Monuments and martyrdom
Memorializing the dead in post-conflict North Maluku

In the aftermath of the 1999-2001 communal violence between Muslim and Christian communities in the eastern Indonesian province of North Maluku, attention has focused on issues of conflict resolution and reconciliation (CPRU/UNDP 2004; Ruddy Tindage 2006). Local and regional government officials have been concerned with returning forced migrants to their places of origin and shutting down camps for the displaced (Duncan 2008). They have also worked to re-establish peaceful relationships between antagonists to prevent future violence (Duncan 2009). In some cases, they have been rather successful. It seems that many of the problems created by communal violence can indeed be repaired: forced migrants can return home, churches and mosques can be rebuilt, gardens can be replanted. However, one of the biggest obstacles to reconciliation remains dealing with those who died and the memories of their deaths. The dead cannot be brought back, and for many their absence serves as a palpable reminder of the horrible nature of events that took place and of the societal divisions that caused them. In this article, I document how Galela and Tobelo communities in northern Halmahera have dealt with the dead in post-conflict North Maluku and how efforts to memorialize the dead are, in part, an attempt to solidify a particular narrative of the conflict and its points of contention. In particular, I look at the construction of memorials, such as martyrs cemeteries and graves, to those who perished in the fighting. I also explore how the placement of these memorials in churchyards represents a rather significant change in local burial practices. This change contradicts

The United Nations considers the North Moluccan government’s handling of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to be a success story (Bakornas PBP 2003:13).

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earlier church efforts to move graveyards out of villages as part of their desire to sever pre-Christian relationships between the living and the dead.

The meanings behind these cemeteries and graves are multi-faceted. They are primarily about local desires to respect and remember those who were lost in the conflict and to recognize the sacrifices made in the name of religion and community. Thus in one sense they are about mourning and martyrdom. However, memorialization practices are also part of the larger arena of post-conflict politics and reconciliation and cannot be seen independently from the way local communities experienced and perceived the conflict (Jelin 2007). The notion of martyrdom highlighted in these memorials relates to another aspect of these monuments, attempts by some local communities in North Maluku to firmly articulate and entrench their version of events in the public narrative. These are not incompatible goals. If those who died are martyrs, and have been interred in special martyrs cemeteries, or buried in extraordinary places in the village, these memorials serve as daily or weekly reminders of the conflict and the overarching master narrative that certain communities want to remember. The issue of martyrdom in particular highlights how local communities perceived the conflict and how they continue to understand it. The people who are honoured died because of their religion, and these monuments have been established to highlight that point. Although government officials and regional scholars may argue that the conflict was actually about political corruption or the spoils of decentralization, these monuments say otherwise.

These places are examples of what Jelin (2007:141) calls ‘vehicles of memory’, attempts by communities to make historical meanings permanent and to stake a claim on the memory of what happened in the aftermath of conflict. They are attempts to legitimize local understandings of events that took place. Jelin (2003:33-4) refers to the individuals or communities that build such memorials (or engage in similar practices) as ‘memory entrepreneurs’, people ‘who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past’ (Jelin 2003:34, emphasis in the original). Although the past cannot be changed, the meaning of the past is constantly malleable, and subject to re-evaluation and reinterpretation. North Moluccan memory entrepreneurs have constructed these monuments to prevent any such re-evaluation of events. As Verdery (1999) has suggested in another context, dead bodies continue to speak in various ways, and in this case they are a concrete reminder of the religious nature of the conflict.

Along similar lines, these monuments also resemble what Pierre Nora

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2 From an academic standpoint, memorials are always open to reinterpretation by successive generations, even by those who built them as time goes on, but this malleability and multivocality of symbols is rarely acknowledged on the local level at the time such a monument is built.
calls ‘places of memory’ (lieux de mémoire), locations or social constructions whose main purpose ‘is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial’ (Nora 1989:19 as cited in Schreiner 2005). In building these monuments and martyrs cemeteries, people are finalizing their narrative of events at a time when they are still fresh in their minds. They want to establish their version before official accounts (or denials) of what happened become hegemonic and pave over the violence and suffering that occurred with bland narratives of outside instigation or versions of ‘tribal warfare’ on the fringes of the state (Hoskins 2005). Constructing these memorials is what Deeb (2008:371) calls ‘efforts to sediment the just-lived past into what is understood as “history”’. They are built by ‘memory entrepreneurs’ seeking to actively define collective symbols or narratives in the contestation over the representation of the recent conflict (Schreiner 2005:269).

Brief history of the conflict

To understand the nature of these monuments, it is necessary to first present a brief outline of the conflict they seek to historicize.3 In January 1999, as ethno-religious violence broke out in Ambon and began to spread across the province of Maluku, the northern part of the province (what would become the new province of North Maluku) remained largely peaceful. That changed in mid-August 1999, when violence between Makian transmigrants and indigenous populations erupted on the island of Halmahera in the sub-district of Kao over government plans to create a new sub-district of Makian Daratan that included several indigenous Pagu villages. The Pagu had no desire to be incorporated into this new sub-district and the resulting tensions led to violence. This violence lasted only a few days, but the problem remained unresolved. Disturbances broke out again in October 1999 and forced approximately 15,000 Makian to flee to the neighbouring islands of Ternate and Tidore.

Riots then broke out on the islands of Tidore and Ternate following the appearance of a contentious letter calling for Christians to cleanse the region of Muslims. The letter called attention to the religious affiliations of the antagonists in the Kao-Makian conflict. The former are approximately 90% Christian, while the latter are virtually 100% Muslim. This religious framing of the conflict also fit the narrative of religious violence emanating from

3 For a more detailed account of the conflict in North Maluku see Duncan 2005 and Wilson 2005.
Ambon to the south. The letter and associated rumours infuriated parts of the Muslim community, and the ensuing riots forced around 13,000 people, mainly Christians, to flee from Tidore and Ternate to North Sulawesi and Halmahera. From Ternate and Tidore, this religious conflict then spread throughout the province. Some of the fiercest fighting occurred in the northern parts of Halmahera, particularly in the sub-districts of Tobelo and Galela. At the end of 1999 and in the beginning of 2000, several massacres of Muslims took place in the town of Tobelo, and the nearby villages of Popilo, Gorua and Togoliua. Several months later, another massacre, which marked the end of large-scale violence, occurred in the Galela village of Duma when Muslim militia killed more than 150 people as they defeated their Christian opponents and destroyed the village church.

