravada Buddhists. There are cases, where a single religious group represents a complete religion, as with the Church of Scientology.

Religious groups are identified as ‘minorities’ notably in terms of membership numbers. Their membership numbers may be a minority of the overall population or they may be significantly smaller than the ‘major religious group’ (Capotorti 1991). Minority groups may be hardly noticeable, particularly if their adherents are

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very few. But they may stand out due to certain social attributes. They may be visible if they are 'significantly different' from the major religious groups, either theologically or culturally. For example, in Australia and New Zealand Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews 'stand out' as minorities as their beliefs and devotional practices are different to those of the major religion, Christianity. Jews stand out in the workforce of Australia and New Zealand, due to their religious holidays. Many Muslim women wear the headscarf to work and or out shopping in Australia and New Zealand, and signify their religion when most of other people are thinking of can also be visible if they are geographically separated from the majority of the national population. In Thailand, Malay Muslims are generally located in southern Thailand and away from the majority of the population in the North.

Minorities by 'Major Religion'

The following analysis will consider the state of minority religions within countries categorised according to their 'major religion' or the religion of the majority of the national population. Among the nations of this volume, there are countries of three 'major religions': Christian, Buddhist and Muslim. This categorisation allows for consolidation and comparisons of data across nations and the region. Countries could also be categorised according to other criteria: form of government, stage of economic development or major racial-ethnic group. However, as religion is the focal social variable in this book, it will be the basic category for the following analysis and remain the focus of investigation.

Christian

Christian countries are subcategorised to variables relevant to current states of religion: 'British Settled', 'Pacific Island' and 'Spanish/Portuguese Colonial'.

British Settled

The two Christian countries in this sub category are Australia and New Zealand. Both are cultural and socially dynamic, but their societies are still largely the result of British settlement policies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. British settlers introduced the major religious groups of their home countries, all of which were Christian denominations: Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian. In Australia, Congregationalists, Methodists and some Presbyterians have largely amalgamated into the Uniting Church (Bentley and Hughes 1996).

Today in both countries, these denominations – or their descendant churches – remain the major religious groups. In Australia's last Census of 2006, Catholics

were 25.8% of Australia's population, Anglican 18.7%; Uniting Church 5.7 and Presbyterian and Reformed 3.0% (ABS 2007a). In 2006 in New Zealand, Anglicans were 15.0% of the population who answered the Census question on religion; Catholics 13.6%; Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed, 10.7% and Methodists 3.3% (Nachowitz 2007).

Australia and New Zealand have depended on further migration for population growth, and continue to receive economic migrants and refugees who have bought minority groups of Christian denominations, other world religions and 'new' religious sects and movements (Bouma 2006; Jupp 2001a; Clarke 2006). Both nations also have minority Indigenous and 'nature' religions. In 2006, the larger minority religious groups in Australia were Buddhists at 2.1%; Greek Orthodox 1.9%; Muslims at 1.7% and Lutherans 1.3% (ABS 2007b). Largest religious minorities in New Zealand in 2006 were Hindus 1.7% of the total population, Baptists 1.5%; Buddhists 1.4%; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 1.2% and Islam, 1.0%. Combined, Pentecostal Christian groups were 2.1% and all Maori Christian groups, 1.8% (Nachowitz 2007).

Significant currents of secularism exist in both nations, which have challenged the importance of religion in social life. In the last Australian census the percentage of people nominating 'No Religion; was 18.7%; for New Zealand the figure was 34.7% (ABS 2007a; Statistics New Zealand 2007). The legislative systems of both countries recognise no state religions (Australian Parliament: Senate 2003; HRC 2008), but also recognise religious freedom, facilitating religious diversity, notably with the presence of freely practicing religious minority groups.

Secular aspects of social life provide integration opportunities for minority religious groups. With little or no recognition of religion in workplaces and recreation, religious minorities can – if they are comfortable with the norms of these spaces – participate and integrate into greater societies without attention on their religious identities. Minority religions can also face problems integrating into largely secular societies, because if they insist on making references to their faiths in spaces that are normatively secular, religious minorities immediately become 'noticed' and their integration is conditional.

In both Australia and New Zealand, 'minority' Christian groups generally co-exist with all other religious groups with no significant tension. However, a very small number are perceived as having practices that are contrary to social norms that relegate religion to the private sphere of citizen's lives. In Australia, the Jehovah's Witnesses are accepted but with some suspicion and distance (Bouma 1999) for their aggressive recruiting strategies (Bouma et al. 2007). The Exclusive Brethren have received adverse publicity in Australia and suspicion for their insularity and lobbying of the previous Federal government (ABC Radio National 2006; Bachelard 2007). However there have been no recent reports of discrimination or violence against these groups. In New Zealand, The Pentecostal Destiny Church has generated public concern over its aggressive protests and uncompromising opposition on gay rights and abortion (Tamaki 2007; TV New Zealand 2004). It has not, however, generated reports of significant tensions.

Australia and New Zealand have small but well integrated Jewish minorities dating back to early points in British settlement (Rutland 2001; Wilson 1966). Assaults on Jews in Australia are regular (Herald Sun 2005). In New Zealand attacks were reported on Jewish cemeteries in 2004 and widely condemned (Boyes 2004; Gardiner 2004; New Zealand Herald 2004; Randerson 2004; USDS New Zealand 2005). Jewish communities effectively resist intimidation. In Australia, Jewish communities and major Jewish figures usually have the attention, if not the support of Australian governments (Australian Jewish News 2006).

Since the 1980s, waves of Asian migrants have arrived in Australia and New Zealand making Buddhism and Hinduism significant minority religions. Sikhs are also increasing in both nations rates. Adherents of these general religions are visible in parts of Australia, particularly in wearing religious clothing, running special stores, restaurants and temples. Sikhs are currently visible in the taxi industry of the city of Melbourne. (ABS 2004, 2006a,b, 2007a; Bouma 2006; Nachowitz 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2007). Among Australians of non-Asian background, the act of converting to Buddhism is still uncommon. However, in the last 25 years, due to the integration of migrants from Buddhist countries, conversions to Buddhism have become far less exotic (Bouma 2006).

In Australia, there have been political moves against Asian migration and therefore indirectly against groups practicing Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs (Furniss 2005). However, there have are few reports of marginalisation or discrimination against Asian religions. A Sydney Buddhist temple sustained a suspected arson attack in early 2008, but no investigative developments have occurred from this incident at the time of writing (Christie 2008).

Most adherents of Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism in Australia and New Zealand also have strong ethnic identities through which they form their primary communities. They may be Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotians, Indians, Tamils, Punjabis etc they have formed ethnic communities which include people of various religions. Largely through their ethnic communities they have integrated into Australian society through their participation in the education system, labour market, business, sport and the arts.

Islam is also a minority religion in Australia and New Zealand (ABS 2004; 2006a, 2007a; Bouma 2006; Nachowitz 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2007). In Australia, Islam has largely grown through migrations from Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Indonesia, India, Pakistan and North Africa (Jupp 2001b). The integration of Islam in Australian has not been smooth in recent years. Since September 11, 2001, Muslims have been a focus of public attention and fear, particularly since Australia has been a potential terrorist target and the Australian military have participated in the US led 'War on Terror'. In Australia, some violent incidents have occurred between Muslims and non-Muslims (ABC News 2007; Bouma et al. 2007; Karvelas 2003; Poynting 2006). Political advocate Pauline Hanson has called for reductions in Muslim immigration, denouncing Muslims as unpatriotic (Herald Sun 2007a) and community lobby groups have successfully fought plans to stop the building of Islamic schools (Emerson 2008; Stafford 2008).

Despite their social exclusion, Muslims in Australia are continuing to integrate (Herald Sun 2007b; Steketee 2007). Muslim consolidation in Australia has continued

through the successful building of mosques and Islamic schools. Currently there is also public discussion about possible government support for training of Islamic clerics in Australia (Crittenden 2007). Muslims also have strong ethnic communities – Turkish, Lebanese, Indonesian and Egyptian – through which they have consolidated their social capital and participated in Australian social life. Muslims are also gaining respect in secular spaces of Australian society. In some workplaces Muslims are allowed time to pray during shifts (Ling 2005) and media have run positive features on Muslims in sport and recreation (ABC StateLine 2004; The Age 2004; Sydney Morning Herald 2007).

New Zealand has had less government action and public concern over Muslim integration. There has been sporadic vandalism of mosques; security concerns over Islamic terrorism and a-well publicised incident where a Muslim woman refused to remove her face veil in a court of law (Devereux 2004; New Zealand Herald 2005; Tunnah 2004a,b; USDS New Zealand 2005). However, Muslims appear free to practice their religion in New Zealand without significant friction.

The circumstances of Indigenous religions – which have various groups in Australia and New Zealand (ABS 2007a; Statistics New Zealand 2007) – differ between the two countries. New Zealand's culture of government has been inclusive of Maori spiritual concerns since British colonisation became official with the signing of the *Treaty of Waitangi* in the 1840s (Ahdar 2006; New Zealand Police 2005). Today, the New Zealand government has processes allowing Maori to apply for changes in government actions that may be of spiritual concern. Formal consideration has recently occurred with respect to the planning of roads (HRC 2008) and genetic engineering in animals (Ahdar 2006). In Australia, the *Native Title Act* 1993 recognises Indigenous spiritual affiliation to tribal territories, allowing Aboriginal Australians to make claims for land ownership on this basis (Habel 1999; Native Title Act 1993). Aboriginal spirituality still has a marginal status in Australia and the process of Reconciliation continues.

In summary, Australia and New Zealand are places where minority religious groups generally practice without marginalisation or intimidation. The multicultural nature of both societies facilitates smooth social integration. The secular natures of both societies also allow religious minorities to smoothly integrate by participating in major social activities where religion is of little pertinence. For example Jews, Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs integrate smoothly through the work, business and sport, because religion is of little consequence to most Australians in these social areas. However where the majority perceive latent conflicts between themselves and minorities, as is occurring between non-Muslims and Muslims in Australia, minority religious groups receive negative attention and marginalisation.

Pacific Island Nations

Since arriving in the Pacific, Christianity has found acceptance among Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian peoples. In the nineteenth century, the island nations

that are now Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea (PNG) and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), fell under the colonial administration of Britain or Germany – or as briefly occurred for FSM, Spain. Under these colonial powers the Island colonies and received missionaries from Christian denominations. Today the major religion in each is Christianity, and the largest religious groups are Christian denominations. Each Island nation also has minority Christian denominations; minority groups of other world religions; and widespread practice of Indigenous religions. Small groups of Baha'i are also present through these nations.

While Fiji and FSM were settled by Indians and Japanese respectively, all the Pacific Island nations covered in this volume are now are mostly inhabited by Indigenous people. Fiji continues to have a very large minority of ethnic Indians and their presence is significant to the religious fabric of the country. The constitutions of all these nations recognise no state religions (*Constitution of Fiji* in Disability Rights Education and Defence Fund 2000; Government of Papua New Guinea 1975; Government of the Federated States of Micronesia 2008; USDS Solomon Islands 2007).

The Solomon Islands, PNG and the FSM are all over 90% Christian. The largest religious group in the Solomon Islands is the Anglican Church, at 35% of the total population, followed by the South Sea Evangelical Church at 17%; the United Church, 11%; and the Seventh Day Adventists, 10% (USDS Solomon Islands 2007). For Papua New Guinea's 2000 Census the major religious group was Roman Catholic with 27.1% of the population, followed by Evangelical Lutheran at 19.5%; United, 11.5% and Seventh Day Adventist 10.1% (National Statistical Office 2000 in Gibbs 2006). In 2007 the majority religious groups in the FSM were Roman Catholic at 50% of the population (USDS FSM 2007) and the United Church was about 40% (Daye 2006).

In the Solomon Islands, the minority religious groups are mainly Christian and include the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unification Church members and Indigenous Christian churches. Some Muslims and Baha'i also live in the Solomons (Ernst 2006; USDS 2007 Solomon Islands). In 2000, PNG also had Christian minorities including the Pentecostal Church, Evangelical Alliance, Anglican, Baptist, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Christ. PNG also had minorities of Hindus, Jews and Muslims (Gibbs 2006). In 2007, minority groups in the FSM were mainly Christian including the Assemblies of God and Seventh Day Adventists. Some Baha'i and Buddhists also live in FSM (USDS FSM 2007).

Serious tribal and inter-island frictions have occurred in the Solomon Islands but there have been no reports of discrimination or violence against or between any religious groups (USDS 2007 Solomon Islands). Similarly, while PNG has had very serious civil disorder and violence, but there have been no reports of discrimination or violence on the basis of religion. The FSM has had no recent instances of marginalisation on the basis of religion. Hence minority religious groups are generally not objects of discrimination in any of these nations, even when currents of violence are high.

