CHRISTIAN PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM IN KENYA:

AS EXPRESSED IN WRITTEN SOURCES FROM 1998 TO 2010

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how Kenyan Christians perceive Islam and Muslims. The thesis approaches the problem by examining various Christian writings. Substantial and representative Christian literature was found in the form of scholarly writing, produced by Kenyan mainline Christians, and in the form of popular literature, produced by Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals.

The historiography of Islam entering into Kenya; and a historical look at Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya, with particularly an examination of the recent debate over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution, were also examined. The combination of the historical and the literary approach provides breadth into the examination of how Christians in Kenya perceive Islam and Muslims.

After an analysis of the history and the texts, several themes that emerge from this analysis are examined from two perspectives. One, politically oriented themes are examined to understand how Kenyan Christians symbolically contest with Muslims over public space. It is seen that the symbolic contestation concerns the legitimacy to occupy roles in the nation-building project. Two, emerging theologies of religion are teased out of the writings to gain insight into the deeper theological structures from which Kenyan Christians operate as they seek to understand and interact with the religious Other (Islam).

The thesis claims that the Kenyan cultural/religious context contributes significantly more so than traditional Christian-Muslim dynamics from outside of Africa.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated first to my youngest daughter, Alia, who cannot remember a time when her father was not busy working on his thesis.

I also dedicate it to all of my Christian and Muslim friends in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya who have taught me to see the world in a new way.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya (formerly the CPK)
AFER	African Ecclesial Review
AIC	African Instituted/Initiated/Independent Church
AIM	formerly named African Inland Mission
AMECEA	Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa
CKRC	Constitution of Kenya Review Commission
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CoE	Committee of Experts (for drafting a new constitution)
CPK	Church of the Province of Kenya (currently the ACK)
EAK	Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (formerly the EFK)
EAR	East African Revival
EFK	Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (currently the EAK)
FEICCK	Federation of Evangelical and Indigenous Christian Churches of Kenya
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
IRF	Inter-Religious Forum
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KICC	Kenyatta International Conference Centre
KNPCPCM	Kenya National Congress of Pentecostal Churches and Ministries
MCK	Methodist Church in Kenya
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NCCK	Nation Council of Churches of Kenya
NEGST	Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

NFD	Northern Frontier District
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church)
NIST	Nairobi International School of Theology
NPC	Neo-Pentecostal Church
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OSSREA	Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PEFA	Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa
PROCMURA	Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa
PSC	Parliamentary Select Committee
RGC	Redeemed Gospel Church
SIM	formerly named Sudan Interior Mission
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WCC	World Council of Churches
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance

GLOSSARY OF NON-ENGLISH WORDS

Agano (Swahili)	Testament; promise
Askari (Swahili)	Military personnel; police
Da'wa (Arabic)	Preaching of Islam to spread the faith
Daktari ya kienyeji (Swahili)	Traditional doctor, usually implying the use of herbs and spirit means to affect healing
Dhimmi (Arabic)	Protected; non-Muslim citizens in an Islamic state
δυναμις/dunamis (Greek)	Power
Harambee (Swahili)	Heave – ho! It became a symbol of working together in the development of the nation.
Jahiliyya (Arabic)	Pre-Islamic society, usually implying sinfulness
Jannah (Arabic)	Paradise
Jinni or *jini* (sg), *majini* (pl) (Swahili)	Jinn (Arabic). A spiritual being.
Kadhi (Swahili)	Muslim judge who makes decisions based on religious law
Kuokoka (Swahili)	To be saved
Liwali (sg), maliwali (pl) (Swahili)	Omani administrator in East Africa
Madrasa (Arabic)	Traditional religious school for Muslims
Majengo (Swahili)	Buildings (literally); normally used to designate ghetto areas
Mchawi (sg), *wachawi* (pl) (Swahili)	Witchdoctor
Mganga (sg), *waganga* (pl) (Swahili)	Religious specialist, diviner
Mihadhara (Swahili)	Attendance (Wandera) or lecture (Chesworth); refers to a confrontational style of street preaching by Muslims
Mtu (Swahili)	Person, human being
Mudir (Arabic)	Governor

Mungu (Swahili)	God
Mwambao (Swahili)	Coast
Naskh (Arabic)	Abrogation
Ngai (Kikuyu)	God
Padrao (Portuguese)	Large stone cross used to claim land by Portuguese explorers
Pepo (sg), *mapepo* (pl) (Swahili)	A spiritual being often associated with the sea; often used to designate evil spirits
Reconquista (Portuguese)	Reconquest
Sawahil (Arabic)	Coast
Shafi'i (Arabic)	One of the four Sunni school's of legal interpretation
Shahada (Arabic)	The Islamic creed or confession
Shamba (Swahili)	Farm; garden
Shari'a (Arabic)	Islamic law
Sharif (sg), *shurafa* (pl) (Arabic)	Descendant of the Prophet Muhammad
Shema (Hebrew)	The most basic creed or confession of Judaism; Dt 6:4
Shifta (Ge'ez)	Bandits, rebels
Tahrīf (Arabic)	Falsification, distortion.
Taurat (Arabic)	Torah
Tawatūr (Arabic)	Lack of reliable transmission
Tawhid (Arabic)	Oneness of God; unicity of God
Ubuntu (Nguni)	Personhood, community
Uchawi (Swahili)	Witchcraft
Ufungamano (Swahili)	Unity
Uhuru (Swahili)	Freedom
Unyama (Swahili)	Beastly, brutish, animal-like

Ushenzi (Swahili)	Uncivilised, savage
Ustaarabu (Swahili)	Arab-like; or Arabness
Utu (Swahili)	Personhood, community (Swahili form of *ubuntu*)
Uungwana (Swahili)	Civilised
Uzima wa milele (Swahili)	Eternal life
Wadaado (Somali)	Sheikh, marabout, Muslim religious leader
Wanika (Swahili)	People of the bush; term used to designate Mijikenda people during the early colonial period
Warruok (Luo)	Salvation
Waswahili (Swahili)	The Swahili people
Watoro (Swahili)	Runaway slaves
Waungwana (Swahili)	Civilised people
Zabur (Arabic)	Psalms

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Africa is the only continent with roughly equal populations of Muslims and Christians.[1] While North Africa is predominantly Muslim, Sub-Saharan Africa contains large numbers of adherents from both religions. Nearly 60% of Sub-Saharan Africans are Christians and 30% are Muslims.[2] It might be said that Africa is performing an experiment in Christian-Muslim relations that is not only unprecedented, but that may also contain lessons for the rest of the world.

Jenkins in his influential book, *The Next Christendom*, seems to believe that the future of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa may have disastrous global consequences. In a chapter titled, *The Next Crusade*, he poses "plausible African scenarios"[3] in which religious wars lead to "the war of the end of the world."[4] Violent conflicts between Christians and Muslims have occurred in Africa, most notably the long civil war in Sudan and interreligious/interethnic violence in northern Nigeria. Huntington, who Jenkins follows in his analysis,[5] makes the questionable claims that Kenya and Tanzania have experienced similar conflicts between Christians and Muslims.[6] It may be asked if Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis and

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[1] Information obtained through the World Christian Database. http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/ accessed 19 July, 2006.

[2] *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Washington, D.C.: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2010), 1.

[3] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 188.

[4] Ibid., 188-190. This is a title of a section in the chapter.

[5] Ibid., 163-190. Jenkins uses Huntington's idea of fault line wars in his description of potential crusades and religious wars in Africa.

[6] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 256.

Jenkins' "next crusade" prognostication are truly the lessons that Africa's experiences convey.

This thesis does not attempt to directly respond to the pessimistic, and rather dramatic, prognoses of Jenkins and Huntington.[7] Instead it will carefully examine Christian-Muslim relations from a Christian perspective in one African nation, which should contribute to a better understanding of the lessons that Africa may offer, as well as provide a more accurate representation of Christian-Muslim relations in one African nation that may prove to be a corrective to their more negative predictions.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to listen to voices of Kenyan Christians[8] as they write about issues concerning Islam and Muslims in order to better understand their perceptions of Islam and Muslims as these perceptions are influenced by the African religio-cultural heritage. An examination of Christian scholarly literature on Islam and popular Christian writing that addresses this subject will be used to gain access to these perceptions. The historical and cultural contexts are also examined. These contexts contribute to a better understanding of the texts, as well as enhancing an understanding of Kenyan Christian perceptions of Islam.

These perceptions will be then analysed through two different frameworks. First, Christian perceptions of Islam are analysed in the contestation over public space. This is a symbolic contestation that is used to maintain an upper hand in contesting for dominance in public space. The contested stakes concern who determines the identity of Kenya and the role of each religion in the on-going process of nation-building. Second, assumed, underlying

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[7] Voll has written a more detailed refutation of the 'clash of civilizations' as a relevant theoretical framework by which to understand Christian-Muslim encounter in Africa. John Voll, "African Muslims and Christians in World History: The Irrelevance of the "Clash of Civilizations"," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[8] However, due to the fact that the vast majority of the writing is produced by Kenyan Protestant Christians, this thesis primarily reflects the views of Kenyan Protestants. See chapter 1.3.

theological positions concerning a Christian understanding of Islam will be analysed. These

theologies of religion have neither been explicitly stated nor presented. These emerging

theologies of religion are teased out of the Christian literature and a preliminary exposition of

these theologies is proposed.

1.2 Methodology

In this section the methodological approach of the thesis will be explained by first

looking at the importance of taking the local Kenyan context as primary. An approach to

selecting and reading the texts will be explained in the following section. Then the concept of

symbolic confrontation, engaged by Kenyan Christians and Muslims, is examined. Finally,

implicit theology is examined as a methodology for better acquiring an understanding of the

theological assumptions implicit within the popular Christian writing.

1.2.1 A Contextual Approach

The thesis proceeds with the understanding that the local Kenyan context is primary in

the production of meaning in matters concerning local Kenyan Christian perceptions of Islam.

To say this does not indicate that the Kenyan Christian response to Islam is any less

'Christian' than Christian responses elsewhere, nor does it mean that external sources of

influence are absent from the Kenyan situation. It does, however, pose questions concerning

the relationship between external messages and local reception, interpretation and use of the

messages. In this particular case, since the thesis examines the views of Kenyan Christians,

who are adherents to a religion that has its origins outside Kenya, it is necessary to look at

theoretical issues concerning the interrelationship between African religion and culture and

Christianity. First, a theological perspective on a contextual approach to Christianity

becoming an African religion will be examined, and then an anthropological approach using

the concept of 'cultural flow' to understand local reception of external messages will be

examined. These two perspectives shape the theoretical background that informs the manner in which the scholarly and popular texts are examined.

Christianity spreading to Africa is often understood as the invasion of a Western religion.[9] However, Lamin Sanneh and Kwame Bediako argue that Christianity has become an African religion. Sanneh, in particular, emphasizes the reception of the message by Africans over against those who brought it,[10] saying "the African, as the agent of religious adaptation, has played a more critical role than his missionary counterpart."[11] The primary means by which this has happened is through the translation of the Christian scriptures into African vernaculars, through which the missionary transmitter loses control of the "proper" interpretation of the religion.[12] The use of the vernacular incorporates "indigenous conceptions and idioms"[13] into Christian thought and life. As Bediako has commented, "it is through the vernacular that the living forces of the primal imagination are perpetuated and carried forward into Christian usage."[14] The use of local names for God, for example, meant for African people that the God of the Bible was in fact the same God that had been known before the arrival of missionaries.[15]

For both Sanneh and Bediako, this vernacular aspect is of the theological essence of Christianity. Sanneh writes that Christianity is always a "translated religion," "original Christianity" being "nothing more than a construct," but that its message is always "received

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[9] See for example the scathing indictment of colonial era missions by A.J. Temu, *British Protestant Missions* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1972).

[10] Lamin Sanneh, *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process: The African Dimension* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 74. This is emphasized througout his writing.

[11] Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), xii.

[12] See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989).

[13] Sanneh, *Encountering the West*, 74.

[14] Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 175.

[15] Ibid., 55, 213.

and framed in the terms of its host culture."[16] As such, Christianity in Africa should not be understood as a Western religion and the Westernisation of Africans through Christianity.[17] One implication of this understanding is that African Christian approaches to various issues, including interreligious relations, should not be understood uniquely in terms of traditional (i.e. primarily Western-derived) Christian theological categories. Instead, the African Christian approach is shaped by a complex interaction between the African religio-cultural heritage and Christianity in which this African heritage shapes Christian thought and action, and the African heritage is also re-shaped by Christian faith.

In addition Sanneh addresses the issue historically, indicating that the primary agents for the spread of Christianity in West Africa were African catechists, colporteurs, teachers, etc.[18] Spear also notes that Africans played a central role in the spread of Christianity in East Africa.[19] Though Christianity arrived on the shores of Africa (and Kenya in particular) through the efforts of Western missionaries, their historical and theological role in the formation of African Christianity is frequently overstated in comparison to the importance of African agency, reception and assimilation. This is as true for present manifestations of African Christianity as it was for the earlier era.[20]

Kalu discusses the more recent phenomena of African Pentecostalism and its relation to Pentecostalism in the West in terms of the globalization discourse. This discourse raises

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[16] Lamin Sanneh, *Disciples of All Nations: Pillars of World Christianity.*, ed. Lamin Sanneh, Oxford Studies in World Christianity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25-26.

[17] Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 62.

[18] Sanneh, *Encountering the West*, 71. The historical situation is described in more detail in Sanneh, *West African Christianity*.

[19] Thomas Spear, "Toward the History of African Christianity," in *East African Expressions of Christianity*, ed. Thomas Spear and Isaria N Kimambo, East African Studies (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 7.

[20] See Paul Freston, "Globalization, Religion, and Evangelical Christianity: A Sociological Meditation from the Third World," in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu Kalu and Alaine Low, Studies in the History of Christian Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008).

two issues: "how globalization impacts local cultures and how local cultures respond."[21] For

Kalu the local appropriation, domestication and transformation of the global (i.e. Western

Pentecostalism) explains African Pentecostalism better than theories emphasizing the external

influences. Therefore, concerning this recent African Christian movement, he arrives at a

similar position to Sanneh and Bediako regarding African response and agency through the

use of theories of globalization rather than translation.

Gifford, on the other hand, is one of the leading proponents of the view that Western

(and primarily American) influence is operative throughout African Christianity, though

especially in its Evangelical and Pentecostal varieties.[22] A brief look at Gifford's thesis may

clarify the contrasting methodology used in this present study. Gifford wishes to use

"concepts taken from political and social analysis" (especially the concept of African socio-

political systems as neo-patrimonial) to "examine the public role" of the church in Africa.[23] In

this way, he regards African churches as dependent upon external "resources, expertise and

power."[24] For example, in describing two Liberian Pentecostal churches he uses expressions

such as "this Christianity is *totally* Western," the "teaching was *totally* American," "there was

not a single African element," and "there was *absolutely nothing* African in either of these

churches."[25] (The emphasis is added.)

While the absolutist language is toned down in his recent writings, Gifford continues

to understand developments of Christianity in Africa as resulting from principally American

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[21] Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 12.
[22] Freston, "Globalization, Religion, and Evangelical Christianity," 36.
[23] Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst & Company, 1998; reprint, 2001), 1.
[24] Ibid., 47.
[25] Paul Gifford, "Bethel and Transcea, Liberia's Fastest-growing Churches: A Comparison," in *New Dimensions in African Christianity*, ed. Paul Gifford, (Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, 1992), 50-51.

initiatives.[26] He writes, for example, that to assess "recent religious trends in Africa" one needs to understand "North American developments".[27] However, as Freston writes, "American influence has to be demonstrated rather than presumed."[28] It seems that Gifford understands African churches to be almost fully dependent upon the patronage of primarily American Christians, whom they imitate structurally, liturgically and theologically. Africans become principally passive recipients of a globalizing American gospel, rather than agents, interpreters and transformers.

Anthropologist, Ulf Hannerz, uses the concept of cultural flow in the global ecumene to understand local reception of external cultural messages. Cultural flow can be understood as both the "externalization of meaning," which can refer to a wide variety of forms (e.g. speech, bodily expressions, material production, art, etc.) and the "interpretation" that one makes of these externalizations.[29] In other words, culture does not flow directly from mind-to-mind but from one individual to another through various means, which must then be interpreted. The global ecumene refers to the "complicated overall entity"[30] within which global cultural forces influence local cultures.

Hannerz shows that cultural flow between centre and periphery (the West would be a centre and Africa a periphery) is asymmetrical as Gifford insists, however the centre-periphery relations are complex. Within the periphery, centres form further centre-periphery relationships resulting in multiple local centres, which interpret and then re-externalize the 'original' cultural message in altered fashion, as well as produce their own cultural

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[26] See also Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (2002). Dunch specifically critiques Gifford for the continual use of cultural imperialism as an analytical tool in understanding African Christianity.

[27] Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009), 139.

[28] Freston, "Globalization, Religion, and Evangelical Christianity," 36.

[29] Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 4.

[30] Ibid., 47. See also pp. 217-267.

messages.[31] In addition, the periphery is never passive, but receives the message as an additional cultural resource rather than as displacement of its own cultural resources.[32] For our purposes, Christianity can be seen as a resource added to African religious and cultural resources, rather than as a replacement. The centre's messages also arrive via media that allows for little or no feedback, nor control, and the closer contacts of "face-to-face interactions"[33] that people experience in everyday life carry more influence than messages from a distant media. It can be seen that strong cultural messages are communicated from centres, but that their influence, while not discounted, is mitigated by the nature of the media and the local cultural circumstances.

Applying Hannerz's theory of cultural flow to the concerns of this thesis, one can recognize that Western Christianity influences Christianity in Kenya, occurring principally through written media, television and missionary personnel in the pattern of centre-periphery relations. However, the receptions, interpretations, adaptations, and uses of the message by Kenyan Christians from their various institutional, cultural and social contexts within Kenya as they produce new meanings form the significant places from which to analyze religious perceptions in Kenya. Hannerz's anthropological theory confirms the theological insights of Sanneh, Bediako and Kalu.[34] Therefore, this thesis will analyse the writings of Kenyan Christians concerning Islam, not as reflections of globalized influence from the West, but as local, creative, Christian responses. It is recognized that Kenyan Christians live within the global ecumene, although the additional cultural resource that arrives in Kenya from Western Christian ministries does not overpower local cultural resources. Kenyan Christian perceptions are produced by Kenyans within the plurality that makes up modern Kenya.

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[31] Ibid., 239.
[32] Ibid., 241.
[33] Ibid., 243.
[34] This is not to say that Sanneh, Bediako and Kalu write exclusively, or even primarily, as theologians. Sanneh and Kalu in particular write from the perspective of historians of Christianity.

1.2.2 Analytical Approach to the Texts

In order to access the broadest view of Kenyan Christian perceptions of Islam, I decided that a widespread collection of published writing by Kenyan Christians would be the principle focus of the research. I had recently relocated to Nairobi after having lived for several years in the Horn of Africa.[35] Having had a long-term interest in African Christian theological issues, I was already familiar with the vibrant Christian theological production in Kenya. It was this scholarly and theological material that I intended to study to gain insight into Kenyan Christian perceptions of Islam. However, as I became more familiar with Nairobi and its Christian community, I began to notice the significance of both the popular Christian literature and the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement.[36] Even in discussions with Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics and Mennonites,[37] I found that popular Pentecostal magazines were being read and that the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement had made important inroads. I, then, decided to begin collecting these popular Christian magazines to include in the study.

An attempt was made to gather as much published material by Kenyan Christians concerning Islam as could be found. As might be expected, locating and acquiring the scholarly material proceeded with very little difficulty. The vast majority of this material is available at the Catholic Bookshop, Keswick Bookshop,[38] or in the libraries of local theological schools. Therefore, it can be reasonably claimed that a nearly complete collection of Kenyan Christian scholarly writing concerning Islam from 1998 to 2010 was made. However, the nature of popular Christian publishing in Kenya means that a claim to

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[35] I came to Nairobi to teach at Nairobi International School of Theology after having taught in the public school system for 15 years in Djibouti. This personal account explains the inclusion of popular literature in the study.

[36] See the Pew Forum study. More than half of Kenyan Christians have some affiliation with Pentecostal or Charismatic forms of Christianity. *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*, (Washington D.C.: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2007), 4.

[37] I was working for a Mennonite agency, thus my connection to Kenyan Mennonites.

[38] Both of these bookshops are located in downtown Nairobi.

completeness cannot be made. One, finding back issues to popular magazines is difficult.[39]

Two, the publication and distribution of these magazines can be sporadic, which makes

regularly locating them difficult. Three, some large Pentecostal churches publish a popular

magazine, but do not make them easily available to the public. Therefore, the popular

Christian literature that was collected can be said to be representative, but it is not exhaustive

of the genre. This type of literature and the collection process is described more fully in

chapter 7.1.

From among the large number of magazine articles, journal articles, book chapters and

books collected, the texts used in this study were then chosen due to their references to Islam.

In scholarly texts references to Islam were direct and were identified by the use of the terms,

Islam or Muslim, in the text. In popular writing the references were often indirect and terms

such as mosque, Allah, and eastern gods (which was used to indicate either Indian religions,

Islam or both, possibly because some prominent Muslims in Kenya are from the Indian

community) were used to identify references to Islam. Popular writers also used specific

geographical regions to indicate a reference to Islam, and those identified were the coast,

northern Kenya, North Eastern Province, Mombasa, Middle East, and Asia(n). Typically

Muslim names, as well as broader themes related to Islam (without directly using Islamic

terms) could also indicate references to Islam.

The texts were read with careful attention given to both their underlying theological

assumptions concerning Islam and their socio-political representations of Christian and

Muslim presence in Kenya. Then they were classified as either primarily religious/theological

or socio-political; a few texts combined both theological and socio-political themes. As

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[39] I was able to obtain back issues to one popular Christian magazine, *Revival Springs*. Though I also attempted to obtain back issues to others, I was unable to do so. Therefore, I was able to collect popular Christian literature over the period 1998-2010, though magazines, other than *Revival Springs*, were collected from 2007-2009.

examined in detail above (1.2.1), the local Kenyan context was primary in analyzing the texts. Categories for analysis were allowed to arise from the texts within their local Kenyan context informed by their historical, cultural and religious heritage. The most salient Kenyan religious/theological concept found in the writings in regards to Christian perceptions of Islam was 'community'. A key role of religion is understood to be the ability to create healthy forms of community. In these texts, Islam is then judged by Kenyan Christians according to how Islam is perceived to be capable of creating its own healthy community. This is explained more in sections 9.3, 9.3.2 and 9.3.3. The theological writings of Kenyan and African theologians such as Mbiti, Mugambi, Magesa and Bujo[40] confirmed community as a valid religious/theological category in the local Kenyan context. Therefore, the texts classified with religious/theological themes were read with careful attention to the idea of community. Questions asked of the texts were: What is community? Who comprises the community? What inhibits healthy community formation? What is the relation of the community to Muslims? Is Islam considered to be capable of creating healthy community?

The 'theology of reconstruction' by Mugambi provided a helpful framework for analyzing texts of a socio-political nature. The theology of reconstruction, using the story of Nehemiah as its Biblical inspiration, calls for African people to come together to find African solutions to their problems in socially, economically and politically building the nation (see sections 6.3.1 and 8.4.1). While all of the scholarly and popular writers may not be in full agreement with the theology of reconstruction, the concept of religious participation in building the nation socially, economically and politically was shared by all (see 8.1). Thus these texts were read giving careful attention to the idea of nation-building; the writers evaluate Islam in its capability of appropriate nation-building. In addition, Bourdieu's concept

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[40] Works by these theologians can be found in the bibliography.

of symbolic contestation through the use of symbolic capital proved helpful in analyzing the manner in which these Kenyan Christian writers sought to impose their vision of nation-building upon Muslims (see 1.2.3). Through the use of a metaphor borrowed from economics, symbolic capital provides a means to understand the manner in which groups create and use power through the manipulation of symbols in order to affect change by imposing meaning on the social order. Questions asked of the texts were: What are the symbolic meanings that Kenyan Christians attempt to impose in the public space? What types of symbolic capital do Christians use most commonly in symbolic confrontation with Muslims? How do they employ these various forms of symbolic capital? What place is expected for Christians and for Muslims in the public space? Are Muslims accepted as equal participants in the public space?

1.2.3 Symbolic Power and Symbolic Confrontation

In examining the scholarly and popular texts by Kenyan Christians, it was found that Kenyan Christians are engaged in symbolic confrontation with Kenyan Muslims. In order to better theoretically understand these symbolic contestations, some concepts from Pierre Bourdieu's sociology will be used. One of his central ideas is that power "finds symbolic expression in cultural forms and practices."[41] This symbolic power is "a power of 'world-making,'" through which "the world itself" can be truly organized.[42] "Symbolic power entails the capacity to impose symbolic meanings and forms as legitimate" and "to shape perceptions of social reality."[43] Within the context of this study, Kenyan Christians seek symbolic power to impose their definition of a Kenyan nation as the legitimate vision for nation-building.[44]

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[41] David Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals: The Political Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 10.
[42] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 22.
[43] Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals*, 78.
[44] See chapter 8.1.

Symbolic power may be understood through the concept of capital, which Bourdieu extends beyond economics to include "a variety of cultural, social, and symbolic resources."[45] "Symbolic capital", then adheres to the "same laws of accumulation, inheritance, and exchange that govern material forms of capital."[46] There are different types of symbolic capital, such as "cultural capital, linguistic capital, scientific capital, and literary capital;"[47] and in the context of this study religious capital and spiritual capital are important notions. These various types of capital may be exchanged for (or transformed to) other types of capital so that an individual or group may gain symbolic capital in a different field.[48] For example, educational capital and cultural capital may be interchanged[49] (i.e. an individual who obtains a high degree of education may also become a 'cultured person', or someone who succeeds as an artist may become accepted as an 'educated person'.) The notion of exchanging or transforming symbolic capital from one type to another will be important for understanding the ways in which Kenyan Christians contest the public space.

'Habitus' is another concept that will be helpful in understanding the manner in which symbolic power functions in Kenya. Collins writes, "The habitus is, briefly, a set of embodied dispositions – a propensity to do things in certain ways in certain contexts."[50] Bourdieu calls

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[45] David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 74.

[46] Bradford Verter, "Spiritual Capital: Theorizing Religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 2 (2003): 152.

[47] Robert Moore, "Capital," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell, (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2008), 103.

[48] Field may be defined as "structured spaces that organize around specific types of capital or combinations of capital." Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals*, 56. The term, space, will be used in this study in a manner similar to Bourdieu's use of field (*champ* in French).

[49] Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans., Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). Much of *Distinction* concerns the relationship between education and culture, and how these form social classes.

[50] Peter J. Collins, "Habitus and the Storied Self: Religious Faith and Practice as a Dynamic Means of Consolidating Identities," *Culture and Religion* 3, no. 2 (2002): 149.

habitus "a structuring structure" and a "structured structure."[51] Maton explains this as follows: "Habitus is structured by one's past and present circumstances" (i.e. family, education, religion, cultural group, urban/rural, etc.), and "it is structuring in that one's habitus helps to shape one's present and future practices." The structure, itself, can be understood as a "system of dispositions which generate perceptions, appreciations and practices."[52] Habitus tells people who they are and where they belong in the larger social order. It "involves an unconscious calculation of what is possible, probable, improbable, or impossible for people in their specific locations in the stratified social order."[53] In the context of the present study, Christian perceptions of Islam, understandings of Kenyan nationhood and the manner of symbolic confrontation are "mediated by habitus,"[54] and not the unique results of the creative thoughts of isolated individuals.

It should be noted that Bourdieu stressed the manner in which the modern state monopolises symbolic power[55] and legitimates distinctive social classes and inequality. As such, other sources of symbolic power did not receive much interest in his works, especially religion.[56] When he did write on religion, Bourdieu focused upon religious institutions within a closed religious system (i.e. marginally related to other fields and types of capital).[57] Considering the importance of religion in Africa, and the manner in which religion tends to permeate all aspects of life (and thus every field or space), the entirety of Bourdieu's theory is of only marginal interest. Therefore, while using some of Bourdieu's concepts in the analysis,

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[51] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 170.
[52] Karl Maton, "Habitus," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell, (Stocksfield, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2008), 51.
[53] Swartz, *Symbolic Power, Politics and Intellectuals*, 41.
[54] Ibid., 73.
[55] Ibid., 43.
[56] Ibid., 131.
[57] Verter, "Spiritual Capital," 151, 157. See for example Pierre Bourdieu and Monique de Saint Martin, "La Sainte Famille: L'épiscopat Français dans le Champ du Pouvoir," *Actes de la Recherche en Science Sociales* 44-45, no. (1982).

the thesis should not be understood to represent a specifically Bourdieusian analysis of religion.

The thesis will specifically examine the contestation over public space, which may be characterised as symbolic confrontation. At its most basic, symbolic confrontation can be contrasted with direct physical or political confrontation.[58] Bourdieu says that symbolic confrontations are "over the power to produce and impose the legitimate vision of the world."[59] It must be kept in mind that the symbolic is significant in modern nationalism;[60] and as Cruise O'Brien writes, "The state in Africa enters the imagination along a religious path."[61] In the particular case under study, the contestation for the "legitimate vision of the world" concerns who can impose their vision of the nation upon Kenya. Symbolic confrontation can change realities in the socio-political world.

The Christian-Muslim contestation is only one of several such symbolic confrontations that attempt to define the Kenyan nation. Other important symbolic contests include: Western versus African, and secular versus religious. Even though this thesis is only concerned with the Christian-Muslim contestation, these contests are not isolated and each one has influence upon the others. For example, the Western-African contest impinges upon the Christian-Muslim contest in that Christians question if Muslims are truly committed to the African cause.[62]

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[58] This contrast is emphasised in E. G. Schwimmer, "Symbolic Competition," *Anthropologica* 14, no. 2 (1972). It is also a point of discussion in D. Cruise O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Imagining the State in Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

[59] Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 20. Bourdieu uses the term in French, *lutte symbolique*.

[60] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, revised ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). While the particular vocabulary of symbolism is not always used, it is very clear that these communities are imagined around diverse important symbols.

[61] O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Imagining the State in Africa*, 1.

[62] See especially chapter 8.2.1. Muslims also accuse Christians of following a Western religion.

Harrison finds "four proto-typical forms"[63] of symbolic confrontation. While his classifications are not of particular interest in this thesis, they provide some insight into how symbolic confrontations work. The symbols of one group may be elevated as more prestigious than that of a competing group.[64] Groups may dispute the control of commonly held symbols, such as those of the nation.[65] A group may create new symbols to enhance its identity.[66] A group may also attempt to displace the symbols of its opponent and replace these with its own symbols.[67] From these four types it can be seen that symbolic confrontation, according to Harrison, concerns each group attempting to gain symbolic power by asserting control over symbols and naming one's own symbols as significant.

Bourdieu points out that the "symbolic power does not rest in the 'symbolic system,'"[68] but that it exists in the relationship between those who exercise this power and those who accept it. In other words, this power is not intrinsically found in the symbols themselves, but it is located in the cooperation between those who have authority to create and promote the symbols and those who recognize the symbols as legitimate and meaningful. This means that a symbolic confrontation not only involves manipulation of the symbolic system, as understood by Harrison,[69] but this confrontation may also include attempts to weaken the relationship between those wielding symbolic power and those accepting it.

Cruise O'Brien, in his study of Senegal, says that the Mouride brotherhood calls the state Satan in symbolic confrontation.[70] He also writes that Tijani Sufis use symbolic

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[63] Simon Harrison, "Four Types of Symbolic Conflict," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 1, no. 2 (1995): 255.
[64] Ibid.: 256.
[65] Ibid.: 258.
[66] Ibid.: 260.
[67] Ibid.: 263.
[68] Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et Pouvoir Symbolique* (Paris: Editions Fayard, 2001), 210. Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," 727.
[69] Harrison, "Four Types of Symbolic Conflict."
[70] O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations: Muslims Imagining the State in Africa*, 4, 48.

confrontation against the Mourides by declaring their own commitment to the morality of the *Qur'ān* and calling the Mourides, morally lax.[71] These examples show that the relationship that establishes symbolic power may be attacked through attempts to discredit the authority of the opposing group.

Bourdieu views the results of successful symbolic confrontation to be an increase in symbolic capital, which confers more legitimacy to successfully compete symbolically.[72] Therefore, whether through the manipulation of symbols or the discrediting of rivals, symbolic confrontation aims to increase one's own symbolic capital for further confrontations and to gain the symbolic power to define the vision of the social world, thus maintaining or changing that world.

It will be seen in chapter eight, *Contesting Public Space*, that both manipulation of the symbolic system and attempts at discrediting Muslim authority to wield symbolic power form the manner of symbolic confrontation that can be found in Kenyan Christian literature. The symbolic power that may be accrued through these contestations is sought as a form of political power that enables the Christian communities to impose their socio-political visions of Kenya.

1.2.4 Implicit Theology

As the underlying theological assumptions concerning Islam of popular Neo-Pentecostal writers will be examined, it is helpful to briefly look at the concept of implicit theology. Percy writes, "the primary materials of theology are often not so much the formal statements of ecclesial bodies, but rather their operant practices, beliefs and interpretations."[73] The implicit theology may then be deduced from these more popular expressions of "story

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[71] Ibid., 59.
[72] Bourdieu, *Langage et Pouvoir Symbolique*, 107.
[73] Martyn Percy, "Fresh Expressions: A Journey into Implicit Theology," *Implicit Religion* 12, no. 3 (2009): 314.

knowledge".[74] Cartledge examines the implicit theologies of Pentecostal groups through the use of sermons, stories, prophecies, songs, etc.[75]

Cartledge also introduces the concept of 'rescripting' in order to supplement and correct popular material "by doctrinal theology for a richer, integrated and ultimately orthodox account."[76] Rescripting aids in the interpretation of the more popular narrative through social and theological categories that are appropriate to that particular narrative. The theology found in the popular Kenyan Pentecostal literature can be considered incomplete; it lacks the sophistication and more thorough reflection of scholarly writing. However, the scholarly theological and sociological writing on African Pentecostalism by Ogbu Kalu and others are used to rescript these popular accounts, and a fuller description of the theology implicit within the popular writing is developed in chapter 9. In this way the underlying theological assumptions (or the implicit theology) of the popular writings may be deduced and subsequently analysed.

The present thesis also offers critiques of the interreligious positions of the Kenyan mainline scholars and the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal popular writers (primarily in the concluding sections of chapters eight and nine and in the conclusion chapter). However, the critiques attempt to respond to these viewpoints by recognising inconsistency between the theological and social tradition of Kenyan mainline scholars and Kenyan (Neo)Pentecostals,[77] and their respective approaches to interreligious relations with Muslims. In other words, I have attempted to critique the viewpoints that are expressed without imposing either Western or personal theological and socio-political views upon the situation. Instead questions are

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[74] Ibid.

[75] See Mark J. Cartledge, "The Symbolism of Charismatic Glossolalia," *Journal of Empirical Theology* 12, no. 1 (1999). Mark J. Cartledge, "Pentecostal Experience: An Example of Practical-Theological Rescripting," *The Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 28, no. 1 (2008).

[76] Cartledge, "Pentecostal Experience," 30.

[77] (Neo)Pentecostal is used to indicate that Neo-Pentecostal, Pentecostal and Charismatic are included.

asked concerning particular attitudes toward and perceptions of Islam and Muslims and their correlation with the respective communities' more general theological convictions concerning inter-human relationships.

1.3   Defining Christian Groups in Kenya

Two contrasting corpuses of writing are studied in this thesis. The scholarly literature is produced primarily by Kenyan Christians of the mainline Protestant churches of Kenya, though a few book chapters are written by scholars from Evangelical churches. The popular literature is produced primarily by Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals. These groups need to be defined within their local national context.