The discourse of reconciliation and forgetting in North Maluku

One of the buzzwords of post-conflict North Maluku has been reconciliation (Ind., rekonsiliasi). Since the conflict has ended, local communities have been inundated with calls for reconciliation from a variety of sources. Trauma experts from Jakarta have visited and lectured people on the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation as part of the healing process (Henry Sitohang et al. 2003a, 2003b). Aid workers from international NGOs fund workshops on reconciliation for adults and ‘reconciliation parties’ for schoolchildren. At many of these events, the nature of reconciliation, and what was being asked of people, was often left unstated. At times even the definition of the term remained unclear to those involved in seminars and workshops on the topic, since officials and practitioners largely conveyed the message using the English cognate. Regardless of the vague nature of what actually constituted rekonsiliasi, people were continually reminded that it was necessary and important for the region’s future stability and for the well-being of their children and grandchildren.

One focus of these reconciliation efforts, particularly in local government circles, has been the need to put the communal violence in the past and to look to the future. Although officials may argue otherwise in private, the public discourse of the post-conflict period focused on forgetting, rather than on placing blame. Government officials argue that focusing on the violence would only foster feelings of revenge that could lead to future violence. For example, a pre-condition for the 2001 peace process between Muslim and Christian communities in Tobelo and Galela was an agreement to set aside

4 Indonesian language terms are indicated by (Ind.), Tobelo language terms are indicated by (Tob.), and Galela language terms by (Gal.).
notions of blame and culpability. This decision stemmed largely from the realization that the two sides could not agree upon a single narrative of what had taken place, nor who was at fault. Muslim accounts of what happened were, and remain, largely irreconcilable with Christian versions.

Since neither side would accept the blame for the violence, official explanations often focused on the common Indonesian theme of shadowy provocateurs. Others gave up trying to explain what had happened, and simply urged people to move forward. For example, local officials in Galela told communities that they had to accept that the conflict had been ‘the work of God’. Neither side was receptive to this explanation. As one Christian man in Galela said:

We are shocked that the government says we cannot blame anyone, and that we have to see this as the work of God. You can call a famine, a drought, or a natural disaster the work of God, but social conflict is different. If a river turns to blood, you can say that it is a curse sent by God, but the Muslims clearly invaded us. How can you say that is the work of God? Why do we have to share equal blame?

Many of the Muslims we interviewed had similar reactions. Although this decision to forget seems like an easy policy choice to avoid the pitfalls of prosecution and blame, both of which could possibly restart the conflict, it was clear from talking to Muslim and Christian communities that simply forgetting what had taken place was not an option. The construction of the memorials discussed here represents one response to this discourse of forgetting. I argue that they represent a reaction to government efforts to take the focus off the religious nature of the conflict and the religious antagonism that persists in the conflict’s aftermath. Although people may be willing to accept that provocateurs or troublemakers played a role in the outbreak of the violence, nevertheless they remain very aware that local communities took part, sometimes rather enthusiastically, in explicitly religious-based violence. These memorials seek to maintain the focus on a religious framing of the conflict.

Monuments and graves in Indonesia

Monuments and cemeteries are well discussed in the literature on memorialization and nationalism in Southeast Asia (Kwon 2006; Malarney 2001). In the case of Indonesia, many have looked at how the Indonesian government has used memorials to boost nationalist fervour, and to control understandings of historical events (Degung Santikarma 2005; Schreiner 2005; Wiener 1999). The New Order monument at Lubang Buaya for the seven generals killed on 30 September 1965 is the most obvious example. The myth of these men and the
events surrounding their deaths represents one of the foundational texts of the Soeharto regime. The monument that Soeharto built to memorialize this event reflects its importance in the historical narrative of the New Order and the dangers of communism that his regime wanted to highlight (Schreiner 2005). The various heroes cemeteries (Ind., taman makam pahlawan) located throughout the country are another form of nationalist commemoration in Indonesia. These graveyards contain the bodies of those who died fighting for Indonesian independence against the Dutch (Schreiner 2002:184-7). The national government took control of these cemeteries throughout the archipelago soon after independence, and they quickly became shared national symbols in the provinces (Schreiner 2002). Most Indonesians are familiar with these heroes cemeteries, which are often located on the outskirts of provincial capitals or other regional centres. However, these cemeteries are for nationalist heroes, those who died fighting for Indonesia or who served the nationalist struggle in various capacities, not for those who died defending their communities from other Indonesians in communal violence. Those who were killed in the violence in Sambas, Poso, Ambon, or Sampit have no place in these cemeteries.

North Moluccans are familiar with nationalist memorials and with the importance of graves as markers of historical narratives that are emblematic of past struggles. In the provincial capital of Ternate the Banau Heroes Cemetery (Taman Makam Pahlawan Banau) is named after the leader of the 1914 rebellion against the Dutch in the district of Jailolo (Het verzet 1930). In the town of Soa-sio, the sub-district capital of Galela in northern Halmahera, a small heroes cemetery commemorates seven people killed by the Dutch in the early days of the Indonesian revolution. Painted in red and white with a large flagpole, the nationalist aspects of this memorial are clear. In the village of Kao, a single grave commemorates the seven indigenous people killed in 1906 when the four ethnic groups of Kao (the Modole, Pagu, Tobelo Boeng, and Toliliko which includes the Kao Islam) joined together to attack a Dutch barracks and chase off, albeit momentarily, the colonial power. This grave

5 In addition to heroes cemeteries, the graves of other important historical figures who have been buried throughout the archipelago also developed during the New Order into places of historical import in Indonesia, such as Soekarno’s grave in Blitar in Java (De Jonge 2008), and the grave of Ibu Tien, President Soeharto’s wife (Doorn-Harder and De Jong 2001:338).

6 Locally built monuments have begun to spring up on the sites of various outbreaks of communal violence that occurred at the turn of the century. Davidson (2008:130-2) discusses one such example from West Kalimantan.

