

## **“We Teach Our Children to See a Human Being There”: Women’s Formal and Informal Religious Education Work in Transforming Religious Conflict in Indonesia**

Joyce Ann Mercer, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA, USA

### Introduction: Women as Peacebuilders

“Kill or be killed, that was the situation we faced. We did not want to die. So we killed.” Such words were spoken to me repeatedly in interviews with a wide range of people--pastors, students, drivers, farmers, mothers--all living in the aftermath of the violent religious conflicts taking place across Indonesia over the past two decades. Indonesia, a religiously and ethnically diverse archipelago nation in Southeast Asia, has become the site of continuing violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims. Thankfully, today in many areas much of the overt violence has subsided, although flare-ups continue across the country and some areas continue to be hot spots for ongoing fighting. Renewed fighting is kept in check in post-conflict areas, in part, by agreements hammered out between traditional community elders, religious leaders, and government officials.

Such “official” peace processes and negotiated settlements are important for bringing an end to fighting. But *peacebuilding*, the work of building relational and structural conditions that make it possible for those who have been at war with one another to live together peaceably over the long term, does not happen merely through the signing of agreements at a negotiating table. Peacebuilding takes place through ongoing, everyday practices that create the conditions for positive, non-violent coexistence. As Sadako Ogata observes, : [xiv] “In situations of internal conflict, peace agreements sometimes succeed in stopping wars but rarely achieve the building of real peace. Peace must be built from the ground up... .” In this paper, I explore strategies used by women peacebuilders in post-conflict areas of Indonesia.

Along with other scholars interested in religious conflict and peacebuilding work, I have observed that women, while frequently absent or excluded from formal peace negotiations, nevertheless often play key roles in their communities as peacebuilders (Kuehnast, Oudratt, and Hernes, 2011; Kaufman and Williams, 2010). International recognition of the significance of women’s experiences and perspectives in spite of their exclusion from formal peace processes, and their invisibility in publically acknowledged work of peacebuilding, led to the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, calling for greater participation of women in addressing conflict and in post-conflict peace work. The resolution also calls for greater protection of women from sexual violence in and in the aftermath of conflict. In spite of this international consensus of the importance of women’s participation in peacebuilding, many of their contributions remain undervalued.

Nevertheless, women continue to work for peace, in the midst of and in the aftermath of violent conflict. The work of education, both formal and informal, comprises a primary platform for women’s peacebuilding work in various contexts around the globe. The importance of women’s peacebuilding through education was demonstrated again when, in 2014, I traveled to Indonesia for the purpose of meeting with and learning about this work across a variety of post-conflict communities. There, I both witnessed, and heard stories of, women’s educational work for peace in places of religious conflict. My larger study is based on ethnographic interviews with women from four post-conflict areas, conducted in Indonesia during May-July 2014. In this

paper, I focus on the peacebuilding practices of some women in the Moluccas, a group of islands to the north and east of Java that have been home to some of the most destructive fighting between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia.

### The Face of Violent Religious Conflict in Indonesia

Pastor Jerda Djawa<sup>1</sup> serves a Christian congregation on the island of Halmahera in the predominantly Muslim province of North Moluccu. Halmahera became the site of some of the nation's most intense and violent conflict between 1999 and 2002, after Muslim communities reacted to a suspicious letter that reportedly called for Christians to purge the area of Muslims, and Christians responded in kind. By focusing attention upon religious identity per se, these precipitating events effectively turned what had been viewed primarily as a tension between ethnically diverse groups into a religious conflict. The result of the violence in Halmahera was severe: more than 200,000 people were displaced from their homes, with thousands of others losing their lives in the fighting. For two years, Pastor Jerda and her congregation lived in the midst of this war zone that was Halmahera: "I was with them, I was there. I looked with them (she pauses, crying). I looked with my eyes, I felt in my heart what they saw and felt. We ran together, we hid together in ditches. My people and I, we would sleep in the day and we stayed awake at night because we had to. In war, we had to worry that someone might attack us at any time."