Kenyan churches may be categorised as follows:[78] the Catholic Church, mainline Protestant churches, Evangelical churches, classic Pentecostal churches, Neo-Pentecostal churches, and AICs (African Instituted Churches).[79] The vast majority of the Christian literature concerning Islam produced in English by Kenyan Christians comes from mainline Protestant churches, Evangelical churches and Neo-Pentecostal churches;[80] therefore, this section will focus upon these groups. In this thesis one article by a Kenyan Catholic lay missionary is examined,[81] and the Kenyan Catholic Church's position vis-à-vis the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution is also included in the general examination of the Kenyan Christian perspective on this debate.[82] In addition, no published literature in English concerning Islam written by Kenyans from an AIC was located, thus the views of AICs are not included in this thesis. Therefore, though it was not the original intention, this thesis

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[78] For a similar categorization of East African churches, see Spear, "Toward the History of African Christianity," 9.

[79] AIC has variously been understood to mean African Independent, Initiated, or Instituted Churches.

[80] Anderson refers to these types of churches as Newer Pentecostal Churches. Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001), 167.

[81] See chapter 6.3.3.

[82] See chapter 5.4.4.

studies principally the perspectives of Kenyan Protestant Christianity, because Kenyan

Protestants have produced the Christian writings concerning Islam.

Distinctions between mainline Protestant churches, Evangelical churches and Neo-

Pentecostal churches (NPCs) can be made historically, institutionally, politically and

theologically. While these groups differ from each other, significant overlap exists between

them in each of the above aspects. These distinctions will be discussed, beginning with

historical differences.

Mainline Protestant churches, which are referred to as "well-established" churches by

Karanja,[83] were founded as the result of European, and less-frequently American missions, in

the early years of British colonial expansion in the region. Some of these churches can claim

well over a century of history,[84] such as the most prominent among them: the Anglican

Church of Kenya (ACK), the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), and the Methodist

Church in Kenya (MCK). Prior to independence the missionaries representing these churches

often had close relationships with the colonial government. Karanja remarks that the Church

of the Province of Kenya (CPK), now the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), was the "quasi-

official" church of the colonial regime.[85] Early Kenyan political leaders, both before and after

independence, frequently had connections to these churches, also.[86]

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[83] John Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya," in *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, ed. T.O. Ranger, Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in the Global South (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[84] See for example the websites of the Anglican Church of Kenya, the Methodist Church in Kenya and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. See also John Baur, *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1990).

[85] Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya," 72.

[86] See some histories of the church in Kenya. William B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa, 1840-1974* (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press, 1977). Robert W. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875-1935* (London: Heinemann, 1978). John Karanja, *Founding an African faith : Kikuyu Anglican Christianity, 1900-1945* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1999). R. Macpherson, *The Presbyterian Church in Kenya; an account of the origins and growth of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa* (Nairobi,: Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 1970); Isaiah Wahome Muita, *Hewn from the Quarry: The Presbyterian Church of East*

It may be helpful to contrast the origin of classical Pentecostal churches in Kenya with that of Neo-Pentecostal Churches (NPCs). Classic Pentecostalism began in Kenya as early as 1912 with the arrival of Finnish missionary, Emil Danielsson.[87] Classic Pentecostal churches may be defined by their founding by Pentecostal missionaries from mostly North America and Scandinavia.[88] Some prominent classic Pentecostal denominations in Kenya are: Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa (PEFA), Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Kenya. In contrast, Neo-Pentecostal Churches "have been instituted by Africans for Africans"[89] leading Anderson to include NPCs with older AICs as AICs themselves.[90] NPCs in Kenya have also been linked with the East African Revival (EAR),[91] further indicating their indigenous roots. The EAR had its origins in the early 20th century in the Anglican churches of East Africa, and from there it has had a great influence within many different churches.[92] The point to be made is not that NPCs have a unique claim to the EAR, but that early Neo-Pentecostal leaders and churches grew out of the revival movement.

Africa, 100 years and Beyond (Nairobi: Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 2003); Zablon Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1982).

[87] *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondeervan, 2003), s.v. "Kenya."

[88] Sung Kyu Park, "Charismatic Spirituality: Could It Be a Viable Option for Contextual Spirituality in Kenya," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 14, no. 1 (2010): 4. Line Marie Onsrud, "East African Pentecostal Churches: A Study of 'Self-Historisation' as Contextualisation," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 87, no. 3 (1999): 422.

[89] Anderson, *African Reformation*.

[90] Ibid., 165, 168, 171.

[91] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 96. George K. Mambo, "The Revival Fellowship (Brethren) in Kenya," in *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973*, ed. David Barrett et al., (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), 117. Julius Mutugi Gathogo, "The Challenge of Money and Wealth in Some East African Pentecostal Churches," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 37, no. 2 (2011): 138.

[92] Richard K. MacMaster and Donald R. Jacobs, *A Gentle Wind of God: The Influence of the East Africa Revival* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2006), 25-37.

The first NPC to be founded in Kenya was Deliverance Church by Joe Kayo in 1970.[93] Other early Neo-Pentecostal leaders were Henry Mulandi, Margaret Wangari[94] and Arthur Kitonga.[95] Ministries frequently grew out of Christian student movements and NPCs attracted (and continue to attract) urban youth in Kenya. While NPCs have strong indigenous roots, their beginning can also be linked to the preaching and healing campaigns of American Pentecostal evangelists, such as T.L. Osborn and Oral Roberts.[96] Some scholars emphasize the Western influences at the beginning and in continuing contacts between NPCs and American Neo-Pentecostals, claiming that Kenyan NPCs are in reality Western imposed forms of Christianity.[97] However, Anderson argues that the relationship between NPCs and American preachers is "eclectic",[98] and Parsitau and Mwaura in a study of the Deliverance Church find that it is a "local church founded locally by local people as a result of local initiatives."[99] While Western influences should be recognised, it must also be recognised that NPCs, unlike classic Pentecostal churches, mainline churches and Evangelical churches, are African initiated. These churches, having grown considerably during the 1980s and 1990s,[100] now make up a significant part of the Kenyan Christian scene.

Evangelical churches in Kenya may be easily located historically, now that mainline churches, classic Pentecostal churches and NPCs have been looked at. Kenyan Evangelical

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[93] Gathogo, "Some East African Pentecostal Churches," 142. Damaris Parsitau and Philomena Njeri Mwaura, "God in the City: Pentecostalism as an Urban Phenomenon in Kenya," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, no. 2 (2010): 105.

[94] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 12.

[95] Gathogo, "Some East African Pentecostal Churches," 144.

[96] Parsitau and Mwaura, "God in the City," 105. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 96.

[97] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa," in *Charismatic Renewal in Africa: A Challenge to African Christianity*, ed. Mika Vähäkangas and Andrew A. Kyomo, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003). Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, see especially 136-139.

[98] Anderson, *African Reformation*, 183.

[99] Parsitau and Mwaura, "God in the City," 106.

[100] Yvan Droz, "The Local Roots of the Kenyan Pentecostal Revival: Conversion, Healing, Social and Political Mobility," *Les Cahiers de l'IFRA*, no. 20 (2001). www.ifra-nairobi.net/cahiers/anthropolog-20/a20droz.pdf (accessed July 4, 2007). Parsitau and Mwaura, "God in the City," 98.

churches generally have been founded by American missionaries and they have rejected

Pentecostal manifestations of the spirit.[101] Some of the more prominent Evangelical churches

in Kenya are the Africa Inland Church, Baptist Churches of Kenya and the Church of God in

Kenya.

Currently, there are four separate Protestant ecumenical associations in Kenya that

bring different church denominations together. The Kenya National Congress of Pentecostal

Churches and Ministries (KNCPCM), which only began in May of 2013,[102] did not exist

during the period under examination. This organisation, as the name implies, attempts to unite

Pentecostals (primarily small NPCs) under a common umbrella for mutual accountability and

empowerment.[103] The Federation of Evangelical and Indigenous Christian Churches of Kenya

(FEICCK) was founded in 2005.[104] The FEICCK claims to represent 78 churches and

denominations in Kenya,[105] though a list of member churches could not be found. It can be

deduced from the list of board members and trustees that the FEICCK aims primarily to unite

NPCs for mutual accountability and to share resources.[106] Neither association appears to have

yet established themselves as a major presence in Kenya's socio-religious-political scene.

The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) and the Evangelical Alliance of

Kenya (EAK) are the most important Protestant ecumenical associations in Kenya. The

NCCK grew out of the Kikuyu Conference of 1913, which established cooperation between

missionary societies in colonial Kenya.[107] The NCCK currently unites 27 member churches

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[101] Amy Stambach, "Spiritual Warfare 101: Preparing the Student for Christian Battle," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39, no. 2 (2009): 138.

[102] http://kenyacongressofchurches.org/.

[103] http://kenyacongressofchurches.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id= 6&Itemid=7.

[104] http://www.feicck.com/News___Events.html.

[105] Ibid.

[106] http://www.feicck.com/fiecck_About_Us.html.

[107] Julius Mutugi Gathogo, "The Early Attempts at Ecumenical Co-operation in East Africa: The Case of the Kikuyu Conference of 1913 " *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 36, no. 2 (2010).

and 17 Christian organisations in Kenya.[108] Most of the member churches would be considered mainline churches or AICs, though a few classic Pentecostal churches and NPCs are also members. The NCCK relates with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). The NCCK focuses its activities on the socio-economic improvement of communities in Kenya.[109]

The EAK was founded in 1975 as the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK)[110] to bring together evangelical churches (i.e. those not wishing to be associated with the larger ecumenical movement). The EAK promotes both evangelism and economic development,[111] and is part of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). The organisation claims to represent 52 denominations in Kenya,[112] though only 23 are listed on its website.[113] Most of the listed members are large, established NPCs and a few large evangelical denominations, such as Africa Inland Church.

The above demonstrates that mainline churches, Evangelical churches and NPCs are differentiated institutionally. The mainline churches are members of the NCCK and associate themselves with the world ecumenical movement. Most of the large Evangelical churches and the large NPCs are members of the EAK and associate with the conservative world Evangelical movement. Small, less-established NPCs have tended to find a home in the FEICCK. There are also many churches, especially small NPCs, that have not joined any ecumenical-type association of churches.

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[108] http://www.ncck.org/newsite2/index.php/about-ncck/who-we-are.
[109] http://www.ncck.org/newsite2/index.php/our-work/council-s-delivery-focus.
[110] http://www.eakenya.org/aboutus.
[111] http://www.eakenya.org/aboutus/roleofeak.
[112] http://www.eakenya.org/aboutus.
[113] http://www.eakenya.org/members/denominations.

Political differences between churches came to a head in the late 1980s over the use of the queue-voting system by the Moi government.[114] The CPK (now the ACK), led by a few bishops, spoke out against the use of this system of voting instituted by the Kenyan government. They were soon joined by leaders from the PCEA and the Roman Catholic Church.[115] Their actions eventually led towards a more general support of multi-party democracy and opposition to the Moi government.[116] The NCCK took up the task of coordinating the advocacy for multi-party democracy among its churches.[117] President Moi was able to induce some churches, such as the African Inland Church and the Redeemed Gospel Church, to support his government.[118] It was at this time that the Africa Inland Church left the NCCK and joined the EFK (now the AEK).[119] Many other churches associated with the EFK also supported Moi.[120] In this way, mainline Protestant churches in Kenya came to be seen as willing to criticise unjust government practices, and Evangelical churches and NPCs came to be viewed as acquiescent to the government.

Karanja shows, however, that though this distinction is valid, it has never been absolute. Several CPK leaders continued to support Moi and his government.[121] Bishop Lawi Imathiu of the mainline Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) long supported Moi and a one-party state, possibly because Moi had donated land for a Methodist university in Meru.

[114] Galia Sabar-Friedman, "Church and State in Kenya, 1986-1992: The Churches' Involvement in the 'Game of Change'," *African Affairs* 96, no. 382 (1997): 32.
[115] Ibid.: 31. Those most prominently involved were CPK bishops Henry Okullu, Alexander Muge, and David Gitari, PCEA leader, Timothy Njoya and Roman Catholic Bishop Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki.
[116] See for example: Galia Sabar-Friedman, "'Politics' and 'Power' in the Kenyan Public Discourse and Recent Events: The Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK)," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 29, no. 3 (1995). Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya."
[117] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 35.
[118] Joseph Kariuki, "Internal wrangles, state influence and schisms: competing visions and struggles in the Africa Independent Pentecostal Church in Kenya," *IFRA: Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est* 25 (2004): 14.
[119] Ben Knighton, "Introduction: Strange but Inevitable Bedfellows," in *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest*, ed. Ben Knighton, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 49; footnote 46.
[120] Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya," 82.
[121] Ibid., 73.

However, when he was succeeded as head of the church by Zablon Nthamburi, the MCK then advocated for a multi-party system.[122] There were also examples of NPCs who supported multi-partyism. Although Arthur Kitonga, head of the Redeemed Gospel Church (RGC), was one of Moi's biggest supporters, Alan Nyaga, a RGC bishop, won a parliamentary seat as an opposition candidate in 1992.[123]

Nevertheless, between especially the NCCK and EAK it can be said that an approach to politics plays an important part in their differences.[124] The NCCK tends towards a critique of government based on the prophetic traditions of the Bible,[125] while the EAK tends to view government as God-ordained according to Romans 13.[126] Having found themselves on opposing political sides during the tense years leading towards multiparty democracy, these groups remain somewhat suspicious of each other politically. Since 2002, when opposition candidate, Mwai Kibaki, became president of Kenya, all churches (including mainline Protestant and NPCs) have come to be seen less as prophetic, and more as ethnically compromised.[127]

The three Protestant groups (mainline, Evangelical and Neo-Pentecostal) hold to similar theological positions in relation to traditional Christian theological orthodoxy, such as the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, the Resurrection, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, miracles in the Bible, etc. In fact, Karanja refers to all three groups as Evangelical because of

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[122] Ibid., 83-84.

[123] Ibid., 82.

[124] John Lonsdale, "Compromised Critics: Religion in Kenya's Politics," in *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest*, ed. Ben Knighton, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 63.

[125] Damaris Parsitau, "From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice: Christian Churches in Kenya and the Dynamics of Voice and Voiclessness in a Multi-Religious Space," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 38, no. Supplement (2012). http://hdl.handle.net/10500/6620 (accessed January 30, 2014).

[126] See Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya".

[127] Parsitau, "From Prophetic Voices to Lack of Voice."

the conservative theology that they share.[128] However, there are significant theological

differences between each group, though these must be understood within the local African

context.[129]

These theological differences centre primarily upon various approaches to the

relationship between Christian faith and African culture and religion. One of the better

expositions of this theological phenomenon is offered by Kwame Bediako in *Theology and*

Identity, in which he compares two mainline Protestant theologians, a Catholic theologian and

an Evangelical theologian (all 20th century Africans) with second century Christian writers on

the question of Christian theological identity in a new culture.[130] Unfortunately, as Bediako

examines the writings of African scholars, the voices of AICs and NPCs (both of whom have

produced few scholars) are missing. As Bediako describes the writings of the mainline

Protestant African scholars, Bolaji Idowu and John Mbiti, they find degrees of continuity and

discontinuity between Christianity and African Religion.[131] On the other hand, the African

Evangelical scholar, Byang Kato, claims a nearly absolute discontinuity between African

Religion and Christian faith.[132] These theological approaches to Christian identity in an

African religious and cultural context continue to be true for both the scholars of the mainline

churches in Kenya[133] and Kenyan Evangelicals.[134]

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[128] Karanja, "Evangelical Attitudes toward Democracy in Kenya," 67.

[129] Carpenter writes that Western theological categories don't always apply in Africa; that new categories must be developed. See Joel A. Carpenter, "Preface," in *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World*, ed. Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), viii.

[130] Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modem Africa.*, Regnum Studies in Mission (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999).

[131] Ibid., Idowu, pp. 267-302; Mbiti, pp. 303-346. Idowu claims that there is primarily continuity, while Mbiti attempts to balance the two.

[132] Ibid., 386-425.

[133] See for example: J. N. K. Mugambi, "Challenges to African Scholars in Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Text and Context in New Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi and Johannes A. Smit, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004).

While much mainline Protestant (and Roman Catholic) theological discussion surrounds the issue of continuity and discontinuity between Christianity and African Religion,[135] there is sharp disagreement over the actual theological position of NPCs on this matter. Scholars, such as Mugambi,[136] Gifford,[137] and Lonsdale[138] understand NPCs to be primarily American driven and opposed to "African cultural norms and values."[139] However, other scholars[140] argue that Neo-Pentecostalism is growing because of its connection with "pre-colonial religious practices."[141] It would seem that NPCs are also involved in a theological debate (albeit less academic and sophisticated than mainline churches) over the continuity and discontinuity between African Religion and culture and Christian faith. As Gifford suggests, the element missing from the mainline discussion, the "enchanted worldview",[142] is central to the NPCs' theological debate. Rather than mainline churches and NPCs having differences concerning whether there is continuity between African Religion and culture and Christianity, they differ on which aspects of African Religion and culture are essential for the debate.

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[134] See for example: *The Holy Spirit and the Church in Africa Today*, ([Machakos, Kenya]: Scott Theological College, n.d.). This book was prepared by the Theological Advisory Group at Scott Theological College of the African Inland Church. Most members of this group were Kenyans, though at least one American missionary was a member.

[135] There are naturally disagreements among mainline Kenyan scholars concerning the degrees of continuity and discontinuity and the manner in which these are understood, yet it is generally accepted that there is some continuity between African Religion and culture and Christianity.

[136] Mugambi, "Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa."

[137] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*.

[138] John Lonsdale, "Religion and Politics in Kenya," in *Lecture, OCMS, 31 viii* (Cambridge: Trinity College, 2004).

[139] Mugambi, "Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa," 122.

[140] See for example: Anderson, *African Reformation*. Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*. Gathogo, "Some East African Pentecostal Churches." Philomena Njeri Mwaura, "Gender and Power in African Christianity: African Instituted Churches and Pentecostal Churches," in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu Kalu, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007). Stambach, "Spiritual Warfare 101."

[141] Droz, "Kenyan Pentecostal Revival."

[142] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 86.

To summarise, the differences between mainline Protestant churches, Evangelical churches and NPCs have been seen to be historical, institutional, political and theological. Mainline Protestant churches have a longer history and historical connection primarily to British mission societies and churches, whereas Evangelicals and NPCs generally have a shorter history in Kenya[143] and varying degrees of connection with American churches. Mainline Protestant churches are members of the NCCK (and thus connected with the WCC), whereas Evangelical churches and NPCs are members of the EAK, the FEICCK or non-affiliated with ecumenical associations. Mainline Protestant churches and Evangelicals and NPCs found themselves opposing each other politically during the movement towards multiparty democracy as the NCCK promoted multiparty democracy and many Evangelicals and NPCs supported President Moi and the one-party system. Theologically, both mainline Protestant churches and NPCs are involved in debate over the continuity and discontinuity between African Religion and culture and Christianity, though each group approaches the issues very differently. Evangelicals have tended to side more strongly on the position that there is a lack of continuity between Christianity and African Religion and culture.

It must be noted that among ordinary Christians the situation is much messier. Most mainline Protestant and Evangelical churches have been affected by Charismatic[144] movements. A Pew Forum survey from 2012 found that 23% of Christians claim to be Charismatics.[145] There is also the common phenomenon of a person being an Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, etc. in the village, and a Pentecostal (usually Neo-Pentecostal) in

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[143] The Africa Inland Church would be an exception as its history in Kenya began in the late 19th century.

[144] Charismatic is the term normally used to refer to those who are influenced by Pentecostal-type spirituality and theology, but choose to remain within non-Pentecostal churches. There are also Charismatics in the Kenyan Catholic Church. See Allan H. Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies and Defintions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan H. Anderson et al., The Anthropology of Christianity (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2010), 16-20.

[145] *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*, 4.

Nairobi.[146] Many members of mainline Protestant and Evangelical churches, therefore, share similar theological and political understandings with classic Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals. Of course, mutual influence occurs within these various churches, so that the cultural-theological project of the mainline Protestant scholars influences Charismatics and evangelicals within mainline Protestant churches. For example, an evangelical Charismatic Presbyterian may participate in a church-sponsored initiation rite that is patterned on Kikuyu tradition, including circumcision, in a program called ROPES (rite of passage experiences).[147]

In this study the term, Pentecostal, will be used to refer in general to all individuals, groups, and movements that share a Pentecostal spirituality (e.g. emphasis upon experiencing the Holy Spirit, works of the Spirit, and spiritual gifts).[148] The term Pentecostal, or Pentecostalism, will also be used in reference to their theological outlook. The term, Neo-Pentecostal, will be used more narrowly to describe independent African-initiated churches and individuals associated with them. The term, mainline Protestant, will often be shortened to mainline, and Evangelical will also be employed to designate individuals and churches as described above in this section. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, Catholic views are underrepresented so that the thesis concerns principally the views of Kenyan Protestant Christianity.

1.4   The Texts

A brief word concerning the texts that are analysed in this thesis is in order. All of the texts have been written by Kenyans who profess Christian faith. Both the scholarly texts and the popular literature were written for the benefit of the church. While scholarly texts have

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[146] I have heard this from many people. The mission-founded churches are more prevalent in rural areas, but when someone moves to Nairobi they attend a Neo-Pentecostal Church.

[147] http://pceakfarm.wordpress.com/2011/11/09/r-o-p-e-s-2011/. While teaching in Kenya, Charismatic Presbyterian students spoke favourably of this program; and eventually swayed students from Neo-Pentecostal students of its benefits, though no NPCs have yet participated that I am aware of.

[148] See Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies and Definitions."

been prepared in the pursuit of knowledge, they have also been written with an eye on the Kenyan church and its faith. The purposes of the writing vary, but include furthering the understanding of Islam (and Christian relations with Muslims), developing theology, enhancing missiology, teaching, admonishing, encouraging, etc.

Most of the scholarly texts were originally presented at seminars, conferences, colloquiums, symposiums, etc., and later included as chapters in books (or articles in journals) consisting of the proceedings. The texts were, therefore, prepared with a very particular audience in mind, usually Christians and academics. A few texts were first presented in the context of interreligious dialogue, thus before an audience of both Christians and Muslims. Though a few texts were initially written for publication (i.e. not to be presented at a meeting), they seem to have been produced with primarily a Christian readership in mind. These texts are written in a scholarly style (i.e. footnotes, bibliography, dispassionate, objective, etc.).

Texts of popular Christian literature were found primarily in popular Christian magazines that were purchased in Nairobi, though a few popular-style books have been included in the analysis, also. Testimony is one of the more common literary genres found in the popular Christian literature. Testimonies are written to entertain, encourage and inspire readers. They most frequently take the form of conversion narratives, in which the principle protagonist must experience difficulties in life that are surmounted through conversion to faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Another popular genre is the sermon, which is usually condensed for the purpose of publication in the magazine. The sermon may be either prophetic (i.e. offering warnings and/or blessings for the individual's or the nation's future) or didactic. An interview with a prominent Christian leader is another common genre that offers the magazine (and the Christian leader) an opportunity to comment on current

national issues. These are the principal genres – found in popular Christian magazines – that address topics dealing with Islam.

All of the texts studied were published between 1998 (the bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi by *al-Qaeda*) and 2010 (the ratification of the new constitution, which includes *kadhi* courts). These are significant dates in Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya; before the 1998 bombing the issue of Christian-Muslim relations was barely a subject of interest for Kenyan Christians. The ratification of the new constitution, which maintained the status quo concerning *kadhi* courts, also marks the end of a highly contested chapter of interreligious relations in Kenya.

1.5   Literature Review

A variety of approaches have been taken in researching Christian-Muslim relations in Africa. Some of the more common approaches have been: examinations of incidents between Christians and Muslims within a particular African nation, theoretical explanations for why conflict and tensions exist between African Christians and Muslims, discussions of *shari'a* and its implications for African Muslims and Christians, histories of Christian missions among African Muslims, and analysis of the influence of African Religion on interreligious relations between Christians and Muslims. These approaches intersect with each other at certain points so that researchers frequently use multiple approaches. The present thesis, while incorporating a few of these approaches, primarily focuses upon the last one – an analysis of the influence of African Religion on interreligious relations between Christians and Muslims.

The essays in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*,[149] however, "concentrate on the notion of encounter"[150]… locating "Muslims and Christians within a common analytical

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[149] Benjamin F. Soares, ed. *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. John Hunwick, Rüdiger Seesemann, and Knut Vikør, Islam in Africa (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

frame,"[151] which Soares claims has not been a common approach. Ficquet, for example, looks

at how Muslims and Christians are socially separated in Ethiopia by practices concerning

meat (i.e. how the animal is slaughtered).[152] Shankar explores the way in which boundaries

between Christian and Muslim were constructed by colonialism through the story of an early

Christian convert from Islam, who easily interacted across religious boundaries that British

authorities deemed rigid and impassable.[153] Chesworth compares competing strategies of

proselytism in East Africa using the analytical framework of fundamentalism.[154] Other essays

discuss different aspects of history and *shari'a* in Muslim-Christian encounter in Nigeria,[155]

examine increasing exclusivism among South African Muslims and Christians,[156] refute the

'clash of civilisations' paradigm for understanding interactions between Muslims and

Christians in Africa,[157] and study how Protestant missions in Egypt and Sudan fuelled

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[150] Benjamin F. Soares, "Introduction: Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 3.

[151] Ibid., 13.

[152] Éloi Ficquet, "Flesh Soaked in Faith: Meat as a Marker of the Boundary between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[153] Shobana Shanker, "A Fifty-Year Muslim Conversion to Christianity: Religious Ambiguities and Colonial Boundaries in Northern Nigeria, c. 1906-1963," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[154] John A. Chesworth, "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa: Christian Evangelism and Muslim Da'wa," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[155] Franz Kogelmann, "The "Sharia Factor" in Nigeria's 2003 Election," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Philip Ostien, "An Opportunity Missed by Nigeria's Christians: The 1976-78 Sharia Debate Revisited," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Patrick J. Ryan, "In My End is My Beginning: Muslim and Christian Traditions at Cross-Purposes in Contemporary Nigeria," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[156] A. Rashied Omar, "From Resistance to Reconstruction: Challenges Facing Muslim-Christian Relations in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[157] Voll, "African Muslims and Christians in World History."

nationalist and Islamic movements.[158] These essays contribute to the historical and social

understanding of the encounter between Muslims and Christians in Africa. The current thesis,

however, takes a different approach by analysing the perceptions that Kenyan Christians have

of Islam in order to better understand the local religious and theological context as it

influences interreligious relations.

Much of the writing resembles what might be called a country report, in which

interactions and events involving Muslims and Christians within a specific country are

examined. Magesa sees increased intolerance between Muslims and Christians in Tanzania

due to outside influences.[159] Rukyaa concurs with Magesa and offers improved religious

instruction as a possible solution.[160] Some Muslim voices are also heard: Mwakimako

catalogues events as Christian bigotry against Muslims in Kenya,[161] Ahmed describes

Christian injustice towards Muslims in Ethiopia,[162] and Bezabeh writes of historical Christian

discrimination against Muslims in Ethiopia.[163] However, Haron found that South African

Christians have moved to a more pluralist and accepting perspective concerning Islam.[164]

Omenyinma, in contrast to the Muslim viewpoints above, claims that Islam is a "threat to the

[158] Heather J. Sharkey, "Missionary Legacies: Muslim-Christian Encounters in Egypt and Sudan during the Colonial and Postcolonial Periods," in *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares, (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

[159] Laurenti Magesa, "Contemporary Catholic Perspectives on Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Tanzania," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[160] Julian Joseph Rukyaa, "Muslim Christian Relations in Tanzania with Particular Focus on the Relationship between Religious Instruction and Predjudice," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[161] Hassan A. Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya: A Catalogue of Events and Meanings," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[162] Hussein Ahmed, "Coexistence and/or Confrontation?: Towards a Reappraisal of Christian-Muslims Encounter in Contemporary Ethiopia," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36, no. 1 (2006).

[163] Samson A. Bezabeh, "Muslim Hadramis in 'Christian Ethiopia': Reflections on Boundary Making Processes," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no. 3 (2010).

[164] Muhammad Haron, "Christian-Muslim Relations in South Africa (circa 1986-2004): Charting a Pluralist Path," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

Christian identity of the Igbo people,"[165] finding resurgent Islam to be at fault for interreligious violence in Nigeria. Kenya is added to the discussion as Aguilar,[166] Mbagara,[167] and Nnyombi[168] catalogue incidents between Muslims and Christians – often the same incidents are repeated in each essay.

Frederiks cautions that when talking of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa, one must be cognizant of which Christians and Muslims one is talking about, as attitudes vary according to different groups.[169] Ojo[170] and Kalu[171] add to this discussion by focusing on Pentecostal views of Islam in Nigeria, described as being primarily negative. These various reports contribute to the writing and understanding of the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa; however, the nature of this format lends itself to an emphasis on conflict, as situations of conflict provide more interest for readers and more material for writers. Bias also enters into the reporting, writers generally favouring their own religion.[172] To avoid this type of emphasis on conflict, the current thesis analyses the writings of Kenyan Christians on Islam, rather than focusing on specific incidents. The notion of conflict also emerges in these various Christian writings, thus this literary method does not conceal the presence of conflict in the nation.

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[165] Ogedi Prince-Eche Omenyinma, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Nigerian Context" (Doctoral Thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000).

[166] Mario I. Aguilar, "Dialogue with Islam: An African Perspective," *African Ecclesial Review* 38, no. 6 (1996).

[167] Lawrence P.K. Mbagara, "Kenya," in *Islam in Africa: Perpsectives for Christian-Muslim Relations*, ed. H.S. Wilson, (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1995).

[168] Richard Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," *Islamochristiana* 23, no. (1997).

[169] Martha T. Frederiks, "Let Us Understand Our Differences: Current Trends in Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Transformation* 27, no. 4 (2010).

[170] Matthews A. Ojo, "Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[171] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, Ch 12 "Child of the Bondwoman".

[172] Jon Abbink, "Religion in Public Spaces: Emerging Muslim-Christian Polemics in Ethiopia," *African Affairs* 110, no. 439 (2011): 17.

Closely related to the country report format – and sometimes in combination with it – are examinations of why interreligious conflict exists. Here authorial bias readily becomes apparent. Most commonly conflict is blamed on 'fundamentalists' within certain Christian and Muslim groups.[173] Mbillah and Chesworth expand on this by understanding fundamentalism to be an influence external to Africa.[174] Contrary to the fundamentalist account, Turaki looks to the colonial era for an explanation, claiming that the roots of current interreligious conflict in Nigeria are due to colonial policies that favoured Islam.[175] In contrast, Bunza argues that the conflict in Nigeria is due to colonial favouritism towards Christians.[176] Some writers find non-religious reasons for the conflicts and tensions. Kukah sees economic inequality, the failure of African states, and manipulation by political leaders as primary causes for interreligious strife.[177] Similarly, Yusuf understands interreligious conflict to be connected to issues concerning scarce resources, power and identity.[178]

Two essays offer analysis – explaining the reasons behind conflicts – by critiquing approaches to dialogue in Africa. Nkulu-N'Sengha looks at why true interreligious dialogue is absent from Africa, concluding that exclusivist theologies are prevalent.[179] Also discussing

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[173] Ibid. Aguilar, "Dialogue with Islam."; Chesworth, "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa."; Yushau Sodiq, "Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?," *The Muslim World* 99, no. 4 (2009).

[174] Chesworth, "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa," 159; Johnson Mbillah, "Interfaith Relations in Africa," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth, PROCMURA Occasional Papers (Nairobi: PROCMURA, 2004).

[175] Yusufu Turaki, "The Social-Political Context of Christian-Muslim Encounter in Northern Nigeria," *Studies in World Christianity* 3, no. 2 (1997).

[176] Mukhtar Umar Bunza, *Christian Missions among Muslims: Sokoto Province, Nigeria 1935-1990* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 2007).

[177] Matthew Hassan Kukah, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa: Problems and Prospects," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[178] Hajiya Bilkisu Yusuf, "Managing Muslim-Christian Conflicts in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Kaduna State," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[179] Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha, "Interreligious Dialogue in Black Africa among Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 33, no. 4 (1996).

dialogue, but with more fruitful analysis and suggestions, Yahya[180] finds that interreligious

dialogues have frequently consisted of papers similar to the country report format above, in

which atrocities committed by the other are enumerated. He proposes instead a practical

dialogue of conciliation with working together as the goal. While theoretical explorations of

reasons for conflict and improved dialogue are welcomed, it seems that authorial bias often

plays an important a role in determining causes. The reasons found in the essays are

frequently generic, simplistic, and essentialist. For example, religious groups with exclusivist

theological positions that seem to demonstrate negative attitudes towards the religious other

are said to have these positions and act in this way, because they are fundamentalists. And

they are known to be fundamentalists because of their theological position and negative

attitudes. This is not to deny that fundamentalism can provide an appropriate analytical

framework;[181] it can, however, become an easy answer to a more complex situation. By taking

the popular literature (i.e. Pentecostalism, which is one of the fundamentalist groups)

seriously, this thesis attempts to examine more deeply the reasons behind the perspectives of

these Kenyan Christians, rather than relegating complexity to a simple (essentialised?)

explanation.

      The implementation of *shari'a* in northern Nigeria is often discussed by Christians as

a problem that will lead to Muslim domination.[182] Oyelade provides more depth by looking at

the history of *shari'a* in northern Nigeria and being more understanding of the Muslim

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[180] Muslih T. Yahya, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa South of the Sahara: The Interface between Research and Dialogue. A Muslim View," in *The Interface between Research and Dialogue: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, ed. Klaus Hock, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004).

[181] See for example. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000). Martin Riesebrodt, *Pious Passion: The Emergence of Modern Fundamentalism in the United States and Iran*, trans., Don Reneau (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993).

[182] See Josiah Idowu-Fearon, "The Shari'a Debate in the Northern States of Nigeria and its Implications for West Africa Sub-Region," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth, PROCMURA Occasional Papers (Nairobi: PROCMURA, 2004).

position,[183] while introducing the concept of *dhimmi* status for Christians.[184] Chesworth, at the

same conference, more fully elaborates on the historical concept of *dhimmi* with a sense of

urgency for the situation in Nigeria.[185] Jarra suggests that introducing *shari'a* in Africa

destroys previously harmonious relations.[186] Speaking of Sudan, Mahmoud says the

introduction of *shari'a* has led to Christians being represented as the "other par

excellence".[187] Ludwig adds to the discussion by demonstrating how the *shari'a* debate is

shaping religious identities in northern Nigeria.[188] The Christian contributions to this

discussion tend towards a certain fearfulness of Islam, not recognising the symbolic

importance of *shari'a* for Muslims in Nigeria. In the present thesis the Christian contestation

over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the Kenyan constitution is discussed. By carefully

examining the history of *kadhi* courts in Kenya, the constitutional process, and the history of

the *kadhi* courts debate before looking at the debate itself, a clearer picture should emerge of

the issues involved and the Christian responses.

Several studies have looked at the history of Christian missions among Muslims in

Africa. Dubois and Soumille tell the story of mission-colonial relations and unsuccessful

missions among Muslims – from the perspective of conversions – in Djibouti.[189] Frederiks

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[183] Emmanuel O. Oyelade, "The Shari'a and National Unity in Nigeria," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth, PROCMURA Occasional Papers (Nairobi: PROCMURA, 2004).

[184] Ibid., 40-41.

[185] John A. Chesworth, "Dhimmi Status in Islam from a Historical Perspective with Implications for Present Day Africa," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth, PROCMURA Occasional Papers (Nairobi: PROCMURA, 2004).

[186] Catherine Jarra, "Dialogue for Peaceful Co-Existence between Christians and Muslims: The Sociological Dimension," in *From the Cross to the Crescent*, ed. Johnson Mbillah and John Chesworth, PROCMURA Occasional Papers (Nairobi: PROCMURA, 2004).