7 Indisch Militair Tijdschrift 1907. There is some disagreement in the literature over what constitutes the four ethnic groups of Kao. According to recent local publications in Halmahera, the four ethnic groups in Kao are the Modole, Pagu, Tobelo Boeng and Toliliko (or Towiliko) (Jesayas Banari 2007). Van Fraasen’s analysis (1980:134-8) of the Dutch literature lists the four ethnic groups (which he refers to as ‘domains’) as the Modole, Pagu, Tobelo Boeng and Kao, with the Toliliko being included among the Kao, along with the Kao Islam.
has come to symbolize the unity of the four ethnic groups in Kao and the importance of maintaining that unity. The power of the historical narrative associated with this particular grave became all too apparent in 1999, when a perceived threat to the unity symbolized by this memorial was an instigating factor in the North Moluccan conflict.

Other significant graves in Halmahera mark the resting place of people credited with ‘bringing religion’ to the region. In the Christian village of Duma in Galela lies the grave of Hendrik van Dijken, the first Dutch missionary to bring Protestant Christianity to the Galela. Finally, more in concert with Indonesian Muslim notions of ziarah, there is a grave near the village of Popon in Kao said to be the resting place of the Arab from Baghdad who introduced Islam to the Kao Islam. The indigenous Muslim communities of Kao annually commemorate his arrival with a pilgrimage to the grave and a communal meal. Thus, the people of Halmahera are familiar with graves as historical artefacts and as commemorations of historical events. They are aware that such graves continue to define how events are remembered and to shape group relationships in the present. It should come as no surprise that in the aftermath of the 1999-2001 conflict, there would be a desire to establish memorials to those who died in the fighting and to solidify a particular narrative of that violence.

**Martyrdom in North Maluku**

Most explanations of the violence in North Maluku note that it began as an ethnic conflict and shifted to focus on religion after the riots in Ternate and Tidore (Bubandt 2008; Wilson 2005). However, to simply note that the framing of the violence changed provides little insight into subsequent events unless we look at how religion and religious beliefs affected how the violence was actualized on the ground and how its effects were experienced. To simply subsume the religious aspect of these conflicts within the larger political goals of the regional elite, or to limit them to sociological groupings, fails to account for how religion influenced people’s understanding of the conflict they were fighting, or the justifications it provided them. For many of those involved, this shift in framing changed the meanings inherent in the violence, as well as the nature and goals of the violence itself.

Once local understandings of the conflict shifted from seeing it as an ethnic dispute over redistricting to a religious one that pitted Christians against Muslims, people on both sides began to consider those who died as martyrs.

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8 Ziarah is an Arabic-derived Indonesian term used to refer to a pilgrimage to a holy place, often a grave or shrine (Doorn-Harder and De Jong 2001).
Christians began to see many of those who died in the conflict, whether on the battlefield or in militia attacks, as martyrs. On the Muslim side, Ja’far Umar Thalib, leader of the Laskar Jihad, declared that Christians in Maluku and North Maluku were ‘belligerent infidels’ (Ind., kafir harbi) that must be killed.⁹ In some variants of Islamic discourse kafir harbi are considered one of the most dangerous categories of unbelievers and Islamic law obliges Muslims to wage war against them, and anyone who dies in this pursuit will achieve martyrdom. Thus ‘the labelling of Christians as kafir harbi gave [Muslims in Maluku] a powerful religious license to kill’ (Fealy 2001). Although the Laskar Jihad had a minimal presence in North Maluku, declarations such as these did filter down to people in North Maluku, and often confirmed what those involved in more localized Muslim militia believed about the nature of the conflict. These claims to martyrdom on either side were seen by the other side as evidence that their enemies sought to annihilate them, and that their plans were grounded in radical and unchangeable religious justifications. The only recourse was to destroy them first, if possible, and any actions taken to this end were considered morally justified.

Although a large number of people in Halmahera see those who died over the course of the violence as martyrs, religious authorities often voice a different opinion. In line with their Calvinist doctrine, ministers and other officials of the Protestant Evangelical Church of Halmahera (Gereja Masehi Injili Halmahera, GMIH) argue that they have no way of knowing whether those who died in the name of Christianity have made it into heaven. This doctrine has placed the church at odds with many of their parishioners whose family members died during the conflict. These people see their lost family members as martyrs and believe that they have achieved eternal salvation in heaven. If possible, GMIH ministers avoid pointing out this doctrinal inconsistency to their congregation. As one minister said, ‘When they ask me if their family is in heaven because they are martyrs, I just nod my head and tell them they should pray’. Muslim religious leaders give an almost identical response as their Christian counterparts. They often answered that according to doctrine, only Allah knows if a person will make it into heaven or not. As much as they would like to think that their loved ones are in heaven, and they believe they are, they have no way of knowing with certainty if that is the case. Despite these doubts among religious professionals, interviews throughout North Maluku showed a strong belief among communities that those who died were martyrs and had earned a place in heaven.

⁹ Thalib made this declaration based on various fatwa that he requested from a number of prominent Muslim scholars in the Middle East (Noorhaidi Hasan 2005; Ja’far Umar Thalib 2000).
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Pre-conflict burial practices in Tobelo and Galela

This notion of martyrdom and the importance that local communities place on remembering those who died during the conflict are evident when we compare these monuments and martyrs cemeteries with the pre-conflict burial practices of Christian communities. The graveyards of most Christian communities in Tobelo and Galela are located on the outskirts of town. As you travel along the Trans-Halmahera highway, you often come across these graveyards before entering or after exiting a village. There are exceptions: some people inter their loved ones in their house yards, but this practice is frowned upon by other members of the community and discouraged by the church. In the twentieth century graveyards were actively moved out of some villages. Beyond the more banal issue of public health, Dutch missionaries and their successors in GMIH wanted to create more distance between the village and the graveyard as part of their efforts to sever relationships between the living and the dead.