Families in Halmahera became desperate for food and security amid the conflict. Pastor Jerda described with anguished voice how some even gave their daughters to soldiers in the military in exchange for rice and promises of protection: "Halmahera is very fertile, and [ordinarily] it's not hard to get some food. You can go to the forest and find food, and also you can go to the sea and you can find some fish. Something like that. But during the conflict you cannot go to sea, you cannot go to the forest. It is too dangerous and the land is destroyed. So you have to buy everything. And if you have no money... if there is no money... (her voice dropped off). After a pause I asked gently, "Then you cannot survive because you have nothing?" "That's right," she replied, "Nothing but your daughters."

Further to the south, Pastor Susanna leads a congregation in a mountainous area near Ambon City. There, in 2000 as conflict spread through Ambon, thirty-five youth died when the church was burned in an attack. "The conflict began, and everyone scattered fast. At this time some houses were burned, and Muslim and Christian people suddenly were fighting each other. Before, we lived together and loved each other. Now suddenly we were fighting... Everyday there was fighting-- bombs, people taking guns to their churches, constantly people were killed.

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<sup>1</sup> This and other interviews took place using a combination of *Bahasa Indonesia* and English, assisted by an interpreter, and each interview was recorded with the permission of the narrator. In accordance with Virginia Theological Seminary's institutional review policies for research ethics, each participant also had the opportunity to state whether she preferred to have her identity disguised and/or be identified with a pseudonym in my use of the interviews for the research. Interestingly, all participants in the interviews said they preferred that their actual names be used, many of them adding, "because I am telling you a true story, so of course you can use my name with it." Participants were invited to identify any parts of the conversation they wished to exclude from the research, and received information for follow-up contact concerning their interviews.

Especially the elderly who could not run away, many of them died because they could not move fast to escape the fighting.”

Throughout the conflict, though many people fled the area, Pastor Susanna stayed with her remaining congregation, imploring those who remained not to participate in acts of retaliatory violence. “I asked people to not kill and I asked them to forgive others. In Ambon there are people, Christians, who killed Muslims but after that they made a confession and asked for forgiveness. Then they would go out and kill again--and come back and ask [for forgiveness] again. I could not condone it. But I understand it. They do this because if you don’t kill, you will be killed.”

I interject at this point, “It must be hard to counsel your congregation members not to kill under those circumstances. But it sounds like you still disagreed with their choice to fight, and kept telling them to stop.” “Yes,” she replied. “It was very hard for me. But I still said to them, ‘Don’t kill.’ I must teach this way with what I do and also with my words because it is a principle of my faith that we do not kill. ”

The narratives of these two women church leaders underscore the complexity of Indonesia’s religious violence. It is a context in which pastors opposed to violence by Christians found themselves challenged to hold to their principled positions of non-revenge in the desperation of a “kill or be killed” reality. Families struggling to survive created a questionable future life for themselves and an unbearable present for their daughters when they used one form of violence to protect themselves from another by making young women into sexual commodities for the sake of security and food. Fighting took place between two groups identified on the basis of their religions, and yet for whom other identity-elements such as ethnicity, and other (geo-political, economic) factors such as migration and external provocation, just as clearly were in play. These conflicts involved gender-based violence and food scarcity, organized conflict provocateurs from outside, and longstanding resentments between villages. Clearly there exists no singular way to name or understand these conflicts, which draws into question the common nomenclature labeling them “religious.”

### Everyday Religion, Everyday Peacebuilding

Recent developments in conflict and peace studies emphasize the multifaceted nature of nearly all violent conflict between religiously identified groups, to the point of drawing into question whether it is even appropriate to refer to these conflicts as religious. Conflicts are generally named religious when the identity boundaries defining contending parties is expressed in terms of their religion, representing a narrowing of identities to this single representation. On the one hand, few of these violent occurrences happen over doctrinal disagreements or matters of religious substance as such. Instead, situations of economic disparity, ethnic tensions, land rights, or migration usually underlie these fights. In many instances in Indonesia, reports of outside groups sent in by the military to instigate violent conflict by manipulating religious identities, put the responsibility for these conflicts in the hands of distant others who stand to benefit from such turmoil. There is no question that “non-religious” underlying sources of conflict give shape to Indonesia’s internal violence. In an important sense it therefore is logical to say that Indonesia’s many internal conflicts between Christian and Muslim groups are not actually religious conflicts per se.

