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Religion can motivate people to violence. But religion also represents a powerful force for
reconciliation.

According to the book written by R. Scott Appleby titled The Ambivalence of the Sacred:
Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation Terrorists and peacemakers may grow up in the same
community and adhere to the same religious tradition. The killing carried out by one and the
reconciliation fostered by the other indicate the range of dramatic and contradictory responses to
human suffering by religious actors. Yet religion's ability to inspire violence is intimately related
to its equally impressive power as a force for peace, especially in the growing number of
conflicts around the world that involve religious claims and religiously inspired combatants.

Religion can be used or mobilized to promote either conflict or peacebuilding. Religion
may not be the principal cause of conflict, even when the opposing groups, such as Protestants
and Catholics in Northern Ireland, are differentiated by religious identities. Religion has long
been, however, and will probably continue to be, a contributing factor in some violent conflicts,
whether in its own right or as a proxy for political battles, in places as widely scattered as
Northern Ireland, the Middle East, the Balkans, Sudan, Indonesia, and Kashmir. Religious
activists engaged in interfaith dialogue have stressed the fact that "religion, unfortunately, is
often the most visible difference between contesting groups and, as a result, frequently is blamed

for conflicts." Religion may, indeed, be instrumentalized or become a mask for violence. Research has shown, however, that many recent violent conflicts also have involved religious beliefs themselves. We know how religion can lead to conflict and escalate to violence but at the same time. There are so many conflicts across the globe that are religious based. Examples are the civil war in Sudan between the christians and the muslims, the boko haram in Nigeria, the sharia law, the Ivory coast and so on.

However, we should also recognise how religion has contributed to the well being of the world by religious leaders serving as mediators and negotiators. Examples include the British Quakers, who carried messages between parties in the Nigerian civil war, and the mediation undertaken by the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conferences of Churches, which brought about a temporary termination of the Sudan civil war in 1972. Through such involvement, these organizations were being faithful to their religious commitment to promote peace. Their effectiveness derived in large part from their even-handedness, discretion, and ability to honor the interests and needs of all parties. Another example is the energetic but self-effacing peacemaking role played by the Imam of Timbuktu in West and Central Africa follows the same pattern. While he has not undertaken sustained mediation, he serves as an important communication link and adviser to both Christian and Muslim leaders on matters relating to conflict and peace. We also have the international mediation and peacemaking undertaken by Sant'Egidio, the lay Catholic organization based in Rome, is probably the most remarkable case of positive involvement. Sant'Egidio was the critical catalyst and facilitator for the peace agreement that ended the Mozambique civil war in 1992. It has subsequently played constructive roles in peace processes in Kosovo, Algeria, Burundi, Congo and elsewhere. Many

elements of its approach to peacemaking are not explicitly religious, but its religious motivation

is always evident. As a Christian foundation, Sant'Egidio believes that peacemaking is an

essential part of its mission, requiring patience and commitment to long-term engagement.

So what we are really saying is that there is always a good and bad side to almost

everything in this world including religion. We just have to learn to balance both and work to

make our life better.