Fiji has a separate examination here because a significant percentage of its population is the non-Indigenous ethnicity, Indian Fijian, with its own almost exclusive group of religions. Ethnic tension has been high in Fiji for decades and the basic factor behind four coups since 1987 (USDS Fiji 2007). For the last Census with available religious figures, 1996, Fiji's population was 50.8% Indigenous Fijian and 43.7% Indian Fijian (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2007). Among Indigenous Fijians, 99.2% were Christian. Indian Fijians were either Hindu, 76.7%; Muslim, 15.9% or Sikh, 0.9%. While 6.1% of Indian Fijians were Christians, the two major ethnic groups were basically split between Christianity; and Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008).

The largest religious group in the country was the Methodist Church which in 1996 was 36.2% of the population and 66.6% of all Indigenous Fijians. The minority Christian denominations included Anglican, Apostolic, Assembly of God, Baptist, Catholic, CMF (Every home), Gospel, Jehovah's Witnesses, Later Day Saints, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and the Seventh Day Adventists. The largest among the minorities were Catholics were 8.9% and Assemblies of God 4.0% and Seventh Day Adventist, 2.9% (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2007, 2008). There have been no reports of discrimination or marginalisation against any of these groups.

The 1996 Fijian Census listed various groups of Hindus; Sanatan being the largest at 25% of the population or 57.0% of Indian Fijians (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2007, 2008). There have been a number of attacks on Hindu temples; and one attack on a mosque (Fiji Times 2006a,b; USDS Fiji 2005). Attacks on Hindu temples have continued (Hinduism Tody 2004; Ekadashi 2008). Indian Fijians have also been excluded from the politics and since the coups of the early 2000s, and effectively the religious groups they represent are indirectly marginalised. The other minority religions reported for the 1996 Census were Baha'i and Confucian. There have been no reports of discrimination or marginalisation of either group.

While serious ethnic, civil, political problems exist among the Pacific Islands there is there little marginalisation and discrimination the basis of religion. The exception is Fiji where Indian Fijian religious groups have been excluded from political power and continue to see their places of worship attacked.

Spanish/Portuguese Colonised

Timor Leste and the Philippines were colonially administered by the Catholic nations of Portugal and Spain. In 2004, Timor Leste was 96.5% Catholic. Minority religious groups were Protestant/Evangelicals, Indigenous religionists, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus (National Statistics Directorate 2004). For their 2000 Census, the Philippines' population was 81.0% Roman Catholic. With Protestant and local based churches, Christianity was the majority religion of the Philippines at 92.6% of the population. The largest religious minority was Islam at 5.1% of the population. The Philippines also has numerically large Protestant and Pentecostal churches (PFRPL 2007; USDS Philippines 2007). Neither country has a state

religion and their constitutions guarantee religious freedom (Government of Timor Leste 2002; Government of the Philippines 1987).

A 2003 vandalisation of a mosque is the only internationally reported case of violence or discrimination against a religious minority in Timor Leste. The Catholic Archbishop of Dili apologised and there seem to be no other recent incidents of minority discrimination (Donovan 2003; USDS East Timor 2007). While some Protestants have complained of obstructions from village governments in the construction of churches (USDS East Timor 2007), there have been no reports of recent significant reports of problems of freedom for minority religious groups.

In the Philippines, a long and bloody insurgent conflict continues between the government and Muslim separatist militia groups on the island of Mindanao where troubles between Muslim locals and central governments have occurred for centuries (Abuza 2003). These groups see local Muslims as economically and politically aggrieved and have issued various demands for local autonomy, a fairer share of locally generated wealth, and expulsion of non-Muslims (Abuza 2003; ICG 2005; Milligan 2005; USDS Philippines 2003). There have been no other reports from the Philippines of discrimination or violence concerning religious minority groups.

In Timor Leste and the Philippines, minority religious groups are not objects of social disturbances, except in the case of the conflict regarding Mindanao. Minority religious groups are also not generally the objects of marginalisation. The Catholic Church holds such a large majority in the two states, that there is only marginal opportunity for conflict, particularly as the Catholic Church does not condone discrimination against other religions. Further the Catholic Church has strong political power in both states and can therefore influence its members to be respecting of minorities (Scarpello 2006; USDS East Timor 2007).

Buddhist

The Buddhist majority nations in this volume are Thailand, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Japan. In 2000, Thailand was 94.6% (Statistics Thailand 2008); and in 2001 Sri Lanka's national census counted Buddhists as 76.7% of the national population (Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics 2008). According to Singapore's 2000 Census, which reported for Singaporeans over 15 years of age, Buddhists were 42.5% (Statistics Singapore 2007). In 2007, the US State Department held that Japan was 71.1% Buddhist.

Singapore and Sri Lanka are former colonies of European nations – both having gained independence from Britain. Japan and Thailand have never been colonised by European nations but were allies in World War II (Harish 2006), at the end of which Japan was occupied by the United States. None has a state religion, although the constitution of Sri Lanka obligates the government to protect and support Buddhism (Government of Sri Lanka. 2008) and the Thai King must be a Buddhist (Government of Thailand 2008). Religious freedom is upheld by the law of all these

states. Sri Lanka and Thailand have bloody separatist insurgencies concerning religious minorities, although particularly in the case of Sri Lanka, there are very strong ethnic dimensions to these conflicts (Harish 2006; ICG 2007b).

In 2000, Thailand's minorities were Islam at 4.6% of the total population as well as various Christians, Taoists, Sikhs and Hindus (Statistics Thailand 2008). Sri Lanka's 2001 minorities were Muslims, 8.5% of the population; Hindus, 7.8% and Roman Catholics, 6.1% (Sri Lanka Department of Census and Statistics 2008). Also in 2000, Singapore's minorities were Christians 14.6%; Muslims, 14.9%; Taoists 8.5% and Hindus 4%. There were also small numbers of Sikhs, Jews, Zoroastrians, Confucians and Jains. Folk religions were also practiced. Unlike other Asian nations covered here, Singapore displays a significant level of secularism. For its last Census in 2000, 18.6% of respondents aged over 15 claimed to have 'No Religion' (Statistics Singapore 2007).

Japan as a very polyreligious culture and while it has a Buddhist, majority, the US State Department reported in 2007 that 85.6% of Japan's population were also Shinto. Christianity was a minority religion at 2.3%, and there were unknown, but significant percentages of Japanese with 'new religious movements' many of which mixed elements of Buddhism, Shinto, Japanese folk religions and other religions. Folk religion practices are also still common in Japan (Shimazono 2006; Shimazono 2004; USDS Japan 2007).

Two bloody separatist battles continue in the Buddhist countries, both with mixed religious and ethnic components. For decades, Sri Lanka had bloody fighting between Sinhalese Buddhists of the south and Tamils of the north, who are mostly Hindu (USDS Sri Lanka 2007) and sections of northern Sri Lanka are presently controlled by Tamil separatist troops. Sinhalese Buddhists assert that Sri Lanka is a special place in Buddhism (Deegalle 2006; De Silva 2006; Obeyesekere 2006), its dominance of which must be protected and therefore separatist demands of the Tamils are non-negotiable (USDS Sri Lanka 2007; Wilson 2000). The Tamils largely see the war a matter of ethnic differences (ICG 2007a). However, Sri Lankan Muslims have suffered under Tamil separatists. In 1990 thousands of Muslims received orders from Tamil separatists to leave Jaffna, and other cities (Peebles 2006; USDS Sri Lanka 2007).

The second separatist conflict is in Thailand where long unrest in the Malay-Muslim southern provinces has also fermented into violence. Thai authorities are currently making efforts to establish peace and reconciliation with southern Malay Muslims, having recently apologised for past injustices and given commitments to improve standards of living in the south (Pathan 2006; Royal Thai Consulate General, Saudi Arabia 2006; Zissis 2007).

The Singapore government holds very strong surveillance on all religious groups and Buddhism does not have special status. The Presidential Council on Minority Rights (PCMR), considers all laws and their implications for ethnic/religious communities and responds to complaints (Kong and Yeoh 2003; USDS Singapore 2007). The Presidential Council on Religious Harmony monitors all religious groups and can make punitive orders against people for their religious activity (Hill 1999). In the 1970s and 1980s the government de-registered the Jehovah's

Witnesses and the Unification Church. It has also arrested Catholics for allegedly conspiring against national security (Brann 1998; Hill 1999; USDS Singapore 2007).

Singapore's constitution recognises Malays as the Indigenous people of the nation and Islam as their religion. The Constitution requires the government to maintain a body to advise the president on matters pertaining on Islam, this council being the Islamic Religious Council (Government of Singapore 1963). Generally, religious groups practice comfortably within the law (Kong and Yeoh 2003). Government policy on minimum education standards has pressured Muslim primary schools to change their curricula, but some Muslims schools are now working with the government to effect smooth change in line with government requirements (Ibrahim 2007; Ismail 2006; Tan 2007).

Japan was forced to adopt a secular constitution by the US after World War II due to associations between Japanese ultra-nationalism with Shinto (Braibanti 1947; Tsuyoshi 1996). Given memories of the war, associations between the Japanese government and religions have been extremely sensitive, not just in Japan but for nations attacked and invaded by Japan. Hence the government has allowed wide freedom and autonomy for religious groups.

Japan has a prodigious proclivity to germinate new religions (Reader 2004; Shimazono 2006) and minorities are less likely to be threatening to the general population. Adherents of minorities are likely to also be Buddhists, Shintoists or both. However, since the 1995 terrorist attacks of the religious group, Aum Shinrikyo, new religious groups have attracted public and government concern. State efforts to prevent further incidents, could see religious minorities under greater surveillance (Clarke 2006; USDS Japan 2007).

In Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has separate departments for Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Each 'inculcate(s) religious values and promote(s) a virtuous society' (MRAMU 2007). For example, the Department for Muslim Affairs supports Muslims in Sri Lanka by funding Islamic education, public Muslim rituals and festivals (Department of Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs 2008). Minority Muslim sect, Ahmadiyya which holds a theology heretical to many orthodox Muslims (Clarke 2006) has reported one homicide attack by orthodox Muslims (USDS Sri Lanka 2007).

Sri Lanka has had recent increases in activism of political Buddhism (Deegalle 2006), and pressures on Christians to accept secondary status. Buddhist members of parliament have attempted to pass a law, basically aimed at Christians, to prohibit all conversion activities (Deegalle 2006). In some areas, Christians have been attacked by Buddhists. Since 2003 over 300 attacks have been reported on Christians (USDS Sri Lanka 2007).

While tensions continue in southern Thailand there are no reports of other religious minorities experiencing marginalisation (Ishii 1994; Yusuf 2007). Thailand has a very long history of peaceful religious pluralism (USDS Thailand 2007; Yusuf 2007).

Minority religions in the Buddhist nations have a range of circumstances. There is separatist violence in northern Sri Lanka and southern Thailand, which has religious dimensions. Violence has also occurred against Christians in Sri

Lanka. In Singapore, the government promotes religious freedom but regulates social cohesion with a firm and discretionary hand. In Japan, minorities are supported by the fluid and multi-dimensional religious society, although Aum Shinrikyo's 1995 attacks have made authorities sensitive to the latent dangers of new religious sects. However, there are many minority religious groups across the Buddhist nations who integrate into greater societies without while still practicing in freedom.

Muslim

Islam is a majority religion in three countries of this volume: Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. The Muslim majorities of these states are: Brunei 67% (CIA Brunei 2007); Indonesia 86% (USDS Indonesia 2007); and Malaysia 60% population of its population (DSM 2001). Brunei and Malaysia recognise Islam as their state religion, In Indonesia, the five point national ideology of Indonesia's constitution, *Pancasila*, recognises the state's belief in 'one God', but does not give special recognition to a particular religion (Republic of Indonesia 2007). However, with 210 million Muslims (USDS Indonesia 2007) Indonesia has the largest national population of Muslims in the world (Encyclopædia Britannica 2007).

In the last Census, religious minority groups in Brunei were Buddhists at 13% of the total population and Christians at 10%. Other minority religions include Chinese, Hindu, Baha'i, Sikh, Judaism and Indigenous beliefs (CIA Brunei 2007; SBS Brunei 2007). Malaysia also had substantial minorities of Buddhists at 19% and Christians at 9%. Hindus were 6% of the population and practitioners of Chinese religions, 3% (DSM 2001). Indonesia's minorities are Christians at 10%; Hindu, 1.8% and Buddhist, 0.8%. Indonesia also has an unknown number of practicing Confucians and Baha'i (USDS Indonesia 2007).