Pre-Christian and pre-Muslim beliefs among the Galela and Tobelo focused largely on the veneration of ancestors (Tob., o gomanga; Gal., o goma). Although the Tobelo and Galela had a perception of a supreme being, he was largely seen as above human concerns; the ritual focus was on the ancestors. Maintaining relations with these ancestors was important, as some of them stayed within the community and could be either a benevolent force or a malevolent one. Strong ancestors stayed in the community and protected it from harm or aided its members in warfare or piracy. Failure to provide sustenance to these ancestors in the form of ritual offerings could result in illness and possibly death (Platenkamp 1988:105). Dutch missionaries sought to sever these relationships between the living and the dead as part of their efforts to convert the Galela and the Tobelo to Christianity. As early as 1874, less than a decade after their arrival, one of the first Dutch missionaries, Hendrik van Dijken, described Galela funerary practices, particularly their secondary mortuary rituals, as ‘the transmitters of paganism’, whose removal would further the Christianization of the region (Van Dijken 1874:157 as cited in Platenkamp 1988:165).

Once communities converted to Christianity, the dead needed to be removed from the village and forgotten, because the dead were no longer to be thought of as social beings. Many Tobelo and Galela were reluctant to

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10 Tobelo nouns are morphologically distinguished by a noun marker. In this paper I will use the default noun marker (o) (Holton 2003:13).

11 Space does not permit an in-depth examination of Tobelo or Galela pre-Christian beliefs or funeral practices. Hueting (1921, 1922) and Platenkamp (1988) provide in-depth discussions of Tobelo pre-Christian cosmology and funeral practices, while Jacob Ajawaila (1990) and Baarda (1914) discuss pre-Christian Galela funeral rituals.
acquiesce in missionary demands and give up these relationships, and the issue remains a matter of concern for the church in the twenty-first century.\footnote{People's attachments to their ancestors were so strong that in some cases the requirements that they dissolve these relationships was an obstacle to conversion to Christianity or Islam. Although the Christian missionaries were firm in their call to sever these relationships, Muslim preachers showed some flexibility. In the Galela village of Seki, for example, the Muslim teacher who converted the population also converted their ancestors by rearranging their graves to face Mecca and performing a short prayer service (M. Adnan Amal 2000:28-9). This arrangement made Islam an attractive option for other communities in the region that had not converted to Christianity.}

Some in the church now consider the spirits of the deceased to be agents of Satan and something to be avoided. As GMIH ministers explain today, the missionaries thought that moving the graveyards out of villages would limit people's interaction with them. They hoped that decreased interaction would eventually remove the dead from the social community and put an end to the associated beliefs. In some Halmaheran communities, people considered the continuing presence of a pre-Christian graveyard as a direct threat to their new-found Christianity and a possible source of recidivism after conversion. I recorded one example of these concerns among the Forest Tobelo, the forest-dwelling foragers of Halmahera's interior, who converted to Christianity in the 1980s and 1990s under the stewardship of the New Tribes Mission (Duncan 1998). The newly converted Forest Tobelo saw the continuing existence of the graveyard where their ancestors were buried as a danger to their new-found faith. Some in the village believed it might serve as a source of longing for pre-Christian beliefs and tempt people back into older practices. The more devout converts felt relieved when a major flood caused a local river to change course and washed the graveyard out to sea. A few informants even argued that the flood was God's work to help solidify Christianity's hold on the people.

In Christian villages today, when people die, their relations with the community are, at least according to the Christian church, supposed to be severed as they go either to heaven or to hell. The church actively discourages people from attempting to maintain relations with those who have died, beyond simple memorial services immediately after their death and annual visits to the cemetery. However, despite more than a century of these efforts to remove the ancestors and other spirits from the social world of the Tobelo and the Galela, people still interact with them in a variety of ways. Some continue to seek favours from their ancestors, a practice that while increasingly rare still occurs, despite being frowned upon by clergy and more devout Christians in the community.\footnote{Platenkamp (1988), in his fieldwork with the Tobelo in the 1980s, noted a gradual decline in the maintenance of relations with the dead.} Others rely on their ancestors for esoteric knowledge used...
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in healing or other magical practices. These magical practices became increasingly popular during the conflict, as people looked for talismans and charms to protect them from harm. Some believed that the more prominent leaders in the fighting had received their superior fighting prowess and magical abilities to avoid harm directly from their ancestors. Beliefs in the ancestors and in other spirits and non-corporeal beings, such as the invisible inhabitants of the forest interior (Tob., *o moroka*) who fought alongside the Tobelo during the violence, flourished during the 1999-2001 conflict. All the more reason, some ministers claim, to work harder to eradicate these beliefs now that the conflict is over.

*Martyrs cemeteries and war heroes*

Understanding the church’s concerns with separating the living from the dead makes the post-conflict burial practices of many Christian communities all the more significant. Particularly when we consider that they were most often undertaken with the approval, and in some cases the encouragement, of the clergy. If one drives through Tobelo and Galela now, in addition to the graveyards located on the outskirts of town, one will also see graves of people who died during the conflict prominently located in a number of churchyards. Since these people died defending their faith, their deaths have been treated differently. The placement of their graves in the churchyard, a place that is the centre of village life and is associated with the vitality of the community, signals a different sort of death. These dead should be celebrated and remembered on a daily basis, rather than separated (both literally and figuratively) from community life. It is not just these individuals who will be remembered, but the events that brought about their deaths, since they are often explicitly marked as martyrs. The placement of martyrs’ graves in churchyards signals an intent to remember their sacrifice. Instead of being set aside in a graveyard to be slowly forgotten, they have been interred in the spiritual and social centre of the community.

Christian villages take great community pride in their church building and the churchyard. Communities go to great lengths to build large churches in the latest style. In some villages the construction and expansion of churches seems to be a never-ending project. Although often defended as a requirement for a growing congregation, there are also other meanings inherent in these construction projects. The size and beauty of a church reflect the wealth and vitality of the community, which some see as evidence of God’s approval and proof of their own sincerity. Just as the church represents the sincerity of the community, in smaller villages it also represents the community itself and is thus often the focal point of a village. The importance that communi-
ties place on maintaining their church and churchyard draws attention to the changes in burial practices since the 1999-2001 violence.

Although it may seem that GMIH has been placed in a slight predicament by these new burial practices vis-à-vis their doctrine concerning salvation, as well as their efforts to combat pre-Christian beliefs, I would argue that the construction of these memorials has worked to their advantage. The placement of graves and memorials at GMIH churches solidifies, if not reifies, the continuing dominance of GMIH in the ever-expanding hierarchy of Christian denominations in Halmahera. It highlights the continuing importance of GMIH in those particular communities, as opposed to smaller non-GMIH congregations.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, the positive aspects of these memorials for the image and position of GMIH in North Moluccan society outweighs any ambivalence the church hierarchy may feel towards the various meanings attributed to them. Furthermore, GMIH has not objected to these memorials, because at the time they were built the church was directly involved in the conflict, or dealing with its immediate aftermath, and to do so would not have sat well with local communities.

