THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA ON MODERN ISRAEL AND THEIR POSIBLE IMPACT ON CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

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Abstract

This dissertation is about the perceptions of Christians and Muslims living in Dar es Salaam Tanzania on modern Israel, and their possible impact on Christian-Muslim relations. This dissertation is written as a result of research conducted in Dar es Salam Tanzania in October 2010. The research aimed at looking at how international politics affect local religious perceptions and interfaith relations. The research found out that there is a strong tendency among Christians to perceive modern Israel as a continuation of the ancient kingdom of Israel, and that the majority of Christians feel an imperative to support whatever Israel is doing. The research further found that the majority of Christians perceive the happenings in the Middle East as pre ordained and that they are part of the eschatological future of the world. On the other hand Muslims perceive Israel as a western implant in the heart of the Muslim world, and an oppressor and enemy of the Islamic community. Between these two extremes there are also moderates. In addition to the mentioned above, the research found that the perceptions formed by Christians and Muslims are influenced by both local and international media. These perceptions are also influenced by religious and secular influential personalities, and leaders, both local and international. Furthermore the study found that the perceptions formed by both Christians and Muslims are dangerous for Christian-Muslim relations.

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