Minorities are recognised and officially respected in each country. In Brunei, minorities are protected by the Constitution which holds that religious tolerance is an aspect of Islam (Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007). Non-Islamic religious organisations must register with the government and supply the names of members (USDS Brunei 2007). Malaysia's constitution recognises non-Muslims' right to practice religions peacefully (Boyle and Sheen 1997) and the Malaysian government has consultative bodies dispersing grants for groups in the minority religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism (USDS Malaysia 2007). In Indonesia, the Ministry of Religious Affairs officially recognises six religions: Islam; Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Groups representing other faiths may gain alternative status by registering with other ministries as non-religious groups. For example they may register with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism as 'social organisations' (CIA Indonesia 2007; USDS Indonesia 2007).

The governments and Islamic authorities of all three nations impose minority status on religious groups that are non-Muslim, and officially recognise

minority groups practicing unapproved forms of Islam as 'deviant'. Brunei's government allows only the official school of Islam, Shafi'ite Islam and has banned minority Islamic groups Abdul Razak Muhammad, Saihoni Tasipan, Al-Arqam and Al-Ma'unah. It has also proscribed Baha'i (USDS Brunei 2007). In Malaysia, minority Muslim sects and other religious groups can be declared 'deviant' by the Islamic Affairs Department. These have included Baha'i and Shi'a Islam (USDS Malaysia 2007). The Indonesian Ulama Council has issued *fatwa* or judicial rulings against minority Islamic sects including Ahmadiyya which has suffered civil attacks on its mosques (Economist.com. 2008a). Messianic sect, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute, has also suffered serious attacks on persons and property some resulting in deaths (USDS Indonesia 2007).

The second issue affecting minority religious groups across the Muslims nations is conversions. Generally in Brunei and Malaysia, it is difficult for Muslims to convert to minority religions and usually necessary for non-Muslims to convert to Islam if they wish to marry a Muslim. In Brunei, Muslims wishing to convert to a minority religion must receive permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Members of minority religious groups who wish to marry Muslims must convert to Islam (USDS Brunei 2007). Similarly, in Malaysia conversions from Islam to minority religions must go through the *Shariah* court which is extremely reluctant to allow conversions (USDS Malaysia 2007). Further, Muslims are also not allowed to marry non-Muslims. Hence prospective marriage partners of Malays who are from minority religious groups, must convert to Islam, otherwise their marriage is not recognised by the state (USDS Malaysia 2007).

The major issue for minority religious groups in Indonesia is the limited number of religions recognised by the state. Indonesia's government recognises only Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Minority religions outside this group are not even recognised (USDS Indonesia 2007).

In the Muslim nations, activities of minorities are limited by the Muslim majority. In Brunei, minorities may not proselytise or import foreign religious literature. Clergy of religions other than Islam are prohibited from entering the country, and imported religious objects such as Buddha statuettes and crucifixes have been confiscated, as these objects are prohibited in Islam (Asiaweek: Hong Kong 1998; USDS Brunei 2007). In Malaysia Non-Muslims must not proselytise Muslims. In both Indonesia and Malaysia, non-Muslims must not distribute their literature, including holy texts, to Muslims (USDS Indonesia 2007; USDS Malaysia 2007). At the same time, there have been impositions of Islam on minority religions. For example, Malaysian Christians near the Thai border have complained of their churches being demolished by their state government and large mosques being erected in areas where Muslim populations are in the minority (Yusuf 2007).

Generally, minority religious groups in the Muslim nations must recognise Islam as the primary religion and be prepared to modify any offensive activities. Rules on conversion in Malaysia and Brunei discourage Muslims and non-Muslims from marrying.

Social Mechanisms of Affecting Discrimination

Social mechanisms on which marginalisation of minorities can takes place across the nations covered in this volume include the following.

Cultural Difference

Minority religious groups may encounter discrimination due to their proclivity to offend the cultural norms of major religions or secular society. Christians in Sri Lanka, by their very presence, offend some Buddhists who believe that Sri Lanka is a sacred place for Buddhism (Deegaale 2006; USDS Sri Lanka 2007). In Australia, some Muslims, Orthodox Jews and Christians offend secularists, by bringing their religion into public life with religious attire.

Theological Difference

With its heterodox variations on orthodox Muslim theology, the Muslim Ahmadiyya sect offends orthodox Sunni Muslims across the region. Followers accept their founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as a reincarnation of the Prophet Muhammad, and the final messenger of Islam, and accept western styles of dress otherwise shunned, and in places even proscribed, by many traditional Muslims (Clarke 2006).

National Security Threat

Following September 11, Australians among others have felt particularly vulnerable to Islamic terrorism. Ongoing tensions have occurred between the minority Muslims and other Australians (ABC News 2007; Bouma et al. 2007; Karvelas 2003). With the implication that they are potential traitors, Muslims have been accused of refusing to condemn acts of Islamic terrorism (Grattan 2006; Vincent 2005).

Cultural Discriminations

In Australia and New Zealand, Jews and Jewish property and sites – such as grave-yards – are the subject of some occasional violence, despite their long and successful histories in these countries after European colonisation (Boyes 2004; Gardiner 2004; Herald Sun 2005; New Zealand Herald 2004; Randerson 2004; USDS New Zealand 2005). The specific factors behind this violence are unclear.

It is assumed that perpetrators are at least partly motivated by a heritage of cultural antisemitism from Europe.

Restrictions on Behalf of the State Religion

State restrictions on religious practices occur in Brunei, where Islam is the religion of the state. Religious minorities, including Christianity and Buddhism must refrain from religious practices that may offend Islam and cannot import crucifixes, Bibles or Buddha statuettes (Asiaweek: Hong Kong 1998; USDS Brunei 2007). In Malaysia, Muslim born Malays cannot convert to a minority religion (USDS Malaysia 2007).

Association with Marginalised Ethnicities

Religious minorities can encounter discrimination indirectly through their ethnic associations. In Fiji, Hindus and Muslims suffer indirect discrimination through action directed at them primarily on the basis of their Indian-Fijian ethnicity (USDS 2007).

Factors Mitigating Marginalisation of Minority Religious Groups

Countries with negligible or no ongoing discrimination or marginalisation of minority religious groups are Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands, PNG, the FSM and Japan. Social tensions certainly exist in these countries but they rarely involve groups identifying themselves by religion. Below is a list of social conditions observed in these nations supporting social cohesion and so favourable to an absence of marginalisation against religious minorities.

A population majority religious with: (1) overwhelming social or political power; and (2) with a policy of non-discrimination against minority religious groups.

Timor Leste is an almost totally Catholic nation in which the Catholic Church condemns discrimination against minority religious groups (USDS East Timor 2007). The social power of the majority religion supports conformity to its social norms. If an institution condemns intolerance, then most of the population will conform and allow minority religious groups to practice in freedom.

Religious diversity of such significance that no single religious group or bloc of groups can generally marginalise others.

PNG approaches this circumstance given its wide diversities of Christian denominations (Gibbs 2006; USDS Papua New Guinea 2007). No particular religion or bloc of religions has the power to influence a general campaign of marginalisation against one or more particular minorities. This situation does not prevent individual minorities from entering conflict with each other; or marginalising other religious groups within their own territories. In fact, it does not prevent the general marginalisation of a religious group on ethnic or cultural grounds. However, it works against general discrimination affected by a single religious standpoint.

A society not threatened by: (a) religious expression; or (b) minority groups of any kind.

These factors are present in the Solomon Islands, PNG, the FSM and Japan. Minority religious groups represent no cultural threat to the greater population – although it should be added that minority religious group, Aum Shinrikyo s threatened public safety in Japan and has made the Japanese suspicious of minorities that may seem anti-social (Clarke 2006).

Significant proclivity to religious fragmentation.

This situation exists in Japan where religious differentiation and fragmentation have been aspects of culture throughout history (Clarke 2006; Shimazono 2004; Shimazono 2006). Small and developing religious groups are a typified aspect of Japanese culture, and unless they exhibit tendencies toward aggression or violent action, they are not perceived as threats.

Cultural acceptance of multiple religious identifications by individuals.

This condition is also appropriate to Japan where practice of more than one religion is common (USDS Japan 2007). When individuals have the social freedom to belong to multiple religions or religious groups, then the greater society has an 'organic' process of inter-faith networking. While Japan is presently the only country in this category, the phenomena may also occur in other nations in the future, given increasing global proliferation of religious images.

Common theological grounds between minority religious groups and major religions.

In PNG, the Solomon Islands, and FSM, most minority religious groups are Christian (USDS Papua New Guinea 2007; USDS Solomon Islands 2007; USDS FSM 2007) and have a common basis of theology. Each believes in same charismatic figure and his messianic qualities. As long as no minority emerges with an offensive variation, as Ahmadiyya have among Muslims in Indonesia and Sri Lanka (USDS Indonesia 2007; USDS Sri Lanka 2007), the various groups sense some kinship of belief.

A recent history of terrible violence and domestic oppression; with a positive view of the future.

Timor Leste has only recently emerged from the violence of Indonesian rule and is politically if not socially committed to rebuilding. Japan had a similar social vision after the terrible outcomes of the civil war. In such societies, aggression, discrimination, oppression and violence may be typified as negative, and tolerance for difference is more likely to be a norm.

Conclusion

Across nations minority religious groups have different levels of freedom. In nations like Timor Leste and the FSM, religious minorities enjoy full freedom. Therefore, the nature of social cohesion in these places is not marginalising for minorities. In Muslim, nations, some minorities remain vulnerable to marginalisation if they contradict or threaten major religious groups or important norms of secular life. This indicates variations in the quality of social cohesion across the region with respect to the integration of religious groups.

A general feature of all nations in the volume is a willingness to recognise minority religions. In Timor Leste, Japan and the Pacific Nations, the majority religious groups are not threatened by minority religious groups. However, in Australia, Sri Lanka and the Islamic nations, minority religious are constantly reminded of their minority status and secondary importance. In these nations, social cohesion requires respect for the hegemony of the major religions, religious groups, or in Australia's case, secularism.

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Religious Competition

The idea of competition between religious groups may seem awkward or even disrespectful of religion. However, like commercial organisations, biological organisms and sports teams, religious groups operate in environments where they compete to survive, consolidate and adapt to change. Competitive action by religious groups can include public criticism of rival groups and aggressive recruiting among their members. It also includes less direct forms such as the setting up of schools and worship centres; or the establishment of special relations with government (Iannaccone 1992). The qualities and conditions of religious competition indicate the nature of social cohesion in the religious dimension of any society. An examination of religious competition will explain why some countries have significantly different levels of religious freedom and proclivities to religious tension.

The chapter's first section considers the nature of religious competition and clarifies its dimensions. Next is a consideration of the general fields of competition among the nations of this volume. The final section examines two major social forces pressuring religious competition and social cohesion: Islamic revitalisation and Christian Renewal or 'Renewalism'.

Nature of Competition Between Religious Groups

Competition between religious groups has two dimensions: goals and strategies. The fundamental goal is to increase membership. Associated goals are increases in social status and state recognition. Strategies to confront all these goals include: direct recruitment tactics; proselytising; public events; professionalisation of management; founding of educational institutions; corporate expansion; social and market research; continuous improvement of services; acquisition of businesses and financial assets; establishment of relations with government; attacking the credibility other religious groups.

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General Fields of Competition

Competition Within Religions

With respect to gaining increases in memberships, competition occurs between groups within rather than across religions, which usually requires a much greater change in faith. In Australia and New Zealand, Renewalist Christian groups have been growing probably at the expense of established Christian Churches (ABS 2004, 2006a, 2007; Morris 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2006). Similarly, both militant and progressive Muslim groups make appeals to 'orthodox' Muslims to rethink, rather than change their religion, and join their alternative Muslim groups.

Competition Across Religions

Competition across religions is now more common due to globalisation which has exposed people across the world to wider ranges of religious images and experiences. Due to globalising technology, information can quickly downloaded from the internet on any religion, including even the sacred texts. Preachers can be observed on You Tube; and direct contact established with people of other faiths, in other nations or locally, by email. Global migration has also moved people of different religions across the world and in many countries have a range of religions that are visible in everyday social life (Keohane and Nye 2003). As a consequence, formerly 'exotic' religions now have a substantial presence as 'real' alternatives. In Australia, for example, it is becoming less unusual for Christians to convert to Buddhism or Islam, or join 'new' religious movements (Clarke 2006; Snow 2007; Vasi 2008).