[187] Mohamed Mahmoud, "When Shariᶜa Governs: Impasse of Relgious Relations in Sudan," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007): 276.

[188] Frieder Ludwig, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Northern Nigeria since the Introduction of Shari'ah in 1999," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76, no. 3 (2008).

[189] Colette Dubois and Pierre Soumille, *Des Chrétiens à Djibouti en Terre d'Islam: XIXᵉ-XXᵉ siècles* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2004).

adds to this story, looking at Gambia, where lack of success among Muslims led missionaries to engage with the freed slave population.[190] Sanders also shows that the CMS (Church Missionary Society) in Kenya preferred to work among freed slaves, rather than among Muslims.[191] Haron, examining the mission of the NGK (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, or the Dutch Reformed Church) amongst Cape Muslims, also finds their attempts to be unsuccessful over centuries.[192] Bunza looks at missions in northern Nigeria by SIM (formerly Sudan Interior Mission) from a Muslim perspective, contrasting the tolerance of Muslims with the intolerance of Christian missionaries.[193] Shankar takes the discussion into greater depth in her examination of conversion among Muslim children (usually in leprosariums) by SIM in northern Nigeria and of the way in which these few conversions have established the relational frames that influence current Christian-Muslim tensions in the region.[194] Cooper looks at SIM and a Pentecostal church in Niger in a rich study that examines religious and cultural similarities and differences among Hausa-speaking Muslims and Christians. [195] In a different vein Chesworth analyses Swahili-language tracts used by Muslims and Christians in East Africa, finding that polemics is the primary method used.[196] Dovlo and Asante also examine current African missions among Muslims, showing that a few Christian ministries in

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[190] Martha T. Frederiks, "Methodists and Muslims in the Gambia," *Islam and Christian - Muslim Relations* 20, no. 1 (2009).

[191] Ethan R. Sanders, "Close Encounters of the Muslim Kind: The CMS and Islam on the East African Coast 1874-1911," *Transformation* 27, no. 4 (2010).

[192] Muhammad Haron, "Three Centuries of NGK Mission amongst Cape Muslims: 1652-1952," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 19, no. 1 (1999).

[193] Bunza, *Christian Missions among Muslims*.

[194] Shobana Shanker, "Children of the Mission in Kano Emirate: Conflicts of Conversion in Colonial Northern Nigeria, c. 1899-1953" (Doctoral Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 2003).

[195] Barbara M. Cooper, *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006).

[196] John A. Chesworth, "The Use of Scripture in Swahili Tracts by Muslims and Christians in East Africa" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2007).

Ghana are actively pursuing Christian missions among Muslims with some success.[197] In one chapter the current thesis has examined the attitudes towards and perceptions of Islam and Muslims that emerge from the writings of early missionaries to Kenya. Christian mission is not, however, a primary focus of this thesis.

Several writers discuss the influence of the African cultural and/or religious heritage on Christian-Muslim relations. Typical of this approach, Mbillah claims that African religiosity is plural and tolerant, and the introduction of Islam and Christianity has introduced religious intolerance.[198] Falola expresses similarly that African indigenous religions are tolerant, but now Christianity and Islam have brought increasing intolerance.[199] Sanneh changes the discussion by associating tolerance with African traditions of hospitality. He then proposes that African Christianity and African Islam are potentially more tolerant than non-African expressions of these religions.[200] Ammah confirms Sanneh's viewpoint from a Muslim perspective.[201] Akinade takes a deeper look into the history of a particular practice – the use of Yoruba clergy for interreligious disputations by the CMS in Nigeria – that led to more conciliatory discussions and openness towards the other than had previously occurred when White missionaries led the disputations.[202]

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[197] Elom Dovlo and Ofusu Alfred Asante, "Reinterpreting the Straight Path: Ghanaian Muslim Converts in Mission to Muslims," *Exchange* 32, no. 3 (2003).

[198] Mbillah, "Interfaith Relations in Africa." Johnson Mbillah, "Inter-Faith Relations and the Quest for Peace in Africa," in *The Interface between Research and Dialogue: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, ed. Klaus Hock, (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004).

[199] Toyin Falola, "The Spread of Islam and Christianity and their Impact on Religious Pluralism in Africa," *Dialogue & Alliance* 2, no. 4 (1988-1989).

[200] Lamin Sanneh, *Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa.*, ed. Paul F. Knitter, Faith Meets Faith (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

[201] Rabiatu Ammah, "Christian–Muslim Relations in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[202] Akintunde E. Akinade, "The Enduring Legacy: Christian-Muslim Encounter in Yorubaland," *Studies in World Christianity* 3, no. 2 (1997).

The studies of Sarbah and Wijsen will be looked at more closely, as their approaches more closely approximate that of the current thesis. Sarbah examines Christian-Muslim relations among the Akan people of Ghana with an understanding that their traditional values aid them in having more harmonious interactions.[203] He specifically outlines which traditional values are involved and how these values have produced a more harmonious and pluralist outlook. He uses the methodologies of the social sciences: questionnaires, interviews and participant observation with the belief that his cultural insider status permits him to have an "unbiased interpretation".[204] Despite his claims that Akan traditional religio-cultural values have produced harmonious relationships within religious diversity, the text contains many hints (e.g. prescriptive language, references to groups engaged in polemics, etc.) that interreligious relations may not be as harmonious as claimed.[205] In contrast, the present thesis examines the writings of Kenyan Christians. This approach should provide broader access to the picture of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya, than focus upon a particular group. I also cannot claim insider status, but an outsider viewpoint is not necessarily more biased than an insider one. It is probably most accurate to say that they are differently biased. Sarbah seems to idealise the influence of Akan values on interreligious relations, while the current thesis attempts to neither idealise, nor degrade, the influence of African religio-cultural values, but to understand them and their influence upon interreligious relations.

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[203] Cosmas Justice Ebo Sarbah, "A Critical Study of Christian-Muslim Relations in the Central Region of Ghana with Special Reference to Traditional Akan Values" (Doctoral Thesis, The University of Birmingham, 2010).

[204] Ibid., 12-13.

[205] Ibid., 113, 114, 131, 138, 147, 156, 263.

Wijsen is concerned with the development of a "theory of interreligious relations from an African perspective,"[206] which he believes is lacking. He proposes that such an African theory must be both socio-scientific and theological, seen as compatible with the African empirical and pragmatic perspective. Wijsen also says that this theory "should be based on values from the African cultural heritage."[207] He does not attempt to explicate such a theory, but to search for one, to outline the necessary requirements for a theory, and to discover why such a theory has not been produced. His methodologies include interviews,[208] reflection on his own African experience, and literature review of African theologians.[209] In contrast to Wijsen, the current thesis has examined texts (written by Kenyan Christians) that address Islam, rather than searching for theoretical writings. From these texts and analysis of relevant history, this study has made an initial effort towards Wijsen's proposal,[210] by uncovering the working (yet undeveloped) theories of interreligious relations among Kenyan Christians. It shares Wijsen's concerns that such a theory must accord with African cultural values.

1.6   Outline of the Study

The study is organised into three major parts. The first part provides context and examines the historical questions concerning Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya. The second part, which forms the core of the thesis, analyses the writings of Kenyan Christians

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[206] Frans Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict in a Haven of Peace: From Religious Studies to Interreligious Studies in Africa.*, ed. Frans Wijsen, Studies in World Christianity and Interreligious Relations (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 241.

[207] Ibid., 243.

[208] He interviewed professors at theological schools in Kenya about the lack of an African discourse on interreligious dialogue.

[209] Wijsen uses the writings of Kibicho quite extensively, whose writing is also used in this thesis. (see chapter 9.2)

[210] I acquired and read Wijsen's book, only later in the process of writing this study. His book has been very helpful, but the outline of the study and the research had been completed prior to having read the book.

pertaining to Islam. The third part, taking into account the findings of the previous sections, discusses certain themes that arise.

The first part begins with chapter two, which briefly looks at the religious demographics of Kenya. Population figures are contested as larger numbers can translate into more political power. Muslim and Christian use and invention of statistics is first critiqued, then the chapter attempts to provide an objective look at these demographics through four recent surveys carried out in the country.

Chapter three looks at the African religious heritage as it influences Christianity in Kenya, especially in ways that it impacts upon relations between Christians and Muslims. Aspects of this religious heritage to be examined are the goals of African Religion, vital force, the existence of a spiritual world, the concept of evil, and community. A brief introduction to Kenyan Christianity is then provided.

Chapter four discusses the historiography of Islam in Kenya. It does so by examining how Islam entered Kenya, and by looking at the way in which Islam in Kenya has been portrayed. While Islam is often depicted as Arab and foreign, it is shown that it has been indigenised into certain African communities.

The fifth chapter scans the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya from a Christian perspective. First, European Christian mission as it interacted with Muslims is examined. Then Kenyan Christian perceptions are studied through the issue of the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution.

In part two, chapter six analyses the writings of Kenyan mainline Protestant scholars. Four scholars: Maina, Kubai, Wandera, and Mutei are specialists in Islamic studies. While an analysis of their writings form the bulk of this chapter, the writings of other prominent

Kenyan scholars as they touch upon Islam are also analysed. The writings of two Kenyan Evangelical scholars are also looked at.

The seventh chapter analyses popular Christian writing that addresses Islam. Most of these writings are found in popular Pentecostal magazines. The articles consist of conversion narratives, extracts from sermons, and various church reports. While a systematic presentation of views on Islam cannot be found, these writings provide a window into the theological world of Kenyan Pentecostal Christianity and its perception of Islam.

In part three, the eighth chapter examines themes dealing with Christian contestation with Muslims over public space. The themes, arising from the earlier chapters, are contesting mythical space, moral space and spiritual space. These themes are contested to establish legitimacy in roles as leaders in the socio-political project of nation-building. Kenyan mainline scholars and popular Kenyan Christian writing are found to represent different approaches to contesting these public spaces.

Chapter nine looks at the emerging Christian theologies of religion in Kenya, especially as they relate to Islam. The theological questions that arise concern God, the goal of religion, community, and the human problem. Kenyan mainline scholars and popular writing differ on their answers, but they ask the same fundamental questions when evaluating Islam.

Chapter ten concludes the study, providing a brief exposition and critique of the two theories of interreligious relations that may be discerned within the Christian literature that was analysed.

CHAPTER 2

MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN POPULATIONS IN KENYA

A variety of numbers concerning the population statistics for Muslims and Christians in Kenya are thrown about, often without indicating how the particular figure was attained. These numbers sometimes become political issues, especially as the Muslim community frequently claims to be underrepresented politically. Despite the numerous unsubstantiated figures given by diverse sources concerning the Kenyan population by religious adherence, reliable surveys have been conducted that provide reasonably accurate data. These surveys will be looked at after Muslim and Christian sources have been examined and their methodologies critiqued.

2.1 Population Statistics as Contested Spaces

Similar to other African countries the "patron-client relationship is understood to be the principal mechanism regulating political and economic life"[1] in Kenya.[2] In this system[3] regional politicians are able to procure development funds for their political district to improve infrastructure, schools, health systems, etc., in exchange for loyalty to the central

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[1] Leonardo R. Arriola, "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, no. 10 (2009): 1343.

[2] See especially Daniel Bourmaud, *Histoire Politique du Kenya: Etat et Pouvoir Local.*, Hommes et Societes. (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1988). Bourmaud describes the patron-client relationship in detail, though his work does not include analysis of the past two decades.

[3] The patron-client system most likely arises out of the form of government employed during the colonial era. See especially the thorough study of Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

ruler.[4] The power relations between the centre and the periphery inherent within the patronage system are also partially managed through "ministerial appointments to the cabinet" of elites from different regions, ethnic groups and religions.[5] As Young has demonstrated, democratic elections have altered the relationship between the patron and clients, who are now voters. He found through an examination of voting behaviour in Kenya that local elections are not decided by ideologies, nor by bribery, but by the amount of development services that an elected official can bring to the district.[6]

Population statistics become important due to expectations that development funds be distributed somewhat equally among the various regions, ethnicities and religions.[7] An ethnic or religious group, or a region, that can lay claim to a large population can demand more funding for improving schools, roads, etc. Expectations for proportionate representation in parliament and in the cabinet are also present.[8] An ethnic group, for example, that claims to make up 20% of the total population would expect that roughly 20% of the MPs and cabinet ministers represent that ethnicity. In these ways population figures become part of the public political discourse.

Population statistics in Kenya are contested primarily by the Muslim community, which forms a significant minority. Bakari and Yahya, for example, claim that the numbers are kept low for the Muslim population resulting in fewer resources for development in

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[4] Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs* 97, no. 388 (1998): 335.

[5] Arriola, "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," 1347.

[6] Daniel J. Young, *Is Clientelism at Work in African Elections? A Study of Voting Behavior in Kenya and Zambia* (Afrobarometer, 2009), 9.

[7] Mohamed Bakari and Saad S. Yahya, "Introduction," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad S. Yahya, ([Nairobi]: Mewa Publications, 1995), x. Yakub O. Ibrahim, "The Muslim Population of Northern Kenya: an analysis of the last population censuses," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Yahya, ([Nairobi]: Mewa Publications, 1995), 266.

[8] Abdulkadir Hashim, "Muslim-State Relations in Kenya after the Referendum on the Constitution," *AASR Bulletin* 24, no. (2005).

Muslim-dominated areas.[9] Ibrahim published an article disputing the census data concerning the Muslim population of northern Kenya, arguing that the population is much higher than reported.[10]

2.2   Muslim Sources on Population Statistics

Muslim sources for the Muslim population of Kenya often cite numbers without references, so that one is unable to determine how the particular statistics were attained. For example, The *Cultural Atlas of Islam* lists the Muslim population of Kenya as 26%;[11] however, there are neither explanations nor footnotes to indicate how this figure was reached. Mazrui makes a similar claim in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*,[12] with a similar lack of references or explanation.

Muslim politicians also make claims about the Muslim population in Kenya. In 2002, while President Moi was in Mombasa showing appreciation to the Muslim community for rejecting a proposed new constitution, six Muslim MPs responded in a speech by asking the president to ensure that Muslims were properly represented in the new cabinet, reflecting their 30% of the total population.[13] Sharif Nasser, late KANU (Kenya African National Union) leader on the coast, claimed in 1995 that Muslims numbered eight million, or 32% of the population at the time.[14] These claims are best understood as political statements.

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[9] Bakari and Yahya, "Introduction," x.

[10] Ibrahim, "The Muslim Population of Northern Kenya," 260-268.

[11] Isma'īl R. Al Fārūqī and Lois Lamya' Al Fārūqī, *The Cultural Atlas of Islam* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1986), 267-270.

[12] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), s.v. "Islam: Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa." He writes that the Muslim population is around six million, which represents a quarter of the total.

[13] Hashim, "Muslim-State Relations in Kenya," 27.

[14] Cited in Arye Oded, "Islamic Extremism in Kenya: The Rise and Fall of Sheikh Khalid Balala," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 26, no. 4 (1996): 414, fn 5. Oded calls this an exaggeration and says that it is commonly accepted that Muslims make up 20% of the population, though he gives no reference for this.

Bakari in 1995 attempted to establish reliable percentages for the Muslim, Christian and African Religion populations of Kenya.[15] It is appropriate to quote his reasoning in full.

> The Muslim statistic is supported by the data on population distribution in the country. Muslims predominate at the Coast and the North Eastern provinces of the Republic. The Coast has also one of the highest birthrates in the country and a low mortality rate. The Western Province of Kenya had Kenya's highest birthrate. It also happens to have a significant Muslim Population. Virtually all the major urban centres have a strong Muslim presence, as indicated by a proliferation of Muslim institutions there. Also, over half the Asian population of Kenya is made up of Muslims of Indian and Pakistani origins, though now fully Kenyan in nationality.[16]

It should be noted that his conclusions are arrived at without the collection of, or apparent analysis of, any relevant data. He also makes some unsubstantiated assumptions, such as the significance of the Muslim population of Western Province,[17] the statistical significance of the Asian population,[18] and even the predominance of Islam in the Coast Province. The Coast Province includes large geographic areas, which have not been traditionally Muslim, such as Taita-Taveta and the Mijikenda territories. In addition, there has been a large influx of non-Muslim Kenyans to the coast for employment in the tourist and shipping industries, so that the most recent census data shows that the Muslim community forms about 1/3 of the population of Coast Province.[19]

Bakari also claims that Christians make up 50-55% of the population,[20] which is much lower than most reports. He says that many supposed Christians actually practice African Religion, which he claims forms 20% of the population, thus reducing the Christian

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[15] Mohamed Bakari, "Muslims and the Politics of Change in Kenya," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 234-235.

[16] Ibid.

[17] The most recent census from 2009 shows that about 3% of the population of Western Province is Muslim.

[18] The Asian population in Kenya makes up less than 1% of the total population according to the most recent census.

[19] Kenya Census 2009: Detailed Census Analysis, ed. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, http://www.knbs.or.ke/detailed_population_results.php (accessed March 31, 2012).

[20] Bakari, "Muslims and the Politics of Change in Kenya," 234.

percentage appropriately. While recognising his creative approach, it can again be noted that no actual data has been analysed.

Ibrahim analyses and compares the 1979 and 1989 census data for heavily Muslim populated areas in northern Kenya.[21] While he also makes some assumptions about the percentage of the Muslim population in each district,[22] he does identify what appear to be problems in the census data. For example, while there was a reported population increase of over 60,000 people, the Muslim population is said to have increased by only 10,000.[23] He also claims that the birth rate is high in the region and the projected growth of the population was therefore high; however, some districts are even reported to have had a net loss of population. There were also problems in the ratio of men to women, which seem to indicate that serious problems occurred in either the collection or the reporting of the data.[24]

He doesn't propose corrected population statistics, as the purpose of his research and article was to raise questions about the accuracy of the 1989 census, which he says affects the amount of development resources that the region receives.[25] His arguments concerning the census, however, seem valid, and Christian sources for citing the Muslim population are frequently based on the 1989 census.[26]

2.3   Christian Sources on Population Statistics

In general Kenyan Christians have not been concerned with making claims about numbers for the Muslim population. During the constitutional review process and the debate over the *Kadhi* courts, this issue did arise briefly. An association of churches, calling itself

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[21] Ibrahim, "The Muslim Population of Northern Kenya," 260-268.

[22] Ibid., 264. These assumptions do appear to be more reasonable than those made by Bakari. The region is arid and has not attracted non-Muslim Kenyans for employment. It is also heavily populated by Somali and Oromo people, the former being all Muslim and the latter being majority Muslim.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 264-265.

[25] Ibid., 266.

[26] David Barrett and Todd Johnson, "Methodology," *World Christian Database* (2001).

'The Kenyan Church,' released a statement in 2005 opposing the inclusion of the *Kadhi* courts in the constitution, which included the phrase: "… Muslims who are only 6% of the population of Kenya."[27] The Kenyan Church also claimed that Christians form 80% of the population.[28]

Barrett listed the Muslim population in 2005 at 7%, and the Christian population at 80%.[29] However, he acknowledges that the survey is based on estimates and approximations, as well as other data when it is available.[30] It appears that the *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey*[31] of 2003 may have been used.

While it is difficult to find written material in which Christian writers address the statistics for the Muslim population, from personal conversations in Nairobi it seems apparent that most Christians assume one of these lower percentages, which differs significantly from Muslim estimations. According to the most recent Kenyan census of 2009, the population of Kenya now stands at around 38 million.[32] Using the lower Muslim estimate of 25% would mean a population of 9.5 million Muslims, while using the higher estimate of 7%, as accepted by Christians, would yield a population of 2.7 million Muslims. This is a significant difference. As indicated above, the statistical difference has implications for development funding and political appointments, therefore making the statistical gap a politically important issue.

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[27] The Kenya Church, "Church's Response," 2005. Six percent is the figure given by the 1989 census in Kenya.

[28] Cited in Hashim, "Muslim-State Relations in Kenya," 25.

[29] David Barrett, 2006. "World Christian Database," Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, (accessed July 19, 2006).

[30] Barrett and Johnson, "Methodology."

[31] *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2003*, ed. Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) [Kenya], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Kenya], and ORC Macro (Calverton, Maryland: CBS, MOH, and ORC Macro, 2004).

[32] Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, *2009 Population and Housing Census Results* (Nairobi: Ministry for Planning, National Development and Vision, 2010), 37.

2.4   Non-Religious Sources on Population Statistics

There have been four recent surveys carried out by governmental and non-governmental organisations that have recorded religious demographics in Kenya.[33] The figures concerning the Muslim population for each survey are not the same, and this can be explained by the difficulties that were experienced with their process in North Eastern Province. The specific difficulties will be examined shortly; however, it seems pertinent to clarify why this province poses such problems.

The population of North Eastern Province, where ethnic Somalis predominate, is almost completely Muslim. According to the most recent census (which will be discussed later in this section), more than half of the Muslim population of Kenya consist of Somali people.[34] Therefore, errors in the data from this province are significant when considering the percentage of the Muslim population of Kenya as a whole. The province is hot, arid, geographically large, sparsely populated and underdeveloped with few roads. Many of the Kenyan Somalis who live in the province continue to herd camels in a nomadic lifestyle. The borders between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia are porous; ethnic Somalis of the same clans, sub-clans and families live on all sides of the borders, so that people regularly travel and live irrespective of national boundaries. More recently, the collapse of the Somali state and the ensuing violence has brought a large influx of ethnic Somalis from Somalia into North Eastern Province, making it difficult to know who are truly Kenyan citizens. All of these factors have made accurate data collection difficult in this province.

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[33] While other population sources may be available, I have chosen to use only those that have openly disclosed their data collection methods.

[34] Oparanya, *2009 Population and Housing Census Results*. 34-35 According to the census there are 2.4 million Kenyan Somalis and 4.3 million Muslims living in Kenya.

Two relatively small surveys were conducted in Kenya between 2008 and 2009: one by Afrobarometer[35] and one by Pew Forum.[36] These will be examined first.

Afrobarometer[37] is a research project that investigates political, social and economic attitudes in various African countries by conducting surveys every few years.[38] From October through November 2008 interviews of a "nationally representative, random, stratified probability sample of 1104 Kenyans"[39] were conducted. Due to the relatively small population of North Eastern Province an oversample was used to provide a sample large enough to permit statistical comparisons with other regions. When national results were recorded, the results of North Eastern Province were "weighted to reflect their actual share of the national population."[40] This means that a larger number of inhabitants of North Eastern Province were interviewed compared to their actual statistical representation; however, an appropriate adjustment was made in calculating national averages. According to this survey Christians formed 85.9% of the population and Muslims 9.2%.

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[35] University of Nairobi Institute of Development Studies, and Michigan State University, *Summary of Results: Round 4 Afrobarometer Survey in Kenya, 2008* (www.Afrobarometer.org, 2008).

[36] *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

[37] http://www.afrobarometer.org/

[38] See http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/162. "The Afrobarometer series was developed by select Africanist scholars with funds from a variety of sources: the National Science Foundation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish Governance Trust Fund at the World Bank, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Michigan State University, and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The series represents a large-scale, cross-national survey research project designed to systematically map mass attitudes to democracy, markets, and civil society in more than a dozen sub-Saharan African nations, and ultimately, to track the evolution of such attitudes in selected nations over time. More specifically, the series furnishes research data on democracy, governance, livelihoods, macroeconomics and markets, social capital, political regimes and transition, conflict and crime, political participation, and national identity in sub-Saharan Africa. Afrobarometer surveys are conducted periodically in such sub-Saharan African nations as Botswana, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The series is partly modeled on Eurobarometer studies of the last 24 years, the new Eurobarometer studies of the last ten years, the Latinobarometer, and the East Asianbarometer. It thus enables comparison across continents."

[39] Institute of Development Studies, *Summary of Results: Round 4 Afrobarometer Survey in Kenya, 2008*, 2.

[40] Ibid.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life[41] conducted a major survey from December 2008 through April 2009 throughout Sub-Saharan Africa to gauge religious attitudes of Christians and Muslims in this part of the world. Approximately 1500 Kenyans were interviewed in December 2008 for the project.[42] A representative sample from all seven provinces of Kenya was sought "with a Muslim oversample."[43] For reporting national results the data was weighted to more accurately reflect true percentages. The survey found that Christians formed 88% of the population and Muslims 11%.[44] An additional finding was that conversion from one of these major religions to the other is statistically negligible.[45]

The important Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) was undertaken in 2003. The purpose of the survey was to provide health related information for the implementation of policy.[46] More than 11,000 men and women[47] in 10,000 households[48] were interviewed throughout Kenya. This survey found that 7% of the population was Muslim and nearly 90% were Christian.[49] However, the report acknowledges the "difficulties in travelling and interviewing in the sparsely populated and largely nomadic areas in the North Eastern Province,"[50] which led to fewer interviews being conducted in the province than would be appropriate for proportionate representation. The reported results for the national level are not

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[41] http://www.pewresearch.org/about/ "Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social science research. Pew Research does not take policy positions."

[42] *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 17.

[43] Ibid., 68.

[44] Ibid., 20.

[45] Ibid., 2.

[46] *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2003*, xvii.

[47] Ibid., 11.

[48] Ibid., 7.

[49] Ibid., 27-28. All the statistics in the report are separated for men and women, so religious adherence is also presented in this way.

[50] Ibid., 7.

weighted to reflect this;[51] therefore, the figure of 7% for the Muslim population is undoubtedly low. The gathering of religious data was not the primary goal of KDHS.

Kenya conducted a major census in 2009, which attempted to count the "complete population" by "where they spent the night" on August 24th to 25th 2009.[52] More than 100,000 field personnel were trained to canvas and take census data,[53] which included questions concerning religious adherence.[54] The North Eastern Province again provided some difficulties, as anomalies were discovered on examining the data from the province.[55] Among the reported issues was a higher men-to-women ratio than is normally found in a population and an extremely large population increase without a corresponding increase in the number of households.[56] The suspected cause of the anomalies is the increasing movement of ethnic Somalis from Somalia into Kenya.[57] With the anomalies the 2009 census found the Muslim population to be over 4.3 million, or 11.1%,[58] and Christians at 82.5%.[59]

2.5   Conclusion

While none of the surveys have been able to establish a definitive figure for the Muslim population in Kenya, one can say with a fair amount of confidence that Muslims form no more than 11%, and no less than 7%,[60] of the population, being closer to 11%. The

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[51] Ibid. For the survey's own purpose of collecting data related to health and women's health-related issues, the undersampling of North Eastern Province doesn't represent a significant shortcoming, as sufficient interviews in the province were conducted to gather the appropriate data.

[52] Oparanya, *2009 Population and Housing Census Results*, 8.

[53] Ibid., 12.

[54] Ibid., 14.

[55] Ibid., 20.

[56] Wilfred Mulliro, "Kenya Somalis Population Explosion Cancelled in Census Results," *Al-Shahid*, August 31 2010. The newspaper is a Somali run internet newspaper.

[57] Ibid.

[58] The CIA *World Factbook* cites the same percentage of 11.1% for the Muslim population of Kenya. Though sources are not named, it would appear that the *World Factbook* has used the Kenyan Census of 2009 as its principle source. See https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html

[59] Oparanya, *2009 Population and Housing Census Results*, 33.

[60] One should keep in mind that 7% is too low.

Christian population seems to be around 80 to 85% of the total. We are not in a position to comment on the faithfulness or the commitment level of the adherents of either religion. The report by Pew Forum indicates that religious believers of both groups continue to participate to some extent in African Religion,[61] whose population figures are listed at 635,352 (or 1.6% of the total population) according to the most recent census.[62]

While it is more difficult to quantify, it is important to also note that Muslims and Christians in Kenya tend to be predominant in different ethnic groups; therefore, religious difference also implies ethnic difference. There are certain ethnicities that are exceptions to this rule, such as the Mijikenda groups near the coast.[63] There also tend to be small Muslim populations within most of the major ethnicities, and one can occasionally find Muslims and Christians in the same family.[64] However, when a Kenyan Christian imagines a Kenyan Muslim, she/he is likely to imagine someone of an ethnicity different from her/his own. Therefore, interreligious relations in Kenya often imply interethnic relations, including the dynamics implied in those.

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[61] *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1.
[62] Oparanya, *2009 Population and Housing Census Results*, 33.
[63] Barrett, "World Christian Database."
[64] This is, however, more rare in Kenya than what the common expectation seems to be for Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AFRICAN RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

This chapter will briefly examine certain aspects of African Religion that impact upon African Christianity and its perceptions of Islam in Kenya. The features of African Religion that will be examined are its goals, vital force and power, the spiritual world, evil, and community (*ubuntu*).[1]

3.1   The Goals of African Religion

Mbiti describes the African religious view as "anthropocentric ontology,"[2] by which he means that humanity is at the centre of African Religion. God and other spiritual beings are explained and understood according to how they relate with and affect the lives of human beings. In contrast to, for example, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which says that "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever,"[3] the purpose of humanity in African Religion is to enhance communal and personal life; communication with the spiritual world and God comprises a significant part of this human and communal objective.[4] Two religious goals that work together towards promoting this larger goal of enhancing communal and personal life will be examined.

An important goal of African Religion is to maintain harmony within the "wholeness of creation,"[5] which includes the human community, nature and the spiritual world. If the "delicate balance" between the vital forces inherent in each of these is not maintained, then

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[1] *Ubuntu* is a word from the southern African Nguni group of languages meaning personhood.

[2] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1988 reprint ed. (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), 16.

[3] The answer to the first question in the catechism. http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html.

[4] Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 38, 50, 64, 71. One of the major themes of the book is that enhancing life is central to African Religion.

[5] D.A. Forster, "A Generous Ontology: Identity as a Process of Intersubjective Discovery - An African Theological Contribution," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 66, no. 1 (2010). http://www.hts.org.za (accessed January 31, 2011).

the "rhythm of the universe" may be affected,[6] which may lead to natural disasters, such as famine, flood, earthquakes, epidemics, etc. The responsibility for sustaining this balance ultimately falls on human beings, who must obey taboos, follow prohibitions, and perform correct rituals.[7] When there is disharmony within the created whole, as evidenced by illness, death or large-scale disaster,[8] then balance must be restored through the performance of certain religious rites, sacrifices or offerings.[9] Much of African Religion and traditional life is, therefore, oriented around living in "harmonious and peaceful existence"[10] with the visible and the invisible (i.e. spiritual) worlds.

The purpose of maintaining this "delicate balance"[11] is to promote "the good life here and now, with health and prosperity, with success in life, happy and productive marriage, etc."[12] The concern is not with eschatological salvation, but with human life as lived in the world and in the present. As Harries notes among Christian Luo, the concept of salvation (*warruok*)[13] is a spiritual immunity to "bad spiritual influence" that allows "saved" Luo to pursue modern forms of wealth without bringing about the disharmony that arrives from breaking traditional taboos.[14] What can be noted from this example is that Christian salvation

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[6] Magesa, *African Religion*, 143.

[7] Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, "The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of the Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology," *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research*, no. 10 (2001). http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html (accessed June 30, 2007); Magesa, *African Religion*, 143.

[8] Magesa, *African Religion*, 62-63.

[9] Forster, "A Generous Ontology."; Magesa, *African Religion*, 78-79; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 59; John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, 2nd ed. (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2012), 300.

[10] Yusufu Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview* (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 33.

[11] Magesa, *African Religion*, 143.

[12] Okot P'Bitek, *African Religions in Western Scholarship* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, nd), 62.

[13] *Warruok* is a word from Dholuo (Luo language) designating salvation.

[14] James Osmar Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa: With Special Reference to Luo Responses to 'Bad' in Gem, Kenya " (Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham,

has been de-eschatologised as it has been Africanised; it now performs the very human-centred task of allowing people to become more prosperous in modern Kenya. As Magesa has said, "African Religion is human-centered, even overtly utilitarian."[15]

African Christianity retains the importance of traditional Christian theological concepts, such as salvation through Jesus Christ and an afterlife, while also taking human-centred goals as central to a "holistic gospel of salvation."[16] Anderson writes, "African Pentecostals proclaim a pragmatic gospel seeking to address practical and contextual issues like sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery."[17] A central aim of African Christianity is to promote abundant life, understood to include good health, relative prosperity, finding jobs, education, children, etc., which also corresponds to the aims of African Religion.[18] Interruptions to abundant life on a large scale, such as drought, floods, epidemics, earthquakes, or other disasters, bring calls of repentance from African Christians, often using 2 Chronicles 7:14[19] as a point of reference. An aspect of this repentance may consist of appeals for religious unity, which is seen as essential to gaining abundant life on a national level.[20]

Both mainline and Neo-Pentecostal churches accept the practical goals of African Religion, yet differ on how these goals are to be achieved. Neo-Pentecostals address these different afflictions by claiming to overcome the spiritual and mystical causes through the

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2007), 176. See also David Maxwell, "'Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?': Pentecostalism, Prosperity and Modernity in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. Fasc. 3 (1998).

[15] Magesa, *African Religion*, 69.

[16] Allan H. Anderson, "The Gospel and African Religion," *International Review of Missions* 89, no. 354 (2000): 375.

[17] Ibid.: 376.

[18] This understanding is compatible with some streams of Western Christianity, especially Pentecostalism, and it is not incompatible with Christian Scriptures. The argument is not that African Christianity is unique at this point, but that it corresponds closely with its African religious heritage.

[19] "if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." NRSV

[20] See chapter 9.3.2 for more development of this idea.

power of the Holy Spirit, bringing health, success and prosperity.[21] Mainline scholars use the discourse of liberation, development and/or reconstruction to address problems.[22] The problems are understood to be the result of unequal economic and power relationships, which include Western dominance in religious and cultural domains that inhibit the formation of true African identity.[23] A solution seems to be that church leaders need more education in the social sciences and humanities in order to be more able to "facilitate" democratisation and better governance.[24]

3.2   Vital Force and Power

Writing of the Luo in Kenya, Harries remarks that in the West the betterment of the human condition (e.g. improved health, economy, etc.) is approached through the use of human reason, whereas in Africa people will generally "evoke spiritual powers or God" in order to solve these same problems.[25] Ellis and ter Haar add that it is commonly understood in Africa that "all power has its ultimate origin in the spirit world."[26] While observers have written of this concept of power in Africa, it has also been interpreted theologically (and philosophically) as "vital force,"[27] "an ontology based … on life" rather than being.[28]

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[21] J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to 'Set the Captives Free': Healing, Deliverance and Generational Curses in Ghanaian Pentecostalism," *International Review of Mission* 93, no. 370/371 (2004): 390-391.

[22] See, for example, J. N. K. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995).

[23] See, for example, J. N. K. Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, Theology of Reconstruction Series (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 36-60.

[24] Ibid., 104.

[25] Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa", 131.

[26] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

[27] This was first done in 1945 by Placide Tempels in *La Philosophie Bantoue*.

[28] Martin Nkafu Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy: A Step Forward in African Thinking* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999), 41. Nkemnkia is here crediting Tempels with this observation, though using his own words.

As Tempels described it, vital force is at the centre of African thought and religion.[29] He wrote, "The supreme value is … vital force,"[30] and "every effort of the Bantu[31] is oriented towards the vital force."[32] Magesa adds that "all principles of morality and ethics" in Africa are found in the concept of vital force.[33] Mbiti describes it as a "force, power or energy permeating the whole universe,"[34] of which God is its ultimate source. Nkemnkia defines it as "the universal spirit of the living,"[35] saying that "every living being is a vital force."[36] Vital force is what enables life. A person, throughout life, seeks to increase their vital force, to "augment and strengthen their nature,"[37] to become more human.

God, spirits, ancestors, humans, animals, plants and even inanimate objects possess[38] vital force. There is a hierarchical nature to this force, God having control over it and spirits and ancestors controlling it more fully than humans. Since God is the source of vital force, a union exists between living beings such that they may affect each other in ways that either further augment life or diminish it.[39] Among people, there are those who have the ability to access and use vital force.[40] Religious specialists,[41] who know how to manipulate vital force,

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[29] There is much debate over whether Tempels and his followers engage in African philosophy or cultural exposition. While interesting, this debate does not impact upon this study. For more on this debate see H. Odera Oruka, *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy* (Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers, 1990).