Despite the iconoclastic reputation of the Dutch missionaries to the region, who, when local people were baptized, often demanded the communal destruction of objects they equated with indigenous cosmologies, the Dutch colonial church in Halmahera maintained a rather ambivalent relationship with local traditions and pre-Christian beliefs. Oftentimes this ambivalence focused as much on co-opting local practices for church goals as it did on stopping them. For example, Dutch missionaries tried to reshape Tobelo \textit{adat} to make it more compatible with Christianity (Hueting 1909). In the eyes of the Tobelo this reformulation had the unforeseen consequence of affirming pre-Christian beliefs (Haire 1981:182). The Christian \textit{adat} devised by the Dutch missionary Anton Hueting covered a wide variety of topics, including divorce, adultery, and theft, that had previously been addressed by indigenous \textit{adat}. Oftentimes he left the mediation and adjudication system between members of the community intact. Haire (1981:182) argues that this new Christian \textit{adat} ‘assumed not only that such matters do occur in Christian communities but also that the settling of them is related to the former \textit{adat’}. Thus Hueting’s efforts to inculcate Christian values into Tobelo social relations had the effect of partially reaffirming pre-Christian belief systems by endorsing pre-Christian Tobelo social systems and ritual relationships. The error appears to be that, where Hueting distinguished between cosmological beliefs and social relations, the Tobelo did no such thing. This reaffirmation

\textsuperscript{14} All of the examples of monuments discussed here, both in Tobelo and Galela, have been built at GMIH churches. I am unaware of any such monument at a non-GMIH church anywhere in Halmahera.
of pre-Christian belief systems convinced many people in Halmahera that Christianity and their previous cosmological beliefs and practices were not mutually exclusive. Although the missionaries expressed a zeal in destroying the material culture associated with these beliefs, they did not express the same zeal in changing people’s understanding of them.

As the post-colonial successor to the Dutch mission, GMIH has also had a rather ambivalent relationship with pre-Christian practices. GMIH preachers often try to Christianize local adat practices in an effort to supplant the pre-Christian beliefs associated with them. One recent example has been efforts by certain preachers to implement the practice of sasi (a regional practice for protecting resources) in an attempt to replace local forms of garden magic (Bubandt 2005). Ministers hope this church-based sasi, which derives its power from the Christian god, will replace the garden magic that many farmers use to protect their crops from theft. Another example would be the actions of certain GMIH ministers who ventured into the realm of fighting magic and protection during the conflict by baptizing warriors prior to battle and blessing magical charms to bestow them with the power of God, rather than the power of the ancestors or other magic. This flexibility, and willingness to overlook the connections between current practices and past beliefs in the hope of co-opting them for the church, continues in the aftermath of the conflict.

Although some clergy might struggle with the mutual exclusivity of the cosmological aspects of adat and Christianity, others in Halmahera see them as complementary realms of interaction and belief. People who regularly attend church – in some cases even people who serve as deacons (Ind., anggota majelis) – may also maintain relations with their ancestors, or with the Moro, the invisible people who inhabit parts of the island’s interior. They see nothing incompatible in working within both systems of thought. Thus, during the conflict, Christian fighters would adorn themselves with Bibles and posters of Jesus Christ, while at the same time using magical practices, amulets, and forest medicines for protection. They would call upon Jesus and the Christian god for aid in battle, and also seek aid from the Moro. Battlefield accounts contain images of angels firing upon attackers from up high, as well as ancestors and other spiritual beings appearing on the battlefield. The intermingling of pre-Christian ideas with church burial practices in the aftermath of the conflict, then, should not be too surprising.

The case of Duma

I now want to look at the memorialization process through an examination of arguably the most extreme examples of this process, the creation of martyrs cemeteries in several Christian villages in Galela. The village of Duma
in Galela was the site of a church massacre that marked the end of large-scale violence in North Maluku in July 2000. By this point in the conflict the religious ‘master narrative’ had superseded most other explanations of the violence. The Christian communities in Galela were fighting to survive and to maintain the presence of Christianity in Galela, while Muslims were fighting to avenge earlier massacres in Tobelo and to rid the sub-district of its last Christians. Since the outbreak of violence in northern Halmahera, the region around Duma had been highly contested. Once news of the fighting in Tobelo reached Galela, violence broke out almost immediately around the villages of Dokulamo and Duma. The militia from Duma quickly routed several Muslim villages before joining other Christian militia to force the Muslim community to retreat to the district capital of Soa-sio, where they joined thousands of other Muslims fleeing the violence in Tobelo. During this fighting and in the months that followed, the Muslim side accused the people of Duma of a number of atrocities.

The advantage shifted in 2000, as Muslim militia reinforced with troops from Ternate and elsewhere began to retake the sub-district. During April and May, Muslim militia destroyed most of the Christian villages in Galela in a series of attacks that forced survivors to flee to Tobelo or to retreat to the village of Duma, where they had decided to make their last stand. Army blockades prevented large-scale reinforcements of the red troops from Tobelo or elsewhere, leaving the people in Duma to fend for themselves. They had a few chances to leave, and in several instances the Muslims reputedly offered them safe passage. They refused these offers, and over the course of several community meetings decided to stay and fight. The Muslim militia were equally determined that they be removed from the region. On a strategic level, Duma was the last remaining holdout of Christians in Galela’s lake region.15 Thus the future of the village, either its destruction or its defence, became a rallying point for both sides. Furthermore, the people of Duma and Christians from neighbouring villages such as Makete and Dokulamo, who were now taking refuge there, had played a major role in the violence since it began in late December 1999. The prominent role of militia from Duma throughout Galela in late 1999 and early 2000 had led many Muslims to consider them the main instigators of the violence.