Such changes also give religious groups greater capacity and opportunity to recruit or compete across nations and cultures. This leads groups to engage in competition, even if just to defend their own point of view. This can be seen in a number of countries as public inter-faith dialogue is now more common, and in which religions may and can criticise each other on theological grounds. Examples of this can be found in Australia (Pell 2006).

Religious Competition and Social Cohesion

The state of religious competition is an expression of relations between religious groups and how they, as parts of the religious society, integrate. Therefore the nature of competition, gives insights into the nature of a society's social cohesion. When the 'field of competition' is respected by all religious groups, as when sports teams respect their competition league, the different groups compete by the same rules and

there emerges a sustaining religious field or society. However, if some groups disrespect the competition and prefer to see the rules of the field as ‘every group for itself’, the competitive field no longer integrates all the players smoothly.

Fields of Competition

The following analysis categorises countries by way of two basic fields of competition: ‘single group majority’ and ‘majority concentration’. In the first, a single religious group or movement holds the majority of the population. This is the case in Timor Leste and Thailand where, respectively, the Roman Catholic Church and Theravada Buddhism represent over 90% of the national populations (USDS East Timor 2007; USDS Thailand 2007).

A ‘concentrated majority’ is where a small number of religious groups, usually with a common basic theology, collectively represent the majority of the national population. This is the case in Australia (ABS 2004, 2007), New Zealand (Morris 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2006) and the Pacific Island nations like Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Gibbs 2006) and the Solomon Islands (USDS Solomon Islands 2007). Singapore has a special majority concentration in which the groups are of separate faiths: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam (Statistics Singapore 2007).

Japan is a unique field of competition given its culture of polyreligious identification (USDS Japan 2007). Hence its environment of religious competition will be covered separately.

Single Group Majority

Several of the countries in this book have religious groups with memberships that are significant population majorities. Roman Catholicism is over 95% of the population of Timor Leste (National Statistics Directorate 2004) and 85% of the Philippines (PFRPL 2007); Islam is about 86% of Indonesia (CIA Indonesia 2007); and almost 95% of Thailand is Buddhist (Statistics Thailand 2008). In Malaysia, Islam is about 60% of the population (DSM 2001) and in Brunei Islam is about 67% (SBS Brunei 2007). All have other religious groups whose competitive chances are affected by the competitive power of the majority group.

In these countries, the majority religious groups have major competitive advantages over smaller groups. For example, membership of majority religious groups is a cultural norm for most people and subgroups of the various national societies. Majority religious groups also have electoral credibility with governments, if not ‘national religion’ status. Islam is the state religion of both Brunei (Government of Brunei Darussalam 2007) and Malaysia (Badawi 2005) and enjoys preferential treatment and power. Roman Catholicism is a strong political force in the

Philippines (USDS Philippines 2007) and Timor Leste (USDS East Timor 2007) and its political power cannot be ignored by governments.

Governments may also give majority religious groups exclusive competitive advantage in areas of consolidation. The Brunei government has made courses on Islam compulsory in all government schools but no school is allowed to teach Christianity (USDS Brunei 2007). Official rules on religious conversions may also favour the competitive opportunities of the majority religious group. In Malaysia, Muslims are not allowed to convert to other religions and Non-Muslims intending to marry Muslims must convert to Islam, as Muslims are not allowed to marry non-Muslims (USDS Malaysia 2007).

The opportunities of new religious groups to 'start up'; or for all non-majority groups to compete, can be formally restricted when authorities have coercive powers to modify or restrict religious practice. In Brunei, the importation of certain religious objects like Christian crucifixes and Buddha statues is prohibited as they are offensive to Islam. Proselytisation by religions other than Islam is not permitted, as similarly in Malaysia non-Muslims must not proselytise to Muslims (Asiaweek 1998; USDS Brunei 2007; USDS Malaysia 2007). Competitively, such rules, if implemented, disadvantage non-majority religious groups.

Government authorities may also proscribe smaller religious groups, including those of the same faith as the majority group. So called 'deviant' forms of Islam are proscribed in Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia (USDS Brunei 2007; USDS Indonesia 2007; USDS Malaysia 2007). The Indonesian Ulama Council (IUC) has issued 11 fatwa against sects practicing 'Liberal Islam', including the Ahmadiyya group. The IUC has also stated its opposition to religious pluralism, forbidding Muslims to pray with people of other faiths (USDS Indonesia 2007). These rulings protect the competitive advantages held by Islamic groups. However, such regulations do not exist in the Catholic nations of Timor Leste and the Philippines.

In countries with single group majorities, government management of religious competition is simplified on one level, as there is limited religious diversity and therefore lower potential for inter-religious tensions. Also, if there is mutual support between the majority religious group and the state support – as in Brunei – then the government can manage religious diversity with more confidence. The power of the majority group may be intensified if it has representation in government. In Sri Lanka and Malaysia, their respective majority groups have lobbied for laws to increase their respective competitive advantages (Deegalle 2006; Kuppusamy 2006). When a majority religious group has significant political power outside the system of government, it can generate effective resistance to the government, as has occurred in Indonesia, the Philippines and Timor Leste (USDS East Timor 2007; USDS Indonesia 2007; USDS Philippines 2007).

Fiji is a special case of a single group majority country, as it is segregated by major ethnic groups, Indigenous and Indian Fijians. Both ethnic groups have their own single group majority. Generally, the Indigenous-Fijians are Christian and the Indian-Fijians are Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. The majority religious group of Indigenous Fijians in 1996 was the Methodist Church, being 66.6% of their population (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008). Most competition between religious

groups for the Indigenous Fijians is among the Christian groups, with the Methodists having significant competitive advantage. However, with the current military based government, the Catholic Church enjoys higher status than the Methodist Church (Newland 2007).

Among Indian Fijians, Sanatan Hindu was the majority group at 57.0% of their population. Smaller religious groups among the Indians were also Muslims and Sikhs (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics 2008; Newland 2006). Some Christian groups have small but ongoing Indian Fijian memberships particularly the Methodists, Assemblies of God and Catholics (Fiji Bureau of Statistics 2008). The Methodist Church gives special services in Hindi for its Indian Fijian members, encouraging their continued membership and discouraging defection to other churches (Newland 2006). However, most Indian-Fijians are probably unlikely to consider giving alliance to a Christian group. Rather, competition is more likely to take place within each of their major religions: Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism.

Recent attacks have been reported on Hindu temples; and at least one attack has been reported on a mosque (*Fiji Times* 2006a,b; USDS Fiji 2005). These attacks, which include arson, continue. Fiji police maintain the crimes are not religiously based, usually including robberies (Radio New Zealand 2006). On the other hand, Hindus have reported that the attacks are religiously inspired attacks including major vandalism and desecrations (Ekadashi 2008; Hinduism Today 2004).

Fiji has had a military based government since the coup of 2006. This government does not have the support of the Methodist church (CBA 2007; DFAT 2008; Dorney 2008). The government, which has been accused of violating democratic rights, has criticised the Methodist church and detained some of its members. The government has also pursued and established positive relations with the Catholic Church and Indian Fijians (Newland 2007).

Sri Lanka also warrants special attention due to its ethnic differentiation and civil war. At the last 2000 Census Sri Lanka was 76.7% Buddhist (Peebles 2006). Other religious groups were Muslims 8.5%; Hindus 7.8%; Roman Catholics 6.1%; and ‘Other Christians’ 0.9% (Department of Census and Statistics. 2008). As with Fiji, religious affiliation is significantly ethnic based, and most Buddhists are Sinhalese while Hindus are most likely to be Tamil. Muslims are descendants of Arab traders and migrants from India. Religious competition is probably significant only within these religious groups given that people converting across religions are likely to also convert away from their ethnic ties. The Constitution gives Buddhism the ‘foremost place’ (Government of Sri Lanka 2008) in Sri Lanka. Some Buddhists believe that Sri Lanka is a holy place where the primacy of Buddhism should be preserved and defended. Buddhists have entered Parliament, making direct efforts to maintain the competitive advantage of their religion (Deegalle 2006; De Silva 2006; USDS Sri Lanka 2007). As is well known, a terrible civil war has been fought in Sri Lanka for decades between Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus, motivated by both religious and ethnic issues.

The most tense issue of religious competition in Sri Lanka, is that of conversions. Buddhists and Christian clergy have expressed great public concern over so called ‘unethical conversions’ by Christian aid workers among vulnerable Sri Lankans affected by the 2004 Tsunami (USCIRF 2005). Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), a

Buddhist party with monk representatives, twice introduced a bill to Parliament that would make acts to win religious converts illegal (USCIRF 2007). This would insulate the present religious content of Sri Lanka, with its Buddhist majority, from competition stimulated by religious individuals or groups who would attempt to win converts in face to face interactions. In 2007, the bill was still unpassed (USDS Sri Lanka 2007). Christians have suffered violent attacks in recent years with Buddhists destroying Christian property and warning Christians to stop their religious practice (USDS Sri Lanka 2007).

The Philippines government has a major conflict with Muslim separatists on the southern island of Mindanao. This terrible situation aside, the Philippines has vibrant competition among Protestant and Renewalist Churches. There are no government measures to maintain the competitive advantages of the Roman Catholic Church, which, anyway, has an overwhelming majority of the population in its membership (USDS Philippines 2007). The Roman Catholic Church has no competitive challengers in Timor Leste. Indigenous religions exist alongside Catholicism but pose no competitive threat.

Concentrated Majority

In 2006 Australia had a concentrated majority of five Christian denominations. Almost 25.8% of the population was Catholic; 18.7% was Anglican; the Uniting Church was 5.7%; and Presbyterian/Reformed, 3.0%. Memberships across this group totalled approximately 53% of Australia's population. Given that 18.7% of Australians in 2006 considered themselves to have 'no religion', this concentrated group makes up a clear majority of religionists (ABS 2007). They also share status in being the oldest British imported religious groups, excluding Judaism. Comparable majority concentrations exist in the PNG, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. Singapore is a special case as it has a concentrated majority of religions of different faiths: Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. All these countries have other religious groups of various faiths outside their concentrated majorities (Daye 2006; Ernst 2006; Gibbs 2006; Statistics New Zealand 2006; Statistics Singapore 2007; USDS FSM 2007; USDS PNG 2007).

Religious groups within concentrated majorities have competitive advantages over 'outside' religious groups. Each group is likely to have larger numbers of members, greater material resources and wider social and political status. In the short term, members of the majority concentration group are unlikely to be under any competitive threat from outside their group – although over generations, they could lose competitive advantages to religious groups that are currently 'minorities'. Members of Australia's majority concentration group have received no short term threats for most of Australia's European history. However, they could be under long term threat from some smaller groups that have had recent growth: Pentecostal Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and people with 'no religion' (ABS 2004, 2006a,b, 2007).

Members of the majority concentration group may compete with each other, pressuring social cohesion when the competition is intense. For many decades in

Australia and New Zealand, Protestants and Catholics competed for social and political influence. At times the competition reached discernible levels of tension (Lineham and Davidson 1995; Mol 1985), although there were never significant disruptions to social stability. Smaller members of the majority concentration group – such as the Presbyterians in Australia – may, due to their smaller size, be vulnerable to competition from outside groups.

Singapore's government closely monitors religious groups to prevent inter-religious tensions, reserving discretionary power to prevent inflammatory religious competition (Government of Singapore 2003). In Australia, the line between 'competition' and 'provocation' is arguably crossed sometimes. This has happened in when senior Muslims, Christians, and sometimes Jews, have engaged in inflammatory public exchanges (Dunn 2006; Pell 2006). However, the style of religious competition in all these states has generally supported religious freedom and religious expression.

Japan

Japan's competitive field is a unique case and warrants separate treatment. There are two critical differences between Japan and the other nations: (1) there are two religions with full majority status – Buddhism and Shinto; and (2) multiple memberships or affiliations are culturally acceptable and probably widespread (USDS Japan 2007). Buddhism and Shinto are both closely associated with Japanese culture and hold some level of obligatory observance for most Japanese. They therefore represent do not compete. Japanese may also practice other religions including as any of the significant number of 'folk' religions (USDS Japan 2007) or spiritualities of the many 'new religious groups', which often borrow from Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity and folk religions (Clarke 2006; Partridge 2004; Shimazono 2004, 2006). Japan's competitive field is multi-dimensional and hyper-differentiated.