[30] Placide Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, Édition de l'Évidence, 2009 ed. (Présence Africaine, 1949), 28.

[31] Tempels originally wrote his book on the *Baluba* people of the Congo, who speak one of the Bantu languages of Central Africa.

[32] Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, 31.

[33] Magesa, *African Religion*, 38.

[34] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 16.

[35] Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy*, 116.

[36] Ibid., 114. Also see Magesa, *African Religion*, 50.

[37] Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, 37.

[38] Possess is perhaps not the best word, but perhaps as Tempels suggests our Western languages don't have the vocabulary to deal adequately with all of the concepts of African thought.

[39] Magesa, *African Religion*, 50.

[40] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 203.

can serve the community by promoting this force, enhancing life and inhibiting the bad. This ability can also be used for nefarious purposes, bringing curses upon members of the community.[42]

Many Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars prefer to speak of the African "desire for power"[43] rather than vital force when discussing African Religion. For example, Adeyemo writes that African Religion is based on the idea that "man's life is power, not law,"[44] and this power is a "fertility power."[45] Turaki writes, "Creation, nature and everything that exists is infused with this impersonal power,"[46] which he says some have called vital force and others manna.[47] It seems clear that the same concept is being discussed by scholars from different Christian traditions; however, Evangelical and Pentecostal scholars tend to evaluate it more negatively, using the word 'power,' while Catholic and mainline scholars refer to it as 'vital force.' According to Anderson there may be room for a positive evaluation of vital force by Pentecostals. He compares the similarity in the African concept of power inherent in vital force with the New Testament concept of δυναμις (dunamis)[48] that Pentecostals seek in their

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[41] I prefer this neutral term to others such as diviner, medicine man, etc. In Swahili this person is known as an *mganga* (sg), or *waganga* (pl). Other Bantu languages tend to use similar cognates.

[42] When these forces are used for evil purposes the specialist normally is referred to by different vocabulary; *mchawi* (sg), or *wachawi* (pl), in Swahili.

[43] Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 35.

[44] Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1997), 33.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 24.

[47] Ibid. Nearly 50 years before Turaki wrote this, Tempels had remarked that this sort of interpretation of Bantu thought was "abusive" and the sign of a "European interpretation of primitive philosophy poorly understood." Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, 35. Turaki, in fact, relies heavily upon a non-African interpretation by Philip Steyne, *Gods of Power: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Animists* (Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1989).

[48] *Dunamis*, which may also be transliterated as *dynamis*, is a NT Greek word that is usually translated as power.

relationship with the Holy Spirit.[49] Through their relationship with the Holy Spirit, Kenyan Pentecostals seek to augment their vital force in order to succeed in the face of obstacles.

Whether it is called vital force or power, African Christians in pursuit of abundant life look towards God as the source of this reality. Individual and community life is enhanced through relationship with and obedience to God. Vital force also provides a means for the evaluation of religions. Religions can be evaluated by examining their ability to enhance life and promote abundant life, since God is the unique source of vital force (or true, and good, power). If a religion advances abundant life, then it follows that God must favour it.

3.3   The Spiritual World

Within African Religion the spiritual world is well-populated, powerful and influential on human life. There are generally a supreme god, subordinate deities, spirits (some are created as spirits, others are forgotten ancestors) and ancestors.[50] These spiritual beings either have more access to vital force, or they know better how to use it to influence the physical human world than living human beings, which makes them more powerful than people.[51] Their ability to influence human life is so great that fear of the ancestors or spirits is not uncommon,[52] as their effects could possibly diminish life, instead of enhancing it.

It is in this sense that Turaki says, "The traditional African conception of reality is deeply rooted in the law of the spirit. Reality does not consist in what is apparent, but in what lies behind and guides life's phenomena."[53] Because god, divinities, spirits and ancestors have the ability to impact the lives of the living for good or for bad, reality truly exists in the

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[49] Allan H. Anderson, "African Initiated Churches of the Spirit and Pneumatology," *Word & World* 23, no. 2 (2003): 179-180.

[50] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 75; Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), 52.

[51] Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*, 46-47.

[52] Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa", 127; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 204.

[53] Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 46.

spiritual world. What happens in the physical world has been shaped, if not determined, by the spiritual world.[54] For example, contemporary politicians seek out religious specialists (*waganga*, or even *wachawi*, Kiswahili) whose source is the spiritual world,[55] to gain access to political power. As Madathil writes of the Gusii in Kenya, "People are deeply aware of the spirit world, and this awareness affects their outlook and experiences in life for better and for worse."[56]

One result of African ties to ancestors is the sacred character of land,[57] which "mystically connects people with their past"[58] because their ancestors are buried in the land. Myths connect the land, the community and God at the very origin.[59] In current religio-political discourse reference to the land may be used to designate ethnic territory or national borders, often with similar mystically oriented meanings.[60] African Pentecostals frequently use the metaphor, "redeeming the land," to communicate political messages,[61] while retaining some of these mystical inferences.

Many African societies believe in the presence of spiritual beings, subordinate to the supreme god in roles similar to assistants.[62] In the literature on African Religion they are generally designated as divinities. Often the divinities are understood to oversee certain

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[54] Ogbu Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe," *Pneuma* 24, no. 2 (2002): 122; Larbi, "Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology." In the first part of the article Larbi discusses the Akan cosmology, before comparing it with Pentecostal understandings.

[55] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 8.

[56] Sajimon George Madathil, "The Concepts of God and the Spirit World in African Traditions and the Bible," *Journal of African Cultures and Religion* 2, no. 1: 177.

[57] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1978), 21.

[58] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 27.

[59] J. N. K. Mugambi and Nicodemus Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1976), 128.

[60] See especially Catherine W Muriithi, *Kenya Arise: A Letter to my People* (Nairobi: Arise Africa, 2007).

[61] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 215-216.

[62] Mugambi and Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage*, 2. Here they are talking specifically of the Abaluyia people in Western Kenya.

functions under the direction of the supreme deity, such as war,[63] or certain natural

phenomena[64] (e.g. thunder, lightning, earthquakes).[65] According to Magesa there is a

"consensus among Africans … that there is only one God,"[66] who is the Creator,

demonstrating that African Religion upholds the "principle of unity."[67] Idowu used the term

'diffused monotheism' to describe this belief system in which a strong belief in a single

supreme God is combined with a belief in subordinate divinities, who act under the authority

of the supreme God.[68] In chapter nine it will be seen how this belief in a diffused monotheism

comes into play for some Christians as they attempt to understand Islam in Kenya.

McIntosh proposes a way of understanding African religiosity in her study of the

Giriama in Malindi[69] that merits brief mention at this point. She remarks that in interacting in

a religiously plural environment,[70] the Giriama "acknowledge the mystical potency (the

ontological reality) of more than one set of religious or cosmological forces,"[71] which she

calls "polyontologism." A person, for example, may use the symbols, the texts, the practices,

etc. of Islam, Christianity and African Religion to mystically affect positive change in their

life. Or put more simply, a person may participate fully in any and/or all religions in order to

benefit from the mystical powers of each. Though McIntosh does not use the vocabulary of

vital force, it could be said that the agency of any religion may be accessed to enhance one's

vital force. She contrasts the polyontologism of African religiosity with the "mono-

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[63] Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, 133.

[64] Ibid., 208.

[65] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 53.

[66] Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence*, ed. Frans Wijsen and Jorge Castillo Guerra, Interreligious Studies, vol. 3 (Berlin: LIT, 2010), 50.

[67] Ibid.

[68] E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), 60 Cited in James Kombo, "The Trinity in Africa," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3, no. 2 (2009): 135.

[69] Janet McIntosh, *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

[70] The religious environment would consist of Islam, Christianity and Giriama Religion.

[71] McIntosh, *The Edge of Islam*, 189.

ontologism" of Christianity and Islam, which draws on one cosmological model, which is perceived to be correct, to explain the work of mystical powers[72] (e.g. healing only comes from God through Christianity). Kenyan Christian leaders, almost unanimously, are concerned that their parishioners may consult religious specialists from another religion. While ordinary Christians would be most likely to consult religious specialists from their own ethnic religious tradition, demonstrations of economic or spiritual power (augmented vital force) in the Islamic community may also prove enticing to Christians seeking blessing. Leaders, therefore, devise means (such as, disparaging the other religion as demonic) to discourage members from seeking blessing from these other sources. These means will be dealt with more fully in chapter nine. It appears that these Christian leaders, and parishioners, are working from a polyontological model.

Kalu writes that the "Pentecostal accepts the African worldview as real and valid,"[73] but seeks a solution to problems through the Holy Spirit and Pentecostal rituals,[74] rather than through traditional religious methods. Meyer writes that Pentecostals believe that there is a "worldwide conspiracy" involving every person in the global struggle against Satan that must be fought on the local level.[75] The ancestors, divinities and spirits of African Religion have become evil spirits and demons in Pentecostal thinking,[76] sometimes adding a henotheistic

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[72] Ibid., 190. According to McIntosh, mono-ontologism should not imply monotheism, as a polytheistic system could consider one cosmology to be correct, and all others to be incorrect.

[73] Ogbu Kalu, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping of the African Religious Landscape in the 1990s," *Mission Studies* 20, no. 1-2 (2003): 98.

[74] Cox understands Pentecostalism to be a revival of "primal spirituality," which provides answers to African traditional religious needs. Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1995), See especially 82-83; and chapter 12.

[75] Birgit Meyer, "The Power of Money: Politics, Occult Forces and Pentecostalism in Ghana," *African Studies Review* 41, no. 3 (1998): 28.

[76] Allan H. Anderson, "African Pentecostalism and the Ancestors: Confrontation or Compromise," (1993). http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications (accessed June 29, 2009); Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 65; Meyer, "The Power of Money," 28.

outlook into the mixture.[77] Pentecostals find African type solutions by finding greater power (vital force) in the Holy Spirit that allows them to overcome evil spirits, who are the theologically new in Africa.

3.4   Evil

Scholars of African Religion generally view human beings as being at the root of evil,[78] though Mbiti suggests that spirits may at times be the "origin of evil."[79] However, though humans normally are the origin of evil (that is they desire harm on others), it becomes active and effective through the agency of the spiritual world. Witchcraft is the English word (*uchawi* in Swahili) used to describe the interaction between human and spirit that produces evil and harms another person. Normally, it is used to exact revenge or gain wealth and advantage over rivals. Magesa writes, "In the African mentality, everything wrong or bad in society and in the world, and, most particularly, various afflictions, originate in witchcraft."[80] Since the agency of evil is in the spirit world, it is unpredictable; therefore, people make much effort to deter the effects of witchcraft, such as following taboos,[81] properly observing funerals,[82] praying,[83] etc. Harries, perhaps overly pessimistically, says that good does not exist in itself, but is only understood as the absence of bad.[84]

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[77] Turaki, *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*, 27.

[78] Magesa, *African Religion*, 150; Mugambi and Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage*, 73; Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual, and Community*, 150.

[79] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 204.

[80] Magesa, *African Religion*, 167.

[81] Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa", 209.

[82] Ezekiel Alembi, "The Abanyole Dirge: 'Escorting' the Dead with Song and Dance," *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* 38(2008). http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol38/alembi.pdf (accessed April 25, 2008); Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa", 269.

[83] Harries, "Pragmatic Theory Applied to Christian Mission in Africa", 271.

[84] Ibid., 130, 244. Harries also argues for the use of the word, 'bad,' to describe the African concept, rather than evil.

To be aware of the possibly nefarious influence of the spiritual world on a daily basis seems to be part of ordinary life for many Africans.[85] Enhancing one's life and the life of one's community entails a spiritual battle.[86] Yet there is no Satan figure, as evil originates in the jealousies, vengeances and ambitions of people. The battle is fought against spirits and against those who manipulate the spirits through witchcraft.

The entrance of Christianity into Africa introduced cosmic dualism,[87] as Satan is depicted as the author of evil.[88] Kenyan Pentecostals frequently emphasize spiritual warfare in which Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit are involved in a spiritual battle against evil spirits. Catholic theologian, Wachege, has also written on the demonic,[89] and the "Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Devil Worship established by the Kenyan government in 1994" was comprised primarily of leaders from mainline churches.[90] The idea of a spiritual battle between agents of God and agents of Satan can, therefore, be seen to be present in all branches of Kenyan Christianity. Witchcraft is now understood, by Christians, to be the work of the Devil, and those accused of practicing it are viewed as Devil worshippers. The radical transfer of the *locus* of evil from humanity to spirits has been one of the most significant transformations of African religious understanding emerging from the Christian missionary movement. The spiritual world – once neutral, yet potentially dangerous

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[85] Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview," 122.

[86] Larbi, "Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology." He is discussing traditional Akan cosmology, which he believes to be similar to other "African perceptions of reality," before comparing it with Pentecostal understandings. Kalu also says "going through life is like a spiritual warfare." Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview," 122.

[87] This would also be true of Islam in Africa.

[88] While theological and biblical arguments minimizing Satan and cosmic dualism can be made, it is clear that the missionary Christianity introduced into Kenya taught cosmic dualism.

[89] P. N. Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved: An African Socio-Religio-Philosophical Touch* (Kiambu, Kenya: self-published, 2000), 89-113.

[90] Rosalind I. J. Hackett, "Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond," *Diogenes* 50, no. 3 (2003): 64.

– is now primarily evil and dangerous, the exceptions being specifically Christian spirits (e.g. angels and the Holy Spirit).

3.5   Community and *Ubuntu*

Mbiti stresses the community-oriented nature of African Religion and African society with his well-known turn on Descartes' famous axiom, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."[91] He further adds that African Religion is:

> not primarily for the individual, but for his community of which he is part. …
> To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves
> participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community.
> A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is
> to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security, his
> kinships and the entire groups of those who make him aware of his own
> existence.[92]

The community, consisting of a person's kin, ancestors and progeny, provides security, identity and life to an individual. Within the community a person may enhance their own vital force, and the vital force of the community is also enhanced through a person's participation in the community. Du Toit describes it as a "communion of persons," emphasising "solidarity" over "activity."[93] Forster, using Buber's concept of I-Thou, remarks that community in Africa "is focused on the hyphen, the between,"[94] rather than on either the I, or the Thou.

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[91] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 108-109.

[92] Ibid., 2.

[93] C.W. Du Toit, "Technoscience and the Integrity of Personhood in Africa and the West: Facing our Technoscientific Environment," in *The Integrity of the Human Person in an African Context: Perspectives from Science and Religion* ed. C.W. Du Toit, (Pretoria: Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, 2004), 33. Quoted in Forster, "A Generous Ontology."

[94] Forster, "A Generous Ontology."

The concept of personhood that forms and is formed in relation to this community has

been called, *ubuntu*, which is a Southern African word[95] that can be best explained through

the "Zulu maxim '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*,' i.e. 'a person is a person through other

persons.'"[96] Gathogo remarks that the Kikuyu of Kenya have a similar saying, "*Mundu ni*

mundu ni undu wa andu, that is, 'a human being is a person because of the other people.'"[97]

In Kenya a Swahili translation of *ubuntu* would be *utu*. Others have affirmed that this concept

of personhood[98] exists throughout Africa.[99] Gathogo says that *ubuntu* is what unites the

various expressions of African Religion as one.[100]

Ubuntu expresses an ideal, which includes hospitality, generosity,[101] compassion for

others,[102] human dignity,[103] vulnerability, openness to the other,[104] and "the fundamental unity

of the spiritual and material worlds."[105] It is a personhood of becoming, rather than being,

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[95] Julius Mutugi Gathogo, "African Philosophy as Expressed in the Concepts of Hospitality and Ubuntu," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 130 (2008): 45. Gathogo explains that it comes from the Nguni family of Bantu languages of Southern Africa.

[96] Dirk J. Louw, "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other," *Paideia* (1997). http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriLouw.htm (accessed March 9, 2011).

[97] Gathogo, "African Philosophy," 46.

[98] Van Binsbergen says that *ubuntu* philosophy is an outside construct that expresses an ideal of African community life that in reality is never lived out fully. He also says that people in an African village do not discuss *ubuntu* and are not familiar with the idea, that it is more present in academic discourse in African universities. However, he does concede that *ubuntu* philosophy is implied in some village practices and ideas. Wim van Binsbergen, "Ubuntu and the Globalisation of Southern African Thought and Society," *Quest* 15, no. 1-2 (2001).

[99] Dani W. Nabudere, "Ubuntu Philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation," (n.d.). http://repositories1.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/4521/3621.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed March 9. 2011).

[100] Julius Mutugi Gathogo, "The Reason for Studying African Religion in Post-colonial Africa," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36, no. 2 (2009): 111.

[101] Gathogo, "African Philosophy," 42.

[102] Gathogo, "Studying African Religion," 112.

[103] Louw, "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other."

[104] Jabu Sindane, *Ubuntu and nation building* (Pretoria: Ubuntu School of Philosophy, 1994), 8-9. Cited in Louw, "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other."

[105] Forster, "A Generous Ontology."

developed through interaction with others in community.[106] A person who lives according to *ubuntu* will become an "ancestor worthy of respect,"[107] to be venerated by the living.

This experience of community and *ubuntu* also entails a certain degree of conformity to the traditions, of which the ancestors are especially understood to be guardians.[108] *Ubuntu* means that consensus is sought, and failure to conform can result in punishment.[109] A person who defies the community's religious ways may find themselves punished by the entire society for fear that the violation may bring danger upon the whole community in the form of epidemics, or other natural disasters.[110] The rights of the individual can be sacrificed to the desires of the community as a whole.[111]

Gathogo also asks why in Africa, if *ubuntu* is the principle human philosophy, are there so "many acts of *unyama* (animal-like behaviour in Kiswahili)?"[112] He answers that *ubuntu* is often understood to include only people who are "members of the blood relatives, tribemates, clanmates, political camp mates, and so forth,"[113] which can "exclude the so-called minority."[114] In other words, personhood (*utu*, Kiswahili) is not always fully extended beyond certain in-groups, allowing the outsider to be treated as less than fully human (*mtu*, Kiswahili).

Kenyan churches strive to reproduce this African community (sometimes in competition with traditional forms of community) with varying degrees of success. Resources

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Gathogo, "African Philosophy," 45.

[108] Mugambi and Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage*, 111.

[109] Louw, "Ubuntu: An African Assessment of the Religious Other."

[110] Mugambi and Kirima, *The African Religious Heritage*, 7.

[111] Gathogo, "Studying African Religion," 113.

[112] Gathogo, "African Philosophy," 46-47. *Unayama* is a Kiswahili word that could also be translated 'brutish', but Gathogo is here emphasising the contrast between human and animal.

[113] Ibid.: 47.

[114] Ibid.: 51.

are shared among members, and a sense of belonging develops. As will be seen, the sense of community has a significant effect on how Kenyan Christians perceive Muslims.[115]

Both mainline churches and NPCs[116] emphasize the importance of community in Africa, though again with some notable differences. Urban NPCs frequently offer a place for migrants from rural areas to form new community.[117] Additionally, NPCs see themselves as "communities of resistance" that are redeeming "the land from hostile occupiers," referring to spirits that have been allowed to dominate.[118] In this way they stand against the prevailing society, which may be perceived to be in league with the dominating spirits. For mainline Kenyan scholars the church is recognised as a "utopian community" with a realisation that its members "cannot avoid involvement in the political, economic and moral challenges facing their communities."[119] They do not stand against the prevailing society, but they must be a part of it, providing examples of leadership, integrity, etc.[120] Community is understood more broadly than being only that of the church; there is a desire to be inclusive in the project of reconstructing society.[121]

To briefly summarise, African concepts of community and *ubuntu* include both a strong urge to include others through hospitality, generosity, openness, compassion, etc. and a sense of conformity within the group that makes full inclusion of those who are truly different difficult.

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[115] See chapter 9.3.3.

[116] Neo-Pentecostal Churches.

[117] Hansjörg Dilger, "Healing the Wounds of Modernity: Salvation, Community and Care in a Neo-Pentecostal Church in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 37, no. (2007): 64.

[118] Kalu, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping," 103.

[119] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 107.

[120] Ibid.

[121] This is evident throughout Mugambi's works on reconstruction.

3.6   Kenyan Christianity

Though some people may have the idea that African Religion is "moving toward extinction,"[122] most contemporary scholars of Africa would "argue that African conceptions of God, the world and morality continue to penetrate Christianity in Africa."[123] This is also true for Islam in Africa.[124]

The two streams of Kenyan Christianity involved in this study deal with their African religious heritage in different ways. The mainline scholars address African Religion theologically through "their preoccupation with African culture in general."[125] Their theological project is to find authentically African expressions of Christian faith in continuity with the African religious and cultural heritage, as revealed in the titles of publications, such as *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa*,[126] *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*[127] and *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki*.[128] As Bediako argues, "modern African Theology emerges as a theology of African Christian identity."[129] This identity is found in the interstices between the African religious and cultural heritage and historical Christian faith.

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[122] Magesa, *African Religion*, 17. Magesa is citing David Barrett in the *World Christian Encyclopedia*. He does not give the full reference.

[123] Ibid., 18.

[124] Magesa, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate*, 52; Nabudere, "Ubuntu Philosophy: Memory and Reconciliation." See also for example, Caleb Chul-soo Kim, *Islam among the Swahili in East Africa* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004).

[125] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 78.

[126] Ukachukwu Chris Manus, *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa: Methods and Approaches* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003).

[127] Mary N. Getui, Tinyiko Maluleke, and Justin Ukpong, eds., *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001).

[128] P. N. Wachege, *Jesus Christ Our Mũthamaki (Ideal Elder): An African Christological Study Based on the Agĩkũyũ Understanding of Elder* (Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers, 1992).

[129] Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, xvii.

Bediako, evaluating Byang Kato's theology,[130] writes that his "negative estimation" of African Religion was due to his "theological presuppositions," principally a desire to "preserving the integrity of 'Biblical Christianity.'"[131] A result of this theological presupposition was a negative evaluation of any non-Christian religion. Kenyan Pentecostals and Evangelicals, similarly committed to theological presuppositions concerning 'Biblical Christianity,' share some of Kato's negative evaluation of African Religion.[132] Pentecostals tend to reject African Religion theologically, while accepting its world view,[133] similar to what was described in the previous sections. This theological rejection frequently comes in the form of declaring the spirits and religious rites of the former dispensation, 'demonic.'[134] What is often less noted by researchers is that African Pentecostals view Christian faith as a means towards entrance into the modern world and economy;[135] African Religion is then perceived as backwards (i.e. unable to accommodate to modern ways).[136] They often understand mainline scholarly interest in African religion and culture as leading Africa in the wrong direction, away from modern socio-economic and technological advancement.

Very little has been written concerning African Evangelicals and their understanding and relationship with African culture and values. What is clear is that African Evangelicals

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[130] Byang H. Kato, *Theological Pitfalls in Africa* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1975). Kato was generally very negative toward African Religion, and can be taken to represent (at least to some extent) current Evangelical and Pentecostal theologies that reject African Religion.

[131] Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, 389.

[132] Kato's writings are often promoted by American Evangelical missions. While I was teaching at Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST), an American Evangelical group offered every professor a free CD containing digital copies of all of Kato's writings.

[133] Kalu, "Preserving a Worldview," 130. See also some of the descriptions of Kenyan Pentecostal churches in Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, especially chapter 8.

[134] Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to 'Set the Captives Free'," 391.

[135] Maxwell, "Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?," 354.

[136] See Birgit Meyer, "Make a Complete Break with the Past: Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998). Meyer focuses on the rupture that Pentecostals make with the ontological past and the spiritual interpretations that they employ upon doing so. She seems to miss the rather ordinary Pentecostal view that the 'ways of the past' are backwards.

prioritise scripture over culture.[137] They express interest in creatively adapting African

traditions into Christian faith (using expressions such as, contextualising the Gospel or

integrating culture and faith), while cautioning against "Christo-paganism."[138] The fear of

syncretism and Christo-paganism generally means that there is more vigilance against than

acceptance of the African religious heritage.

Scholars of African Christianity have tended to view African Pentecostalism as

American influenced and non-African in origin and nature.[139] However, both Kalu and

Anderson have argued that African Pentecostalism is truly indigenous;[140] Anderson

considering it to be a form of African Initiated Christianity.[141] An example of a Pentecostal

understanding of its relationship with Africa will be shown.

A handbill[142] for a Pentecostal-led event in Uhuru Park, Nairobi in 2007 shows three

pictures of Africa. The theme revolves around the theological notion of fall and redemption.

Africa is depicted before the fall, after the fall and after redemption. The fall is related

principally to colonialism, while the depictions of Africa before the fall and after redemption

are nearly identical. These depictions emphasize the existence of empires, civilisation,

technology, unity, wealth, wisdom and freedom. The Christian redemption of Africa from a

Pentecostal perspective is depicted as a restoration of (an idealised and ancient) pre-colonial

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[137] Kwame Bediako, "Scripture as the Interpreter of Culture and Tradition," in *African Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo, (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 2006). Bediako, interestingly, bridges the mainline and the Evangelical traditions in Africa.

[138] Lawrence Lasisi, "Syncretism," in *African Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo, (Nairobi: Word Alive Publishers, 2006).

[139] Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exploring the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (London: Routledge, 1996), see especially chapter 8. Also, Mugambi, "Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa."

[140] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*. Anderson, *African Reformation*.

[141] While I find Anderson's argument convincing, most African Pentecostals refuse this designation (as Anderson acknowledges).

[142] (Handbill), "The Re-Birth of the Black Race: Prophetic History and Destiny," (Nairobi: Continental Prayers of Restoration, 2007). A copy of this handbill is found in Appendix One. I acquired the handbill at Dove Fellowship in Nairobi in 2007.

Africa. Kenyan neo-Pentecostals use Afrocentric symbolism – as do mainline scholars – but within a Pentecostal framework.

The African religious heritage, as found in Kenya, has significantly influenced Kenyan Christianity of all stripes. The manner in which Kenyan Christians interpret and perceive Islam depends much less upon the history of Christian-Muslim encounters, or upon Western-derived theologies of religion, than upon the interaction between the African religious heritage and local Christianity.

CHAPTER FOUR

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ISLAM IN KENYA

This chapter examines the history of how Islam came to be present in Kenya and factors that have contributed to its expansion and growth throughout the country. As this study is primarily concerned with Christian perceptions of Islam, the chapter will concentrate on those features of the history of Islam in Kenya that have the most influence on these perceptions.

4.1   Islam as Foreign to Kenya

Khalid says "the Kenyan who has gone through a European education has been trained to equate Muslims with non-Africans."[1] Current popular and academic writing about Islam in Kenya tends to portray Islam and Muslims as somehow foreign to Kenya. The history textbooks used in Kenyan secondary schools often refer to the Swahili people as Swahili-Arabs,[2] where the addition of the word, Arab, communicates the 'foreign' nature of these indigenous people. These history textbooks also stress the Arab and Persian origins of the Swahili people, language and culture,[3] which, as will be seen, does not conform to the more recent postcolonial scholarship of the past few decades.

Other Muslim peoples also receive labels, indicating their 'foreignness.' Non-Muslim Kenyans frequently refer to Somali people as 'Somalis' rather than as 'Kenyans,' while not

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[1] Abdallah Khalid, *The Liberation of Swahili: from European Appropriation* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977), 54. Khalid's book is polemic defense of Swahili against all things European.

[2] Assa Okoth and L. A. Ochieng'-Moya, *History and Government: Students' Book for Form One* (Nairobi: The Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, 2003), 75-76.

[3] Omato Maranga and others, *History and Government: Form One Students' Book*, 3rd ed. (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 2003), 71-84; Okoth and Ochieng'-Moya, *History and Government*, 85-115.

necessarily doing the same for other ethnic groups.[4] Even when challenged that two million

Somali people are native to Kenya, people are often reluctant to identify them as 'Kenyans.'

In 2007 several people of Somali ethnic origin were deported 'back' to Somalia. The

government claims that they were Somali nationals, not Kenyans, and that they were linked to

terrorism in some fashion. Human rights groups and Muslim groups have protested, saying

that Kenyan citizens were deported. While neither claim can be verified, given prevalent

attitudes towards Somali people, it is very possible that Kenyan citizens of Somali ethnicity

may have been deported along with those of Somali nationality. A person of Somali ethnicity

is often considered to be a foreigner until proven otherwise.[5]

The Nubian community has lived in Kenya since the early days of colonialism,

approximately 100 years, yet they are often called 'Sudanese.'[6] They also have difficulty

receiving the full rights of citizenship. The Boraana people are sometimes considered to be

from Ethiopia. And finally Muslims of Asian background are obviously foreign, considering

that they are Asian, though their families may have lived in the territory of what is now Kenya

since the late 19th century, or possibly from as early as the 14th to 15th century. Several of the

most important Muslim groups are thus perceived to be at least partially foreign.[7]

4.2   Origins of Islam in Kenya

There have been four principle movements of Islam into Kenya. Each of these four

movements will be examined historically with special concern for how its history influences

current Christian perceptions of Islam. These four movements of Islam into Kenya can be

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[4] Mistrust between 'Kenyans' and 'Somalis' are discussed in Godwin Rapando Murunga, "Conflict in Somalia and Crime in Kenya: Understanding the Trans-Territoriality of Crime," *African and Asian Studies* 4, no. 1 & 2 (2005).

[5] Ciugu Mwagiru, "Country Faces International Outcry over Mass Transfer of 'Terrorists' to Ethiopia," *Sunday Nation*, April 15 2007.

[6] Samantha Balaton-Chrimes, "Counting as Citizens: Recognition of the Nubians in the 2009 Kenyan Census," *Ethnopolitics* 10, no. 2 (2011): 209-210.

[7] These several observations have also come through many conversations with people in Kenya.

associated with four different ethnic/national groups: the emergence of the Swahili people along the East Africa coast, the presence of the Somali people in north-eastern Kenya, the immigration of south Asians, and the settlement of colonial-era African soldiers, often called Nubians, in Kenyan urban areas. The size, the effect and the influence on Islam in Kenya of each Muslim group vary considerably. The state of present research and available materials concerning each of the movements is rather uneven. Some groups have received an exceptional amount of attention, while others have received almost none. For example, Spear found 270 books and journal articles dedicated to the questions of Swahili origins and history written between the years 1985 and 2000.[8] The amount of research dedicated towards Somali origins is much more modest and the presence of Asian Muslims and 'Nubians' in Kenya have only produced a few articles in academic journals.

4.3   The Swahili People of the Coast and Islam

Islam first arrived in the territory now called Kenya through the interaction of Arab traders with a coastal African community, commonly referred to as the Swahili. Horton and Middleton have noted that it is only within relatively recent history that some people along the coast of East Africa have begun calling themselves, 'Swahili.'[9] Eastman also indicates that the Kiswahili-speaking[10] Muslims of the Kenyan coast have only taken on Swahili ethnic identity since independence, as a form of opposition to the national identity of being Kenyan.[11] This designation was first used by others (Arab traders in the 12th to 13th centuries) to refer to the African people who lived in the coastal trading towns. The word comes from

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[8] Thomas Spear, "Early Swahili History Reconsidered," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 33, no. 2 (2000): 257.

[9] Mark Horton and John Middleton, *The Swahili: The Social Landscape of a Mercantile Society*, The Peoples of Africa (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 14-17.

[10] The prefix "Ki-" designates language (i.e. Kiswahili = the Swahili language)

[11] Carol M. Eastman, "Swahili Ethnicity: A Myth Becomes Reality in Kenya," in *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities: Inland Influences and Stategies of Self-Determination*, ed. David J Parkin, (London: School of African and Oriental Studies, 1994), 85.

the Arabic, *sawahil*, for lands of the coast or ports of trade. Though first called 'Swahili' by Arab traders more than 800 years ago, the label only became popularly used during the British colonial era.[12] Ironically, it was freed slaves, liberated from Arab or Swahili owners, who first identified themselves as *Waswahili* (Swahili people), since most 'true Swahili' identified with their particular 'tribe' or town, such as Watangana, Wamvita (Mombasa), Wapate, etc.[13]

Of particular interest for this study is the African origin of these Muslim coastal peoples. While the vast majority of current scholars affirm the African origin of the Swahili people, culture and language, the more popular image is that of a mixed 'race' of Arab and Bantu people. In the current Kenyan secondary school curriculum students in Form One learn that "The Swahili were a product of intermarriages between the coastal Bantu and the Arabs."[14] This seemingly erroneous point of view comes from two sources. One, the Swahili people themselves have variously claimed Shirazi, Arab or African origins for themselves.[15] Socio-economic and political circumstances have often determined these various claims of origin. Two, the writings of colonial era researchers generally attributed the advent of Swahili civilisation to Persians and Arabs, as shown by the first line of Trimingham's *Islam in East Africa*, "The history of Islam in East Africa belongs more to the history of the Indian Ocean than to African history."[16] Again this viewpoint is reflected in current Kenyan school books, "Arabian and Islamic architecture also took root along the coast. The designs of buildings were Arabic and Persian."[17] However, current scholarship, while acknowledging outside

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[12] W. Arens, "The 'Waswahili': The Social History of an Ethnic Group," *Africa* 45, no. 4 (1975): 432.

[13] Mervyn. W. H. Beech, "Slavery on the East Coast of Africa," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 15, no. 58 (1916): 146.

[14] Maranga and others, *History and Government*, 75.

[15] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 19-20.

[16] J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa*, ed. Steve Bedney, reprint ed., Islam (New York: Books for Libraries, 1980; reprint, Oxford University Press, 1964).

[17] Okoth and Ochieng'-Moya, *History and Government*, 90.

influence, affirms the indigenous character of the architecture,[18] and other cultural features, in these coastal towns.

Because of the prevalence of the view that Swahili people, language and culture are an amalgamation of Persian and/or Arab people and African people, often with the foreign element as both initiating and predominant, the relevant aspects of the history of these coastal African people will be examined in some detail. Standard works such as the *Cambridge History of Africa*[19] and Trimingham's *Islam in East Africa* promote this dual origin perspective. This perspective is also found in school books[20], tourist information,[21] photographic coffee table books, etc.

4.3.1 Swahili Origins

A brief history of the origin and development of Swahili society on the coast of Kenya will be outlined. Four recent studies will be examined. Nurse and Spear,[22] a linguist and an historian, utilise linguistic evidence to establish a time frame on origins and outside influences, as well as analysing historical texts and traditions. Pouwels,[23] a historian specialising in East African history, is more critical of linguistic, archaeological and anthropological approaches that he believes do not take the historical process and evidence

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[18] Hatim Amiji, "The Asiatic Bias in the Historiography of the East African Coast," *Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 2 (1983): 68. Chapurukha Makokha Kusimba, *The Rise and Fall of Swahili States* (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 1999), 61.

[19] Roland Oliver, ed. *The Cambridge History of Africa: from c. 1050 to c. 1600*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[20] Maranga and others, *History and Government*; William Robert Ochieng, ed. *Themes in Kenyan history* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1990); Okoth and Ochieng'-Moya, *History and Government*.

[21] Joseph Bindloss, Tom Parkinson, and Matt Fletcher, *Kenya*, 5th ed. (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2003), 163; Elise Vachon, *Kenya Guide*, 2nd ed. (Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Open Road Publishing, 2000), 43.

[22] Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800-1500*, ed. Anthony F.C. Wallace and Lee V. Cassanelli, Ethnohistory (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1985).

[23] Randall Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900*, African Studies Series vol. 53 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

seriously enough. Horton and Middleton,[24] an archaeologist and an anthropologist, examine

the issues first from the perspective of Horton's archaeological research at a few sites along

the coast, especially at Shanga, and subject the issues raised to a thorough examination using

the skills of an anthropologist. Kusimba,[25] a Kenyan archaeologist, provides probably the best

overall history of the Swahili people by bringing together the methods used by each of the

above researchers. There is a general consensus among these writers concerning the origin

and development of Swahili society, though some minor differences in dates and on the role

of Persian traders on the coast exist.