But, on the other hand, those involved in Indonesia’s internal violent fights unhesitatingly categorize the contending groups in terms of their religious identities, as do many outside observers who see that the conflicts occur principally between one group recognized as Christian

and another as Muslim. One of the lasting effects of the conflicts in the Moluccas has been the segregation of Muslims and Christians who formerly lived side by side. Beyond the geographical segregation is the co-occurring problem of narrowed identities wherein all matters of difference and distinction between groups come to be categorized in religious terms.

Is it then accurate to suggest that these conflicts “are not really religious,” if those engaged in them as violent actors bear these religious identities, and even understand what they are doing in terms of religion? People with whom I spoke did not say that they were fighting because of the oppressive economic conditions or because of forced migration. They said things like, “I was fighting for Jesus,” or “I wanted to defend my religion.” They saw themselves engaging in the conflict *as a Christian or as a Muslim* specifically struggling against another who was identified on the basis of their being religiously different. Many of these conflict actors named other elements along with religion, leading me to wager the claim that Indonesia’s violent conflicts, in addition to being about discrimination and economic disparity, migration and other political/social/economic phenomena, also are religious in nature, in this broader sense.

I base such a claim in part upon a distinction between religion understood as a system of doctrine to which one gives cognitive assent, and religion understood as a set of everyday life practices that embody a worldview and constitute a way of life. Sociologist Meredith McGuire (2008, p. 12) uses the term “lived religion” to refer to “how religion and spirituality are practiced, experienced, and expressed by ordinary people (rather than official spokespersons) in the context of their everyday lives.” Lived religion refers to the way people “make space for God” in their everyday lives, infusing ordinary events with sacred meaning in ways that defy attempts to “structure religion out of the social system... or keep religion tightly bounded within it... (Williams, 2010, pp. 257-258). In this perspective, one is not being religious in one particular instance (such as when praying) but not in another (such as when eating without any explicit religious thematizing attached to the occasion). Instead of understanding religion as a separate component of human life and action that remains distinct from other aspects of everyday life, lived religion defines the religious as that engagement with sacred dimensions of life which finds expression in the everyday experience of people. Such a perspective hold particular salience in Indonesia, where the overt presence of religious language and practice are commonplace across all life domains, even in government.

A “lived religion” framework highlights practices shaped by and giving shape to a larger, often implicit worldview in which persons are situated in their everyday lives, that participates in comprising identity. McGuire (2008, p. 187) suggests, “When we focus on lived religion, we come to a more useful perspective on people’s individual uses of religious and other cultural resources for their self-identities and commitments.” Even this way of describing religion remains mired, however, in a (North American/Western) notion that to be distinctive from another person (religiously or otherwise) means exercising one’s *individuality*. In the context of Indonesian cultural norms, as is the case with many other non-Western cultural groups, religion operates less as a “resource” to be “used” for individual self-expression, than as an integrated aspect of one’s formation/being into particular ways of personhood that are always already communal.

Indonesia is a complex, vast archipelago nation of diverse religions in which religious life is not separated from other life-domains. Thus, while it has become popular for conflict analysts to claim that religious conflicts are only marginally focused on religion per se, such frameworks too narrowly construe religion as doctrine, and sees religious affiliation through a North American lens as an acquired or voluntary identity held by an individual. Such a perspective

misunderstands the centrality and deep integration of everyday religion in the lives and practices of people and communities in southeast Asian contexts such as Indonesia. When conflict becomes a feature of daily life, and people “make space for God” across the domains of their daily lives, then even conflict becomes a site imbued with religious meaning. From an everyday, lived religion perspective, then, Indonesia’s internal violent conflicts are necessarily religious--even as they also involve many other factors.