In managing religious competition, Japanese governments deal with legacies of World War II. Largely due to US concerns about the role of Shinto in ultra-nationalism, Japan's Post War Constitution gives complete freedom of religious belief and practice within the law (Hardacre 2006; Tsuyoshi 1996). The government also gives unbiased state support through tax concessions to significant numbers of religious groups (USDS Japan 2007). However, the Aum Shinrikyo attacks of 1995 may have intensified state surveillance of new religious groups. This will not necessarily compromise freedom of religious competition if groups refrain from terrorist activity (Clarke 2006; USDS Japan 2007).

Non-majority Groups

In both types of competitive field, non-majority religious groups are at a competitive disadvantage, lacking comparable memberships, status and influence with government

– at least for the entire nation. They may also remain viable by functioning as 'majority groups' for specific ethnicities and geographic areas. For example, many smaller Christian churches in Australia serve ethnic groups like Serbians or Ethiopians, and have significant competitive advantages with these ethnic groups (ABS 2006a, 2007). Regional fragmentation of national populations, as occurs in the Solomon Islands, FSM and PNG, may allow groups outside the concentration to be a 'single group majorities' in defined geographical areas.

Forces Changing Competitive Environments

Islam – Revitalisation and Perceptions of Threat

Since 11 September 2001, Muslims have been seen by many adherents of other religions as potential adversaries – theologically, culturally and militarily. Perhaps in response, some Muslims, have felt antagonism toward people outside of Islam. Within this tension, members of both sides have felt obliged to define themselves and their differences. This has lead on one hand to a revitalisation of Islam around the world, including the Asia Pacific region. On the other hand, there have been revitalisations among opposing groups like politically conservative Christians and Jews. This has lead to increases in the intensity of competition between Muslims and other groups.

In reconsidering, redefining and defending themselves, many Australian Muslims, for example, have experienced a religious revitalisation, becoming more energetic in their dialogue and competition with other religious groups and secular attackers in the media. As Australia's Muslim community is under a social siege, its solidarity, ability to defend itself and compete with other religious groups have all gained extra importance for community members.

For decades, Malaysia's Islamic party Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PAS) has campaigned for further Islamicisation of Malaysian social institutions (Abuza 2003). Possibly in response to this pressure, former Prime Minister Mahathir made concessions such as giving greater powers to the *Shariah* court (Kuppusamy 2006). The power of PAS has decreased in recent years and the current Prime Minister, Badawi has implemented a more moderate philosophy of Islamic government, *Islam Hadhari* (Badawi 2005). This philosophy remains an affirmation of national Islamic identity and affirms an unchallengeable competitive position for Islam. In Indonesia the number of mosques has increased and Islamists have attempted to see the Constitution recast to follow *Shariah* law (Falaakh 2003; Hosen 2005). These moves have failed but *Shariah* is implemented at various levels in some Indonesian provinces (USDS Indonesia 2007), giving Islam a competitive advantage. There has also been increased competition between militant and moderate Muslims in Indonesia and Malaysia and significant violence between Muslims and Christians in parts of Indonesia (Abuza 2003; USDS Indonesia 2007).

Islamic revitalisation is also occurring in Australia with consequences for local religious competition. Although only 1.7% of the total Australian population in

2006 (ABS 2007), Muslims were one of the largest religious groups outside Christianity (ABS 2007). Given that Australia has contributed military support to the 'War on Terror', Australian Muslims have been the focus of attention from the media and politicians. They have also been the subject of some violence, discrimination and efforts to reduce their competitive opportunities. There have been calls to ban the Muslim headscarf in schools (Maiden and Taylor 2005) and calls to limit Muslim immigration (Herald Sun 2007b). Further, there have been openly anti-Muslim moves to block building permits for Muslim school and mosques (Emerson 2008; Stafford 2008). With constant public scrutiny and attacks on their competitive position, Muslims have become more aware of themselves as a distinct group.

Despite their competitive disadvantages, Muslims in Australia have built their competitive strength, gaining a regular presence in the media and public discussion, and also attracting special support. The federal government has awarded funding for the training of Muslims to aid Muslims' social integration through the labour market (Herald Sun 2007a). While applications to build mosques and schools have been refused, Muslims have challenged these decisions through the courts and have usually gained successful reversals (Stafford 2008). The growth of Muslim schools will consolidate Muslim groups in Australia, giving long term competitive chances. Also, where previous generations of non-Muslim Australians had little or no knowledge of Islam, regular public discussion has served to stimulate interest, disseminate information and increase the potential for conversions. While conversions to Islam remain uncommon in Australia, they are becoming more accepted (The Age 2004). The Muslim style of competition may be appreciated as one of 'wearing down' religious and secular opponents, through patient incremental progress.

Christian Renewal

As Muslims have had a revitalisation, so has part of Christianity in the form of Christian Renewalist movements (PFRPL 2006). Christian Renewalists include Pentecostals and charismatics who have 'a common belief in the spiritually renewing gifts of the Holy Spirit' (PFRPL 2006, 1). As the major Christian denominations have steadily lost members in Australia and New Zealand (ABS 2006b, 2007; Bouma 2006; Statistics New Zealand 2006), Renewalist churches have engaged in increasingly successful competition since at least the early 1990s (ABS 2006b; Bouma 2006; Statistics New Zealand 2002, 2006). The most famous Renewalist church in Australia is Hillsong – a branch church of the Assemblies of God. According to the *Sydney Morning Herald,* Hillsong church had 19,000 members in 2007 (Morris 2007) and religion journalist James Murray described Hillsong as, 'purvey(ing) a gospel of prosperity and promises of financial reward for doing God's will' (Murray 2004). Renewalists in Australia are attracting public support and associations from politicians who recognise these churches as significant sources of publicity (Lohrey 2006). With increasing publicity, adherents and political associations, Renewalists increase their competitive strength.

Similarly, Renewalist churches are increasing their strength in New Zealand. Between 1991 and 2006, the New Zealand Census category of 'Pentecostalism' increased as a percentage of the total population from 1.6% to 2.1%. For the same period the category, 'Evangelical' doubled from 0.16% to 0.37%. As in Australia the memberships of major Churches are decreasing as percentages of the national population (ABS 2004, 2006b, 2007; Statistics New Zealand 2002, 2006). Lineham (2004) holds that New Zealand is undergoing a growth in politically conservative Pentecostalism as demonstrated by the rise of the Destiny Church, which came to national attention in 2004 with an aggressive street march against gay rights (TV New Zealand 2004). Collins (2007a,b) reports that other New Zealand Pentecostal churches have also been politically vocal.

Renewalist churches also operate in FSM, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Indonesia and Timor Leste. They are particularly strong in PNG where the Evangelical Lutheran Church is 19.5% of the population, the Pentecostal Church, 8.6% and Evangelical Alliance, 5.2% (Gibbs 2006). In 2007 the South Sea Evangelical Church was about 17% of the Solomon Islands population (USDS Solomon Islands 2007) among whom there was a substantial increase in the evangelical and Pentecostal conversions between 1986 and 1999 (Ernst 2006). Some charismatic Protestant groups are very large in the Philippines. In 2006, Jesus is Lord had 1 million affiliates. Catholic charismatic groups are even larger in the Philippines with El Shaddai claiming 2 million members in 2006 (Kessler and Ruland 2006).

Pentecostal churches have also been active in Indonesia, a Muslim majority country. Robinson (2005) estimated that the Pentecostal Church of Indonesia had a membership of 2 million members in 2001. Anderson (2003) claims that in 2003, there were 9 million 'Pentecostals and Charismatics' in Indonesia.

In the Christian majority countries, Renewalist churches have made assertive efforts to compete with older Christian denominations and win adherents of other religions. Many Renewalists churches have significantly different styles of worship, with interactive singing, television screens and PowerPoint presented images. According to Morris (2007), the formula used by these churches to attract and maintain memberships is, 'a charismatic, likeable and dynamic husband-and-wife team, contemporary soft-rock worship and a message of self transformation, abundant spiritual and material blessings for believers and the chance of healings and miracles for the afflicted'. In Australia some Renewalist churches have further diversified in their selection of worship venues, even holding services in licensed hotels (Patterson 2007).

While there is little specific Australian data on the numbers of former members of established churches being attracted by the Renewalists, some clerics see such defections as significant. As early as 1994, the serving Archbishop of Sydney, Rev Harry Goodhew, claimed that 'denomination hopping' was 'common among young church goers, the big winners being the Pentecostal churches' (Jopson 1994). In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) counted Pentecostals as 1.1% of Australia's population or 219, 687. In recent decades there has been a gradual increase in the Pentecostal category as a percentage of the Australian Census. In

1981, the percentage was 0.5%; then 0.9% in 1991, to 1.0% in 2001 and 1.1% in 2006 (ABS 2004, 2006a,b, 2007; Bouma 1992). While these percentages of the Australian population are small relative to many other religions and religious groups, they are increasing. At the same time, the major and long established Churches – Catholic, Anglican, Uniting and Presbyterian – have been decreasing in memberships and as portions of the population (ABS 2004, 2006a, 2007).

Conclusion

Restrictions on religious competition exist across countries of this volume and take various forms, including state support for majorities, state controls on minority religious groups. In some countries, these restrictions on religious competition probably have the majority population support. For example restrictions on competition that support the primary position of Islam in Brunei and Malaysia are probably supported by most citizens and residents of those countries, particularly as these nations have had Muslim majorities for all their recent histories. In fact, restrictions on competition are being supported in some places. The recent community opposition to a Muslim school in the Australian town of Camden shows that in parts of Australia, some groups are prepared to take public action to restrict religious competition and prevent the presence of certain religious groups. The loss of the school – if the decision is final – is a competitive setback for Australian Muslims as it denies or delays a further consolidation of Islam in Australia. Further the spirit of this competitive victory was definite and intense. When Camden's local government made the decision to reject the school, locals cheered and made comments like, 'we don't want them (Muslims) not only here, we don't want them in Australia' (ABC News 2008).

The two major forces affecting change in religious competition, Islamic revitalisation and Christian Renewalism, vary in significance across nations but may ultimately affect the entire region. An extreme scenario would be the development of significantly influential Renewalist lobbies in Christian countries, and politically influential Islamist groups in Muslim majority nations. International relations would then be influenced by competition between religious views.

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Women and Religious Diversity

In Southeast Asia and the Pacific, as in the rest of the world, it is undeniable that women form the major part of members of faith communities, yet invariably the formal organizations of these communities are predominantly run by men. How does the differing experience of men and of women in communities of faith in the region influence the growth of civil society in Asia and the Pacific? This chapter will highlight a few examples of women from a number of differing faith traditions in the region, who have made a very particular contribution to social movements through their faith. Women in Southeast Asia and the Pacific have played leading roles in building community, opposing violence, mediating in conflicts and preparing the way for improved human rights.

Asia is home to most of the world's major faith traditions, from the Indian subcontinent with its pantheon of Hindu Gods, to East Asia with strong traditions of Buddhism to the early introduction of Islam from Arab traders and the later introduction of Christianity with European colonialism. The continent has been a meeting place of the major faith traditions. The Pacific Islands region, colonized for the most part by the Europeans, remains one of the most strongly Christian areas, yet exhibits a diversity in the extent to which Christianity both manifests internal varieties of expression on the one hand, and co-habits with indigenous beliefs on the other.

Most notable in female interpretations and apprehensions of religion is the far greater emphasis on lived experience. Male interpretations of scriptures are usually subject to debate in a more theoretical context. As Erin White and Marie Tulip put it in their path breaking book of Australian Christian feminist theology *Knowing Otherwise*, 'The major religions play a complex role in the oppression of women, since their scriptures and doctrines and prophets often call for the full equality of all people, yet their practices perpetuate oppression. In Christianity, for example, all people are seen as equal before God, but the symbols and structures of the church are still largely and powerfully patriarchal' (White and Tulip 1991, 2).

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The last few decades have seen women taking an increasing interest in studying scriptures in order to bring about change in both the religious organizations of which they are members and the wider culture in which they find themselves. In Asia and the Pacific Islands this is a particularly daunting proposition for, as Chinese theologian Kwok Pui-Lan has argued 'As a Chinese Christian woman I have to critically re-assess my double heritage, to rediscover liberating elements for building my own theology' and, furthermore, 'doing our own theology requires moving away from a unified theological discourse, to a plurality of voices and a genuine catholicity' (Kwok 2007, 70). Elsewhere she asserts: 'We can only speak about our Christian identity in relation to, not in spite of, these indigenous traditions of our motherland' (Kwok 1994, 67).