Horton and Middleton say that by the middle of the first millennium Bantu-speaking

people were living in villages along the Kenyan coast, practicing small-scale farming, fishing

and hunting.[26] They probably traded with sea-faring Arabs, Indians and Persians on an

irregular basis, which over time evolved into more permanent commercial relationships.

Chami and Msemwa, having done recent archaeological research on the northern Tanzanian

and southern Kenyan coast, assert that "the communities of this region were playing a major

role in transoceanic trade" already in the 6th century.[27] By the 8th century at the latest, some of

these farming/fishing villages had transformed into merchant towns, as shown by

archaeological evidence (e.g. the presence of mosques, the minting of local coins[28] and a

common tradition of local pottery).[29] Kiswahili probably emerged as its own distinct language

around this time,[30] giving birth to a new civilisation.

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[24] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*.

[25] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*.

[26] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 28-46.

[27] Felix A. Chami and Paul J. Msemwa, "A New Look at Culture and Trade on the Azanian Coast," *Current Anthropology* 38, no. 4 (1997): 675.

[28] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 48-49.

[29] Mark Horton, "Closing the Corridor: Archaeological and Architectural Evidence for Emerging Swahili Regional Autonomy," in *Continuity and Autonomy in Swahili Communities: Inland Influences*

Both trade and Islam were important factors in the formation of Swahili society. This civilisation quickly expanded southward, as evidenced by the Swahili town of Kilwa, a thousand kilometres south of Lamu, which dates from the 9th century.[31] Commercial relationships with Arab, and possibly Persian, traders led to the gradual conversion of these coastal Kiswahili-speaking peoples to Islam. Following Robin Horton's theory on conversion,[32] Nurse and Spear write, "Each village was a microcosm, a miniuniverse, with its own specific spirits associated with it. To move to another village was to enter another world."[33] On the other hand, town people "lived in a macrocosmic world inhabited by peoples speaking different languages, having different ancestors, and working in different occupations. In this world the beliefs of the microcosm were too parochial; what was needed were beliefs that were universal. And so townspeople began to adopt Islam."[34]

Trade along the coast depended upon the monsoon seasons of the Indian Ocean. From November to February the winds enabled ships to sail towards the East African coast, whereas a change in wind patterns allowed ships to sail north from April to May, or again from August to September.[35] Muslim Arab merchants could be forced to stay a few months in these merchant towns waiting for favourable winds to take them back home. Colonial-era writers, therefore, concluded that Arab traders had built the trading centres and married local women, leading to the emergence of the 'mixed race' Swahili people.[36] Non-Western scholars see,

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and Strategies of Self-Determination, ed. David J. Parkin, Beitrage zur Afrikanstik (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994), 15-16.

[30] Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 49.

[31] Ibid., 52.

[32] Robin Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part 1," *Africa* 45, no. 3 (1975); Robin Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part 2," *Africa* 45, no. 4 (1975).

[33] Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 94.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Bashir A. Datoo, "Influence of Monsoons on Movement of Dhows along the East African Coast," *East African Geographical Review* 12 (1974): 23.

[36] Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa*, 9-10.

probably correctly, an element of ethnocentrism in the conclusion that an African people could not have founded the Swahili cities.[37] While current scholars disagree with colonial-era scholars on this theory of origins, these extended stays by Muslim merchants increased the amount and type of interactions between them and the local Bantu Swahili people. Intermarriages cannot be discounted, but they were not responsible for the formation of the Swahili people. Wooden mosques were first constructed, such as the one Horton excavated in Shanga,[38] probably for use by these Muslim visitors.

Over the next few centuries trade increased and a wealthy merchant elite developed among the people on the coast. After 1000 CE mosques were being constructed of stone or coral blocks in the larger towns.[39] The elite also began to build large stone/coral houses for themselves. They were most likely the first to convert to Islam; their conversions facilitating trading relationships with Arab Muslim merchants,[40] which does not exclude religious and cultural reasons for conversions. Immigrants claiming to be *shurafa* (descendants of the prophet endued with special blessing) from Yemen began to arrive in Swahili trading towns in small numbers in the 13th century.[41] It was at this time that Swahili Islam became Sunni of the *Shafi'i* school.[42]

It would be a mistake, however, to understand Swahili society to consist only, or even primarily, of urban trading centres. Kusimba reports that of over 400 Swahili settlements from the period 1000 – 1500 CE surveyed by archaeologists, only around 20 could be classified as

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[37] Kim, *Islam among the Swahili in East Africa*, 12; Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 27-30.

[38] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 48-49.

[39] Ibid., 51.

[40] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 133; Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 95.

[41] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 69; Randall Pouwels, "The East African Coast, c. 780 to 1900 C.E.," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levitzion and Randall Lee Pouwels, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 256.

[42] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 62-69. The authors believe that due to the influence of Zaidi traders from Yemen, Swahili Muslims practiced a form of *Shi'a* Islam until the 13th century.

urban with coral block houses and mosques.[43] The majority of the people lived in smaller

villages, practicing such occupations as artisanship, fishing and farming. Their conversion to

Islam was also much more gradual, and perhaps less orthodox. Beginning in the 12th century,

and continuing up to perhaps the 15th century, conversions occurred on a larger scale and the

Swahili people as a whole became Muslim.[44]

Pouwels calls the period, from the 12th to the 15th century, the 'Golden Age' of

indigenous Swahili society.[45] Nurse and Spear note that only a few loan words from Arabic,

primarily religious and commercial vocabulary, had entered Kiswahili in these early

centuries,[46] indicating the African indigenous nature of this coastal civilisation during its

golden age. The urban elite distinguished themselves from others, both Arab and African,

referring to themselves as *Waungwana*, which could be translated as 'civilised,' entailing

knowledge of local African Swahili culture and etiquette.[47] Both of these would change as

Arab influence increased on the coast in the following centuries.

4.3.2 Portuguese Interlude

As the 15th century came to a close, the Portuguese arrived on the East African Coast

"interested in commerce and religious crusade."[48] From the beginning they came with naval

power, Vasco da Gama's ships being heavily armed as he set sail from Portugal in 1497.[49]

Swahili towns were not fortified, nor organised for military defence,[50] so that a relatively few

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[43] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 119ff; Randall Pouwels, "The Medieval Foundations of East African Islam," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 11, no. 2 (1978): 219. Pouwels indicates 37 towns with at least one stone building.

[44] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 134; Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 95; Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 22.

[45] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 24.

[46] Nurse and Spear, *The Swahili*, 5-6, 95.

[47] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 72-73.

[48] Pouwels, "The East African Coast, c. 780 to 1900 C.E.," 258.

[49] Justus Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, ed. J.S. Kirkman, trans., J.F. Wallwork, 1961 ed. (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1961; reprint, 1971), 12.

[50] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 158.

Portuguese soldiers, sailors, merchants and missionaries were able to impose submission upon most of the Swahili towns within a few years. By 1515 the Indian Ocean was controlled by the Portuguese,[51] though their control of the coast was never absolute. However, the effects of Portuguese control of the seas were often devastating. In Kusimba's view the coming of the Portuguese signalled the "fall of the Swahili States."[52] The Portuguese attempted to halt all trade that they didn't control between the East African coast and elsewhere. They were not completely successful, but the amount of trade that Swahili communities had normally participated in was reduced significantly.[53]

The religious aspect of Portuguese encounter with Muslims was also very present. Strandes wrote of a brief attack on Mogadishu, "Without even getting into contact with the town, but simply because it was inhabited by Muslims, they bombarded it at close range with the ships' cannon, and inflicted considerable damage, particularly to vessels at their moorings."[54] Additionally, Pouwels says, "the Portuguese, following practices that long had existed between Muslims and Christians of the Mediterranean, perpetrated several acts of egregious brutality."[55] This included attacking and murdering an entire ship of Muslim pilgrims.[56] Kusimba writes, "The Portuguese system of warfare was, in many cases, scorched earth. The towns were not only looted, but often reduced to ashes. The town's residents were sent into slavery abroad or enslaved locally. Men, women and children were massacred."[57] These sort of actions were justified by claiming that "Islam and Christianity were forever hostile the one to the other, and that as the Muslims took every opportunity of seizing

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[51] William Robert Ochieng, *A History of Kenya* (Nairobi: Macmillan Kenya, 1985), 55.

[52] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 145.

[53] Ibid., 164.

[54] Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, 27.

[55] Pouwels, "The East African Coast, c. 780 to 1900 C.E.," 258.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 163.

Christians and their property, so were the Christians justified in retaliating whenever they could."[58] However, Prestholdt shows that the Muslim religion of the Swahili, the Arabic language spoken by at least a few of them, and similarity in the appearance of Swahili towns to Portuguese towns offered the Portuguese some points of familiarity that enabled them to communicate and relate with the inhabitants of the East African coast more easily than they could with those of the interior.[59]

Although the Portuguese, under d'Almeida, attacked and sacked Mombasa in 1505, their presence along the northern Swahili coast (i.e. Kenya) was limited until the end of the century.[60] After a series of Turkish naval efforts to free fellow Muslims from Christian subjection from the 1540s to the 1580s and two revolts in Mombasa in 1528 and 1589, the Portuguese began construction of Fort Jesus of Mombasa in 1593.[61] The Portuguese were expelled from Oman in 1650, and Omani power increased considerably in the Indian Ocean region. From 1653 to 1698 Omani-backed forces helped to liberate Pemba, Zanzibar, Otondo, Pare, Faza and finally Mombasa from Portuguese control.[62] The Portuguese continued to try to assert dominance along the coast, even recapturing Mombasa for about one year, only to be forced out permanently in 1729.[63]

This period of East African history should not, however, be thought of as only involving the Portuguese, Swahili and Arabs. Non-Muslim African people were, and had been, involved in the history of the coast. Archaeological evidence found along the Galana

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[58] Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, 50.

[59] Jeremy Prestholdt, "Portuguese Conceptual Categories and the 'Other' Encounter on the Swahili Coast," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2001).

[60] H. Neville Chittick, "The East Coast, Madagascar and the Indian Ocean," in *The Cambridge History of Africa: from c. 1050 to c. 1600*, ed. Roland Oliver, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 228-229.

[61] Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, 134-142, 144.

[62] Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa*, 20.

[63] Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*, 255.

River in present day Kenya shows that people from the interior were trading with people on the coast as early as the 5th – 6th centuries.[64] Trade between the coast and the interior was a necessary part of the Indian Ocean commercial network. The interior furnished items such as skins and ivory to the Swahili merchants, who in turn traded these items along with iron, mangrove poles, etc. for cloth, beads, porcelain, and so forth. The commercial links between the coast and the interior were often based on African Religion as much as those towards the sea were based on Islam. As Kusimba writes, "rural politics retained an allegiance to traditional animistic beliefs and kin-sanctioned ancestral cults."[65] Additionally, in the political intrigues and the warring between Swahili, Portuguese and Omani Arabs, non-Muslim Africans of the immediate hinterland were often involved, allying themselves with one group or another. The history of Islam in East Africa belongs as much to African history as it does to the history of the Indian Ocean.

4.3.3 Increasing Arab Influence on the East African Coast

The Portuguese period in East Africa inadvertently brought about an increase of Arab influence along the coast. First, in the early 16th century, Ahmed Gran led a *jihad* against the Orthodox Christian kingdom in Ethiopia. After initial Muslim success, the Christian Ethiopian kingdom finally prevailed, with minimal Portuguese help, as Gran's army disintegrated upon his death in battle in 1543.[66] A number of Arabs, including many *shurafa*, from the Hadramaut in Yemen had joined his army in fighting a holy war against Christians. Once Gran was defeated, rather than returning to Yemen, many of these men went to the East African coast, primarily in the Pate/Lamu area in the north, to continue the *jihad* against

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[64] David K. Wright, "New Perspectives on Early Regional Interaction Networks of East African Trade: A View from Tsavo National Park," *African Archaeological Review* 22, no. 3 (2005): 128.

[65] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 41.

[66] Mohammed Hassen, *The Oromo of Ethiopia: A History, 1570-1860* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994), 24.

Portuguese rule.[67] Being *shurafa*, these men were accepted in the Swahili towns as teachers and carriers of blessing. These men had also come to stay, rather than for trade, so that they married into local families, often ruling ones, thus instilling the blessings of being *sharif* into the lineage.[68] While not successfully expelling the Portuguese, this new Hadramaut Arab migration greatly increased the Arab influence upon Swahili culture and language.

Second, as Portuguese power decreased and Omani power increased in the latter half of the 17th century, Swahili coastal towns requested the help of Oman to overthrow their Portuguese oppressors.[69] Once the towns were liberated in 1698, the Yarubi Imams of Oman sent representatives, *maliwali*, to Mombasa to govern the area. In 1742 the religious Yarubi Imamate was overthrown by the more secular rule of the Busaidis. During the civil strife leading up to the change in rulers, the Mazrui family, who had supplied the *maliwali*, began to rule independently over much of the northern Swahili coast in 1735. Their period of rule lasted for about 100 years. Eventually, the Busaidi sultanate moved its capital to the island of Zanzibar, and began to take the territory governed by the Mazrui, so that from 1837 until the British incorporated the Kenyan coast into its East African Protectorate in 1895 the Busaidi sultans ruled over the coast.[70] The Swahili had moved from Portuguese colonialism to Omani colonialism.

These two waves of Arab immigration, Yemeni and Omani, from the 16th century onward greatly augmented the influence of Arabic culture and language upon Swahili society. Much of the Arabic vocabulary in modern Kiswahili was incorporated during this period.[71]

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[67] B. G. Martin, "Arab Migrations to East Africa in Medieval Times," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7, no. 3 (1974): 375-377; Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 261.

[68] Martin, "Arab Migrations to East Africa in Medieval Times," 378.

[69] Kusimba, *Rise and Fall*, 171.

[70] F. J. Berg, "The Swahili Community of Mombasa, 1500-1900," *Journal of African History* 9, no. 1 (1968): 49-54; Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 98-120.

[71] Spear, "Early Swahili History Reconsidered," 272.

Whereas the Swahili elite of the past had been civilised, *uungwana*, they began to more readily use the term, *ustaarabu* (Arab-like), to speak of themselves.[72] Previous Arab immigrants had readily been integrated into Swahili society, but these new immigrants generally remained 'Arabs' for generations. Factors, such as the immigration of women and families and the large number of immigrants, worked against easy integration.

Arabs had now also entered the region as colonialists, rather than as equal trading partners, and marriages and alliances with local families were not always desired.[73] By the end of the 19th century many Swahili families began to transform their names into more Arabic sounding ones (i.e. Kilindini became Al-Kindy).[74] Even the religion of the coast was affected, as religious authority became connected to writing and knowledge of Arabic[75] through Mazrui influence in Mombasa and Hadrami influence in Lamu.[76] During the Omani period trade centres and trade routes were established deep into the interior, with both Arab and Swahili merchants trading in ivory and slaves. The economy also changed as slavery, which had previously been practiced to a small extent,[77] became a mainstay of the coast's economy. Large plantations were established on Zanzibar, Pemba and along the Kenyan coast primarily by Arabs (Omanis more than Yemenis) and some Swahili families.[78] Economically, this was a new period of growth and wealth.

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[72] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 72.

[73] Randall Pouwels, "Sh. al-Amin B. Ali Mazrui and Islamic Modernism in East Africa, 1875-1947," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 3 (1981): 335.

[74] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 129-130.

[75] Pouwels, "Sh. al-Amin B. Ali Mazrui and Islamic Modernism in East Africa, 1875-1947," 333.

[76] Mohamed Bakari, "The New 'Ulama in Kenya," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 171.

[77] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 135-136.

[78] Frederick Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 23.

4.3.4 Slavery and the Slave Trade in Kenya

Slavery and trading in slaves had been practiced on at least a small-scale for probably centuries along the coast. There is evidence for such trade between the Swahili coast and Arabia as early as the 9th – 10th centuries.[79] However, it wasn't until the 19th century that slavery took on major economic importance. As the very existence of Swahili towns along the present Kenyan coast depended upon good relationships with the peoples of the immediate hinterland,[80] and since trade routes into the interior of Kenya were controlled by the Akamba until the 1860s,[81] not many slaves were actually raided from the present territory of Kenya. There are a few exceptions: stories of Akamba traders capturing Kikuyu women to sell as slaves in the latter half of the 19th century,[82] and Arab and Swahili merchants entering from Buganda to raid Luhya populated areas in present-day western Kenya in late 1800s.[83] Also, due to a drought affecting the interior of Kenya in the 1880s, "large numbers of Mijikenda pawned themselves or their children for grain to the coastal plantation owners"[84] expecting to redeem them once the drought had finished. However, the coastal people, now in a position of power, continued to hold them in slavery.[85] The drought also "gave coastal potentates a somewhat better chance to stage raids, capturing badly needed labourers."[86]

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[79] Horton and Middleton, *The Swahili*, 73-75.

[80] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, 122.

[81] William Robert Ochieng, "Kenya's Internal and International Trade in the Nineteenth Century," in *An Economic History of Kenya*, ed. William Robert Ochieng and Robert M. Maxon, (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers, 1992), 44.

[82] Godfrey Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu: 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), 106.

[83] Gideon S. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya: 1500-1930* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), 143-145.

[84] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, 128.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya, 1890-1925*, Reprint 1981, Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 217.

The non-Muslim people of Kenya were not greatly affected by the slavery practiced on the coast,[87] though Cooper notes that his interviews revealed a "legacy of bitterness" among Mijikenda.[88] Also, as Nnyombi writes "Missionaries presented Islam as a 'religion of slave trade,' and this generalised description of Islam has remained in the minds of many Kenyans to the discredit of Islam."[89] Maina makes similar claims,[90] and similar statements – that Muslims had enslaved their ancestors – can be heard among up-country Kenyans. Secondary school textbooks present an unclear picture of the history of slavery and the slave trade. They don't differentiate between what happened in other parts of East Africa and Kenya; they can also be unclear about the extent and chronology of slavery. Upon reading these books one gets the impression that much slave trading had been happening throughout eastern Africa since the early days of Swahili civilisation.[91]

The Muslim population of the coast increased significantly because of slavery; most slaves and their descendants converted to Islam and entered Swahili society, though as marginal people of low social status.[92] Islam formed one aspect of a threefold identity perceived by the descendants of slaves; their ethnic origins and being people of the coast formed two aspects.[93] Others became Muslim through immigration, generally through patron-client relationships between the Swahili and non-Muslim African groups nearby.[94] Still others

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[87] As noted above there were a few exceptions.

[88] Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, 217, footnote 123.

[89] Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 160.

[90] Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Said Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 122.

[91] Maranga and others, *History and Government*, 74-75, 80-82; Okoth and Ochieng'-Moya, *History and Government*, 89, 104-106, 108. Okoth and Ochieng'-Moya's textbook presents a somewhat more clear history of slavery in Kenya, especially in a map on p. 107. Yet, the student would still gain the impression that slave-raiding had taken place throughout East Africa, including Kenya.

[92] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, 25; Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 193.

[93] Cooper, *Plantation Slavery on the East Coast of Africa*, 240.

[94] David Sperling, "The growth of Islam among the Mijikenda of the Kenya coast, 1826-1933" (Doctoral Thesis, University of London, 1988), 66; Justin Willis, *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the*

became Muslim through marriage, as some non-Muslim African groups allied themselves with the Swahili against Portuguese and Arab intruders, such as the Segeju.[95] Other Bantu language speaking groups (Pokomo and Mijikenda) near the coast also began converting to Islam in the 19th century due to Swahili influence and later in reaction to British colonialism.[96]

4.3.5 British Arrival in East Africa

With the arrival of the British the dynamics of the situation changed once more. British influence was felt early in the 19th century, demonstrated by an 1828 treaty with the Busaidi Sultanate on Zanzibar limiting the slave trade[97] and the presence of Church Missionary Society missionaries, Johann Krapf and Johannes Rebman, beginning in the 1840s.[98] From the beginning of the Eastern African Protectorate in 1895 several characteristics of British rule transformed the situation of Coastal Islam in Kenya. One, British rule significantly reduced the wealth of Muslims on the coast. Two, the British viewed the Arabs as more civilised than Africans, thus favouring this community. Three, the centre of British East Africa soon moved to the Kenyan highlands, where non-Muslim Africans received missionary education and eventual employment in the colonial state. Four, as an important port, Mombasa attracted workers from the interior.

The abolishment of slavery in Kenya in 1907 undercut the plantation system upon which the wealth of many had been built. Land that formerly had been productive

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Making of the Mijikenda, Oxford Studies in African Affairs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). Willis' entire book makes this case. Scholars, while agreeing with his basic position, disagree about the extent to which it can be applied.

[95] Sperling, "Islam among the Mijikenda", 46; Strandes, *The Portuguese Period in East Africa*. The Mosungulos in Strandes account of the Portuguese period.

[96] See Robert Louis Bunger, *Islamization among the Upper Pokomo*, 2d ed., Foreign and Comparative Studies: African Series (Syracuse, NY: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 1979). David Sperling, "The Coastal Hinterland and Interior of East Africa," in *The History of Islam in Africa*, ed. Nehemia Levitzion and Randall Pouwels, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000). Sperling, "Islam among the Mijikenda".

[97] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 163.

[98] Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa*, 3, 11.

agriculturally lay unused, then the Land Titles Ordinance instituted by the British in 1908

allowed unused land to be appropriated by the crown.[99] Much land was lost by Swahili and

Arabs on the coast in this way, though a few wealthy Omani families benefited greatly by

purchasing large amounts of property.[100]

British favouritism towards Arabs encouraged Swahili people to make claims of Arab

origins for themselves. The British viewed Africa as a place where each person belonged to a

tribe. The system of 'indirect rule' was instituted according to these preconceived ideas of

tribe. In 1910 the Colonial government introduced legislation which classified Arabs as 'non-

natives' concerning the payment of the Hut Tax.[101] The Swahili were, therefore, forced to

make a choice concerning identity unlike any they'd ever been confronted with in the past.

The acceptance of Swahili identity in the British colonial system meant the acceptance of

'native' status, which acquired the "connotations of inferiority and under-privilege."[102] Being

an Arab enabled a person to achieve higher social and economic status. Therefore, to claim an

Arab origin was not to deny being Swahili, as being Swahili was an identity imposed upon

them by outsiders. However, as Hyder Kindy repeatedly notes in his autobiography,[103] the

Arab community looked down upon the Swahili, even criticising him for using an Arab form,

El-Kindy, of his name.[104] In any case, many 'formerly' Swahili families were then registered

as 'Arabs' in the classification system imposed by the British, further confusing the issue of

Swahili identity.

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[99] Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 183.

[100] Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters*, 217.

[101] Ahmed I. Salim, *The Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895-1965* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973), 187.

[102] Ahmed I. Salim, "'Native or Non-Native?': The Problem of Identity and the Social Stratification of the Arab-Swahili of Kenya," in *Hadith 6*, ed. Bethwell A. Ogot, (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1974), 66.

[103] Hyder Kindy, *Life and Politics in Mombasa* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1972).

[104] Ibid., 20-21.

The railway from Mombasa to Uganda was finished in 1901, which opened the

Kenyan highlands to white settlers,[105] and in 1907 the capital of the British Protectorate was

moved to Nairobi. Christian missions, which had found progress on the coast difficult, also

gave greater attention to the interior once the railway allowed easier travel.[106] While

missionaries often discouraged 'too much education,' they were virtually unanimous in their

advocacy for literacy to enable Kenyans to read the Bible. By contrast Muslim communities

on the coast distrusted the Western education offered by missionaries; they feared – with

reason – that the missionaries wanted to convert their children to Christianity.[107] Within a

short time Africans of the interior were educated in the language and culture of the colonisers,

thus able to find employment, and eventual political power, whereas African Muslims along

the coast had retained the Islamic forms of education, memorisation of the Qur'ān and Arabic

script, and were thus left outside the emerging economic and political structures.[108] From the

perspective of the people of the coast, this was a reversal of previous roles in which the

Muslim people of the coast were understood to be more educated and civilised than those of

the interior.

Additionally, with the construction of the railway Mombasa became a major port and

the centre for importing and exporting goods from the Kenyan interior and Uganda. Men from

the interior came to Mombasa to find jobs. In the early decades of the 20th century some of

these workers converted to Islam and brought their new religion back to their homeland.[109]

However, as the years progressed immigrants from the interior brought their religion to the

coast, and as Holway shows, by 1962 Christianity formed the majority religion in Mombasa

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[105] Ochieng, *A History of Kenya*, 102-105.

[106] Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1965), 170.

[107] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 124-125.

[108] Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 152.

[109] Yusuf A. Nzibo, "Islamization in the Interior of Kenya: A General Overview," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Said Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 44.

District.[110] In these ways British colonialism negatively affected the standing of the Swahili community on the Kenyan coast.

The struggle for independence from Britain was led primarily by non-Muslim Kenyans. The Muslims of the coast campaigned for independence from 'up country' Africans of the interior in a movement called '*mwambao*' (Kiswahili for coast) even to the point of demanding the maintenance of British 'protectorate' status over the coast and Zanzibar.[111] This movement is one reason that the coast has been relatively marginalised politically since independence in 1963. The Swahili language has grown to dominate communication in much of eastern Africa, but as Constantin writes, "géant linguistique, la 'swahilité' est un nain politique."[112]

It has been shown that the Swahili of the coast are an indigenous African Muslim community, though the more popular perception is otherwise. This community has experienced some form of colonialism for the past 500 years, and many Swahili would claim that they continue to be 'colonised' by up-country Africans. This period of colonialism has augmented the influence of Arabic language and culture on the Swahili people, though they remain an African people. Omani colonialism tended to place the Swahili behind the newcomers of Omani origin in both economic terms and social and political status. British colonialism again modified this community's position on the coast, so that today their status is greatly diminished, and they seem to be a marginal people in the new state of Kenya.

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[110] James D. Holway, "The Religious Composition of the Population of the Coast Province of Kenya," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 3, no. 3 (1970): 235-237.

[111] François Constantin, "Social Stratification on the Swahili Coast: From Race to Class?," *Africa* 59, no. 2 (1989): 155; D. Cruise O'Brien, "Coping with the Christians: The Muslim Predicament in Kenya," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period since Independence*, ed. Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), 202.

[112] "While a linguistic giant, Swahili is a political dwarf." François Constantin, "Condition Swahili et Identité Politique," *Africa* 57, no. 2 (1987): 221.

4.4   Somali People in Kenya and Islam

The Somali people became part of this story when British East Africa joined the nomadic groups, who inhabit the arid lands of what is now northern Kenya, with the people of the coast and the fertile interior into a single political unit. "One main reason why Britain extended her domain over the whole of the Northern Province, including the NFD (Northern Frontier District), was that she wished to provide a buffer between Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia on the one side, and the East African railway and the white settlers in the highlands on the other."[113] The predominant group among these nomadic peoples was the Muslim Somali, who are now the largest Muslim group in modern Kenya.[114]

The Somali are generally considered to be relative newcomers to the region, having only crossed the Juba River (in present day Somalia) in the mid-19th century, and reaching the Tana River, where the British stopped their advance in 1909.[115] However, Turton suggests that this may have been a reconquest of land as "there is evidence that to the north and north-west of the Lorian Swamp Galla,[116] Somali and Masai peoples interacted for several centuries."[117] If Turton is correct, then Somali people had most likely lived in northeastern Kenya for centuries before being gradually driven out by Oromo expansion from southern Ethiopia beginning in the 16th century, only to return in the latter part of the 19th century.

There are two competing theories of Somali origins. I.M. Lewis, following Somali oral traditions, places Somali origins in the northern Horn of Africa, where he says, Cushitic,

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[113] A. A. Castagno, "The Somali - Kenyan Controversy: Implications for the Future," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (1964): 169.

[114] Raymond G. Gordon, Jr. (ed.), "Ethnologue: Languages of the World", SIL International http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Kenya (accessed 18 June 2007).

[115] Christian Bader, *Le Sang et le Lait: Breve Histoire des Clans Somali* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1999), 92; I.M. Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," *The Journal of African History* 1, no. 2 (1960): 226.

[116] Galla is a term that was formerly used by Europeans to refer to the people now normally called the Oromo people.

[117] E.R. Turton, "Bantu, Galla and Somali Migrations in the Horn of Africa: A Reassessment of the Juba/Tana Area," *The Journal of African History* 16, no. 4 (1975): 536.

proto-Somali pastoralists and Arab immigrants intermarried forming new lineages which became the Somali people. He adds that due to various historical, ecological and religious reasons these people began in the 10th century to steadily migrate in southern and western directions, displacing Oromo and Bantu people, finally reaching the Tana River in 1909.[118] Herbert Lewis, an American anthropologist working among the Oromo, proposed a different theory, using Oromo oral traditions and historical linguistics.[119] Linguistic evidence suggests that the Eastern Cushitic group of languages (of which Somali is one) originated somewhere in the area of southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya; 21 of the 24 Eastern Cushitic languages are still spoken in this region.[120] In addition, Oromo traditions collected from many different Oromo groups in various regions also speak of a south-central Ethiopian origin near Lake Abaya.[121] Also, Somali traditions of Oromo-Somali warfare are found primarily among the Darood clans located in the southern parts of Somali territory (i.e. those regions where confrontations would have occurred during Oromo expansion and Somali reconquest).[122] Iye, a Somali political scientist, explains Somali traditions of Quraysh Arabic origin (thus countering I.M. Lewis's argument) saying, "Les Somalis … du fait de leur islamisation et de leur tentative d'assimilation à la civilisation arabo-musulmane, se sont construits de toutes pièces une origine arabe en rattachant leur généalogie aux tribus prestigieuses du prophète Mohamed."[123]

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[118] I.M. Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa."

[119] Herbert S. Lewis, "The Origins of the Galla and the Somali," *The Journal of African History* 7, no. 1 (1966).

[120] Ibid.: 38-39.

[121] Ibid.: 34.

[122] Ali Moussa Iye, *Le Verdict de l'Arbre: Le Xeer Issa, Etude d'une 'Democratie Pastorale'* (Djibouti: self-published, nd), 63.

[123] Ibid., 49. "Somalis ... because of their Islamisation and their attempt to assimilate to Arab-Muslim civilisation have constructed an Arabic origin by joining their genealogies to the prestigious tribes of the prophet Muhammad." (my translation)

It would seem that the most likely scenario is that many Somali-speaking people still lived in northern Kenya until, for some unknown reason, the Oromo people began to expand rapidly across Ethiopia and into present-day Kenya in the early 16th century, as attested to in contemporary Ethiopian and Portuguese written sources and Oromo traditions.[124] About 300 years later a smallpox epidemic allowed the Somali to defeat the Oromo and control the region from the Juba River to the Tana River.[125] The Somali presence in North Eastern Province is almost certainly a return, rather than a new episode.

Another significant group of Somalis (from the Isaaq clan) living in Kenya, first came from Aden as *askaris* and settled in towns working as clerks, interpreters and traders in livestock.[126] Their success in trade soon attracted Herti Somalis from the Darood clans of British Somaliland in the north.[127] These two groups of Somalis have remained urban traders in Kenya. The passionate protests by the Isaaq in the decades before 1940 to pay higher taxes illustrates well the attitude that most Somali people held towards non-Somali Africans. The Isaaq were classified as native Africans by the colonial administration and therefore required to pay the lower 'native Poll Tax,' but the Isaaq insisted that they were Asian and demanded to pay the higher rate charged to this group. As Turton explains, "The Isaq were indeed strongly convinced that their status was superior to that of other East Africans and they bitterly resented being placed in the same category as the Bantu, whom they pejoratively referred to as 'slaves.'"[128] While other Somali clans may not have gone as far as demanding to pay higher taxes, feelings of superiority towards non-Somali Africans would have been (and

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[124] H. S. Lewis, "The Origins of the Galla and the Somali," 32-34.

[125] I.M. Lewis, "The Somali Conquest of the Horn of Africa," 226.

[126] E.R. Turton, "The Isaq Somali Diaspora and Poll-Tax Agitation in Kenya, 1936-41," *African Affairs* 73, no. 292 (1974): 326.

[127] E.R. Turton, "Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule and the Development of Somali Political Activity in Kenya, 1893-1960," *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 1 (1972): 120.

[128] Turton, "Isaq Somali Diaspora," 326.

usually continue to be) similar, which naturally effects Kenyan Somali relations with other Kenyans.[129]

The Somali were also instrumental in the Islamisation of other peoples within Kenya. Castagno writes, "Colonial officials readily acknowledged the 'separate identity' of the Somalis, a separateness which in large part was based on religion, on a degree of homogeneity in language and customs, on fighting prowess, and on ability to convert and assimilate contiguous non-Muslim groups."[130] Large sections of the Oromo Boraana people in northern Kenya became Muslim in the 19th and 20th century due to Somali influence. They regarded the Somalis as people who were successful in the face of foreign colonialism, so they adopted Somali ways, including Islam.[131] In addition Somali Islam has long been associated with Sufi brotherhoods, especially the Qadiriya and Salihiya, inspiring *wadaado* (sheikhs in Somali) who traveled and taught Islam.[132] The Malakote people (a Pokomo group) along the Tana River near Garissa also attribute their Islamisation to contact with Somali people.[133]

Murunga notes there is a "Kenyan suspicion of all ethnic Somali including those who are Kenyan citizens."[134] The *shifta* war had been a major cause of this suspicion. While Muslims on the Kenyan coast protested joining the new nation of Kenya through the *mwambao* movement, the Somali Muslims of Northeast Province took up arms to fight for the right to join neighbouring Somalia. This was termed the *shifta* war, from an Ethiopian word meaning bandits. Both the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments found it expedient to refer to the war as banditry, rather than a struggle for separateness.

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[129] Murunga, "Conflict in Somalia and Crime in Kenya."

[130] Castagno, "Somali - Kenyan Controversy," 170.

[131] Mario I. Aguilar, *Being Oromo in Kenya* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998), 2-3.

[132] I. M. Lewis, *Saints and Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-based Society* (London: HAAN Associates, 1998), 13-14.

[133] Personal conversation with a member of the Malakote.

[134] Murunga, "Conflict in Somalia and Crime in Kenya," 145.

Two primary reasons can be given for this *shifta* war. One reason was the internal

dynamics of the Somali situation. The Somali clans present in Kenya were also present on the

other side of the border in Somalia. These people had interacted and crossed the borders since

their creation. Somalia nationalism was also growing, and the Somali people of the NFD

wanted to become a part of a larger Somali nation. Murunga says that 87% of the Somali

people in Kenya wanted to join Somalia.[135] The Somali Youth League, having started in

Mogadishu, was also active in colonial Kenya promoting Somali nationalism.[136] A second

reason was the manner in which the British administered the NFD where the Somali people

lived. Mburu writes, "The colonial administration expressed concern that, as more Pagans and

Christians embrace Islam, the predominately Muslim Somali population might use religion as

a unifying factor and gain territorial advantage over non-Muslims."[137] Therefore, the Special

District Ordinance of 1934 was passed to limit interaction between the people of the NFD and

the rest of Kenya.[138] Included in this ordinance were provisions for pass laws similar to those

of apartheid South Africa. Special permits were required to enter or leave the NFD, thus

isolating its economic and political development from the rest of Kenya.[139] The Somali and

Boraana Muslim people of the NFD never had the opportunity to form political alliances with

those living across the Tana River.

The outcome of the five-year *shifta* war was mutual suspicion between Kenyan

Somalis and other Kenyans. Though, as Al-Safi notes, "In Kenya … Somalis have found

themselves far more secure economically, socially and politically. … Prospects for education,

health services and economic development … are more promising in Kenya than in

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[135] Ibid.: 147.

[136] Turton, "Somali Resistance to Colonial Rule," 136-138.

[137] Nene Mburu, *Bandits on the Border: the Last Frontier in the Search for Somali Unity* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2005), 53.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., 78.