Both sides in this conflict were also well aware of Duma’s historical significance. Both Christians and Muslims see Duma as the birthplace of Protestant Christianity in the region. Dutch Protestant missionaries had acquired their

15 Accounts of the violence in Galela often focus on the violence around the region’s lakes, and between these lakes and the border with the sub-district of Tobelo. It should be noted that fighting took place along the northern peninsula of Galela as well, although at least one community, Jere, located on the extreme northern tip of Halmahera, did manage to escape the violence.
The first North Moluccan converts in Duma in 1896, and subsequent missionaries were sent throughout the region to other ethnic groups. The missionary who had overseen these initial conversions among the Galela was buried in the village cemetery along with his wife. In the 1980s and 1990s Duma had also been home to a long-running Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) project to translate the Bible into the Galela language. With the master narrative of the conflict focusing on religion, both sides saw the defeat of Duma by Muslims or its defence by Christians as a matter of significance. After a series of attacks in May and June of 2000, Muslim militia eventually defeated the last holdouts in the village on 19 June. Over 150 people, including many women and children, died in this final confrontation.

After the survivors in the church had surrendered, a number of army units arrived to protect the few remaining men and the large number of women and children who had survived. Under the protection of the army, the survivors quickly buried the bodies of those that had been killed. They buried some in mass graves in front of the church, while they interred others in front of their destroyed homes. Before they left, the survivors held a brief prayer ceremony (Ind., ibadah pelepasan) during which they promised to return and re-bury the dead in a more dignified manner. The suffering of the people of Duma did not end with the Muslim defeat of the village. After the army evacuated the survivors to Tobelo, a large number decided to continue on to Manado in North Sulawesi. Unfortunately, many of these survivors boarded the ill-fated passenger ship Cahaya Bahari. Originally designed to carry 250 passengers, the Cahaya Bahari left port in Tobelo on 28 June with more than 550 people on board. It never reached its destination, and only ten survivors were found.

For several years the people of Duma lived as IDPs (internally displaced persons) in and around the town of Tobelo and in North Sulawesi. When they returned in 2003 after prolonged negotiations with their Muslim neighbours, one of their first tasks was to rebury the dead as they had promised. In fulfilling this vow, the community decided to separate them from the general graveyard in the village. The latter is seen as a place for those who died a natural death, while the new cemetery is for those who died ‘too soon’. As
Figure 1. The martyrs cemetery at Duma, Galela, North Maluku. Photo by the author, July 2008.
one woman said: ‘If I saw my daughter’s grave in the general graveyard it would make me very sad because I know she died too soon. But when I see it in the martyrs cemetery, it does not make me sad because I know that she is in heaven.’ This particular woman finds it relaxing to sit and chat with friends in the cemetery, as it brings her a sense of peace.

This martyrs cemetery is located next to the remnants of the now-destroyed church where the killings took place. A sign with a large white cross marks the entrance to the memorial park and reads: Cemetery of Love and Affection for Martyrs of the Congregation in Duma (Taman Pusara Martir Jemaat ‘Dodara’ di Duma). The site was designed by one of the war leaders from Duma. The final design consisted of 20 rows of 10 identical graves (see Figure 1). These graves are located on a large cement plaza of approximately 900 square meters. All of the tombstones are labelled with uniform metal plaques (see Figure 2). In addition to identifying the occupant of each grave, these plaques have a picture of two angels blowing trumpets over a small Bible open to the verse Romans 14:8. This Bible verse, not written on the plaque, reads: ‘If we live, we live to honour the Lord; and if we die, we die to honour the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord’. Each person is also referred to as ‘martyr of the congregation’ (Ind., martir jemaat). Below the data identifying the occu-

![Figure 2. Example of a tombstone from the martyrs cemetery at Duma, Galela, North Maluku. Photo by the author, July 2008.](image)

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19 *Dodara* is the Galela word for ‘love, affection’ (Ind., kasih, kasih sayang).
pant of the grave is the inscription: ‘Don’t let my struggle have been in vain’ (Ind., Jangan sia-siakan perjuanganku). These graves contain all of those from Duma who had been killed in the church on 19 June, as well as people from other villages who were killed that day. There are also a few graves of Duma citizens who died elsewhere during the violence.

Once they had completed the construction of the graves, the village held a large ceremony to rebury the martyrs. Family members exhumed those who had died, and the bodies were moved to their respective neighbourhoods, where they were placed in new coffins. As two musicians played hymns on the ruins of the former church, another parishioner rang a church bell. Each time the bell rang, all the coffins from a particular church district (Ind., lingkungan gereja) in the village were brought to the new cemetery and placed inside a nearby tent. After a short service, in which one of the pastors referred to the new memorial as ‘historical proof’ of what had taken place, the coffins were interred in the martyrs cemetery to serve as a sign of respect (Ind., tanda penghargaan) to those who died during the conflict.

The memorial eventually contained 200 graves from over 80 different families. After the martyrs cemetery was finished, the man who played a prominent role in ensuring its construction passed away and was buried there as well. His grave was set off to the side at the front of the graveyard to symbolize his leadership role before and after the conflict. Thus, as he led the people of Duma during the fighting, he will lead them into the afterlife. With the exception of the person who designed it, only those who fell during the conflict are buried in the cemetery. Those who died after the conflict was over, or who will pass away in the future will be buried elsewhere regardless of the role they played. Thus, with the one exception, the cemetery has been set aside for martyrs rather than heroes. Only those who died in the name of their religion are buried there. Those who distinguished themselves in the conflict, but survived, will have to be content with being buried in the general graveyard.

Through the construction of these memorials, the people of Galela are underwriting a particular interpretation of the communal conflict. If the bodies had been buried in the general graveyard, over the years people may have forgotten them, and they would fade from memory as they represented just another grave among many. But by putting them all together in a single spot, in the same place where many of them fell defending their religion, they have been marked out for special remembrance. Furthermore, the monument is constructed in such a way as to effectively preclude any other interpretation of events. The signage leaves little to the imagination. The martyrs cemetery differs from regular graveyards in another crucial aspect: the entire cemetery is made of concrete. In the general cemetery the gravestones are made of poured concrete, but the cemetery itself consists of dirt, grass, weeds, and frangipani trees. Graves of those who are no longer remembered by their
descendants often become overgrown with weeds and grass, eventually crumbling and disappearing. In contrast, the martyrs cemetery in Duma has been built with a more permanent aura. It is still in need of weeding, and the village weeds it on the monthly anniversary of the massacre, but it has a far more imposing presence than the general graveyard, which informants cited as one aim of its construction.