At the World Council of Churches Assembly in Canberra in 1991 Professor Chung Hyung Kyun stunned the crowds with her energetic presentations of contemporary struggles, including war and peace, represented by gospel stories and liturgical dance from the indigenous cultures of Australia and her own Korea (Hill 1991). While some criticised her presentation as 'syncretistic', the major debate which has gone on in most theological schools in the following years on 'gospel and culture', has resulted in her view as now almost mainstream within the churches of Asia and the Pacific, where it is always necessary to be able to cross cultural boundaries to make sense of religious texts. Later at the NGO Forum of the Beijing Women's Conference she went so far as to say 'I am a Christian who lives out the reality, power and dangers of the Buddhist, shamanist and Confucian traditions which are alive in my people's history' (Chung 1995, 31).

A number of themes can be identified which have preoccupied women from various of faith traditions and which have emerged through their joint action in the women's movement, particularly that facilitated by the holding, every 10 years since 1975, of major United Nations women's conferences. These intergovernmental conferences were accompanied by Forums for Non-Governmental Organizations, beginning in 1975 with the International Women's Year in Mexico City (Vickers 1992). I had the good fortune to attend two of these: the 1985 gathering in Nairobi, Kenya and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the last of the four (Hill 1985, 1997). In the years between I participated in a variety of events in Manila, Bangkok, Jakarta and Suva, where I was impressed to see the high level co-operation across faith communities by this diverse group of women from all faith traditions and none (Hill 1994).

At the Nairobi Forum, I observed a very real change from the 'women as victim' approach which had characterised a great deal of the women in development literature with which I was familiar (Hill 1984a) to an emphasis on 'women as agents of change'. Some of this was due to an extraordinary presentation by the Egyptian Muslim, Nawal el Sadaawi on the rise of religious fundamentalism in all continents and in all religions and its impact on the status of women. Even then there was evidence that women from within several faith traditions were beginning to address issues of patriarchy and subordination. For example, the World Council of Churches held a workshop at the Forum on 'Religious traditions and women's bodily functions' where women from a number of faith traditions examined this issue as a basis for subordination of women within their own faith (Becher 1990).

Just as the American leaders of first wave feminism at the famous Seneca Falls Conference in 1848 were inspired by documents such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton's 'Women's Bible' (Webb 1999, 76), so women in the Asia and Pacific region have turned to their faith traditions to search for legitimisations for equity to argue for better policies and influence governments in a number of fields, regardless of what their faith hierarchies are saying about them. This search has applied to issues such as violence against women, family planning and women's reproductive rights, women and work (in particular recognition of women's unpaid work), human dignity and human rights, and the promotion of social justice generally, such as the treatment of refugees and immigrant workers. Malaysian Irene Fernandes, with a background in the Catholic Worker movement, has been consistent in her advocacy for the rights of immigrant workers for example, and incurred the wrath of the Malaysian government and legal system having a charge and sentence hanging over her head for 13 years before eventually being acquitted in 2008 (Christian Solidarity Worldwide n.d.; UNHCR 2008). Women have often taken the lead in public debate, often inspired by stories of biblical characters or the views of prophets and women in the scriptures of their particular faith community.

At these world conferences and regional women's conferences there were often distinct religious undercurrents while the topics being discussed were not overtly theological. Nevertheless it was discussing and debating issues such as women in the religious hierarchy, women's interpretation of scripture, female interpretations of God, and attitudes of faiths and cultures towards female bodies, which has often given women confidence to speak out on the issues mentioned above.

Far more than at previous Forums, the Beijing NGO Forum attracted members of religious communities from around the world, including many from Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Participants included feminist interpreters of various scriptures. As I noted in a story sent from the Forum in 1995, a great deal of dialogue took place between and within the religious communities on the role of women and relationships between men and women. From the Muslim community there were wide variations of opinion on women's role in the family, divorce, inheritance, dress, legal status and ability to hold independent political opinions, while there was general agreement on women's right to education. Within the Christian tradition, an even wider range of opinions was advanced, particularly with respect to reproductive rights and women's positions of authority within churches (Hill 1995; Stromberg 1995). Issues such as globalization, with their attendant problems of increasing trafficking in women and other forms of loss of dignity due to commodification of women's bodies, advertising and media stereotyping, has been a continuing theme of faith-based and women's organizations.

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) working with the International Women's Tribune Centre, and the Philippines based network ISIS, carried out an extensive media monitoring of the portrayal of women in print media on the same day, 18 January, around the world. women's groups monitored the media in their own country and WACC, together with ISIS and IWTC collated all the results (Gallagher 2001, 27–29). WACC produced a study guide to encourage women's groups and church study circles to discuss the portrayal of women in the media and what it means.

Marianne Katoppo of Indonesia was a pioneer in Asian feminist biblical study, publishing her groundbreaking *Compassionate and Free: An Asian Women's Theology*, in 1979. In 1981 two Asian women, Filipina Maryknoll Sister Virginia Fabella, and Korean pastor and poet Lee Sun Ai, met at the New Delhi occasion of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). The two women were disappointed to find negative reaction to their use of the word 'Mother' for God and came to the conclusion that 'not all male liberation theologians were ready for inclusive language or a feminist perspective on theology' (Antone 2007). In December 1982 they founded a journal, *In God's Image*, envisaged as 'an Asian Christian Women's effort to provide a forum for expressing our reality, our struggles, our faith reflections and our aspirations for change' (Antone 2007, 4). In 1987 they established the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology (AWRC), first in Singapore, later in Korea and now located in Kuala Lumpur under the leadership of Yong Ting Jin, former Asia-Pacific secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, who had already helped establish the women's program of the WSCF (Antone and Yong 2000).

The women of AWRC lost no time in organizing conferences, including two interfaith conferences in November 1989 in Kuala Lumpur, and November 1991 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, where Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Christian women and women of Asian indigenous religious traditions all spoke (AWRC 1991, 1992). The journal *In God's Image*, continues to be a forum for discussion of many issues all over the Asian region from the experiential point of view informed by feminist theology. Indonesian human right activist Nina Naroyan, now working in Timor Leste with the Student Christian Movement, has described in its pages her experience of working with Timorese women on the issue of reconciliation between ordinary Timorese and Indonesians (Naroyan 2008).

Timorese women of faith, such as Sister Maria Lourdes (Mana Lu), a former member of the resistance, has now established her own religious order in Timor Leste, but one which is very much geared to involving its members in the difficult work of building communities from the ground up (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2005). Another Timorese woman of faith who is struggling to persuade the Parliament to take on the difficult issues around pursuing justice for ordinary Timorese, and who suffered during the 24 years of Indonesian occupation, is Fernanda Borges. Fernanda chairs the parliamentary committee charged with promoting discussion on the report of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, *Chega*! She says 'Reconciliation alone is not enough to heal the tragic memories of victims. Accountability and real recognition of past atrocities is necessary to repair the wounds so that reconciliation efforts can complete the healing process' (Progressio website).

In the Pacific Islands region, for many years, women were in the forefront of the Movement for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific, which also had the backing of most of the major Christian denominations. In part, this was due to the influence of the YWCA, which had established branches in the Pacific in the early 1970s, under the leadership of Ruth Lechte and Anne Walker (Lechte 1983). At the first Pacific regional conference for women in International Women's Year 1975,

delegates were on the whole highly critical of the churches when it came to gender equity, arguing that while preaching love and unity the churches ‘have tended to restrict us women from developing our full potential’, as Konai Thaman of Tonga pointed out (Griffen 1976, 28).

Back in 1984 I observed that many of the activist women in the region had come to leadership positions through the movement for the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific, listing Amelia Rokotuivuna, Suliana Siwatibau, Lorine Tevi of Fiji, Darlene Keju of the Marshall Islands, Dewe Gorodey of New Caledonia, Hilda Lini of Vanuatu, Marie-Therese Danielsson of Tahiti and Bernadette Pereira of Samoa (Hill 1984a). The majority of these came from a church or YWCA background (many from both). All of them went on to become significant women’s leaders in the region. Fiji Methodist laywoman and scientist Suliana Siwatibau wrote the basic book for Pacific Island people explaining the nuclear fuel cycle and why radiation is dangerous to the human body (Siwatibau and Williams 1981). Lorine Tevi of Fiji represented the Pacific at the World Council of Churches office in Geneva. (Her son, Fei, holds the same position today, although the office has been moved back to the Pacific). Amelia Rokotuivuna (now sadly deceased) later worked at the World YWCA and Hilda Lini at the South Pacific Commission. Darlene Keju-Johnson, a speaker at two World Council of Churches Assemblies, who warned the world about nuclear weapons, became a significant youth and women’s leader in the Marshall Islands before succumbing to the cancer which she developed, almost certainly as a result of nuclear testing near her island in the 1940s (Keju-Johnson 1983; Dibblin 1988, 116; de Ishtar 1994, 19–40).

Rose Kara Ninkama of the Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea was one of the first Pacific Island women to write a carefully argued theological treatise for women’s equality in the churches (Ninkama 1987). By 1989 women in the mainline churches in the Pacific had founded the Weavers, a women’s advocacy arm of the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools under the leadership of Ilisapeci Meo, a Fijian with Methodist theological training in the USA. In 1992 they published a special issue of *Pacific Journal of Theology* on Women in Ministry with a variety of female contributors; Catholic and Protestant; lay and ordained. One of the contributors, Roina Fa’atauva’a, who now heads the umbrella body of Samoan NGOs, made a detailed analysis of the ways the history of missionary presence in the Pacific islands led to a loss in status of Polynesian women, in contrast to their traditional status (Fa’atauva’a 1991).

Weavers held its first writers workshop in April 2001 where 30 women from Pacific Island countries came together to ‘weave their own theology’ (Johnson and Filemoni-Tofeaono 2003, 12–13). In her theological reflection ‘Asserting women’s Dignity in a Patriarchal World’. Meo, in addition to looking at biblical sources, draws on work by Shamima Ali and Imrana Jalal who have also struggled with the same issue from within their own Muslim faith tradition (Meo 2003). *Eglise Evangelique* pastor, Tamara Wete of New Caledonia, reflecting on motherhood in the Pacific argued that most Pacific women would find the idea of God as Mother in addition to Father comforting and empowering (Wete 2003).

In Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, women of faith have found themselves playing an extraordinary role as peacemakers, when male leadership had given up on negotiations and returned to fighting. In Bougainville, women founded the Bougainville Inter-Church Women's Forum, made up of members from the Catholic, United, Seventh Day Adventist and Pentecostal Churches. This organization, which was inspired in part by a visit from Joy Balazo of the Uniting Church in Australia, encouraged women to step beyond their tradition roles as wives and mothers into the business of peace negotiating, working with victims of war and during the blockade, of creating alternative institutions of development (Garasu 2001, 2004).

Similarly the 'Women for Peace' group came together in Solomon Islands in June 2000, following an attempted coup. It brings together women from all Christian denominations, and is inspired, in part, by the example of biblical women such as Abigail (in 1 Samuel 25), Esther and Miriam, who were peacemakers in their own time (Pollard 2000, 10). Women for Peace was able to have an extraordinary impact on the success of peace negotiations in Solomon Islands as its members were of diverse backgrounds yet still united in their belief in women's peacemaking role, they were thus, not only able to influence their sons, husbands and fathers, but also were recognised by the authorities sufficiently to take part in peace negotiations themselves (Pollard 2009).

Just as Christians in Southeast Asia and the Pacific have found it liberating to make their own interpretations of the Bible 'through women's eyes' the founders of the Malaysian group 'Sisters in Islam', have focussed their attention on literary and legal interpretation of the Qur'an. In the 1991 publication *Are Women & Men Equal Before Allah?* 1991 they state:

> Our research has shown that oppressive interpretations of the Qur'an are influenced mostly by cultural practices and values, which regard women as inferior and subordinate to men. It is not Islam that oppress women, but human being with all their weaknesses who failed to understand Allah's intentions.
>
> It has been a liberating experience for us to return to the Qur'an and study Allah's actual words in an effort to understand their true meaning. The Qur'an teaches "love and mercy" (Al Rum, 30:21) between women and men, that "men and women are like each other's garment" (Al Baqarah, 2:187), and that "be you male or female, you are members of one another" (Ali 'Imran, 3:195), and that "men and women are protectors, one of another" (Al Tawbah, 9:71).

The insights of Hinduism have also played a significant role in the development of the women's movement in both the Pacific and Southeast Asia, although Hindu women have suffered particular discrimination in the Indian sub-continent, the faith arrived in Fiji with much less emphasis on the system of caste and hierarchy. Hinduism, with its multiplicity of Gods, male and female, and its particular respect for the environment, has played a role in enabling a critique of some of the policies which emerged as a result of the imposition of 'western christendom' on other countries as part of the process of colonialism. The powerful essay 'Monocultures of the Mind' by Indian scientist Vandana Shiva is now widely studied by women from all faith traditions in an attempt to promote a more inclusive view of agriculture and social change and to develop an understanding of biodiversity that gives proper respect to nature (Shiva 1993).