### Everyday Conflict Transformation Practices: Women’s Educational Work

Beyond providing a more useful way to conceptualize Indonesia’s internal violent conflicts, might the paradigm of everyday or “lived religion” also offer a more helpful approach to thinking about education for conflict transformation there? An everyday, lived religion-approach to conflict transformation education would be one that understands such education taking place not only in the formal teaching and learning experiences in which the explicit curriculum focuses attention on specifically religious subject matter in the service of conflict transformation, but also in everyday, informal contexts where teaching and learning takes place as an embedded aspect of everyday life. Such a perspective embodies Lave and Wenger’s (1991) Vygotskian notion of “situated learning,” emphasizing learning as something that continually goes on in situations outside of schooling, as people learn and participate in the activities of their cultural communities. Barbara Rogoff (2003) similarly suggests the inseparability of culture and biology in human development, as apprenticeship in practice, or guided participation in the practices and expectations of cultural communities, operates as a primary site for education.

Indonesian women, because of their maternal and educational roles in the lives of children, often are in positions to carry out such everyday education by guiding children’s participation in practices of daily living. Ana, who currently lives in the US, worked in Ambon as a nurse before deciding to leave in 2011 because of a recurrence of conflict in her area. She spoke about how she regularly took her children and their friends with her to the market, where they met and came to know the children of Muslim women who were vendors there. “My children watch everything. They are smart, they notice. And what they noticed was that we treat everyone with the same respect, both the Muslim sellers and the Christian ones. The children sometimes played with their children, they came to know Muslim children that way. It’s only a small thing, you might think. But I get them to bring their friends along with us, so that the circle is a little larger. What I am trying to do is to teach them that Muslim children and other people are human like they are. If someone they meet and understand as a human being with feelings and loved ones, if that person is (seen as being) the same, like me, then it is more difficult to make them into an enemy. So first we must teach them to see a human being there, and not a ‘thing.’ God made all of us to live in peace.”

In the everyday activity of household marketing, Ana strategically engaged in education for peacebuilding with her own children and their friends. Is it religious education? Working from the standpoint of everyday religion, it is clear that for Ana the marketplace is not a space from which God is somehow excluded. In fact, in the very activity of encounter with religiously “other” Muslim children and adults there, Ana invokes religious meaning: “God mad all of us to live in peace.” While this kind of education, situated in the context of Ana’s everyday religion, of course is not a self-sufficient, stand-alone curriculum of religious education, it nevertheless is one important way Ana apprentices children in the faith practices of getting along with Muslim neighbors and of peacebuilding.

Another example of women's uses of informal and everyday educational methods for peacebuilding is Pastor Jerda's "*taman baca*" or "house for reading," in Halmahera. Pastor Jerda lives in what she calls a "mixed" housing development, populated by both Muslim and Christian families. She and her husband purchased a small house there in addition to the one they live in, to use as a space where women and children in that area could come together. "It is a 'reading zone'. There, they can come to read any kind of book we have, and we will have story reading times with the children, and they will get used to being around each other because they will come for the joy of the books. It is a simple thing to do, faithful for us [Christians] and for them [Muslims] to come together in harmony. So maybe it can help when tensions go up again, that we have been together in this way."

Although the idea of the *taman baca* is not original with Pastor Jerda (there are several such spaces being established across the country), she decided to create one for her neighborhood. Her initial concern was to empower women to be less isolated, as a way of addressing the rampant violence against women that exists in the aftermath of the conflicts there. Realizing that women will come together around activities for their children, she also recognized the relative scarcity of books in her area of Halmahera but how valuable reading books was for her own children. She decided she wanted to share books for children as a way to empower women, and then she began to see the possibilities for connections between people across religious differences through children's activities around books.

### Culture, Community, and Informal Education for Peace

Neither of the two examples of women's peacebuilding practices above (marketing and *taman baca*) involve formal schooling, but both are important opportunities for building peace through education that fit well within their cultural contexts. The American educator Jerome Bruner once noted that "... schooling is only one small part of how the culture inducts the young into its canonical ways. Indeed, schooling may even be at odds with a culture's other ways of inducting the young into the requirements of communal living" (1996: ix). Not surprisingly, some of the strongest sites for women's peacebuilding work through religious education in Indonesia happen at this informal level of education, and involves children.