Somalia."[140] However, suspicion and tension between Kenyan Somalis and other Kenyans have not disappeared. The presence of 150,000 refugees from Somalia (in 2005),[141] which has grown to half a million since 2011,[142] has also contributed to tensions and the perception of the foreign nature of Somalis in Kenya.

The issues concerning Somali Muslims in Kenya are similar to those discussed concerning the Swahili. It has been shown that the Somali are a Cushitic African people, originating in southern Ethiopia. Some Somali clans most likely lived in Kenya for centuries before being pushed out by Boraana Oromo expansion, only to return in the 19th century. Somali Muslims, similar to the Swahili, have considered themselves to be superior to other Africans and contested being ruled by them. Non-Muslim Kenyans have also tended to view both groups as 'foreign' to what it means to be Kenyan.[143]

4.5   Nubis and Islam

Islam also spread into the interior through the colonial army and police which, in its early stages, was a majority Muslim army with Kiswahili the *lingua franca* of the military.[144] These soldiers eventually settled in urban centres throughout British East Africa. The earliest soldiers used by the British came from the army that "Khedive Muhammad Ali of Ottoman Egypt mobilized to conquer Sudan in the nineteenth century."[145] Frederick Lugard led a group

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[140] Mahasin A.G.H. Al-Safi, "Kenya Somalis: The Shift from 'Greater Somalia' to Integration with Kenya," *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 4, no. 2 (1995): 40.

[141] See the report by the UNHCR. http://www.unhcr.org/4641be610.html

[142] See the recent report by the UNHCR. http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php

[143] O'Brien, "Coping with the Christians," 202.

[144] Mungai Mutonya and Timothy Parsons, "KiKAR: A Swahili Variety in Kenya's Colonial Army," *Journal of African and Afro-American Studies* 25, no. (2004): 111.

[145] Omari H. Kokole, "Idi Amin, 'the Nubi' and Islam in Ugandan Politics, 1971-1979," in *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period since Independence*, ed. Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle, East African Studies (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995), 46.

of these men into Uganda in 1890.[146] Most of the soldiers were from different parts of Sudan, and a creolised form of Arabic, which came to be known as Nubi, became the common language. These soldiers, most of whom were originally recruited in Sudan, became known as Nubis.[147] Eventually, this military band evolved into the East African Rifles and then the King's African Rifles. By 1902 at least half of the East African Rifles were Sudanese, or Nubis.[148] The majority of the other soldiers were Somali or Swahili, who most likely would have been from the lower class or freed slaves. As time passed men from other ethnic origins within Kenya became part of this military organisation.

However, soldiers from these varied Muslim backgrounds: Sudanese, Swahili, Somali, etc. settled into homogenous neighbourhoods, called *majengo* (ghetto in Swahili), Swahili and/or Nubi villages, in several Kenyan urban areas,[149] sometimes even founding the towns as centres of British administration.[150] As these military men were often the first African inhabitants of emerging towns in rural areas, they welcomed individuals from rural non-Muslim ethnic groups into their community as they came to these administration centres in search of employment. As a result many of the early urban residents from many different ethnic groups converted to Islam. These early converts were often called 'Swahili' by the local people, and they usually cut off relations with their ethnic homes and took Muslim

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[146] Adam Hussein Adam, "The Nubians and Statelessness: History in Defining Modern Lives.", Open Society Justice Initiative http://dev.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2/fs/?file_id=17043 (accessed 8 April 2007).

[147] Kokole, "The Nubi and Islam," 46-47.

[148] Timothy Parsons, "'Kibra is Our Blood': The Sudanese Military Legacy in Nairobi's Kibera Location, 1902-1968," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 30, no. 1 (1997): 88.

[149] *Briefing on the Nubian Community of Kenya*, (Nairobi: Centre for Minority Rights Development, June 15, 2004); N. Kabiri, "The Evolution of an African Muslim Demography in Kenya," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Said Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995); S. Ikua Kariuki, "Some Aspects of Islamic Conversion among the Kikuyu of Nyeri in Early 20th Century," in *Islam in Kenya*, ed. Mohamed Bakari and Saad Said Yahya, (Nairobi: Mewa Publications, 1995), 30-32; Anne Nkirote Kubai, "The Muslim Presence and Representations of Islam among the Meru of Kenya" (Doctoral Thesis, King's College, 1995), 26-52; Nzibo, "Islamization in the Interior of Kenya: A General Overview."

[150] Carl A. Dutto, *Nyeri Townsmen: Kenya* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975), 25.

names, therefore relegating conversion to the individual affairs of urban migrants.[151] This trend changed rather dramatically by World War One, and few conversions to Islam occurred thereafter among the ethnic groups of the interior.

According to the Centre for Minority Rights the Nubis in Kenya are a people without nationality, even though they have been there for several generations.[152] Once more they represent a Muslim group which are considered to be foreigners in Kenya.

4.6   Kenya's Asian Muslim Community

Immigrants from Muslim communities in the Indian sub-continent began settling in East Africa in the mid-1800s. A British consular report in the 1870s stated that there were over 2000 Khojas[153] (Shia Ismailis) and 500 Bohras,[154] another Shia group, in East Africa. The Asian[155] communities in East Africa have generally been economically successful. The Asian Muslim communities have used some of this wealth to build mosques for African Muslim communities.[156] The Khoja Ismaili community in particular has also constructed hospitals, schools and other facilities that have increased their reputation in Kenya. However, Asian Muslim communities in Kenya tend to be insular, building and using their own mosques and cemeteries, as well as, not marrying outside their community.[157] Their wealth and the inaccessibility of the community to the average African Kenyan has led to a rather tense relationship between the Asian and African communities in Kenya.

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[151] Kabiri, "The Evolution of an African Muslim Demography in Kenya," 75-77.

[152] *Briefing on the Nubian Community of Kenya.*

[153] Hatim Amiji, "Some Notes on Religious Dissent in Nineteenth-Century East Africa," *African Historical Studies* 4, no. 3 (1971): 606.

[154] Hatim Amiji, "The Bohras of East Africa," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 7, no. 1 (1975): 36.

[155] In East Africa, the word 'Asian' is generally used to speak of those with an Indian sub-continent origin.

[156] Yusuf A. Nzibo, "Islam and the Swahili-Speaking Community of Nairobi, c. 1895-1963," *JIMMA* 5, no. 2 (1984): 447.

[157] P. K. Balachandran, "An Embattled Community: Asians in East Africa Today," *African Affairs* 80, no. 320 (1981).

4.7   Conclusion

The origins of Islam and primary Muslim groups in Kenya have been traced, demonstrating that these groups either formed in the area now known as Kenya, or have lived here for an extended period of time. The history of the Swahili people has been examined in more detail because of their cultural and historical influence in the region. It has been seen that under colonisation, and continuing since independence, Muslims groups (Swahili, Somali, Nubians and Asians) have been politically and socially marginalised. Non-Muslim Kenyans frequently perceive them to be foreign to Kenya, which further marginalises these communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM ENCOUNTERS IN KENYA

This chapter will examine the history of Christian-Muslim encounters in Kenya that form the background against which the writings of Kenyan Christians analysed in chapters eight and nine must be viewed. This background will be explored by a journey from early historical possibilities, through the disastrous interreligious encounter under Portuguese attempts to colonise the East African coast, through the early British Protestant missionary encounter with Muslims, and finally to the recent postcolonial debate over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the Kenyan constitution.

5.1   The Early Possibilities

It is possible, and even likely, that some sporadic encounters occurred between Christianity and the East African coast prior to the arrival of Islam. Christianity had been established nearby in the Ethiopian highlands from as early as the middle of the 4th century. Baur reports the existence of stories about Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox monks arriving on the coast to preach the Christian faith even before the arrival of Islam.[1] Both Syrian and indigenous monks were active in these early centuries of Ethiopian Christianity as wandering evangelists. The Aksumite kingdom of Ethiopia also controlled the maritime trade routes of the Red Sea from the 4th to the 7th century.[2] Until the early decades of the 7th century there was relatively extensive contact between the coast of India and the Christian nations further west, including the kingdom of Aksum.

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[1] Baur, *Catholic Church in Kenya*, 15.

[2] Jacke Phillips, "Punt and Aksum: Egypt and the Horn of Africa," *The Journal of African History* 38, no. 3 (1997): 450, 456; Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270-1527*, ed. John D. Hargreaves and George Shepperson, Oxford Studies in African Affairs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 32.

Cosmas Indicopleustes,[3] writing of his travels to Ethiopia and India in probably the 6th century, mentions a land beyond Barbaria called Zingium in his account, which seems to be linked to the Somali coast on the Indian Ocean. Cosmas personally does not travel to Zingium; in fact he fears the ocean currents coming into the Gulf of Aden.[4] However, his account leaves open the possibility of continued contact between Egypt and the East African coast. The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, which demonstrates that Ptolemaic Egypt traded along the East African coast a few centuries earlier, might also be considered. In addition, coins and shards of cooking pots of Roman-Egyptian origin from the 3rd century have been found in Zanzibar.[5] It is not unreasonable to suppose that by the 6th century some Christian merchants, and perhaps monks or priests, must have interacted with the population of that area. However, any possible interactions between Christians and the coastal population were cut off by the expansion of Islam and Arab control of the Red Sea and Indian Ocean beginning in early in the 7th century.

5.2   Early Portuguese Encounter with Muslims in Kenya

Leaving the realm of historical possibilities and entering that of historical certainty, chapter four has already shown the ruthless manner in which the Portuguese arrived on the East African coast: sacking towns, sinking ships and killing inhabitants.[6] Religion was often a factor. Having only recently achieved liberation from Muslim dominance in the Iberian Peninsula, Portuguese mission was generally understood in terms of the *Reconquista* upon

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[3] The identity of Cosmas Indicopleustes is not certain. Frykenberg refers to him as an ''Indian Christian'', while McCrindle says that he is an ''Egyptian Monk''.

[4] Cosmas Indicopleustes, "The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk," ed. J.W. McCrindle (1897). http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cosmas_01_book1.htm (accessed April 15, 2008).

[5] Phillips, "Punt and Aksum: Egypt and the Horn of Africa," 451.

[6] See chapter 4.3.2

meeting the Muslim community along the coast.[7] In 1498 Vasco da Gama, who was well

received in Malindi, was permitted to erect a *padrao* (a pillar with a cross that still stands

along the beach in Malindi), which for him meant that the city was under "the sphere of the

Portuguese Conquista."[8] Francis Xavier stopping on his way to India commented on the

padrao, "How great is the might of the cross, seen standing so lonely and so victorious in the

midst of this vast land of Moors."[9] This was not uniquely a Portuguese understanding of the

enterprise, as an early 16th century papal bull praised the Portuguese Crown for its efforts at

"waging war" and "spreading the faith" around the world, including Ethiopia and Africa.[10] In

such a manner Christian missions to Muslims along the coast made an inauspicious start.

Almost 100 years after Vasco da Gama's visit in Malindi, his grandson Dom

Francisco da Gama, the Portuguese viceroy in Goa, requested that the Augustinians send

priests and monks to East Africa.[11] Fort Jesus was being built at this time and da Gama was

particularly concerned about the spiritual welfare of the increasing Portuguese population in

Mombasa and elsewhere along the coast, though he also mentioned the spiritual need of the

local population.[12] Several chapels and churches were built in towns along the coast, and a

convent and a 'House of Mercy' were opened in Mombasa, which enabled the Augustinians

to care for orphans, the disabled and the ill.[13] They reported 600 baptisms in Mombasa alone

within a year; the number of baptisms per year remained high. Other towns also reported

baptisms by the hundred. Baur notes that most of these baptisms were probably of slaves

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[7] John Baur, *2000 years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History, 62-1992*, Second ed. (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 46.

[8] Ibid., 87.

[9] Ibid., 88.

[10] Fernanda Olival, "Structural Changes within the 16th-century Portuguese Military Orders," *e-journal of Portuguese History* 2, no. 2 (2004) (accessed May 9, 2008).

[11] Baur, *2000 Years*, 88.

[12] Carlos Alonso, *A History of the Augustinians and the Martyrs of Mombasa (1568-1698)*, trans., Maureen Eyles (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007), 18.

[13] Baur, *Catholic Church in Kenya*, 16.

before they were transported to other regions,[14] though there are also communications which indicate that some Swahili Muslims were baptised.[15]

The relationships between the Augustinian missionaries and the local rulers and inhabitants were often ambiguous. While the presence of churches was seen as a threat to the continued allegiance of the local people and an inducement to conversion, the missionaries were generally able to ease the effects of oppressive Portuguese rule.[16]

5.2.1 Yusuf bin Hassan

The high point of the Christian mission seemed to be the return of the young king, Jerónimo Chingulia,[17] born Yusuf bin Hassan, but trained by Augustinians in Goa, converted to Christianity and married to a Portuguese noble woman. He had been made a Knight in the Order of Christ,[18] a Portuguese military order specifically created to fight in crusades against Muslims.[19] Two years after his return to Mombasa in late 1625 (or early 1626) Chingulia wrote a letter to Pope Urbano VIII declaring his loyalty as a Christian king and boasting of having converted more than 100 Muslims.[20]

Within a few years the dream of a Christian kingdom on the coast had become a nightmare. In 1631 Chingulia reconverted to Islam and instigated a massacre of about 600 hundred Christians, both African and Portuguese. Though the circumstances of Yusuf bin Hassan's (Chingulia's) reversion to Islam and the subsequent massacre are not clear, they are

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[14] Baur, *2000 Years*, 89, footnote 2.

[15] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 30-32.

[16] Ibid., 20-22; Luigi Clerici, "Should the 300 Martyrs and the 400 Confessors of the 1631 Mombasa Rising against the Portuguese be Canonized? Pros and Cons," *African Christian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1994): 63.

[17] Chingulia could refer to a hero or brave person. See entry for '*ngulia*' in Swahili-English Dictionary by TUKI, 2001.

[18] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 55.

[19] Olival, "Structural Changes within the 16th-century Portuguese Military Orders."

[20] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 54-5; Luigi Clerici, "The Mombasa Martyrs and Confessors Revisited: Religious Motivation of their Killer from Portuguese Evidence," *African Christian Studies* 23, no. 1 (2007): 29.

nonetheless unsurprising. He had been sent to Goa, orphaned as a young boy, after the

Portuguese captain of Mombasa had bribed some local inhabitants of the hinterland to murder

King Hassan, Yusuf's father.[21] In his letter to the pope Chingulia (Yusuf) had also written of

the lack of respect shown to him by the Portuguese officials in Mombasa.[22]

Alonso surmises that the combination of disrespect shown by the Portuguese captain

and his reputation as the "traitor king" among his Muslim subjects led to an inner conflict

between these two sides of his person, which in turn brought about his return to Islam and his

violent reaction – a relief from "his inner dichotomy."[23] Evidence for Yusuf's (Chingulia's)

psychological condition, however, seems scant and Clerici, who refers to the massacre as "an

early anticolonial uprising against unjust and despotic rule,"[24] may provide a better judgment.

An inquiry was begun soon after the massacre to determine if those who died were indeed

martyrs. Survivors were interviewed in Goa, and the proceedings were sent to the Vatican,

where the matter was not further investigated and eventually forgotten.[25]

By 1635 Yusuf bin Hassan (Chingulia) had fled from the city fearing Portuguese

reprisal, and Augustinian missionaries had returned to Mombasa. A convent was even opened

on the island in 1638. Over the next several decades there were repeated attacks on Mombasa

and other Portuguese-controlled towns on the Swahili coast, which resulted in the deaths of

more Augustinian priests. However, after the massacre in Mombasa the Augustinians had

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[21] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 43.

[22] Ibid., 79; Eric Axelson, *Portuguese in South-East Africa, 1600-1700* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1960), 85. Axelson, especially, gives a detailed account of his mistreatment.

[23] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 63-5.

[24] Clerici, "300 Martyrs," 63.

[25] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 92; G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The Mombasa Rising against the Portuguese, 1631: from Sworn Evidence.*, Fontes Historiae Africanae (London: Oxford University Press, 1980).

little effective influence among the local Swahili people. Finally in 1698 Mombasa was conquered by forces from Oman ending Augustinian presence on the coast. [26]

The only traces of Christianity left behind by the Portuguese episode of Christian presence in Kenya consisted of a few physical structures, such as Fort Jesus in Mombasa and the *padrao* in Malindi. There were no remaining Christians along the Kenya coast when Johannes Krapf arrived in Mombasa in 1844. However, renewed efforts promoting the canonisation of the 'Mombasa Martyrs' are bringing these events back into the memories of Christians and Muslims in Kenya. Carlos Alonso's book, *A History of the Augustinians and the Martyrs of Mombasa*, and Luigi Clerici's articles in *African Christian Studies* are part of this process. The account of the martyrs is also being popularised by the Catholic Church with the publication of a popular book[27] on the subject and the recent release of Alonso's study in English. The motivation behind these moves seems to be to strengthen the Kenyan Catholic Church by developing an indigenous story of martyrdom and perseverance in the faith despite opposition. As Clerici writes,

> 'Mombasa martyrs and confessors' must become a household word in the Catholic families of Kenya, for they were splendid witnesses to the power of God's grace and their faith in Jesus the Messiah on a Muslim coast, in spite of being evilly treated by a so-called 'Christian' nation in its crusading ferocity against the followers of the prophet.[28]

His emphasis here is on the Africans who died, rather than the Portuguese, and upon their faithfulness, not in the face of an Islamic threat, but in spite of mistreatment at the hand of fellow Christians, the Portuguese. Clerici, however, expresses reservations about "publicizing" an event which so clearly shows "past Christian wickedness against our Muslim

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[26] Alonso, *Martyrs of Mombasa*, 96-102.

[27] Malachy Cullen, *The Martyrs of Mombasa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997). There was also a lengthy article with pictures in a Kenyan newspaper at roughly the same time as the publication of this book. I have, however, lost the article and reference to it.

[28] Clerici, "300 Martyrs," 65. Clerici advocates canonization only for the Augustinian missionaries and the African Christians, but not for the 150 (non-Augustinian) Portuguese who died.

and African brethren."[29] One might also ask what Muslims think of a popular martyrology which portrays Muslims as the persecutors of Christians during a period of aggressive European Christian colonialism.

5.3   Themes in Early British Missionary Encounter with Islam

The arrival of Johannes Krapf, a German Lutheran serving with the British Church Missionary Society, marked the beginning of continuous Christian presence in the territory of Kenya, and by extension an interaction between Christians and Muslims in Kenya that continues to this day. Five themes can be found in this early Western, primarily British, Christian missionary interaction with Islam. These are competition, avoidance, ambiguity, antagonism, and marginalisation; they continue to be important in Christian-Muslim relations among Kenyans today, though often in altered forms.

5.3.1   Competition

Competition between Christianity and Islam for the 'conquest' of Africa became one of the principle underlying motifs. This is demonstrated as early as Krapf's mission in East Africa. During a previous mission in Ethiopia, he had made contact with the Oromo people (referred to as the Galla at that time) whom he saw as the key to the evangelisation of Africa.[30] In addition to seeing innate qualities in the Oromo people,[31] Islam had already begun to make converts among them; Krapf believed that their conversion to Christianity would prevent the spread of Islam into the interior of eastern Africa.[32] One of his primary goals became the evangelisation of the Oromo people, though he was never to have success in this.

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[29] Ibid.

[30] M. Louise Pirouet, "The Legacy of Johann Ludwig Krapf," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23, no. 2 (1999) (accessed May 19, 2007).

[31] Ibid. Krapf said that the Oromo were "the most intellectual people of Eastern Africa".

[32] Johannes Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours during an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg, 2nd ed., Missionary Researches and Travels (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), 122.

Krapf also became known for his vision of a chain of mission stations from the East African coast across the continent. One purpose was to prevent the spread of Islam towards the interior,[33] a containment strategy which was sometimes referred to as 'stemming the tide.' He was able to put this strategy into effect when Johannes Rebmann arrived from Germany two years later. Then Krapf and Rebmann moved a few miles inland to Rabai Mpya to begin a mission station among the Mijikenda people (called the *Wanika* by Krapf). While several reasons can be given for the move, including Rebmann's arrival and the lack of a genuine hearing for his message in Mombasa, Krapf had also discovered, to his surprise, that Muslim influence was limited to the coast.[34] By building a new mission station at Rabai it would be possible "to make the Gallas acquainted with the Gospel through the Wanika,"[35] thus preventing the spread of Islam towards the interior.[36]

This strategy directed towards the containment of Islam by evangelising among African traditionalists in areas bordering Muslim regions continued beyond the earliest days. In Uganda Bishop Willis wrote in the Church Missionary Intelligencer that sending local evangelists towards the north and east, where it was believed Islam would most likely enter Uganda, was "the best and most effectual means of combating the Mohammedan advance."[37]

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[33] Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 137; Paul E. Kretzmann, *John Ludwig Krapf: The Explorer-Missionary of Northeastern Africa* (Columbus, OH: The Book Concern, n.d.), 102.

[34] R.C. Bridges, "Introduction to the Second Edition," in *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours During an Eighteen Years' Residence in Eastern Africa* Missionary Researches and Travels (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), 15.

[35] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 128-9.

[36] Sanders argues that the CMS did not develop a strategy of preventing the spread of Islam until much later, after the establishment of churches in the interior. However, though it may not have been CMS official policy, Krapf does make reference to this idea in his journals. Sanders, "Close Encounters of the Muslim Kind."

[37] Quoted in James D. Holway, "CMS Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 4, no. 3 (1972): 204.

Islam had been present in Uganda, but from a missionary perspective it had been contained.[38] Gustav Warneck, in the early 20th century, spoke of the 'race for the soul of the animist' between Christianity and Islam.[39] Roland Oliver reports that in the years 1908 and 1909 Islam became a prominent issue at all missionary conferences concerning East Africa.[40] At the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 there was concern that "If things continue as they are now trending, Africa may become a Mohammedan continent."[41] In 1912 a CMS missionary expressed fear that Muslims in Nairobi would spread Islam among the ethnicities of the central highlands, if the missions didn't invest more effort upon the evangelism of these ethnic groups.[42] Most likely Islam was the majority religion among Africans in Nairobi at this time.[43] Cornelius Patton, who visited Africa as the Secretary of the Home Department for the American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions, wrote in 1917, "Africa thus presents the spectacle of two missionary armies advancing for the conquest of the continent, the Mohammedan army from the north and the Christian army from the south."[44]

After World War I conversion among Kenyans to Islam slowed tremendously.[45] Its influence extended little beyond the towns. The theme of competition with Islam diminished

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[38] See David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History*, ed. Martin Klein, New Approaches to African History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 153-168.

[39] Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 205.

[40] Ibid.

[41] David Barrett, "AD 2000: 350 Million Christians in Africa," *International Review of Mission* 59, no. 233 (1970): 39.

[42] Holway, "CMS Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914," 206.

[43] Anne Nkirote Maingi, "The Diversity Factor in the History of Islam in Nairobi, 1900-1963" (Master's Dissertation, University of Nairobi, 1987), 112.

[44] Cornelius H. Patton, *The Lure of Africa* (Boston: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1917), 85.

[45] Maingi, "The Diversity Factor in the History of Islam in Nairobi, 1900-1963", 247.

considerably, but it did not disappear. Especially, as independence approached, some observers again thought that Islam would see rapid growth to the detriment of Christianity.[46]

5.3.2 Avoidance

The principle form of interaction that Christian missionaries sought with Muslim people was avoidance. Sanders writes, "It is clear that the objective of the CMS in East Africa did not include an attempt to reach the Muslims of the coast."[47] An exception to this general rule was William Taylor, who remained in Mombasa in the 1890s in efforts to convert Muslims.[48] Others, such as Rebecca Wakefield, exhibited sentiments leading towards avoidance as she wrote in her journal, "Most of the people … are Mohammedans, and no one ever expects to make any converts from among them."[49] As seen earlier, Krapf moved to Rabai Mpya after spending two years in Mombasa, which Stock, official historian for the CMS, later described as the real beginning of Krapf's mission work in East Africa.[50] Nthamburi makes a similar comment about the Methodist mission when they began to concentrate their work among peoples living near Mount Kenya in 1913, rather than among peoples living near the coast.[51] Hewitt comments that in the early 20th century of eighteen missions working in Kenya, only three had any presence along the Muslim-dominated coast.[52] Mission strategy concerning Islam was principally to contain it within its present boundaries,

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[46] William H. Lewis, "Islam: A Rising Tide in Tropical Africa," *The Review of Politics* 19, no. 4 (1957): 446; W. Montgomery Watt, "The Political Relevance of Islam in East Africa," *International Affairs* 42, no. 1 (1966): 35-6.

[47] Sanders, "Close Encounters of the Muslim Kind."

[48] Chesworth, "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa," 161-162.

[49] Robert Brewin, *Memoirs of Mrs Rebecca Wakefield: Missionary in East Africa*, 3rd ed. (London: Andrew Crombie, 1888), 78.

[50] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 125.

[51] Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya*, 60.

[52] Gordon Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society, 1910-1942*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: SCM Press, 1971), 124-5.

rather than encounter Muslims, themselves, due to the difficulty found in converting Muslims to Christianity.

5.3.3 Ambiguity

Though early missionaries viewed Islam as an inferior rival to Christianity, they depended quite heavily upon Muslim individuals to commence the mission enterprise in Kenya and East Africa. In order to live in Mombasa, Krapf first had to go to Zanzibar to obtain permission from Sultan Said, who was very happy for the 'heathen' of Africa to learn about God. The dependence of Krapf and other early missionaries upon Muslims and Arabs did not stop there. Krapf translated parts of the Bible into Swahili with the help of the *Kadhi* of Mombasa.[53] He depended upon Muslim friends to introduce him to the Mijikenda people of Rabai, Ribe and Kambe.[54] A Muslim friend also helped him in negotiations for building a mission station among the Mijikenda of Rabai.[55] In Krapf and Rebmann's many travels Muslim guides led caravans, Muslim porters carried goods, and Muslim leaders interceded with local authorities to enable trips.[56]

This sort of dependence upon the Muslim community in the mission enterprise was not limited to Krapf and Rebmann. For example, a Swahili carpenter and his slaves constructed the buildings for the Methodist mission station of Charles New and Thomas Wakefield in Ribe.[57] Ali Muhsin Barwani wrote, in an article critiquing Christian missions in East Africa, that Muslims welcomed and helped the missionaries only for them to turn and put

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[53] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work*, 3 vols., vol. 1 (London: Church Missionary Society, 1899), 461.

[54] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 135-8.

[55] Ibid., 152.

[56] Ibid., 180, 240, 248, 267, 284.

[57] R. Elliott Kendall, *Charles New and the East African Mission* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1978), 75.

much effort into "denigrating" Islam.[58] Though Barwani's article is very polemical, these observations seem accurate.

The ambiguity of the relationships between these early missionaries and Islam is also shown in other ways. While Islam was viewed as a competitor – certainly inferior, but capable of winning the souls of the 'pagan' Africans – the indigenous religions practiced by Africans were never understood as true rivals. Krapf writes, for example, of the dullness, drunkenness and other vices of the "heathen Wanika,"[59] and he even attributes "their feeble conception of a Supreme Being, the Mulungu," to historical interaction with Muslims.[60] Though Krapf also wrote negatively of Islam, he believed that Muslims were more 'civilised' than the *Wanika*.

Missionaries and colonial administrators tended to categorise people into different groups depending upon how 'civilised' they were. Tristam Pruen, a medical doctor serving with the CMS in East Africa in the 1880s, explicitly outlined this classification. At the top of his hierarchy of civilised people are civilised Christians who both convert to Christianity and European civilisation. Following the civilised Christians are two Muslim groups, the semi-civilised Muslim (i.e. mostly Arabs), then nominal Muslims. Nominal Christians follow with the 'heathen' at the bottom of the civilisation hierarchy.[61] Interestingly both Arab Muslims and African Muslims were considered more civilised than non-Europeanised African Christians. Certainly most missionaries would not have articulated this hierarchy of civilisations so carefully, but it seems that a majority operated with a similar understanding.

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[58] Ali Muhsin Barwani, "A Muslim Experience of Christian Mission in East Africa," *International Review of Mission* 65, no. 260 (1976): 442.

[59] Krapf, *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labours*, 136, 140, 147, 162-8, 268. *Wanika* is the term that Krapf used to designate the people now usually referred to as the *Mijikenda*.

[60] Ibid., 356.

[61] S. Tristam Pruen, *The Arab and the African: Experiences in Eastern Equatorial Africa During a Residence of Three Years* (London: Seeley and Company, 1891), 291-7.

5.3.4 Antagonism

The practice of slavery and the slave trade in East Africa provided the early missionaries with an opportunity to actively oppose Islam. David Livingstone was certainly the most impassioned and widely known spokesman against the Arab slave trade, but Krapf, New and Price also wrote vivid accounts in letters to their mission headquarters concerning the poor treatment of slaves in East Africa by Muslim slave traders.[62] Roland Oliver commented that the entrance of the Christian church into East Africa could be considered an anti-slavery and an anti-Arab movement.[63]

Freretown was established in 1875 by the CMS as a refuge for men and women freed from slave ships plying the East African coast. This freed-slave settlement was provocatively located on the mainland opposite Mombasa Island in the midst of the coastal, slave-based, plantation economy.[64] William Price, the CMS missionary who founded the community, also brought lawsuits against slave owners who abused slaves and reported illegal slave trading activities to British authorities,[65] which increased animosity between Freretown and Muslim slave-owners. In 1880 a white flag with the word, *Uhuru* (Kiswahili for freedom), written on it was raised above Freretown during the administration of CMS missionary, J. R. Streeter.[66] At the same time Streeter also had Freretown fortified and installed "12 pound war rockets."[67] Both the local Arab community and the British envoy, Kirk, believed that Streeter was

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[62] Fred Morton, *Children of Ham: Freed Slaves and Fugitive Slaves on the Kenya Coast, 1873 to 1907*, ed. Paul E. Lovejoy, African Modernization and Development Series (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 6.

[63] Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, 50-4. See also Nthamburi, *A History of the Methodist Church in Kenya*, 21-5.

[64] Ironically, Freretown was built through the use of slave labour hired from Mombasa. Morton, *Children of Ham*, 63.

[65] Ibid., 65-6.

[66] Holway, "CMS Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914," 202.

[67] Joseph Harris, *Abolition and Repatriation in Kenya* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1977), 35.

involved in a possible slave rebellion.[68] In addition both Freretown and Rabai, the CMS

mission station further inland, frequently accepted runaway slaves, *watoro* (Swahili), into

their communities.

Missionaries from the Friends Industrial Mission on Pemba Island agitated strongly

against slavery sending articles and photos of slaves in chains to England.[69] Peter Scott

Cameron, who was initially attracted by East Africa due to the Arab slave trade, even took up

arms upon his arrival to join British forces in fighting against Mbarak al-Mazrui.[70] As Nwulia

has indicated, it was the missionary community rather than the Imperial British East Africa

Company (IBEAC) or the British consulate which most aggressively pursued the abolition of

slavery.[71] In doing so, they placed themselves in direct opposition to much of the local

Muslim community. By enlisting the sympathy of British society and the authority of British

officials in their anti-slavery endeavour, they brought about conditions that resulted in the

local Muslim community viewing the missionaries, the IBEAC and the British government as

a united front opposing them and their traditions.[72]

5.3.5 Marginalisation

The marginalisation of the Muslim community has probably had the deepest and most

enduring effect upon Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya. As seen in the previous chapter[73]

Muslims had been dominant along the East African coast for about 1000 years with the

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[68] R. M. Githige, "The Issue of Slavery: Relations between the CMS and the State on the East African Coast prior to 1895," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 16, no. 3 (1986): 213; Harris, *Abolition and Repatriation in Kenya*, 35; Holway, "CMS Contact with Islam in East Africa before 1914," 202.
[69] Moses D. E. Nwulia, "The Role of Missionaries in the Emancipation of Slaves in Zanzibar," *The Journal of Negro History* 60, no. 2 (1975): 284.
[70] Dick Anderson, *We Felt Like Grasshoppers: The Story of the African Inland Mission* (Nottingham: Crossway Books, 1994), 19-21.
[71] Nwulia, "The Role of Missionaries in the Emancipation of Slaves in Zanzibar." The entire article addresses this issue. Some missionaries opposed the emancipation of the slaves on the coast, fearing that the result would be chaos and extreme poverty. Morton, 161.
[72] Temu, *British Protestant Missions*, 29.
[73] See chapter 4.3.2.

exception of a relatively brief Portuguese interlude. This movement from dominance to marginal status has understandably been difficult. The ability of missions to marginalise, either intentionally or unintentionally, the Muslim community was a product of the generally positive relationship enjoyed by missions with the governing authorities.

Muslims were marginalised politically through the creation of semi-autonomous zones along the coast and beyond the Tana River in northeast Kenya.[74] The people in these zones were able to exercise a minimal amount of authority over their own institutions, while becoming marginal to what became the main power centre, Nairobi. Upon independence these zones were, somewhat unwillingly, incorporated into the nation of Kenya. Their previous, semi-autonomous status meant that Muslim leaders had not established the sort of political connections necessary for full political integration into the emerging power structure. Missions were not involved in this level of marginalisation. In fact, the British colonial establishment of semi-autonomous zones inhibited mission activities, and were therefore sometimes opposed by the missions.

Mission involvement in education also effectively marginalised Muslims. From the perspective of the Christian missions, the purpose of schools and education in East Africa was to win converts among more malleable children and to train catechists who would better be able to evangelise among their own people.[75] As Sifuna has written, "The school was to be the focal point of Christian propaganda and of all civilising processes."[76] Since schools were primarily in the hands of missionaries with the purpose of religious conversions, Muslim parents did not send their children to these schools. Consequently, few schools were found in

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[74] Joseph Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour: Justice and the Future of Christian-Muslim Co-Existence in Kenya," *Hakimani: Jesuit Journal of Social Justice in Eastern Africa* 8, no. 1 (2008): 34. See also chapter 4 on Islam in Kenya.

[75] D. N. Sifuna, *Development of Education in Africa: The Kenyan Experience* (Nairobi: Initiatives Publishers, 1990), 50-1.

[76] D. N. Sifuna, *Short Essays on Education in Kenya* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1980), 8.

Muslim areas. Sifuna also claims that missionaries opposed the opening of secular schools in these areas.[77]

In Mombasa the CMS founded the higher quality Buxton High School in 1904 in order to attract the children of more economically successful Muslims.[78] There were tensions between the mission and the parents and students over the presence of compulsory Christian education in the curricula. In 1921 the school altered its original purpose and became the school for the children of Christian immigrants from upcountry.[79] The colonial government began to establish some secular schools along the Muslim coast, but these schools also did not succeed, as Muslim parents also opposed them as the schools refused to teach Islam or Arabic.[80] The end result was that most Muslim children continued to be educated in traditional *madrasas*, effectively closing the Muslim communities off from Western-style education.

By the 1940s power in African urban centres came through education and access to salaried positions within the colonial government, rather than through the ownership of property in the cities.[81] Those receiving the appropriate education were primarily Christians, thus bringing about a power shift in the urban centres where Muslim presence was relatively strong. Wandera says that this marginalisation of the Muslim community continues even after independence, due to the differences in levels of formal education at independence.[82] Even

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[77] Ibid., 9.

[78] Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society, 1910-1942*, 129; Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa*, 61.

[79] Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa*, 61.

[80] Sorobea N. Bogonko, *A History of Modern Education in Kenya (1895-1991)* (Nairobi: Evans Brothers Kenya, 1992), 12-3; Ahmed I. Salim, "The Impact of Colonialism upon Muslim Life in Kenya," *JIMMA* 1, no. 1 (1979): 64.

[81] John Lonsdale, "Town Life in Colonial Kenya," *Azania* 36-37, no. (2001-2002): 215-216.