While women have a history of being discriminated against in all faith traditions, many of them in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, along with their counterparts in other regions, are using their intelligence and their experience to gain new insights from their scriptures, histories and from the practices of their faith communities. In addition to helping them play a key role in wider civil society, in the women's movement and other movements, this may well contribute to changing power relations within those faith communities themselves.

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Regional Interfaith Dialogue

Among the many aspects of religion within the Southeast Asia and Pacific region that today command attention, two things stand out. The first, as this book amply demonstrates, is that there is a very full and rich diversity of religious identity, expression and life present in the region. Indeed, the religious milieu of most nations is impressively variegated. And within the region as a whole, as well as within the nations that comprise it, no one religion predominates overall, although three world religions – Buddhism, Christianity and Islam – are variously dominant. But these three are themselves undeniably situated within multi-faith milieus, even where they command majority allegiance. Plurality rules; religious diversity is the norm. The second aspect commanding attention is that the attitude of the States, or of governments, within the region vis-à-vis religion is undergoing change. At the very least this rich religious diversity requires a measure of management, and religion has re-emerged in recent times as a key factor in respect not just to communal identity but also inter-communal and social harmony – or disruption where things go awry. In some instances the change faced by the State is quite significant. This is because, in broad terms, the political context of religion throughout the region is that of secularity: none of the countries is a religious state as such, even though in some cases one religion may have special status as being the *de jure* faith of the land. But, even so, other religions are allowed for.

The modern Western political ideal of the separation of the powers of religion from those of the State is the widespread norm. Nevertheless, three broad patterns may be discerned as applying within the region in respect to the relation of religion and the State – secular divide; benign secularity; and secular contract. Heretofore all have variously described and/or constrained the relationship of religion(s) to the wider society. But all of them are undergoing adjustment in response to contemporary changes in the world of religion and the need to take fresh account of that. The setting of an aggressive secular divide prefers to see religion wholly absent from the public sphere and political discourse. This is the historical context of Australia and New Zealand, for example. Here the media will emblazon the sins of a fallen priest but ignore the saintly work of hundreds. Good news is not good news; only bad news is news-worthy. The ideology of such secularism is hostile to religion and actively seeks to limit, denigrate and neutralise any potential influence of religion

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within the public domain. By contrast, other countries in the region, such as Pacific Island nations, could be said to be marked by a comparatively benign secularity. Here, while there is a clear division of responsibilities and sphere of influence between religion and State, there is not the underlying current of an aggressive secularism; rather the religious dimension of life is more overtly present within the public sphere and more likely to be regarded benignly, even positively, by the apparatus of the State and the leadership of the nation. On the other hand, some Southeast Asian nations – such as Malaysia and Indonesia – whilst being identified as nations of a particular religion (Islam) nonetheless are politically constituted as secular states whereby religion, including the dominant one, is situated within the context of a secular contract: rights, privileges and responsibilities are clearly spelled out by law. So long as the contract is upheld, religion is honoured. However, in all three situations – secular divide, benign secularity and secular contract – significant change is taking place. Governments are taking notice of the religious dimension in a new way. If it was thought that religion was safely in its place, suddenly, it seems, religion is to be taken account of, responded to, and interacted with in a wholly new fashion.

Today, religion is seen to matter; religious identity, expression and life are no longer confinable to the private sphere, on the one hand, nor benignly accepted or neatly ordered, on the other. Religion impacts upon, contributes to, and is varyingly constitutive of, wider public life. Even despite changes taking place within the religious milieu – resurgent exclusivist identities; emergent extremisms; aggressive political interventions, to name but a few – a new order is undeniably abroad. The old modes of construing religion vis-à-vis wider society and its governance are being rethought. Whereas previously the social problems created by religious diversity were ameliorated by virtue of rending religion socially invisible, or at least marginal, today religion commands new attention. Today, by and large, States are taking notice of their religious dimension in a quite new way. For societies where the ideology of an assertive secularism has held sway, this development is arguably the most striking and challenging. But there are challenges inherent which impact on all, nonetheless. One response, which is manifest in various ways, is the emergence of a new interfaith discourse: not only are religions talking with and to one another in a variety of contexts, this interreligious activity is now regarded as an important plank in the quest for enhanced social relations and the advancement of inter-communal harmony. For community identity is very often tied in to religious identity; inter-communal conflict is often also inter-religious; and the route to communal co-existence is through religious détente: the road to peace is paved by dialogue between religions. And so it was that, with the irruption into the Southeast Asia region of religion-sponsored terrorist violence in the form of the Bali bombings, and following on from the infamy of 9/11 and the 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, an initiative emerged aimed at bringing religious and community leaders together from throughout the Southeast Asia and Pacific region, with a view to fostering intercommunal harmony through interfaith dialogue, and to involve government both within that process and as a recipient of recommendation, advice and guidance to arise from it.

Beginning in 2004, and as a result of the initiative of Australia and Indonesia, a series of Southeast Asia and Pacific regional interfaith dialogue forums, involving government-level nominated representative teams of religious and community leaders, has taken place. The first took place in Indonesia. Further meetings have been held in Cebu, the Philippines, in 2006; Waitangi, New Zealand, in 2007; and most recently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 2008. The governments of the initiating countries, together with the governments of New Zealand and the Philippines, have co-sponsored the series thus far. The aim is to bring together representatives of the region's different faith groups, and other community leaders, in order to foster mutual understanding of beliefs and practices and to explore common purposes and projects. Such dialogue, it is hoped, could assist in the promotion of good relations among the various faith communities and cultures of the nations within the region, and contribute to understanding, tolerance and respect for each other's beliefs. Significantly, post 9/11 the concept of interfaith dialogue, as a community or government-sponsored and endorsed activity, as opposed to simply one driven by the interests and concerns of faith communities themselves, has been attracting growing support around the world. Variations on this phenomenon can be found elsewhere. A number of regional and multilateral interreligious initiatives involving some form of dialogical conversation and the quest for common-action responses to local and regional concerns, along with broader intercultural and inter-civilisational initiatives, are well underway with many at the behest of UN agencies. Many countries see these dialogical and especially allied educational developments as a way of countering radicalisation and recruitment by terrorists, and thereby addressing some of the underlying causes of terrorism. The Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue series, as an ongoing concern, aims to strengthen regional security by providing a channel for discussion amongst the major faith and community groups of, currently, some fifteen countries in the Southeast Asian and South Pacific region. Its objective is to promote a culture of peace and tolerance among the different religions of the region and to strengthen the position of religious moderates.

As mentioned, the first regional interfaith dialogue forum was held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on 6–7 December 2004, and took place also under the aegis of ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations. It brought together delegations teams of ten faith and community leaders from each of 14 countries in South East Asia and the Pacific, namely from Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. Malaysia was represented by one observer sent from its embassy in Jakarta. The forum theme was 'Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation' and it was opened with addresses by the President of Indonesia, Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono; the Australian Foreign Minister, the Hon Alexander Downer, MP; Indonesian Foreign Minister, Dr. N Hassan Wirajuda, together with Professor Syafii Ma'arif, the Chairman of Indonesia's Muhammadiyah. A tone of hopeful expectancy was set. Plenary sessions and work groups dealt with key challenges facing communities in the region, national case studies on building harmonious communities, empowering religious – especially Muslim – moderates, and seeking the way forward for fostering inter-communal harmony. In his address the President of the Republic of

Indonesia stressed that the solution to inter-communal relations in the region was not to deny the reality of differences, but to affirm a deeper, greater and more important reality, that of our common humanity.

The forum was unique in that, for the first time, governments in the region had co-operatively initiated and engaged in interfaith discussions focussed – appropriately – on matters of security, a concern which affects all countries. The forum underscored the importance of intra-regional cooperation at all levels. From the perspective of delegations that attended, the success of the gathering was in its being another important step in strengthening regional interdependence and cooperation. Furthermore, the religious dimension of national and social life was now being addressed and taken seriously as a key component of regional social and political affairs. The main focus, as mentioned, was security in the region and the promotion of interfaith activities as a means of strengthening solidarity against extremism and its likelihood of resultant terrorism. For this to be accomplished it was made clear at this forum that there needs to be awareness-raising at many levels of society, not just about security, but also about the nature of religious diversity within our region and the need to work for inter-communal harmonious relations. In some countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, the opening decade of the twenty-first century has seen an upsurge in the variety and frequency of interfaith activities of both a bi-lateral and multi-lateral nature. Many multi-religious interfaith forums, councils and allied bodies had already come into existence, of course. For the most part this had happened during the latter half of the twentieth century. However, by and large such development had not taken place within an explicit national framework for conducting or encouraging interfaith cooperation and dialogue as such. This is now changing, and the change coincides with the emergence of the government-backed regional interreligious dialogue forums and the like. But for many, such interfaith initiatives are a novel experience. It was clear, for instance, that for some of the participants from ASEAN countries at the Yogyakarta forum the very fact of face-to-face interreligious dialogue was a unique event and constituted for them a ground-breaking experience.

This first forum addressed not just the issue of relationships between faith communities in the region, but also that which obtains, or ought to obtain, between governments and national and regional faith communities. This led the meeting to reflect on the absences of apposite national and regional frameworks, together with the important contribution a robust relationship between faith communities and governments at the national and regional level could make to peace, security, human rights and social justice. It was noted that while there are established bilateral and international vehicles for dialogical contact, the exchange of people, resources and ideas in respect to aid, education, trade, development, immigration processes and the like, there is no parallel framework for interfaith relations and cooperation. It was argued and agreed that such a vehicle could play an essential and unique role in bridging the knowledge gaps between different faith communities, with the hope of lessening tensions where they exist. The dialogue members were of the view that there is good cause for governments, nationally and regionally, to confer with faith communities in the same way they do, for example, with business, environmental, scientific, and educational or human rights institutions

and key personnel. Such consultation may be regarded as part of the overall process of developing an inclusive society.

The region covered by the forum, as this book demonstrates, contains a great diversity of religions, including all the world's major faiths along with a host of minor but locally significant ones. The role of religion in the region is very important. Examples of community conflicts in which religion is a factor, and of successful religious tolerance and pluralist co-existence, have been cited. The forum agreed that religious dialogue between the major religions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, together with smaller and indigenous religions, is a vital ingredient in achieving and sustaining regional peace and security (New Zealand Delegation Report 2004). All these religions have their own regional characteristics which, to some extent, can contribute a distinctive perspective to the global interaction between religions. The Yogyakarta forum thus strongly endorsed the continuation of regional interfaith dialogue and engagement between faith communities and ASEAN/Pacific governments collectively. It is at the regional level that faith communities have a particular contribution to make towards peace, security, human rights and social justice. Furthermore, at the conclusion of this forum the Indonesian and Australian governments made a joint announcement about the establishment of a "Centre for Study and Cooperation" in Yogyakarta. This was discussed within the forum itself, which supported the proposal as part of an overall plan to promote such study and cooperation at the national level more widely across the region. And following the Yogyakarta forum, a delegation from Fiji was invited to join in order to increase Pacific representation.

The 15 countries that have taken part in subsequent dialogues include Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam. Significantly, these nations together comprise 620 million people and are configured as follows.

- Seven nations with under 10 million people (Fiji, NZ, PNG, Singapore, Timor, Brunei, Lao)
- Three nations with 20–50 million people (Australia, Cambodia, Malaysia)
- Four nations with 50–100 million people (Philippines, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)
- One nation with 245 million people (Indonesia)

Three nations have a Muslim majority (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei), five have a Buddhist majority (Cambodia, Vietnam, Lao, Thailand, Myanmar), six have a Christian majority (Philippines, Australia, NZ, Fiji, PNG, Timor Leste), and one has no single majority (Singapore). Taken together, these 15 nations comprise approximately 244 million Muslims, 151 million Christians, 149 million Buddhists, 7 million Hindus, 71 million other religions/no religion.