The terminology of "informal education" should not be taken to mean that such education is casual or insignificant in relation to conflict. Ana and Jerda both make clear that their actions are quite intentional and planful. And while they may not be consciously aware of it, behind their informal educational work they each operate out of a particular theory of peacebuilding, known as the contact hypothesis. The contact hypothesis posits that increased neutral or positive contact between groups increases tolerance and cooperation, and decreases the likelihood of conflict. While not without its critics, the contact hypothesis underlies many highly sophisticated, formal educational interventions. Ana and Jerda, in their everyday, small-scale methods of creating conditions for peace, instantiate their belief that if Christians and Muslims come into contact with each other in everyday activities like marketing or enjoying books where they can establish positive, mutually respectful relationships, they are less likely to engage in conflict.

Informal educators may not articulate why they believe their actions lend themselves to peacebuilding, and they may not have a specific, systematic teaching plan. But as cross cultural psychologist and educator Pierre Dasan writes, "informal" does not mean unstructured and haphazard: "... there is distinctly an informal pedagogy, although it often remains implicit and even those who practice it are not conscious of it. ... [I]n contrast to schooling, (informal education) is in essence adapted to the local cultural system, which it tends to perpetuate." Dasan

2008, p. 27). He goes on to identify some key characteristics of informal education that help explain its fit in many traditional societies: it can be offered everywhere at any time; it emphasizes cooperation rather than competition and as such, all participants are allowed to be successful at it (as opposed to the elitism of schooling); parents and elders play important roles; it is broad, including moral and spiritual realms; and it is embedded in everyday life (Dasan, 2008, pp. 26-27).

Ana and Jerda embody many of these characteristics in their strategic informal educational practices. While some might wonder whether the informal education practices of Jerda and Ana actually constitute *religious* education practices as such, given the Indonesian social and cultural context of deep integration between religious identity and consciousness with everyday life, there is no way to “extract” religion from education for peacebuilding in their activities.

In fact, the informal educational strategies of Ana and Jerda bear similarities to what Goedroen Juchtmans describes in her analysis of Dutch women as “ritual experts” in the context of their roles organizing the everyday rituals of family life, passing on their faith as “mediators between the sacred and the everyday,” in ways that stress practical, embodied knowing rather than second-order discourse about religious ideas (Juchtmans, 2012). Current North American discourse about religious education, in an effort to correct a previous era’s excesses of so-called socialization models of religious education, often emphasizes the necessity for learning of using religious/theological vocabulary, and in fact tends to make this cognitive-verbal expression of faith ideas the definition and condition of being Christian (Smith 2005; cf. Osmer, 1997). While there certainly is an important place for “naming and claiming” in explicit theological language one’s faith perspectives, Juchtmans’ work is suggestive for the Indonesian context, in which everyday lived religion organically integrates what one *knows* religiously with how one *participates and practices* faith in the community as people go about their day to day living.

Dihyatun Masquon Ahmad, writing about a type of Islamic boarding school known as the *pondok pesantren* that is one of Indonesia’s oldest institutions of education, reinforces this idea concerning informal education’s power. Ahmad notes that in Indonesia while the *madrasah* provides a good context for formal Islamic education, the *pondok pesantren* can go further because its boarding-school setting allows for religious education within everyday life beyond the classroom:

Students [in the *madrasah*] may be properly taught in the class but what happens outside the class is beyond the system. The *madrasah* is precisely like the modern school system and is not able to inculcate other Islamic teachings that are not covered by the *madrasah* curriculum. The positive aspect of the *pondok pesantren* was to be found in its boarding system where non-formal and informal education and activities can be carried out within the spirit and limits of Islam. (Ahmad, 2012, p. 67)

Ahmad, like Juchtmans above, places a clear value on the kind of education that best takes place through informal modes of teaching and learning, for religious education in a world of violent conflict. Given Indonesia’s numerous religious conflicts, such informal practices may in fact be among the most important forms of religious education offered.

#### Classrooms and Commissions

Of course *formal* modes of religious education remains a useful context for such peacebuilding education to happen too. The Indonesian religious education landscape offers

numerous sites for formal education, particularly since religious education is required by the government in the schools. Formal spaces for religious education such as Islamic madrasah or Christian parochial schools are numerous, and would appear to be ideal sites for teaching peacebuilding by teaching religious practices that contribute to peace, and by teaching about other religions themselves. Similarly, church-based education such as Sunday schools or other church education programs also promote peacebuilding in Indonesia, and women often provide the leadership for such ventures.