[82] Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour," 35.

recently in national school exams, students from Muslim areas generally score lower than students from other areas.[83]

5.4   Christian-Muslim Relations since Independence

Since Kenya became an independent nation in 1963 interaction between Muslims and Christians has continued. This postcolonial history has been discussed and analysed by several writers.[84] Conflict between Muslims and the Kenyan state has resulted in the destruction of churches,[85] as the government is often identified with Christians. Muslims and Christians have also clashed leading to the burning of churches[86] and, at least, one mosque.[87] In addition tensions have arisen in Christian-sponsored schools as administrations have restricted the religious practices of Muslim students;[88] in one case the local Muslim community constructed a mosque for students on school grounds without obtaining

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[83] See the table ranking districts for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in the Daily Nation, December 29, 2006: 14.

[84] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya." Aguilar, "Dialogue with Islam." Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya." David Sperling, "Islam and the Religious Dimension of Conflict in Kenya " (n.d.). www.payson.tulane.edu/conflict/Cs%20St/SPERLFIN5.doc (accessed 29 May 2007). Arye Oded, *Islam and Politics in Kenya* (Boulder: L. Rienner, 2000), 101-110. Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," in *Quests for Integrity in Africa*, ed. Grace Wamue and Matthew M. Theuri, African Christianity Series (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003). Anne Nkirote Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya Since Independence," in *The Interface between Research and Dialogue: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, ed. Klaus Hock, Christenum Und Islam Im Dialog (Munster, Germany: LIT Verlag, 2004). Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya." John A. Chesworth, "The Church and Islam: Vyama Vingi (Multipartyism) and the Ufungamano Talks," in *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest*, ed. Ben Knighton, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[85] Joseph Akwiri, "Riots Hit Kenya after Muslim Cleric Shot Dead," *Reuters*, 27 August 2012. Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 39, 42. Ngumbao Kithi, "Mosque: Leaders Criticised," *Daily Nation*, 15 December 1999.

[86] Jared Akama, *Developing Local Inter-faith Capactiy in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding in Kenya* (Nairobi: Center for Partnership and Civic Engagement, 2012), 5. Sperling, "Islam and the Religious Dimension of Conflict in Kenya ". Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 58; Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 177.

[87] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 297. Mwakimako, in a slightly polemical article, uses the plural, mosques, however he specifically discusses the destruction of only one mosque, and I have not been able to find reports of more than one mosque-burning in Kenya.

[88] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 128; Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 296.

permission.[89] Muslim regions in which mission activity had been previously restricted by the

colonial government were opened to Christian mission after independence,[90] and both

foreign[91] and national[92] Christians now participate in missionary activity among Muslims.

Kubai suggests that mission activity has increased tension between the two communities;[93]

however, more research is needed to better understand the effects of Christian mission on the

Muslim community and Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya.[94]

Rather than repeat a catalogue of mishaps, misunderstandings and conflicts between

Muslims and Christians in Kenya since independence, this section will examine the recent

debate surrounding the continued inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the new Kenyan constitution.

There are three reasons for this tactic. One, the cataloguing approach, which lists

transgressions of peace and understanding, draws a rather inaccurate picture of seemingly

continuous conflict, when most incidents have been relatively isolated and sporadic. Second,

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[89] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 127.

[90] Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 150.

[91] See for example: Aguilar, "Dialogue with Islam." Malcom Richard Hartnell, "Strategic Considerations for Church Planting among the Digo of Kenya" (Master's Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996). Øyvind Åsland, "Conversion from Islam to Christianity among the Digo: Implication for Christian Witness" (Master's Dissertation, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2005). Gerhard Nehls and Walter Eric, *Reach Out: What Every Christian Needs to Know about Islam and Muslims*, Special Book Edition ed. (Nairobi: Life Challenge Africa, 2006).

[92] See for example: Solomon Maiwada Yero, "Power Encounter: A Critical Component for the Evangelization of Folk Muslims in Nairobi" (Master's Dissertation, Nairobi International School of Theology, 2006). Stephen Mutuku Sesi, "Prayer among the Digo Muslims of Kenya and its Implications for Christian Witness" (Doctoral Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 2003). Harun Wang'ombe Karuku, "A Missiological Study of Culture Shock Experiences of the Sheepfold Ministries' Missionaries in Kenya with Implications for Training at Center for Missions Training" (Master's Dissertation, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2006). Wairimu Kamau, "A Study of Eastleigh Fellowship Center's Muslim-Youth Ministry Methods from a Christian Cross-Cultural Perspective" (Master's Dissertation, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 2005). Esther Adenike Famonure, "An Investigation into the Strategies of Evangelism among Three Evangelistic Ministries in Garissa" (Master's Dissertation, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, 1993).

[93] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 39.

[94] This thesis is not specifically addressing the issue of Christian mission and its effects on the Muslim community, but it examines Christian perceptions of Islam.

several articles cataloguing such events have been written and can be easily found.[95] Third, a closer examination of the debate over the *kadhi* courts offers an opportunity to view Christian action and reaction in response to Muslim assertiveness in national politics and to living together in a plural society.

The debate over the *kadhi* courts brings two histories to converge: the struggle for democracy and the existence of *kadhi* courts in Kenya. Before examining the debate itself, it will be necessary to briefly recount these two histories.

5.4.1 The History of Kadhi Courts in Kenya

Islamic law, in the form of *liwali*, *mudir* and *kadhi* courts,[96] was first institutionalised on the Kenyan coast by the Sultanate of Zanzibar early in the 19th century.[97] The *liwali* and *mudir* were political administrators, who also judged legal disputes, under the Sultanate, whereas the *kadhi*'s authority was understood to be derived more directly from Islam.[98] Though officially appointed by the Sultan of Zanzibar,[99] *kadhis* were "local elders representing their communities in the Sultan's court."[100]

The IBEAC signed a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar in 1887, in which they agreed to exempt *kadhi* courts "from direct British authority."[101] Less than a decade later the British government took administrative control of Kenya from the IBEAC, initially assuming both

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[95] See footnote 82.

[96] Hassan A. Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts: the Kadhi, Mudir and Liwali Courts and the Civils Procedure Code and Criminal Code," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011).

[97] Anne Cussac, "La Reconnaissance des Tribunaux de Kadhi au Kenya: Un Enjeu Politique? (1887–2005)," *Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est* 31 (2006): 2.

[98] Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts," 333, 339.

[99] Ibid.: 330.

[100] Hassan A. Mwakimako, "Conflicts and Tensions in the Appointment of Chief Kadhi in Colonial Kenya 1898-1960s," in *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*, ed. Shamil Jeppie, Ebrahim Moosa, and Richard Roberts, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 110.

[101] Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts," 330.

"executive and judicial powers" over the coast.[102] However, in 1897 indirect rule was instituted through the creation of Native Courts of which *liwali*, *mudir*, and *kadhi* courts were retained for use by the Muslim population.[103] As Cussac suggests the principle purpose of these courts from the perspective of the colonial government was to "control the region and restrict the powers of traditional officers,"[104] though the coastal Muslim populations understood it in terms of religious liberty.[105]

The *kadhi* courts initially were able to render judgments in both matters of personal law and criminal law in the coastal Protectorate.[106] Appeals could be heard by a High Court under British control that would also include the Chief Kadhi as an assessor.[107] By virtue of both its local and religious character the *kadhi* courts gained the trust of the Muslim population.[108] Due to its effectiveness the *kadhi* courts were expanded to other areas of Kenya with Muslim populations after 1945.[109]

As Kenyan independence approached, Sir James Robertson was appointed by the colonial office to lead a commission to make recommendations on the future of the coastal region.[110] He recommended that the coastal Protectorate be incorporated into Kenya, while assuring that the Muslim population would be able to retain certain rights in the new

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[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.: 331.

[104] Cussac, "La reconnaissance des tribunaux de Kadhi," 5. (My translation) See also the study of British colonial indirect rule by Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*.

[105] Cussac, "La reconnaissance des tribunaux de Kadhi," 8.

[106] Ibid.: 5; Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts," 332.

[107] Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts," 332.

[108] Ibid.: 333.

[109] Cussac, "La reconnaissance des tribunaux de Kadhi," 7.

[110] Ibid.: 9. James R. Brennan, "Lowering the Sultan's Flag: Sovereignty and Decolonization in Coastal Kenya," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50, no. 4 (2008): 849.

emerging nation.[111] Most importantly for this study, *kadhi* courts were retained through an article in the constitution "under the chapter on the judiciary"[112] being officially limited to matters of personal status under Islamic law,[113] and the jurisdiction of *kadhi* courts was limited to disputes between two Muslim parties, who both agreed to use these courts.[114]

Since independence the status of Islamic personal law has been under frequent stress. The Kenyan government – attempting to harmonise a diverse set of laws concerning marriage, divorce and inheritance – made three attempts to enact new standardised regulations that are based primarily on Western understandings of family.[115] The Muslim community strongly opposed these proposals, as they were seen to violate Islamic law. The Muslim community succeeded in blocking their implementation.[116] The courts are also closely supervised by the Kenyan government: "kadhis must comply with state edicts concerning the administrative operation of the courts; their work is periodically reviewed; and any appeals of their decisions are heard in the Kenyan High Court rather than an Islamic Court of Appeal."[117] Therefore, in a decision between Muslims in a dispute, the losing party could appeal to a secular court to overturn the decision based on Islamic law.[118]

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[111] Sumayya Athmani, "The Kadhi Courts," *Wajibu* 18, no. 3 (2003). http://africa.peacelink.org/wajibu/articles/art_2120.html (accessed March 28, 2008); Cussac, "La reconnaissance des tribunaux de Kadhi," 9.

[112] Athmani, "The Kadhi Courts."

[113] Abdulkadir Hashim, "Coping with Conflicts: Colonial Policy towards Muslim Personal law in Kenya and Post-Colonial Court Practice," in *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*, ed. Shamil Jeppie, Ebrahim Moosa, and Richard Roberts, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 229.

[114] Anne Cussac, "Les Tribunaux de Kadhi et l'Application du Droit Islamique au Kenya," *Les Cahiers de l'IFRA* 27 (2005): 6.

[115] Eugene Cotran, "Marriage, Divorce and Succession Laws in Kenya: Is Integration or Unification Possible?," *Journal of African Law* 40, no. 2 (1996): 195, 202.

[116] Ibid.: 203. African traditionalists also opposed these laws.

[117] Susan F Hirsch, "State Intervention in Muslim Family Law in Kenya and Tanzania: Applications of the Gender Concept," in *Muslim Family Law in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial Legacies and Post-Colonial Challenges*, ed. Shamil Jeppie, Ebrahim Moosa, and Richard Roberts, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 314.

[118] Hashim, "Coping with Conflicts," 232.

The fact that the use of *kadhi* courts is optional has given them a symbolic importance as Muslims are able to assert their religious identity by submitting to their jurisdiction.[119] Muslims have also come to view these courts as part of their fundamental rights as citizens.[120] Christian efforts to have *kadhi* courts removed from the constitution (and Muslim reactions) need to be understood against this background.

5.4.2   A Brief History of Change in the Kenyan Constitution

This section will examine the constitutional process in Kenya that has led to the writing and implementation of a new constitution approved through democratic elections in 2010. The early changes in the original constitution that led to an authoritarian presidential regime will first be outlined. Then the processes leading to the publishing of the Bomas Draft, the Wako Draft and finally to the new Constitution of Kenya will be looked at briefly. The issue of the retention of *kadhi* courts in these various stages of the development of the new constitution raised opposition among many church leaders. This issue will be examined more fully in the next section.

The original Kenyan constitution was published in March 1963 after lengthy negotiations involving various Kenyan groups and British interests.[121] This first constitution, forming a government based on a federation of ethnic-based regions,[122] had no real means of fostering national unity. Before power was transferred to the Kenyan national government, it

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[119] Anne Cussac, "Muslim Identity In Nairobi: The Role Of The Kadhi's Court In the Assertion of a Religious Identity," in *Governing Cities in Africa; Law, Local Institutions and Identities* (Alliance Francaise de Nairobi: IFRA, 2006).

[120] Athmani, "The Kadhi Courts."

[121] H.W.O. Okoth-Ogendo, "The Politics of Constitutional Change in Kenya since Independence, 1963-1969," *African Affairs* 71, no. 282 (1972): 14. Chanan Singh, "The Republican Constitution of Kenya: Historical Background and Analysis," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1965): 895. Singh's article provides a detailed discussion of the factors leading to the formation of the first constitution and the earliest changes to it.

[122] Okoth-Ogendo, "The Politics of Constitutional Change," 13-14.

was known that KANU[123] would make changes to the document.[124] The next few decades saw the constitution amended several times so that power became consolidated in the office of the president.

Okoth-Ogendo divides the first "drastic changes" to the constitution into two short historical periods: 1963-1965 and 1966-1969.[125] In the first period of constitutional change the goal was to dismantle the regionalism found in the document[126] and centralise power in the national state.[127] The later period saw several amendments that gave the ruling party more power over the affairs of government.[128] The power of government became personally focused on President Jomo Kenyatta, as party leader and charismatic figure.[129]

While Kenyatta was ill and nearing the end of his life and rule of Kenya, a group of Kikuyu[130] politicians attempted to add an amendment to the constitution that would prevent the vice-president from assuming power upon the president's death.[131] This attempt failed, and Daniel arap Moi became the second president of Kenya in 1978. After a failed *coup d'état* in 1982, President Moi modified the constitution again, making Kenya a one-party state.[132] Later the constitution was again amended, giving the president the power to dismiss the Attorney-General and judges from the High Court and the Court of Appeal.[133] The same

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[123] Kenya African National Union (KANU) was the ruling party led by Jomo Kenyatta.

[124] Okoth-Ogendo, "The Politics of Constitutional Change," 18. Singh, "The Republican Constitution of Kenya," 926.

[125] Okoth-Ogendo, "The Politics of Constitutional Change," 10.

[126] Ibid.: 18.

[127] Ibid.: 21.

[128] Ibid.: 23-29.

[129] Ibid.: 29; Singh, "The Republican Constitution of Kenya," 929-930.

[130] Jomo Kenyatta was from the Kikuyu ethnic group.

[131] Herve Maupeu, "Une Opposition en Regime Autoritaire: l'Exemple du Reveil Est-Africain au Kenya," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 25, no. 2 (1991): 260.

[132] Rok Ajulu, "Kenya: The Road to Democracy," *Review of African Political Economy* 19, no. 53 (1992): 81.

[133] Ibid.: 84.

amendment also increased the power of the administration to jail 'suspects' without bringing charges.[134] Kenya had become officially and constitutionally an authoritarian state.

The only national institution powerful enough to express discontent with government action was the church.[135] In the late 1980s church leaders began criticising the government for the new queuing system of voting,[136] which David Gitari, a bishop of the CPK, [137] called unconstitutional.[138] By 1990 the critique had expanded to repealing section 2A of the constitution, [139] which had instituted one-party rule. After multiparty elections in 1992 the "demand for constitutional and legal reform" augmented.[140] More than thirty years of authoritarian rule was understood to be the fault of a constitution that vested too much power in the presidency;[141] therefore, a new constitution was seen as essential to Kenya's future development. In 1997 after many delaying tactics by the government, a delegation of religious leaders, which included Protestants, Catholics and Muslims, met with President Moi to push for constitutional reform.[142]

Moi's rejection of demands for popular participation in the constitutional review process led to the formation of the *Ufungamano* Initiative,[143] which is a Swahili word

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[134] Ibid.

[135] Sabar-Friedman, "'Politics' and 'Power' in the Kenyan Public Discourse," 433.

[136] Maupeu, "Une Opposition en regime autoritaire," 258.

[137] Church of the Province of Kenya is now called the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK).

[138] Sabar-Friedman, "'Politics' and 'Power' in the Kenyan Public Discourse," 437.

[139] Ibid.: 441.

[140] Diane Ciekawy, "Constitutional and Legal Reform in the Postcolony of Kenya," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 25, no. 1 (1997): 16.

[141] Mwangi S. Kimenyi and William F. Shughart, "The Political Economy of Constitutional Choice: A Study of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum," *Economics Working Papers.* Paper 200808(2008). http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/econ_wpapers/200808.

[142] Knighton, "Introduction: Strange but Inevitable Bedfellows," 33.

[143] Yussuf Murigu, "The Ufungamano Initiative in Kenya: An Interreligious Approach to Conflict in Society," *Wajibu* 18, no. 3 (2003). Chesworth, "The Church and Islam," 156.

meaning unity. [144] According to Tayob, Abdul Hamid Slatch and Abdulrahman Wandati first approached Christian leaders about forming a civil society group to advocate for constitutional reform,[145] which developed into the *Ufungamano* movement consisting of Muslim, Hindu, Protestant, Catholic and Indigenous Church leaders and leaders of secular civil society groups.[146] These leaders formed a People's Commission[147] that began meeting independently of the government appointed, Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC), to discuss and reform the constitution. The two commissions were later joined at the insistence of Yash Ghai, chair of the CKRC.[148]

The expanded CKRC journeyed throughout Kenya from late 2001 to early 2002 in order to hear from Kenyans[149] about "the Kenya we want."[150] In almost every region people expressed the opinion that religion was a positive influence on politics, however Muslim populated regions viewed Islam as the necessary and good influence on politics, and Christian populated areas understood Christianity as the religion that should influence politics.[151] In 2003 three meetings, National Constitutional Conferences (NCC), were held at the Bomas

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[144] Murigu, "The Ufungamano Initiative," 11. The name of the initiative came from the place of meeting, Ufungamano House.

[145] Abdulkader Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts as part of Kenya's Constitutional Review," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 58.

[146] Cathy Majtenyi, "Christian-Muslim Relations and Consitutional Reform," *African Scribe* 1, no. 1 (2001). http://web.peacelink.it/africanscribe/1_issue/p4.html (accessed May 29, 2007).

[147] Chesworth, "The Church and Islam," 163.

[148] Jill Cottrell and Yash Ghai, "Constitution Making and Democratization in Kenya (2000–2005)," *Democratization* 14, no. 1 (2007): 5. Samuel Mbithi Kimeu, "Historical and Legal Foundations of the Kadhi's Courts in Kenya," in *In Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 18-19.

[149] Beth Elise Whitaker and Jason Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution: Implications for Democracy in Kenya," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27, no. 1 (2009): 5.

[150] Stephanie Diepeveen, "'The Kenyas We don't Want': Popular Thought over Constitutional Review in Kenya, 2002," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 48, no. 2 (2010): 236, 254. The phrase, "The Kenya We Want" was the title of a proposal for a modern constitution written by human rights and legal groups in Kenya in 1993.

[151] Ibid.: 236-250.

near Nairobi to write a draft for a new constitution.[152] The 'Bomas Draft' of the constitution was produced in 2004[153] and though criticised as "unwieldy, costly and inappropriate,"[154] it had been created through popular participation, it substantially limited the powers of the president, and it included the office of an executive prime minister.[155]

Though Mwai Kibaki had defended similar constitutional changes while in opposition against Daniel arap Moi, when he took office as newly elected president in January 2003 Kibaki's attitude shifted against a constitution that reduced presidential powers.[156] The Bomas Draft was never submitted to the voters for approval. Instead parliament suggested amendments[157] and Attorney General Amos Wako produced a "final coherent draft"[158] that would be voted on in a national referendum. This became known as the Wako Draft. The Wako Draft, which "endowed the executive branch with excessive political authority,"[159] was published in August 2005,[160] and a referendum was held in November of that year.[161] The proposed constitution was defeated; 57 percent of voters rejected it.[162]

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[152] John A. Chesworth, "Kadhi's Courts in Kenya: Reactions and Responses," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 8.

[153] Gabrielle Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception: 'Ethnic Politics' and the Case of Kenya's Constitutional Referendum," *African Studies* 65, no. 2 (2007): 239. Whitaker and Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution," 6.

[154] Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception," 239.

[155] Whitaker and Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution," 6.

[156] Cottrell and Ghai, "Constitution Making and Democratization in Kenya," 2.

[157] James Thuo Gathii, "Popular Authorship and Constitution Making: Comparing and Contrasting the DRC and Kenya," *William & Mary Law Review* 49, no. 4 (2008): 1119.

[158] Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception," 239.

[159] Kimenyi and Shughart, "A Study of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum." See also Whitaker and Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution," 6. Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception," 239.

[160] Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception," 238.

[161] Gathii, "Popular Authorship and Constitution Making," 1119.

[162] Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception," 234.

Religious scholars tend to view the *kadhi* courts issue to be a strong reason for the defeat of the Wako Draft,[163] as both Christian and Muslim groups were dissatisfied with the provision of religious courts in the draft constitution.[164] Political scholars argue three more compelling reasons for its defeat.[165] One, the Wako Draft, similar to the old constitution, gave too much power to the president.[166] Two, the people of Kenya were angry at the political manoeuvring that lead from the popular process of the Bomas Draft to the government produced Wako Draft.[167] Three, the Wako Draft was understood to favour certain ethnic groups at the expense of others, thus leading to an ethnically divided electorate.[168]

The electoral campaign over the Wako Draft of the constitution led to the formation of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which later contested the 2007 presidential election under Raila Odinga. The "third phase of Kenya's constitutional reform process"[169] began as a result of the violence following the 2007 elections. A Committee of Experts, primarily legal scholars, wrote a harmonised draft constitution using the previous CKRC,

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[163] Chesworth, "The Church and Islam," 169. Hashim, "Muslim-State Relations in Kenya." Mohamed Mraja, "Kadhi's Courts in Kenya: Current Debates on the Harmonized Draft Constitution of Kenya," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Capetown, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 33. Joseph Wandera, "Anglican Responses to Kadhis Courts in Kenya," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 42.

[164] These issues will be discussed more fully in chapter 5.4.4.

[165] Though Cottrell and Ghai, "Constitution Making and Democratization in Kenya," 19. do briefly mention the *kadhi* courts issue as one possible reason for people to vote against the Wako Draft.

[166] Kimenyi and Shughart, "A Study of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum."

[167] Cottrell and Ghai, "Constitution Making and Democratization in Kenya," 16. Whitaker and Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution," 11-12.

[168] Lynch, "The Fruits of Perception." She argues that ethnicity, or big men politics of an ethnic character, were the primary determining factor in her article. Whitaker and Giersch, "Voting on a Constitution," 1-2. They also acknowledge the importance of ethnic factors, while emphasizing individual decision-making over political options. Kimenyi and Shughart, "A Study of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum." They also argue that ethnicity was important due to the economic benefits of government favouring certain ethnic groups.

[169] Eric Kramon and Daniel N. Posner, "Kenya's New Constitution," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 2 (2011): 92.

Bomas and Wako drafts.[170] This draft was submitted to a referendum in August 2010, passing with 68% of the vote to become the new constitution of Kenya.[171]

5.4.3 The *Kadhi* Courts Issue in the Constitutional Process

Although the *kadhi* courts had been in Kenya's constitution since before independence and maintained there after independence, when civic society groups began to get involved in the constitutional reform process their presence in the constitution became a divisive issue between Christians and Muslims.[172] It appears plausible that many Christian leaders were unaware of the constitutional provision for *kadhi* courts until this process began.[173] The authoritarian nature of previous Kenyan regimes did not encourage a politically literate citizenry. Even as late as 2007, P.L.O. Lumumba, a Christian professor of law, needed to correct an audience at a forum at Nairobi International School of Theology, who believed that the presence of *kadhi* courts in proposed constitutions was a new initiative by the Muslim community,[174] though it is also possible that these participants (mostly students) were influenced by misinformation campaigns led by some church leaders.[175]

With the opening of democratic space and constitutional reform Kenyan Muslims sought ways to improve the *kadhi* courts through the new constitutional process.[176] The most important changes advocated by Muslim leaders were a system of appeals maintained within

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[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.: 89.

[172] A good, concise introduction to the *kadhi* courts debate can be found in John A. Chesworth, "Islamic Courts in Kenya and Tanzania: Reactions and Responses," *The Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies Newsletter*, Summer 2010.

[173] Ibid.

[174] P.L.O. Lumumba at NIST on 8 November 2007. In my personal observation, it was obvious that most students (many of whom served as pastors in local churches) and some professors were not well informed about the constitution.

[175] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 303.

[176] Kimeu, "Historical and Legal Foundations," 19.

the *kadhi* courts system,[177] improved training for the *kadhis*,[178] and an extension of the

jurisdiction of the *kadhi* courts over civil and commercial law.[179] A few Muslim leaders,

mostly from North East Province,[180] advocated complete application of *shari'a*, including

criminal law for jurisdiction over Muslims.[181] The constitutional draft prepared by the CKRC

under the direction of Yash Ghai included many of these recommendations for the

improvement of the *kadhi* courts.[182] Chesworth suggests that this Muslim advocacy for an

enhancement of the *kadhi* courts led to the negative reaction of Christians participating in the

Bomas NCCs.[183]

The *Ufungamano* Initiative, which had withstood violent Christian-Muslim conflict

when a church and a mosque were destroyed,[184] collapsed when Christian members opposed

the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution; Muslim leaders then withdrew in 2003.[185]

Tayob reports that Muslim participants were "devastated when their Christian comrades

rejected Kadhis courts in the new constitution."[186] The draft produced by the NCCs at the

Bomas removed the enhancements of the *kadhi* courts found in the CKRC draft, returning to

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[177] Kibe Mungai, "A Case Study of Interfaith Conflict in Kenya," *Wajibu* 18, no. 3 (2003). Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts," 56.

[178] Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts," 56.

[179] Mungai, "A Case Study of Interfaith Conflict in Kenya." Chesworth, "The Church and Islam," 166.

[180] Kimeu, "Historical and Legal Foundations," 26. Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Islamophobia among Christians and its Challenge in Entrenchment of Kadhis Courts in Kenya," in *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*, ed. Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011), 51.

[181] Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts," 56.

[182] See sections 198 – 202 of the CKRC draft, which may be found at http://katibainstitute.org/fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1. (accessed November 27, 2012)

[183] Chesworth, "Kadhi's Courts in Kenya," 9.

[184] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 302.

[185] Chesworth, "The Church and Islam," 172.

[186] Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts," 58.

the status quo of the original constitution.[187] NCCK General Secretary, Mutava Musyimi, also resigned as a commissioner on the constitutional review commission over the continued inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the Bomas draft.[188] This was an indication that Christian leaders in the constitutional process were no longer accepting of the status quo, but wanted *kadhi* courts to be completely removed from the constitution.

Considering Christian opposition to *kadhi* courts in the constitution, Attorney General Amos Wako seemingly tried to please each religious group by including a provision for religious courts (Muslim, Christian and Hindu) in the proposed constitution of 2005[189] that was put before the electorate. This, in fact, pleased no one. Christians and Hindus felt no need to have religious courts,[190] and Muslims understood the Wako draft to enable *kadhi* courts to be removed via an Act of Parliament.[191] As mentioned above, the Wako draft was easily defeated in 2005 referendum[192] and the *kadhi* courts (or religious courts) issue most likely played a small role in this.

The new Kenyan constitution voted into law in 2010 maintains the status quo of the *kadhi* courts[193] found in the original constitution with only minor changes in language rather than substance. Many church leaders campaigned against this constitution for three reasons: opposition to abortion, opposition to gay rights, and opposition to the inclusion of *kadhi* courts. Considering that the constitution passed with nearly 70% of the electorate voting in

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[187] See chapter 5.4.1 above. The status quo was the establishment of *kadhi* courts for matters of personal law between two Muslim parties. Appeals would go before the standard Court of Appeals. See sections 198 – 199 of the Bomas draft, which can be found on the website of the Katiba Institute.
[188] Wandera, "Anglican Responses to Kadhis Courts in Kenya," 42.
[189] See section 195 of the Wako Draft found at http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/pdfs/2009/12/ The_Proposed_New_Constitution_wako_draft.pdf (accessed November 10, 2012).
[190] Mraja, "Kadhi's Courts in Kenya," 33.
[191] Ibid.
[192] See chapter 5.4.2.
[193] See section 170 of the Kenyan Constitution found at www.kenyalaw.org.

favour,[194] the political power of the church would now seem to be questionable.[195] Kramon and Posner surveyed Kenyan voters, finding that 30% of 'No' voters cited religious issues as a deciding factor,[196] which indicates that a fairly small percentage of the electorate followed the directive of their church leaders.

The next section will look at the Christian opposition to *kadhi* courts and arguments used by church leaders in opposing *kadhi* courts in the 2010 constitution.

5.4.4   The *Kadhi* Courts Debate

Beginning in April 2009 the Committee of Experts (CoE) began meeting with various Kenyan groups and in town hall type gatherings in order to discuss various issues in the constitution and to determine which issues were to be classified as contentious, in need of more attention in the drafting of the constitution.[197] Christian leaders from the NCCK, the ACK, the Catholic Church and evangelical and Pentecostal churches commenced efforts to have the *kadhi* courts removed from the constitution, or at minimum to have their inclusion declared a contentious issue.[198] After a year of Christian attempts to change the proposed constitution, which included talks in April 2010 with a committee chaired by President Kibaki, the government announced that "it was impossible to amend the law to accommodate

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[194] Kramon and Posner, "Kenya's New Constitution," 89.

[195] Nzau Musau and Ramadhan Rajab, "Trust in Clergy Shaken, Says Poll," *Nairobi Star*, 7 August 2010.

[196] Kramon and Posner, "Kenya's New Constitution," 96. While an accurate calculation cannot be made without the raw data, it is clear that only around 10% of the electorate voted against the new constitution based on religious issues, e.g., *kadhi* courts.

[197] "The Committe of Experts on Constitutional Review," *Daily Nation*, 26 October 2009. Grace Maingi, "The Kenyan Constitutional Reform Process: A Case Study on the Work of FIDA Kenya in Securing Women's Rights," *Feminist Africa*, no. 15 (2011). http://agi.ac.za/journal/feminist-africa-issue-15-2011-legal-voice-special-issue.

[198] See for example the two memoranda, in which church leaders from the NCCK request the removal of *kadhi* courts from the constitution as well as other demands. Peter Karanja and Charles Kibicho, "The 4th Memorandum Presented by the NCCK to the Committee of Experts for the Constitution of Kenya Review Process," (Limuru: NCCK, 2009). "The Memorandum by the Kenyan Christian Leaders Presented to the Members of the Kenya National Assembly," *NCCK*. 2010. Anglican Archbishop Eliud Wabukala made a similar demand. John Ngirachu, "Kenya: Anglicans Oppose Kadhi Courts," *Daily Nation*, 27 November 2009.

the concerns of Christian church leaders."[199] The Christian leaders stopped discussions with the government over the constitution[200] and began campaigning for a vote against the constitution in the upcoming August 2010 elections.[201] The Christian-led 'No' campaign was heavily financed by the American Center for Law and Justice, which is an NGO founded by Pat Robertson, a prominent conservative American televangelist.[202]

This decision by the government to reject their demands was interpreted by Christians as their concerns being ignored[203] and partisanship towards Muslims.[204] Both the NCCK and the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) claimed that the CoE and the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC), charged with the new constitution, were not only biased, but "dominated by Muslims."[205] However, only one of eleven members of the CoE was a Muslim,[206] and four of the twenty-four members of the PSC were most likely Muslims.[207] Their claim, while spurious, indicates the heated nature of the debate and the emotions involved on the Christian side.

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[199] Fredrick Nzwili, "Kenya: Constitutional Talks With Church Collapse After Clergy Pull-Out," *Ecumenical News International* April 29 2010.

[200] Ibid.

[201] "Churches Gear for No Vote," *Daily Nation*, 28 April 2010.

[202] Kevin Kelley, "Kadhi Courts Focus of U.S. Groups' Opposition to New Kenya Law," *Daily Nation*, September 13 2010; John Ngirachu, "America Disowns Group Funding 'No' Campaign," *Daily Nation*, 3 May 2010, 1.

[203] "Christian Leaders Brochure on Contentious Issues," *Kenya Christian Leaders Forum,* 2010; "Entrench Islamic Sharia Law in the Constitution at Your Own Risk," *NCCK,* , February 2010.

[204] "Kenya Leaders Forum," 2010. Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, http://eakenya.org/newsevents/article.htm?id=19 (accessed October 18, 2010).

[205] "Entrench Islamic Sharia Law."; "Kenya Leaders Forum."

[206] "A Discussion with Abdirashid Abdullahi, Member of the "Committee of Experts on Constitutional Review," Nairobi, Kenya," 2010. *Berkley Center*, http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-abdirashid-abdullahi-member-of-the-committee-of-experts-on-constitutional-review-nairobi-kenya (accessed 28 November 2012).

[207] "Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Review of the Constitution on the Reviewed Harmonized Draft Constitution," 2010. *National Assembly*, kenyastockholm.files.wordpress.com (accessed 28 November). The report does not list the religion of its members, but it does list the members by name. With a knowledge of local Muslim, Christian and indigenous names, with a high degree of certainty one can say that four members of the PSC were Muslims.

Maina gives nine reasons that Christians voiced in opposing the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution:[208] having *kadhi* courts in the constitution gives preference to Islam and Muslims, possibly making Islam the official religion of Kenya; having *kadhi* courts in the constitution is a devious way to eventually introduce Islamic rule in Kenya; putting *kadhi* courts in the original constitution was an historical wrong that needs correction; Christian Kenyans should not have to pay for *kadhi* courts through taxes; *kadhi* courts should come under an act of parliament, not the constitution; some Christians say that *kadhi* courts should come in the section of the constitution on human rights;[209] *kadhi* courts discriminate against non-Muslims, as it is only for Muslims and the *kadhis* must be Muslims;[210] and issues of personal law should be resolved in the mosque, not in a Kenyan court.[211]

These reasons can be understood as those concerning fairness (preference to Islam, taxes for the *kadhi* courts, courts for Muslims only), legality (their presence in the original constitution, created by an act of parliament), confusion with Christian institutions (solving issues of personal law in a mosque), and fear (devious way to establish an Islamic state). While Christian leaders attempted to frame the debate in terms of fairness, Muslims,[212] newspapers,[213] and some Christians[214] pointed out that the Kenyan government was dominated by Christians, and the constitution was written from a Judeo-Christian perspective

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[208] Maina, "Islamophobia among Christians," 51-53.

[209] I have not encountered this particular reasoning in my reading and discussions with Kenyan Christians.

[210] Some Christians even suggest that in fairness a Christian, who is well-versed in Islamic law, should be able to become a *kadhi*.

[211] Most of these reasons for opposing the *kadhi* courts can be found in the longer publications of church groups, such as:"Entrench Islamic Sharia Law."; "Kenya Leaders Forum."

[212] See for example Ibrahim Lethome, "Misplaced Opposition to Kadhi Courts," in *The New Constitution (blog)* (Captial FM, 2009). Lethome was a member of the CKRC.

[213] Makau Mutua, "Why the No Campaign could Destroy the Church," *Daily Nation*, 8 May 2010; Peter Mwaura, "Christians Are Behaving Like a Dog in the Manger.," *Daily Nation*, 14 August 2009.

[214] Rachel Wambui, "Constitution: Christian Leaders' Fears are Unfounded," in *Peace Caravan Kenya: Raising Voices for the Voiceless* (2010).

incorporating these religious values into the justice system. Also, though it may have seemed reasonable to establish the *kadhi* courts through an act of parliament, rather than in the constitution itself, Kenyan Muslims feared that parliament could easily disband them,[215] and Christian opposition to the courts enhanced this fear.[216] Maina's appraisal that Christian opposition was motivated primarily by Islamophobia seems to be justified[217] and attempts by Christian leaders to hide this fail.

Once the new constitution passed, church leaders issued statements 'accepting the verdict of the people,' while vowing to continue to push for constitutional reform.[218] The issues of abortion and *kadhi* courts were specifically mentioned as areas in which churches would continue to advocate for amendments to the new constitution. As of the writing of this thesis, no important concrete actions have been taken by church leaders since the implementation of the new constitution to amend it.