One year after the formal opening of the martyrs cemetery, the village built a monument to those lost on the Cahaya Bahari passenger ship. This monument consists of a replica of the ship in a large basin of water (see Figure 3). The plaque on the monument reads: ‘Monument to the members of the Nita Congregation of GMIH in Duma lost on the Motorship Cahaya Bahari on 29-06-2000’. Around the walls of the basin are plaques with the names of some of those who died when the ship sank. The community constructed the monument at a cost of 40,000,000 Indonesian rupiah (approximately US$ 4,000), but the plaques were paid for by the individual families and thus remain incomplete. The monument refers to those who died on the Cahaya Bahari as victims (Ind., korban), rather than as martyrs (Ind., martir); whether this reflects how local people view their salvation remains unclear.

Once the people of Duma had finished their memorial, other nearby villages decided to follow suit. Some neighbouring communities, whose members died in Duma on 19 June 2000, took their dead and built smaller versions of the memorial. For example, the neighbouring village of Makete built a small martyrs cemetery to hold the graves of those that died at Duma. In Makete the plaques on the tombstones are labelled with the phrase ‘martyr of the congregation’ (Ind., martir jemaat) written above a small Bible with a cross. The Bible verse written on the depiction of the book is Philippians 1:21, and the text of the verse is inscribed below the identifying information on the plaque. The verse in question reads: ‘For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain’. A similar grouping of graves has been built in the Christian part of the village of Mamuya to house the graves of several people who died during the conflict; however, no signs explicitly mark this graveyard as a martyrs park and the gravestones make no direct reference to the conflict, other than the dates when the people died.

Not everyone in northern Halmahera welcomed the idea of building a martyrs cemetery in Duma or elsewhere. Initially the armed forces discouraged the planning committee. They argued that building a monument to the dead would foster feelings of revenge and prevent the peaceful coexistence of Muslim and Christian communities.
were also wary of the martyrs park for a variety of reasons. Their mistrust of Christian motives led to a rumour that the people of Duma were going to use the graveyard as a weapons cache, and the coffins would be filled with guns and bullets rather than bodies. One person even claimed that the Indonesian army sent someone from Jakarta to inspect the coffins before they were interred. Some Muslims wanted to duplicate the park, not for religious reasons, but to access the government funds they thought Duma had received for the park’s construction. Once they realized that no such funds existed, the idea quickly faded. Muslims in Galela that I interviewed in 2006 and 2008 rarely mentioned any continuing discomfort with the park; they no longer saw it as a potential source of conflict. Some even saw it as a point of reconciliation; they believed that the Christians of Duma would see the martyrs cemetery and, rather than feeling a need for revenge, would be reminded on a daily basis of the suffering that comes with religious conflict.

The graveyard and the Cahaya Bahari monument have now become tourist attractions. Visitors to northern Halmahera, particularly Christian ones, invariably include a stop at Duma in their itinerary. Visiting foreign Christian

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22 The district government has listed both the graveyard at Duma and the Cahaya Bahari monument as part of the district’s tourist potential, alongside beaches, hot springs, and other attractions in the region (Data potensi 2006).
Monuments and martyrdom

Pastors and supporters of faith-based NGOs make it a point to visit Duma, or are taken there by friends and colleagues from Tobelo. The story of the fall of Duma was, and remains, a popular one among western Christian organizations, and they occasionally bring tourists and donors to visit the site, as well as attend yearly commemorations of the massacre. The people I interviewed in Duma did not feel exploited by these tourists. Rather they were glad that others remember their sacrifices, and it reminds them that they ‘have not been forgotten’. Prior to the construction of the martyrs cemetery and the monuments, the destroyed church in Duma and the nearby mass graves had already become something of a tourist attraction. Numerous times as I passed the church in 2001 and 2002, well before the citizens of Duma had returned, I saw small groups of visitors taking photos and looking around the church.

Tobelo churchyards

Christians in Galela are not the only ones who have built memorials to those who perished in the fighting. Throughout the district of Tobelo many of those who died in the conflict have been interred in churchyards (see Figure 4). Those in Tobelo did not die as part of massacres, but as individuals in the wider conflict. For example, the person buried in the churchyard in Paca was killed by the armed forces after attempting to buy bomb-making materials across the bay. The men buried in Pitu were shot by the army during a standoff at the main army blockade between Tobelo and Galela. Another clear difference between the graves in Tobelo and those in Galela, aside from their size, is that those in Tobelo were often built, or at least construction was started, during the conflict, while those in Galela were constructed several years after the conflict was over and people had returned to their homes.

Another interesting aspect of the graves in Tobelo is the similarity between the interring of people who died in battle and pre-Christian burial practices. In pre-Christian Tobelo society, the Tobelo classified people who died in two ways, either as o heneoara or as o dilikine. The first, o heneoara, were those who died of old age and had exhausted all of their life force (Tob., o gurumini). These were not seen as strong ancestors (Hueting 1922:162). The second type of dead, o dilikine, are described as ‘strong spirit[s] of those who died violent deaths, particularly those who died as a casualty of war, but also those that died from drowning, falling from a tree and the like’ (Hueting 1922:162). The Tobelo believed that the spirits of these individuals, due to their unnatural...
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deaths, retained some of their life force and could serve as protective spirits. As one Tobelo informant told the Dutch missionary Hueting (1922:138) in the early twentieth century, the o dilikine ‘do not really belong to the dead’. Tobelo believed that these particular ancestors stayed in the community. Some Tobelo communities placed the bones of those deemed o dilikine in small structures near their residences (Tob., o gomanga ma tau) (De Clercq 1889; Platenkamp 1988:179-80). Thus, one could see the treatment of those who died of religious violence as, ironically, being connected with pre-Christian ritual practices.24 Just as the community remembered and honoured the memory of powerful ancestors (Tob., o dilikine) through the construction of small ancestral houses (Tob., o gomanga ma tau), so have they honoured the martyrs by interring them in socially prominent places in the community, rather then placing them in the separate graveyard. The few ministers I questioned about the similarities between these new burials and pre-Christian practices were quick to discount such connections, and focused instead on the Christian aspects of the burials and their connection with a religious conflict.