One example of a church-based, formal education program in which women and men advocate for peace in Indonesia concerns a recent curriculum re-design of children's Sunday school materials. After the horrendous violence in Ambon, the Protestant Church in the Moluccas (Gereja Protestan Maluku, or GPM) re-wrote its children's *Sekolah Minggu* (Sunday school) curricula to include an emphasis upon religious pluralism and living together across religious differences as a tenet of Christian faith. The theme in this curriculum is "God is good for all creation." One program conducted by the synod and focused on children takes place on National Children's Day, each July 23, when children of all religions gather in Ambon for sports, arts, and cultural activities. In addition to such children's programs, in at the 2010 assembly, the chairperson of the GPM identified peacebuilding as the five-year theme for the church's work moving forward, providing resources for pastors to preach "peace sermons" in their congregations across the region. The GPM's center for theological education, Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (UKIM), established a Center for Peace Studies as did many other university theology programs.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, at the level of university teacher education (in particular, the training of teachers of religious education), some programs have begun featuring experiential encounters between Muslims and Christians combined with formal teaching about the faith of the religiously other group.

Pastor Susanna coordinates educational programs for the synod focused on peacebuilding and trauma healing. One of these programs, referred to locally as "Live-In," involves youth and adults in living for several days in the homes of Muslim families, and Muslim families similarly spend time residing with a Christian family. The host families are carefully chosen and prepared for these visits, expressing their willingness to answer any questions about their practices as they provide hospitality for "the religious other" in their homes. Following the live-in period there is an intensive de-briefing and classroom learning time.

"It might not sound like a very difficult thing to outsiders," Pastor Susanna states. "But those who lived through the conflicts here find it hard to go into the home of people who have killed their families and burned their churches. Almost always they do not sleep the first night because they are afraid. But those who stay with it can be transformed by the experience." Pastor Susanna notes that currently, the formal educational emphasis in the synod is on the development of programs equipping pastors and lay leaders to address children's trauma. "We cannot build peace for our future by focusing only on adults. If the children grow up with trauma still inside

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<sup>2</sup> These formal educational activities were reported by various participants in the Indonesia Christian Universities Peace Network conference, "The Role of Christian Higher Education in Religious Peacebuilding: Interreligious Understandings and Peacebuilding Workshop" sponsored by United Christian Board of Higher Education in Asia, 6/6/14-6/10/14; also in interviews with the Rev. Leis Mailoa-Marantika 6/25/14 in Ambon City, and with the Rev. Jacky Maniputty 6/26/14 in Ambon City.

them, they will seek revenge. I keep telling them about forgiveness and reconciliation--that revenge is God's hands, so don't kill, we have to forgive. Revenge is God's. This is not easy. It's hard to forgive. But I say to them, even though you lost everything, you didn't lose your life and your hope. It is not easy but we have to, and so we must help the children, to make the impulse for revenge go away and instead have a desire for peace."

### Gender Matters

Beyond schooling contexts for formal education toward peace, women peacebuilders in Indonesia also work at the level of public policy, where education is a primary component of bringing about legal and policy changes. In the aftermath of the mass-scale violence against women in the May 1998 riots in Jakarta that ignited conflict around the country, the new government of Indonesia established an independent agency called *Komnas Perempuan*, the Commission on Violence Against Women. This agency was and is tasked with addressing and eliminating violence against women through increasing peoples' understanding of violence against women, advocacy for legal and policy reform, documentation of gender-based violence particularly in the nation's conflict areas, and prevention education. The Commission intentionally draws its membership from women leaders of different religious bodies in the nation.

The Rev. Leis Mailoa-Marantika is the vice-moderator of the Protestant Church of the Moluccas (GPM) and a regional member of *Komnas Perempuan*. She focuses attention on the differential effects of conflict on women, and particularly the escalation of gender based violence in Indonesia's conflicts. She shared with me a story similar to Pastor Jerda's, concerning military troops' sexual liaisons with "ordinary village women who, for reasons of security have personal relations with soldiers and are then told, 'This is not about conflict, it's personal decisions of the women to have relations with soldiers, therefore we do not need to address that.'" Pastor Leis considers this a form of re-victimization of the women, because "the military are representatives of the state who have duty to protect people, not to use people to satisfy their needs. When we see this situation of conflict from a feminist or gender perspective, this is an issue about power relations. But right now, when the state builds a concept of peace, they don't integrate the healing of this kind of experience of power abuse as a part of peacebuilding."