The second forum, sponsored by the governments of Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand and the Philippines, was held in Cebu, the Philippines, from 14–16 March 2006, under the title of 'Dialogue on Regional Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Development and Human Dignity'. The work of the forum focussed on four workshops

– the role of the media in promoting interfaith cooperation; interfaith cooperation for regional peace and security; human dignity, development and interfaith cooperation; and the role of education in promoting interfaith cooperation. During the course of this forum the New Zealand delegation (New Zealand Delegation Report 2006) initiated and convened informal regional 'intra-faith' meetings of Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim participants, and a meeting of Pacific region delegates (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste). Bilateral discussions were also arranged with delegations from most other participating countries. These sorts of additional activities and initiatives indicate something of the worth and value of the regional forums – the opportunity for appropriate networks to evolve and for new developments, compatible with the overall aim and intention of the regional interreligious dialogues, to emerge. The forum concluded with the adoption of the Cebu Declaration on Regional Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, Development and Human Dignity. The Declaration was largely based on the key outcomes of the four workshops and from statements made at the opening session of the conference. Apart from general sentiments in relation to peace and security, human dignity and development, education and the media, the Declaration identified a number of follow-up actions which it enjoined the participating governments to heed (Cebu Declaration 2006). The statement of the President of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, noted the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation for regional peace and development, and asserted the view that faith has to do with primordial needs in the human condition in respect of hope, confidence, courage, together with a commitment to lead a good life on which the family, society, and civilization are based. Arroyo's statement was warmly endorsed by the Dialogue Forum. Commitments to the continuation and strengthening of the regional interreligious dialogue process given by high-ranking government representatives from New Zealand, the Philippines, Australia and Indonesia were clearly articulated. Statements reflecting the great potential and power of faith to bring together peoples of different races, cultures and creeds in the shared pursuit of lasting peace in the region were affirmed. The Declaration went on to assert:

> We believe that interfaith dialogue builds understanding, goodwill, and relationships across religions and among peoples,
>
> We acknowledge that interfaith cooperation plays a central role in the fostering of peace and security in our region and that interfaith dialogue and cooperation are now an integral part of the national and international political landscape,
>
> We recognize that believers, communities, and institutions exercise a distinct and vital role in the promotion of peace, development, and human dignity in this region,
>
> We appreciate that interfaith dialogue and cooperation are essential in de-linking religions from all forms of terror,
>
> We affirm that the key societal values that underpin successful interfaith understanding and cooperation include shared values of peace, harmony, tolerance, ethical standards and human rights,
>
> We recognize the impact of the media on public opinion and their critical relationship to peace and harmony, interfaith and intercultural understanding, nation building, social cohesion and social responsibility,
>
> We affirm that faith communities need to engage with the media, build relationships, provide them with news and information and enter into dialogue with them.

> We believe that human beings have moral, spiritual and intellectual capacities which could be best developed towards the attainment of human dignity,
>
> We believe that education at all levels and in various contexts can play a significant role in promoting interfaith understanding and cooperation,
>
> We recognize the shared contribution of women and men towards interfaith education and the promotion of human dignity,
>
> We recognize that to make interfaith education effective, the driving forces behind interfaith conflict need to be addressed.

Among other things, the Cebu Declaration encouraged the development of local, national and regional interreligious dialogue forums and allied events for the purpose of enhancing interfaith and inter-communal relations and understanding. Governments were called on "to uphold freedom of religion and belief in ways that will encourage interfaith dialogue" and to engage in partnership with faith communities "in addressing violence and all forms of terror and in working for peace, development, and human dignity". And religious communities in the region were exhorted to work for greater mutual respect, sensitivity, and acceptance. Government action throughout the region in respect of policy-making and educational curricula requirements to incorporate values- and interfaith-based dimensions was also urged. Similarly, calls were made for appropriate training to be offered to key media personnel. The Declaration ended with the statement that

> The participants in the Cebu Dialogue, characterized by many languages, cultures and religions, share a conviction that Interfaith Cooperation plays an essential role in the promotion of peace, development, and human dignity and that the Cebu Dialogue, exemplified by the spirit of cooperation, understanding and friendship provided a robust platform for our collective future.

It is clear, from this brief review of the outcome of the second regional interfaith dialogue, that there was a strongly unanimous assertion of aspirations, hopes and intentions for the strengthening of interreligious relations within the nations of the region represented at the forum, and a strong assertion of the place and role of religious life within the affairs of state.

The third regional interfaith dialogue forum with the theme 'Building Bridges' was held at Waitangi, in the Bay of Islands of New Zealand, on 29–31 May 2007, hosted by the New Zealand government (New Zealand Delegation Report 2007). The key sponsoring governments were represented at the opening of the Waitangi dialogue by New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Philippines' President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters, and Andri Hadi, representing the Indonesian Foreign Minister who was unexpectedly unable to attend. Delegates were provided with a copy of the then recently published (with support from UNESCO) New Zealand Statement (Religious Diversity in New Zealand, 2007) on Religious Diversity. This statement, a direct result of the first regional interfaith dialogue forum at Yogyakarta, and in concert with the development of New Zealand's own annual National Interfaith Forums and regional interfaith councils, received considerable positive comment from attendees at the Waitangi forum. Furthermore, the Waitangi dialogue gathering had been preceded during the

previous week by a high-level international symposium held in Auckland (23–24 May 2007) on the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations report.[1] The outcomes of this symposium were reported at Waitangi and formed the basis for one of the workshop sessions there.

In her opening address at Waitangi the New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, noted that the Alliance of Civilisations Report described the contemporary world as "alarmingly out of balance" such that "the need to build bridges between societies, to promote dialogue and understanding, and to forge the political will to address the world's imbalances has never been greater" (Clark 2007). The Australian government representative, The Hon Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs, noted that the benefits of globalisation, such as freedom of movement, the presence of the internet and the ubiquity of mobile phones, can be exploited by some in order to pit intolerance, violence and extremism against tolerance, pluralism and openness. However, such exploitation signals a challenge that makes us "more determined to pursue those values and policies that we believe should govern the conduct of relations between and among people" (Downer 2007). And in a substantial paper an Indonesian representative, Zainal Abidin Bagir, reflected on the almost standard interlinking of interfaith dialogue and the pursuit of peace, noting that in many parts of the world "peace among religions" seems hardly to exist, despite decades of dialogue (Bagir 2007). Is too much being asked of interfaith dialogue when it comes to issues of security and inter-communal harmony? Given realistic limits on what dialogue can achieve, Bagir argued the need for dialogue as the locus of conversation between peoples of different religious worldviews and cultural sensitivities. Interfaith dialogue remains the place to begin the quest for resolution of issues and the advancement of security and peace.

Once again key elements of opening speeches were endorsed by the Forum's closing statement, the Waitangi Declaration: Third Regional Interfaith Dialogue Action Plan (Waitangi Declaration 2007). These included calling on "responsible nations and people of good will to build bridges across the divides" of the participant societies; looking forward "to creating deeper interfaith ties within the region as together we work towards building bridges for a culture of peace"; noting that although "each faith may walk alternative paths to explore the human and the divine… this is a shared journey that demonstrates the diversity and openness of our societies"; and recognising that never before had so many representatives from such a diversity of communities of faith gathered in Waitangi to create "greater mutual understanding and respect for each other". The Indonesian spokesperson highlighted the role of regional dialogue in connecting religious leaders and faiths across the region and called for bridges to be built at all levels of society. This

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[1]The Alliance of Civilisations is a global initiative, launched by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. It seeks to overcome fractures and tensions between societies and cultures and to offer genuine alternatives to the bleak prophecy of near inevitable conflict between civilizations as popularised by Samuel Huntingdon in the mid-1990s. In particular, it seeks to reduce the polarisation between Islam and the West. It represents a wider and more global engagement with the same sorts of issues and concerns that have motivated the emergence of the Asia-Pacific regional dialogue forums.

Dialogue "has now taken root in history". The need to increase the representation of women and youth actively involved in the regional dialogue forums was noted, as also the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the building of bridges between faith communities and between them and governments; in learning about each other through public education, religious education and media; and in the promotion of regional peace and achieving security. The Declaration included a Plan of Action that both echoed sentiments asserted in the previous two declarations (Yogyakarta and Cebu) and attempted to give a sharper sense of focus with respect to identifying concrete outcomes to be aimed for. Thus the plan ranged over actions designed to build intercommunal relations, encourage the development of appropriate educational strategies, and address the role and responsibility of the media in respect to religious and communal concerns and sensitivities.

In particular, faith groups and civil society were urged "to develop partnerships with each other and with governments to work for social and economic justice, minority empowerment and reconciliation among conflicting groups within society" while at the same time "the strengthening of intra-faith dialogue and call for intra-faith dialogue sessions to become a formal part of the Asia Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue process" was endorsed. Furthermore, "education about religions in the public curricula of all schools, including religious schools" was advocated and that governments in the region should "ensure through curriculum review that curricula meet guidelines for fairness, accuracy, and balance in discussing religious beliefs and that they do not denigrate any faith or its adherents". In respect to this educational focus, religious leaders, education policy makers, and interfaith civic organizations were encouraged "to work together to develop consensus guidelines for teaching about religions" together with "the implementation of media literacy programmes in schools, to help develop a discerning and critical approach to news coverage about religions by media consumers" as well as a call to the media "to include the coverage of religion in their voluntary codes of conduct".

The fourth interfaith forum in the series thus far was hosted by the Cambodian government in Phnom Penh on 3–6 April 2008. The theme for this meeting was 'Interfaith cooperation for peace and harmony'. It was noted that the process of regional interfaith dialogue begun in Yogyakarta in 2004 had since contributed to stronger interfaith relationships both nationally and within the region, and had led to increases in interfaith activities at the grassroots level as well as to international exchanges, regional support for global interfaith initiatives, and to initiatives in education programmes both nationally and between countries. It was also noted that the growth in trust that was evident between national delegations and among the participant representatives of diverse faith communities over the course of the four dialogues has contributed to an increasing commonality of purpose and a focus on practical action. Religious tensions in the region have reduced over this four-year period. While the regional interfaith dialogue process might have only been one contributing factor, it was thought to have made an undoubted positive contribution (New Zealand Delegation Report 2008). Plenary sessions and workshops focused on a number of issues, including: Follow-up to the Waitangi Declaration and Action Plan; Achieving Security: Interfaith Action for Regional Peace, Security

and Harmony (which included workshops on 'security', 'tolerance and understanding', 'democracy and equal opportunity', 'solidarity and cooperation' and 'conflict resolution and peacemaking'); Nurturing Initiatives at the Grassroots Level; and Empowering Those Advocating Peace and Harmony (which included workshops on the role of faith groups, women's and community groups, civil society and government, cooperation between the media, faith groups and government, and effective use of education to shape the attitudes of the young and the wider community). The forum concluded with the issuing of a Declaration (Phnom Penh Declaration 2008) in which the participants declared a commitment "to work towards the following in conjunction with governments and other sectors of society:

a. Multifaith dialogue and cooperation
b. Peace as a sacred priority
c. Increased participation by women and youth in interfaith dialogue
d. Sharing with our communities successful examples of multifaith dialogue and cooperation and encouraging others to participate
e. Interfaith cooperation that addresses issues of critical community concerns in our region such as poverty, HIV, human rights, environmental issues and natural disasters.

Following the lead of the 2007 Waitangi Declaration, the 2008 Phnom Penh Declaration contained a substantial 'Action Plan' that ranged over relationships (country-to-country bi-lateral; continuing interfaith and intra-faith activities locally as well as regionally); education and capacity building (religious perspectives on human rights, curricula developments, etc.); conflict resolution and peace-building (utilising religious resources, enhancing networks, joint projects and information sharing); grassroots initiatives (referring to local community-building, extending the range and inclusiveness of the dialogue process especially in respect to women and youth); media and promoting interfaith understanding (balancing free speech with communal responsibility, the contribution of the media to education and positive communal enhancements, the need for training and resourcing media personnel).

In his opening address to the Phnom Penh gathering, the Hon Chris Carter, New Zealand Minister for Ethnic Affairs, expressed his personal view that "interfaith dialogue – driven by its overriding goal of promoting good relations, understanding and respect amongst different faith communities – can make a real contribution to preventing or reducing conflict in our societies" (Carter 2008). This encapsulates both the rationale and the hope for this new regional interreligious and government-backed initiative. Furthermore, Carter stated of this series of Interfaith Dialogue that they concretely demonstrate

> …how civil society representatives can work together – and with their governments – to develop lines of trust and communication. The Dialogue encourages us to focus on the need for inclusion and respect for each other within our own diverse communities, so that no faith community feels marginalised or excluded. It assists us to see more clearly what is happening across the fault lines which exist within and between societies, and to understand better what can be done to bridge them.

Time will tell to what extent this series of regional interfaith dialogue gatherings will result in sustained benefit to the nations involved. Certainly, at the very least, it demonstrates a new-found willingness of the organs of State to engage with the communities of faith who make up such a substantial proportion of the populations of the region, and to acknowledge the place of religion, in all its diversity and complexity, within the structures of society and the quest for regional security, peace, and harmony.

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