24 Platenkamp (1990) has made similar comparisons between Christian practices and pre-Christian Tobelo rituals in relation to both death and marriage.
Regardless of their connection with pre-Christian beliefs, the people buried in these graves are now considered by their communities as Christian martyrs, but their martyrdom is less marked on their gravestones than in Galela. There are no explicit references to martyrdom, but the text often makes it clear that they died defending their religion. For example, the epitaph on one of the graves next to the old church in the village of Pitu reads: ‘I struggled until the last drop of blood for Jesus who was insulted and the Christian community that was oppressed. Hey, my comrades keep going forward. No retreat.’ In another example, the graves in the village of Kupa-Kupa refer to the deceased as ‘Christ’s troops’ (Laskar Kristus). As noted above, these memorials generally consist of individual graves or at most a few graves placed near the village church. The placement of the graves in the churchyard, rather than in the general cemetery, has transformed them from relatively unimportant sites, sites known only to the immediate family of the deceased, into community memorials to glorify their struggle, and the struggle of their larger community, to defend their faith.

**Muslim burial practices**

The Muslim community in North Maluku appears to be less interested in building memorials for those who died in the conflict. In part this stems from reformist Muslim concerns regarding graveyards. Many Muslims in North Maluku saw marking graves of martyrs with monuments as unnecessary because Allah, they argued, already recognized their martyrdom. In some cases, such as with certain members of Muhammadiyah, there is an antipathy towards gravestones and graveyards due in part to negative views on *ziarah*. The contrast in memorialization practices becomes readily apparent if we compare how people in Duma commemorated those who died in the church massacre, with how the Muslim community of Popilo commemorated those who died in the massacre in their mosque. The memorialization at Duma, as mentioned above, has been rather significant and there is little subtlety in the public expressions of martyrdom. The people of Popilo, also ethnic Galela, have responded in a different way. Popilo was the site of one of the largest massacres of the conflict, when Christian militia killed several hundred people as they moved north from Tobelo and destroyed the last Muslim villages in the Tobelo sub-district in early January 2000. Many from Popilo

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25 Indonesian original: *Aku telah berjuang hingga titik darah terakhir justru Yesus yang dinista dan umat Kristiani yang ditindas. Hai Rekan Ku maju terus pantang mundur.*

26 The villages of Popilo and Luari, although located in the Tobelo sub-district, consist largely of people from the Galela ethnic group.
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sought refuge in their mosque, but no quarter was given and almost everyone who took refuge was killed. In the aftermath of the fighting, it was left to the armed forces to bury the dead in a mass grave dug directly in front of the mosque.

After the people of Popilo returned to their village, the general consensus was to leave the mass grave unmarked. There appears to have been little interest in making any sort of memorial to those who died. Some disagreed with this decision and two families placed headstones on the mass grave to mark their lost family members. One headstone notes the death of three members of a particular family, and the other commemorates the death of a single individual (see Figure 5). The latter does make a reference to martyrdom. Above the name of the deceased (who actually appears to have been killed in the neighbouring village of Gorua) is written ‘Wassuhada’, a reference to the deceased’s having died along the path to Allah.27 Otherwise there is no men-

Figure 5. Grave markers at site of mass grave in Popilo, Tobelo.
Photo by the author, July 2008.

27 The phrase ‘Wassuhada’ appears to be a variant of the plural of the Arabic term for martyrs (Arabic, shuhada); however, only one name is on the tombstone. The family that placed the tombstone on the mass grave was unavailable for comment.
tion of the dozens of other people interred there or their martyrdom.

There are some Muslim villages in northern Halmahera that contain graves with references to martyrdom, but none of them as elaborate or as well maintained as those found in Christian villages. In the centre of Soa-sio in Galela a small cemetery holds the graves of a number of people who died during the conflict. Those buried here, however, are either people from outside of the region, or those who died during the height of the violence when people were too scared to travel to graveyards on the outskirts of town to bury the dead. The cemetery itself was not specifically constructed to valorize those buried there, and in fact it appears to be slowly disappearing as the tombstones disintegrate and are overgrown with vegetation. This decay should come as no surprise as the majority of the dead have no family in the region to maintain their graves. Some of these graves carry the inscription of ‘mujahidin’, marking those that are buried there as individuals who died waging jihad and are thus, in the eyes of their loved ones, assured a place in heaven. However, Muslim leaders in Galela that I interviewed see this graveyard more as an educational instrument to remind people of the cost of communal violence rather than as a monument to martyrdom. They argued the graveyard reminded everyone who passed it that conflict comes at a high price. A few more graves are located next to the mosque in the Galela village of Soakonora, but these individuals were buried there during the conflict because people were too scared to go out to regular graveyards at that time. None of them makes reference to martyrdom.

Conclusion

As Coombes (2003) asks about post-apartheid South Africa, how does a society remember a violent past without reigniting the tensions that initially led to violence? This question is crucial because in the North Moluccan context many communities insist on maintaining a public memory of the events that took place. Analysing these sorts of memorializing processes is an important, though understudied, aspect of conflict analysis in Indonesia (for two recent exceptions see Davidson 2009; Spyer 2008). Most of the focus has been on the instigating factors in the various outbreaks of violence across Indonesia (Bertrand 2004; Davidson 2008; Sidel 2006), the timeline of events, or what made certain places conducive to violence (Klinken 2007). Hopefully scholars will move beyond this focus on causation and chronologies and begin to explore the way people remember these conflicts. These ways of remembering, the way communities and individuals set memories of past conflict in stone, steel or paint, has ramifications for inter-group relations and other aspects of post-conflict dynamics and needs to be explored further.
The fighting in North Maluku ended eight years ago and the evidence of that violence, to the untrained eye, disappears with each passing year as forced migrants return home and villages are rebuilt. As the events recede in time and as official rhetoric attempts to paper over the religious tensions inherent in the conflict, these monuments built by the Tobelo and Galela will continue to highlight the religious aspects of the violence. Denials of the role of religion in the conflict will, at least in the near future, fall on deaf ears. Furthermore, appeals to forget the past and focus on the future will be met with scepticism in communities whose centrepieces, their churches, are surrounded by the graves of those who died in the name of their religion.

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