Pastor Lies is critical of public figures and religious leaders who "only talk about burning houses or killing people" as the damage wrought by conflict, but say nothing about violence against women as an act of war:

Through our work in the Commission on Women (*Komnas Perempuan*), we try to mainstream women's experience of violence and conflict, educating people that violence against women is a form of violence *in the conflict*. In the recovery, in building peace, we have to address three factors. First, economics, which affects women as well as men, and may affect them differently because the men go off to fight leaving the women to provide for the household on their own. Second, acknowledging the truth that violence against women and discrimination against women is affected by conflict. We document this: when the men return from fighting, there is an upsurge in domestic violence. And third, justice for victims and recovery for them. What usually happens is that the women victims of sexual violence in the conflict are just ignored, treated as if they did something wrong, and shamed. When we talk about peace from women's perspective this needs to be acknowledged as part of peace, that we cannot say we have peace while still remaining silent about the situation of women.

Through her work with Komnas Perempuan, Pastor Leis facilitates advocacy on the national level by “linking the work in Ambon with speaking out in Jakarta: we collect the testimony of the victims, and then prepare material to talk with the government, to arrange a national educational campaign, and to facilitate humanitarian aid.” Her work represents yet another crucial way that women engage in peacebuilding work. When I asked her about the religious dimensions of her public policy work, she laughed: “I work for the church, and I do this public sector work because of my position in the church and not in spite of it. It is all for faith, that God’s justice includes justice for women, especially the women victimized in the conflicts. God’s peace includes peace for these women too.”

### Intersections: Women and Education for Peacebuilding

Conversations with Indonesian Christian women from the Moluccas about their experiences of conflict and work as peacebuilders suggest several dimension of the interaction between gender, peacebuilding, and religious education in their contexts:

(1) Women are primary actors in the day to day interactions between religious groups in markets, taman baca, and other public spaces where peace or conflict are lived out in various micro-practices of engagement. As such, women potentially play a highly significant but ordinarily invisible role in brokering everyday connections across the boundaries of conflict-divided identities. They also apprentice children in practices of respectful engagement, tolerance of difference, and even friendship in these contexts.

(2) Women are primary informal educators of children in the home and in informal, everyday life activities, as well as (at least in the early years) in formal educational settings such as religious assemblies and schooling. Such formal education is a primary platform for women’s peacebuilding work in Indonesia alongside the informal. While formal religious education programs embracing religious pluralism and fostering understanding of “religious others” are not widespread, their growing potential and impact is significant. Informal educational practices act as tiny capillaries, from which many small, ordinary activities that invite and sustain the possibilities for peace can nourish the whole body, Indonesia.

(3) Some women express a sense that they as women have a “different stake” in transforming violent conflict, with some even suggesting that as women they possess different capacities for doing so. A primary expression of women’s stake in Indonesian conflict transformation concerns the struggle to get gender based violence recognized as an aspect of conflict, rather than understanding it as separate and somehow normal, alongside yet outside of conflict. Concomitantly, recognizing the need to address gender-based violence in recovery and peacebuilding efforts is also key, and part of the different stake women have in building sustainable peace. Women’s different relationship to conflict transformation work in the Indonesian and Moluccan context may also relate to their roles (whether viewed as socially constructed or “natural”) as the tend-ers and mend-ers of community.

In this paper I have explored some of the ways women participate in the work of peacebuilding in post-conflict society. Gender norms, while problematically contributing to women’s invisibility in peace processes and placing boundaries around their spheres of influence, also create opportunities for women to work in important ways in the so-called small spaces where peace takes root: in children’s learning about how to regard and engage those religiously different than they are; in Sunday school classrooms; in neighborhood book sharing rooms where women and children can gather in peace. Indonesian women peacebuilders are also at work in

the larger public arenas, drawing attention to the plight of women in conflict and demanding that woman's experiences and healing be part of the work of peace. Across these settings, women address religious conflict with religious education toward peace.

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