Not all Christian leaders in Kenya supported the 'No' campaign. Archbishop Eliud Wabukula of the ACK and Cardinal John Njue, though supportive of the 'No' campaign, refused to participate in large rallies against the constitution.[219] Anglican priest and Sheepfold missionary among Somali Muslims, Francis Omondi, wrote several blog posts arguing for the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution.[220] Prominent retired Anglican Archbishop David Gitari, after initially opposing the inclusion of *kadhi* courts, supported the 'Yes' campaign.[221]

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[215] Athmani, "The Kadhi Courts."; Chesworth, "Islamic Courts in Kenya "; Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 301.

[216] Mwaura, "Christians Are Behaving Like a Dog in the Manger.."

[217] Maina, "Islamophobia among Christians."

[218] "Church to Accept People's Verdict," *Daily Nation*, 4 August 2010; "May God be with Kenya! - Catholic Bishops Statement on the Constitution," *Catholic Information Service for Africa*, 20 August 2010; Abiud Ochieng', "Clergy Accept Defeat but Push for Amendment " *Daily Nation*, 5 August 2010.

[219] Musau and Rajab, "Trust in Clergy Shaken, Says Poll."

[220] http://leo-kanisani.blogspot.com/ (Leo Kanisani can be translated as the Church Today.)

[221] Mutua, "Why the No Campaign could Destroy the Church."

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church came out in support of the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution saying that they "have been in the Constitution and have never negatively affected Christians."[222] After attending a "civic education programme" a group of 120 pastors in Central Province from various denominations decided to support voting 'Yes' on the new constitution, remarking that they had been misinformed about *kadhi* courts by those campaigning against it.[223] Perhaps most importantly, retired Presbyterian leader and long-time advocate for democracy, Timothy Njoya, campaigned passionately for the new constitution and the inclusion of *kadhi* courts.[224]

5.5   Conclusion

The chapter has briefly told the history of Christians encountering Muslims in Kenya from before recorded history in the region, through the Portuguese interlude, into the era of British colonialism and finally of a postcolonial encounter surrounding the issue of *kadhi* courts. The Portuguese interlude was shown to be oppressive of the local Muslim population and most characterised by the violence of the rebellion led by Yusuf bin Hassan.

Christian interaction with Islam during the colonial period was examined under five themes: competition, avoidance, ambiguity, antagonism, and marginalisation. While it would be possible to use these themes to examine postcolonial Christian-Muslim encounter, it would not necessarily help to clarify these interactions, and it would give the incorrect impression that Kenyan Christian encounter with Islam is determined by missionary and colonial Christianity. Yet it is also true that missionary Christianity has had some impact upon Kenyan Christianity and its response to Islam.

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[222] James Ratemo and Patrick Beja, "Let Kadhi's Courts Be, Say Adventists," *The Standard*, 3 September 2010.

[223] "Pastors Join Yes Camp in Runyenjes," *Daily Nation*, 16 July 2010.

[224] "Don't Kill Our Reform Dream, Churches Urged," *Daily Nation*, 4 April 2010; Billie O'kadameri, "Reform Cleric Slams Church in Constitution Row," *Radio France International*, 30 July 2010.

As was seen in the *kadhi* courts debate, Christians tended to be ignorant of Muslim institutions and relatively unacquainted with Islam until constitutional talks began in the late 1990s. Muslims had remained marginalised after independence, and Christian leaders seemed to want to maintain this marginalisation by eliminating *kadhi* courts from the constitution. Kenyan Christians also seemed to show a fear of Muslims, which was not as obviously apparent in missionary Christianity. Interestingly, although churches had been instrumental in bringing about democratic reforms and calling for constitutional reform, many were then willing to block this reform in order to oppose the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution. Other churches (a minority) were willing to advocate for the rights of Muslims to have *kadhi* courts written into the constitution, thus guaranteeing the courts continued presence in Kenya.

Both Muslim and Christian leadership flexed their political muscles; Muslims attempted to expand the role of *kadhi* courts in Kenya, and Christians tried to remove them from the constitution. As was seen, the result of this contestation was to maintain the status quo concerning *kadhi* courts within the new constitution, which would indicate that neither community was able to exert dominance over the other. Some Christian leaders vowed to continue the effort to remove the courts from the constitution, which was a symbolic assertion of political power attempting to minimise the message from the referendum results that church leaders did not have as much influence over their flock as thought.

However, Kenyan Christians may have benefited from having lost this small battle. Ostien argues that Nigerian Islam became radicalised when Christians managed to defeat a "proposed Federal Sharia Court of Appeal" in 1979;[225] Kenyan Christians, by losing this battle, may have avoided the radicalisation of Kenyan Islam.

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[225] Ostien, "Opportunity Missed by Nigeria's Christians."

PART TWO

ANALYSIS OF KENYAN CHRISTIAN LITERATURE ON ISLAM

CHAPTER SIX

SCHOLARLY DISCOURSE AMONG KENYAN CHRISTIANS CONCERNING ISLAM OR CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

With the appearance of *Jesus in African Christianity*[1] in 1989 an important endeavour into the publishing of African theology was born in Kenya. This book marked the first publication in Kenya by Kenyan theologians of their own research. Three years later, under the leadership of J.N.K. Mugambi, Acton Publishers grew out of this initial effort, which has since published more than 60 books[2] on various aspects of African church and theology. About a decade later, Paulines Publications Africa began publishing books on African theology with the release of *African Religion*[3]. Paulines has since published more than 25 books[4] of African theology. In addition the Catholic University of East Africa Press, Gaba Publications[5] and Uzima Publishing House[6] have published books in Kenya on African church and theology. Considering that other publishers occasionally release theological books, one can estimate that more than 100 books on subjects concerning African theology have been published in Kenya over the past two and a half decades, indicating Kenya as a major centre for the production of African theology.

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[1] J. N. K. Mugambi and Laurenti Magesa, eds., *Jesus in African Christianity: Experimentation and Diversity in African Christology* (Nairobi: Initiatives Ltd, 1989), 72.

[2] See the catalogue at http://www.acton.co.ke/catalogue.html.

[3] Magesa, *African Religion*.

[4] See the catalogue at http://www.paulinesafrica.org/african_theology.html.

[5] Gaba is a part of AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa).

[6] Uzima is the publishing arm of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

A few books on Islam have been published in Kenya by Christian publishing houses. None of these books have been written by a Kenyan Christian, and only one such book has been co-edited by a Kenyan,[7] which seems to indicate that Kenyan Christian experts on Islam have yet to take the lead on addressing this issue in their own country. However, Kenyan Christian religious scholars have contributed several chapters in these books on Islam, as well as chapters on various issues dealing with Islam in other books of African Theology, journal articles and chapters in books published outside of Kenya. These chapters and articles will be discussed and analysed in this chapter. The local Kenyan context is given priority (see 1.2.1) and the theology of reconstruction (see 6.1), as it proposes the importance of African culture and African solutions to African problems, provides a framework for the analysis of the texts and the Christian perceptions of Islam found therein.

Though books and journals included in this study have been published by Roman Catholic publishers, the scholarly writing examined in the present chapter represents primarily mainline Protestant churches, as mainline Protestant scholars have written most of the articles. One article is written by a Catholic lay missionary, and articles by two Evangelical scholars are also examined.

6.1   Kenyan Mainline Scholars

This chapter will examine articles produced by theologians and religion scholars from mainline Protestant churches.[8] Three articles by two Evangelical scholars will also be examined at the end of the chapter. Due to the limited representation of Evangelical perspectives these will only be examined briefly; they will not be used extensively in further

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[7] Fritz Stenger, Joseph Wandera, and Paul Hannon, eds., *Christian-Muslim Co-Existence in Eastern Africa*, Tangaza Occasional Papers, 22 (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008).

[8] See chapter 1.3 for more explanation on the different Christian groups in Kenya.

commenting on Kenyan Christian perceptions of Islam in later chapters. They are included here to provide a thorough look at what Kenyan scholars are producing concerning Islam.

Paul Gifford, in writing about mainline Christianity in Kenya, says, "Kenyan intellectuals generally blame the West for their plight," and that among Christians "the blame goes beyond secular agents" to also include Christian missionaries.[9] He also critiques Kenyan theologians because rather than doing a political theology, they do a "theology of culture"[10] in which they react to past injustices and the scorn of African culture by Europeans, especially during the colonial era. Their concern is then to address cultural and social issues to demonstrate that Christianity is not a Western religion, but that it can truly be African.[11] It is important to note that in these theologies of culture, African cultural ways are generally promoted as valid, life-giving and exemplary of Christian values, while most of the country's problems are understood to come from outside Kenya. It can be anticipated that Christian-Muslim tension in Kenya will be presented as coming from Western attitudes towards Islam. Gifford adds that the Bible is rarely used to promote this theology of culture, as most of the writing consists of "cultural exposition."[12] It might also be expected that those writing on Islam will examine social and cultural issues in particular, while biblical and theological issues will be less developed.

Mugambi's theology of reconstruction is one the theologies of culture that Gifford critiques. Mugambi is concerned with a theology of culture in which a genuine Africanness[13] is considered the ideal in Christian theology and in the development of society. He also writes

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[9] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 65.

[10] Ibid., 71.

[11] Ibid., 71-72. See also Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*.

[12] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 72-73.

[13] While strongly advocating a genuine Africanness, the concept remains somewhat ill-defined.

of a move from liberation to reconstruction,[14] where the liberation paradigm of the Exodus

under Moses is replaced by an emphasis on rebuilding society using the biblical model of

Nehemiah. He writes that Nehemiah was able to get people to "overcome their sense of

alienation"[15] and work together in unity to rebuild Jerusalem. They were able to "take control

of their own history."[16] As applied to contemporary Africa, Africans have been alienated by

colonialism, racism, and neo-imperialism; the current need is for the cultivation of a unity that

brings African people together, overcoming their alienation, to work for African solutions to

their problems.[17] The theology of reconstruction provides a helpful framework for examining

the texts. The issues of colonialism, neo-imperialism, unity, working together, finding African

solutions and valuing African culture are those important in African Christian theology. A

central question in examining the following texts will be how this theology impacts Christian

perceptions of Islam in Kenya.

6.2 Kenyan Scholars of Islam from Mainline Churches

Four Kenyan scholars of Islam will have their works examined in this section. They

are Newton Kahumbi Maina, Anne Nkirote Kubai, Joseph Wandera, and Joseph Mutei.

6.2.1 Newton Kahumbi Maina

Newton Kahumbi Maina, a Presbyterian (PCEA),[18] who is a senior lecturer in Islamic

Studies at Kenyatta University in Nairobi (where he also obtained his doctorate),[19] has written

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[14] This is the title of one of Mugambi's earliest works on the subject. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*.

[15] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 25.

[16] Ibid., 26.

[17] Ibid., 129.

[18] Maina appears to be the least actively involved with church institutions of the Kenyan Christian writers under examination.

[19] I owe gratitude to John Chesworth for much of the information included on personal details of the Kenyan scholars.

seven articles concerning Islam within the timeframe of this study that will be analysed.[20] In

these texts Maina writes on women in Kenyan Islam, the *kadhi* courts controversy in Kenya,

the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya, and Islamic extremism. As will be seen

his writing addresses historical and social issues of Islam in Kenya, rather than theological

issues. Maina's main objectives are to promote a better understanding of Islam as it exists in

Kenya and to correct misperceptions about Islam among Christians.

In a project report prepared for the Organization for Social Science Research in

Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) for the Tenth Gender Issues Research Competition in

2000, Maina addressed the issue of *The Impact of Islam on Women's Role in Political

Mobilization in Kenya*,[21] which is the fullest treatment of Islam that he provides within the

timeframe of this study. A shorter version of this report was later published as *Muslim Women

and Politics in Kenya*.[22] He states the problem as follows:

> In Islam, there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, the affairs
> of the "church" and those of the state. Hence religion is inseparable from
> politics. Although Islam grants a woman political rights, in Kenya, Muslim
> women are on the periphery of political decision making processes. This
> situation creates a paradox which necessitates a research inquiry. The question
> is: is the role of a Muslim woman in Kenya's politics a product of Islamic
> teachings and practices or are there other influences? In view of that, this study
> has attempted to investigate the impact of Islam on women's role in political
> mobilization in Kenya.[23]

A few points can be raised from this paragraph. First, Maina says that Muslim women

are politically marginal in Kenya. Then he raises the question whether their marginality is due

to Islam or "other influences," though he has already provided an answer earlier in the

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[20] Maina is the only Kenyan Christian writer who has also published any significant material on Islam prior to 1998.

[21] Newton Kahumbi Maina, *The Impact of Islam on Women's Role in Political Mobilization in Kenya* (Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2000).

[22] Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Muslim Women and Politics in Kenya," in *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*, ed. Mary N. Getui and Emmanuel A. Obeng, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003).

[23] Maina, *The Impact of Islam on Women's Role*, 10.

paragraph where he writes that "Islam grants a woman political rights." This indicates that the role of Muslim women in politics in Kenya is limited by "other influences." Finally, this political marginality is somehow connected to the absence of a "dichotomy between the sacred and the secular" within Islam. The non-separation between religion and state is not addressed any further in the article, as its presumed importance here is that Islam does specifically address the political role of women in the Qur'ān and Hadith.

The issue is then presented as an intra-Muslim debate between 'modernists' and 'fundamentalists' over the interpretation of the Qur'ān concerning "issues pertaining to women."[24] Maina clearly favours the modernist side of the debate, giving examples of "women in early Islam," such as Muhammad's wives and daughter, Fatima, who were active in the politics of the community.[25] In presenting this perspective he frequently cites from works by Muslim feminist scholars Fatima Mernissi and Leila Ahmed, concluding that "the teachings of Islam do not hinder the role of a woman in politics."[26] He presents the conservative argument as: women are the leaders of the home, whereas men are the leaders in the political arena.[27] The conclusion of the report is that Muslim men in Kenya "interpret the Qur'ān in a way that stresses the subordinate role of women as wives and mothers," which limits their participation in politics.[28] He portrays the modernist argument as more accurately reflecting the Qur'ān and the Hadith,[29] while representing the conservative argument as more influenced by patriarchal traditions,[30] even writing, "Although the Islamic scriptures do not categorically state it, the question of superiority of men over women is a product of

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[24] Ibid., 24.

[25] Ibid., 22.

[26] Ibid., 72.

[27] Ibid., 69.

[28] Maina, "Muslim Women and Politics in Kenya," 142.

[29] Maina, *The Impact of Islam on Women's Role*, 48-59.

[30] Ibid., 59-62, 69.

patriarchal ideology."[31] Maina is therefore saying that patriarchal African traditions are the "other influences" that are primarily responsible for political marginality among Kenyan Muslim women. Gifford has noted that Kenyan theologians often present African culture in a "rather idealised" fashion,[32] and Maina goes against this trend. As will be seen, this is a unique character of Maina's writing as he defends his understanding of Islam against both Christian (and Western) stereotypes and African cultural adaptations of Islam.

In another article addressing women's issues in Islam,[33] Maina also writes of how Muslim women may be marginalised and even denigrated by religion.[34] However, he states that "Islam and Christianity could be cited as religions whose doctrinal imperatives legitimize male domination over women."[35] In general, he says that the status of women[36] improved with the advent of Islam over the pre-Islamic situation. He also notes that Christian women could learn from Muslim women on the issue of inheritance.[37] Therefore, Maina seeks to establish parity between Islam and Christianity on women's issues, which, as will be seen, is a common strategy among scholars of the mainline churches in Kenya.

Maina presented a paper, *The Historical Roots of Conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Kenya*,[38] at a conference on interfaith dialogue in 2008 at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa in Nairobi. He introduced his paper saying:

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[31] Ibid., 83.

[32] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 73.

[33] Newton Kahumbi Maina, "The Status of Muslim Women in Kenya," in *Quests for Abundant Life in Africa*, ed. Mary N. Getui and Matthew M. Theuri, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002).

[34] Ibid., 199.

[35] Maina, "Muslim Women and Politics in Kenya," 137.

[36] Maina has also published on women's issues outside of the Islamic context. Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Role of Women Religious Leaders in Managing and Resolving Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of the Rural Women Peace Link " *Chemichemi* 5, no. 1 (2008).

[37] Maina, "The Status of Muslim Women in Kenya," 200.

[38] Newton Kahumbi Maina, "The Historical Roots of Conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Kenya," in *Interfaith Dialogue: Towards a Culture of Working Together*, ed. Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi, (Nairobi: The Catholic University of East Africa, 2009).

It is shown that since the first interaction between Christianity and Islam in Kenya, the former enjoyed a position of power while the latter was presumably reduced to an underdog status. This was the situation during the colonial period, a situation that created competition between Christianity and Islam. This competition has engendered conflict between Christians and Muslims. It is concluded that the causes of conflicts between Christians and Muslims in the contemporary period are a product of historical antecedents.[39]

The purpose of the article is to demonstrate that present day tension between Muslims and Christians in Kenya is due to Western colonial and missionary experience, which is consistent with expectations arising from Gifford's analysis of Kenyan mainline churches. What was the situation during the colonial period that Maina refers to? He claims that the "missionaries wanted to establish Christianity …"[40] in Kenya, therefore viewing "… Islam as an enemy religion and competitor that need to be obliterated."[41] He also uses similar vocabulary to describe colonial era missionary activity, such as a Christian "onslaught on Islam … in order to eradicate it."[42] The actions bringing about these accusations are: missionaries preached "openly against Islam and slavery,"[43] missionary-provided education and medical services "were geared towards evangelization and converting people to Christianity,"[44] and close cooperation between missions and colonialism included requests from the colonial government for missions to "broaden their bases of operation in all areas in order to hinder the progress of Islam."[45] These actions demonstrate an unconstructive approach towards Islam, explaining negative Muslim reaction towards Christianity. However, they give no indication of the sort of violence implied in the exaggerated language that Maina sometimes uses. This seems to be motivated by the desire to fault Western missionaries.

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[39] Ibid., 78.
[40] Ibid., 80.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 81.
[44] Ibid., 85.
[45] Ibid., 87.

Placing an overstated blame on outsiders also functions as a means to provide at least partial excuse for the negative attitude of current Kenyan Christians.

Maina also mentions recent phenomena that have adversely affected Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya. First, "a lot of resources have found their way into Africa from the oil-rich Arab and Muslim countries," which have "enabled Islam to economically compete with Christianity in missionary work."[46] Now Christians see Islam as true competition; both religions have begun to use propaganda against the other. For example, Muslims accused Daystar University in Nairobi of paying Muslims to convert to Christianity.[47] Christians have made similar accusations against Muslims for using "unorthodox means to spread Islam in Christian areas."[48] He claims that the use of such propaganda increases the tension in the relationship between Muslims and Christians. Second, this competition is also shown through calls by Kenyan Christian leaders "to intensify evangelization in order to stem the tide of the spread of Islam."[49] These calls to evangelism are understood as responses to the rise in Muslim *da'wa*. Third, Maina writes of the relatively new practice of *mihadhara*[50] (public debates) by Muslim preachers that have sometimes led to physical confrontations due to their polemical nature.[51] The method of *mihadhara* is said to have come from the late South African preacher and polemicist, Ahmed Deedat. Fourth, due to terrorist attacks in Kenya and around the world "Kenyan Christians have an inherent phobia for Islam and Muslims."[52]These attacks, clearly indicated to have been instigated by "the Saudi fugitive

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[46] Ibid., 90.
[47] Ibid., 91.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. Recall use of the phrase, 'stem the tide', as used by Western missionaries (see chapter 5.3.1).
[50] See chapter 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 for more explanation on *mihadhara*.
[51] Maina, "Historical Roots of Conflict," 92.
[52] Ibid., 93.

Osama bin Laden,"[53] have created a "social perception of Muslims as a people who thrive on violence."[54] Fifth, the fear of Islam is perpetuated by the Western media, who portray it as "a source of intolerance, brutality, irrationality, backwardness, militancy, extremism and terrorism."[55] Sixth, Kenyan political issues concerning the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution[56] and the signing of a MoU between presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, and a Muslim organisation[57] are said to have had detrimental repercussions on Christian-Muslim relations. Interestingly, most of these phenomena are clearly indicated to have their origins outside of Kenya. The only exceptions are the local political issues of *kadhi* courts and the MoU, and possibly some statements by Christian leaders. One of Maina's concerns in presenting these interfaith problems is to demonstrate that their origin is ultimately foreign to Kenya. This is as significant as the presentation of the historical situation in Kenya itself. He also attempts to hold both Muslims and Christians responsible for the conflicts. He is careful to show no favouritism towards either faith in critiquing the current situation.

Maina brings the paper to a close saying "in the contemporary period cases of conflicts are an exception rather than a rule."[58] He affirms "a long tradition of tolerance, mutual respect and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims."[59] He then gives recent examples of Christians and Muslims working together in Kenya, which leads him to conclude that "Christians and Muslims can work together for the common good."[60] By writing that conflict is an exception in the contemporary period, he is again contrasting the independent African era with the colonial Western era of interreligious relations. In writing of

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 94.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 94-96.

[57] Ibid., 97.

[58] Ibid., 98.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid., 99.

Christians and Muslims working together, he does not, however, address the question of how and who decides what is the common good in Kenya. Do Muslims and Christians differ on their understanding of the common good for Kenya? If so, how then is the 'common' good known and decided upon? This is a question that will be seen again.

In *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya*[61] Maina addresses many of the same issues of conflict in a similar fashion as found in the paper discussed above.[62] For this reason only the part of the article that advocates for interfaith dialogue in Kenya will be discussed. According to Maina, "the teachings of Islam and Christianity provide the basis for dialogue between Christians and Muslims."[63]

For Christians dialogue is said to be ingrained in the teachings of Jesus. Maina specifically mentions the story found in Luke 4:16-30 in which Jesus speaks in the synagogue in Nazareth. In this story Jesus says that "God is not only a God of Israel but equally a God of the Gentiles."[64] He further comments:

> The account of Jesus in these verses shows that God is not limited and confined to a particular group of people. He is a God of others too. This means that Christians should reach out and dialogue with Muslims as brothers and sisters because all are children of one God.[65]

In this passage Maina appeals to the universality of God as the Christian basis for dialogue with Muslims. God is understood to also be the God of Muslims. As will be seen in the discussion of the popular Christian literature on Islam, God is not always understood in this way among Kenyan Christians. He refers to Muslims and Christians as brothers and sisters, emphasising their commonality over their differences. This family relationship would

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[61] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya."

[62] Since the *Historical Roots of Conflict* was written several years after *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya*, it is an expansion of the issues brought up more briefly in the earlier article.

[63] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 177.

[64] Ibid., 178.

[65] Ibid.

imply that mutual respect and love should be the norm in their relationship. This family

relation is based upon both Christians and Muslims being "children of one God," which

implies that believers of both religions share in that relationship. Maina is most likely

directing his appeal specifically to issues that he observes in the Kenyan church.

For Muslims dialogue is rooted in the nature of *da'wa*:

> *Da'wah* should not be coercive. It should only be fulfilled with the free
> consent of the called: "there is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'ān 2:256).
> People who do not pay attention to the message should be approached again
> (3:176-177; 5:108; 47:32). The responsibility of a Muslim is to present truth to
> the people and not to force them to accept it (39:41). This means that dialogue
> is an important component of *da'wah* work.[66]

For Maina the non-coerciveness of *da'wa* implies the necessity of dialogue. A Muslim

engaged in *da'wa* is only responsible for the presentation of the message to others, not for the

acceptance or non-acceptance of the message. If the recipient of the message does not accept

it, the only option is to communicate the message another time. It seems that dialogue is then

understood to represent a form of *da'wa* that is inherently non-coercive. Since the foundation

for dialogue among Christians was found to relate to specific issues within the Kenyan

church, it is plausible that Maina understands *da'wa* in Kenya to be often done in a coercive

manner. The *mihadhara* debates mentioned previously may represent a coercive method of

da'wa.

Maina discusses the goals of dialogue between Muslims and Christians, writing:

> Dialogue should foster a better and mutual understanding, communion
> and co-operation between Christians and Muslims for them to live and work
> together. For an effective dialogue, Christians and Muslims should cultivate a
> positive attitude towards others and their religious beliefs. This means either
> should strive to go above the deep seated prejudices and stereotypes. For
> example, Christians should be careful about the blanket condemnation of Islam
> as a "religion that is spread through the edge of the sword," or the emotive
> label which describes Muslims as fundamentalists. To shed these stereotypes,
> Christians need to understand that Islam is a peace loving religion which does

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[66] Ibid., 177.

not advocate violence and terrorism of whatever nature. Extreme cases should not be used to judge Islam, as doing so would be tantamount to distorting the image of Islam.[67]

The primary goals are practical: mutual understanding, co-operation, working together, and living together, rather than theological. By contrast, for example, Mahmoud Ayoub provides primarily theological goals for dialogue such as, accepting the divine inspiration of each religion, being spiritual partners on a journey towards the divine, and seeing each faith as salvific.[68] Maina is more concerned with living together in peaceful relationships, which he believes can only happen when there is positive respect for the religious beliefs of others. Elsewhere, he says that people of each faith tradition can "borrow and learn from each other through dialogue."[69] Perhaps most importantly, he again addresses the local situation, in which "Christians and Muslims seem entrenched in their negative attitudes toward each other,"[70] by stressing that certain stereotypes must be overcome, namely that Islam is violent and Muslims are fundamentalists. He only writes of Christians overcoming stereotypes, which should be understood to indicate his target audience and not a belief that Muslims harbour no prejudices. His concern is to encourage Christians to correct their distorted images of Islam and to engage in constructive dialogue.

Maina also discusses the proper way to approach dialogue. He shows some dependence on Jesuit theologian, Jacques Dupuis.[71] He writes:

> Dialogue takes into cognizance the doctrinal differences that exist between Christians and Muslims. These differences should be taken as the strengths of each religious group rather than points of weakness. It is these differences that could be explored to provide new insights about others'

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[67] Ibid., 179.

[68] Mahmoud Ayoub, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Goals and Obstacles," *The Muslim World* 94, no. 3 (2004): 315.

[69] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 183.

[70] Ibid., 182.

[71] Jacques Dupuis, *Jesus Christ at the Encounter of World Religions*, trans., Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

religion, to provide accommodation for others opinions and points of view which are necessary for an effective dialogue to take place.[72]

He later adds that while trying to understand these differences, participants in dialogue maintain "their own religious convictions."[73] Here Maina follows Dupuis, who suggests that true dialogue between adherents of different religions must rest upon the "integrity of their faith,"[74] which means that differences must be recognised and dealt with. Therefore, for Maina dialogue is a learning experience in which adherents of each religion learn from each other's differences, learning to become tolerant of diverse points of view. Within a nation such as Kenya, which provides for freedom of religion, then each religion has a right to "propagate its faith,"[75] though Maina qualifies this by mentioning the negative example of *mihadhara* as provocation.

It is clear that Maina is concerned about the tensions and misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians in Kenya. His expressed desire is for dialogue and cooperation. Perhaps the exaggerated and excessive vocabulary that he sometimes uses can be explained by a desire to influence his primarily mainline Christian readers, grabbing their attention. Again it should be noted that the brunt of 'blame' is assigned to past missionaries for the current conflicts, the causes of which "are apparently a carryover from the colonial period" that "continue to plague the relations between Christians and Muslims."[76] By saying that current attitudes are a product of the missionary and colonial past, he may be strategically

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[72] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 179.

[73] Ibid., 180.

[74] Jacques Dupuis, "Interreligious Dialogue, a Challenge to Christian Identity," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 92, no. 1 (2004): 33.

[75] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 183.

[76] Maina, "Historical Roots of Conflict," 87.

implying to his readers that continuing with these same attitudes is to persist in the missionary and colonial past that Kenyan mainline Christians profess to have moved beyond.[77]

In discussing Islamic fundamentalism in an article in AFER,[78] a Catholic journal published in Kenya, Maina aims to correct misconceptions that equate Islam, and especially Islamic renewal movements, with extremism and terrorism. He writes that the word, Islam, is "derived from the Arabic root of *salm*, which means peace,"[79] thus meaning that Islam is a "religion of peace."[80] However, Maina also includes a rather long list of atrocities committed by Islamic extremists[81] that would seem to undermine his argument to the ordinary reader that Islam is a religion of peace.

In *Islamophobia among Christians and Its Challenge in Entrenchment of Kadhis Courts in Kenya*,[82] Maina again takes up the theme of conflict and competition between Muslims and Christians in Kenya. He begins the article by indicating that not all Christians were opposed to the inclusion of the k*adhi* courts in the constitution, though most of the article discusses those parts of the church who strongly opposed their inclusion. The primary theme of the article is that church leaders promote an irrational fear of Islam in order to motivate followers to engage in competition with Islam to slow its spread and increase the spread of Christianity.[83]

As can be seen from the above discussions, Maina generally advocates for Muslims and critiques negative Christian attitudes. In discussing tensions between the two

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[77] See, for example, Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*. He says that Africa has moved beyond the need for liberation from Western oppression to a desire to reconstruct a truly African and modern society.

[78] Newton Kahumbi Maina, "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism," *African Ecclesial Review* 43, no. 6 (2001).

[79] Ibid.: 289.

[80] Ibid. This sentiment is also present in Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 179.

[81] Maina, "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism," 287-289.

[82] Maina, "Islamophobia among Christians."

[83] Ibid., 9.

communities in Kenya, he finds the present conflicts to have historical antecedents in colonial-era missionary attitudes and actions. Christian fears and misconceptions are attributed mostly to this past and to the portrayal of Islam in Western media. Islamic extremism, which comes from outside Kenya, is also said to hold some responsibility for these tensions. In discussing women's issues, he wishes to defend both women and Islam, which leads him towards a difficult position concerning his support of Muslims against Christian misconceptions. This is solved by observing that Christianity also has a poor record in defending the rights of women, by commenting that Islam has improved the lives of women over the pre-Islamic *jahiliyya*, and by using modernist Muslim scholars to state that the Qur'ān and Hadith advance the rights of women more than Muslim traditionalists, including the Muslim community in Kenya, have allowed.

6.2.2 Anne Nkirote Kubai

Anne Nkirote Kubai, a Methodist, who obtained her PhD at the University of London in Religious Studies, now teaches at Uppsala University in Sweden and is a researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute.[84] Her approach to the tensions found between Muslims and Christians in eastern Africa is influenced by her theoretical point of view that human conflicts are normally caused by economic and political factors, which are then "disguised as religious,"[85] as identity becomes a significant issue in the conflict.[86]

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[84] Kubai formerly taught at Kenyatta University, where she mentored Maina.

[85] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 42.

[86] This view is most fully expressed in Anne Nkirote Kubai, "Religious Communities and the Struggle for Civil Space," *Journal of Henry Martyn Institute* 25, no. 1-2 (2006). See also Anne Nkirote Kubai, "Striving in Faith: Christians and Muslims in Africa," in *Striving in Faith: Christians and Muslims in Africa*, ed. Anne Nkirote Kubai and Tarekegn Adebo, (Uppsala, Sweden: Life & Peace Institute, 2008).

Kubai published *The Muslim View of Power*[87] in 1999 in a widely-circulated journal among Kenyan intellectuals, *Wajibu*,[88] shortly after the American embassy bombing in Nairobi. The article is an attempt to enlighten readers seeking an explanation of a Muslim understanding of political power after the terrorist attack. The same issue of the journal also includes an article about a Christian view of power.[89] She introduces the article as follows:

> Islam presents itself as a blueprint of social order, as a way of life based on rules and principles that are divinely ordained. It is a comprehensive way of life, which makes no distinction between the sacred and the secular: both spheres form one indivisible realm. All creation is suffused with the ineffable Oneness of God. The inseparability of the sacred and the secular domains is explained in terms of God's dominion, which is absolute. The Quran lays emphasis on the unity of all things. In Islam it is "religion and state" (*din wa dawla*). The precedence for this was set by the Prophet Muhammad when he founded a religio-political community in Madina and wrote the famous "Constitution of Madina" in which the obligations of the various communities (both of believers and non-believers) resident in Madina were outlined. It is not surprising therefore that, unlike Christianity which renders unto Caesar that which belongs to Caesar, Islam does not separate the two domains of the sacred and the secular, but retains both within its control.[90]

The key to understanding the Muslim view of power according to Kubai is the non-separation of the secular and the sacred; this idea is mentioned in some form at least seven times in this short paragraph. By indicating that the Prophet Muhammad "founded a religio-political community," she anchors the inseparability of the secular and the sacred in the very essence of Islam, and contrasts this with Christianity, which separates "the two domains." It is, however, doubtful that the Kenyan church understands these domains to be completely

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[87] Anne Nkirote Kubai, "The Muslim View of Power," *Wajibu* 14, no. 3 (1999). http://web.peacelink.it/wajibu/8_issue/p3.html (accessed March 14, 2008).

[88] *Wajibu* is published in a magazine format and it is available at several popular bookshops and newsstands.

[89] Moses M. M'ithinji, "Power and Service in Christianity," *Wajibu* 14, no. 3 (1999). http://web.peacelink.it/wajibu/8_issue/p4.html (accessed March 14, 2008). The separation of church and state are not clearly established in this article, but the church is seen to advocate for good governance and justice in society.

[90] Kubai, "The Muslim View of Power."

separate.[91] She addresses the implications of the Muslim non-separation of the secular and sacred by explaining that Muslims expect "an ordinary government to be imbued with righteousness."[92] Interestingly, only a few years before this article was written some church leaders in Kenya agitated for more 'righteousness' in the Kenyan government,[93] and they were told by leading officials that the church should keep to spiritual matters.[94] It is not obvious that Kubai is addressing both the Muslim view of power and the recent history of Christian protest against an authoritarian regime, but the similarities in her account give rise to this question.

She continues, writing that citizens are expected to obey the rulers of the nation, even if they are living in a non-Islamic nation.[95] However, it is also stressed that ultimate obedience is to God, and that "the actions of those in position of political power should be judged by the standards of the *shari'ah*."[96] She adds that a *fatwa* does not need to be obeyed if one lives outside "the jurisdiction of an issuing religious authority,"[97] which must have been an important question for Kenyans at the time. Kubai emphasizes that "social justice" is an important part of an ideal Muslim social order.[98] The "divinely ordained" rules, such as found in the s*hari'a*, favour the community over the individual and "human welfare" over "human liberty."[99]

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[91] Maupeu, "Une Opposition en regime autoritaire." Maupeu argues that the Kenyan church has generally favoured a Constantinian form of church-state relations.

[92] Kubai, "The Muslim View of Power."

[93] David M. Gitari, "Church and Politics," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 28, no. 3 (2004). In this article Gitari defends to the right of the church to speak out against the government when there is injustice.

[94] Sabar-Friedman, "'Politics' and 'Power' in the Kenyan Public Discourse," 435.

[95] Kubai, "The Muslim View of Power."

[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

She concludes the article by briefly discussing current Islamic revival in the world. She writes that "the central concern of the revival is the state: how can Muslims resist what is seen as the alien and the oppressive power of the modern state."[100] It is understood as a political revival more than a spiritual revival. This article may assuage concerns a bit, as she stresses that Islam enjoins its followers to obey the state. Readers may also see their recent concerns with an authoritative regime and the response of Christian leaders mirrored in her explanation. However, she frequently writes also of the preference for an Islamic state and the possible rejection of a state that is unrighteous. Her description of the Islamic revival may raise concerns as well as alleviate fears.

In *Religious Communities and the Struggle for Civil Space*, Kubai writes of the role of religion in violent conflict. Her basic point of view is that conflict originates in social and economic causes, which can then be exacerbated by differences in religious identity. The article is about religion in general, and only one paragraph specifically addresses Islam.

> Islam, too, teaches peace. The very word 'Islam' means peace! Qur'anic verses speak of peace, peacemaking, and forgiveness, and of God as Gracious and Merciful. There are various opinions on verses that deal with peace, with some saying that it is peace for and among Muslims. However, other verses speak of what can be interpreted as violence against those who are considered to be unbelievers and hypocrites (66:9). Again on this injunction, there is a variety of opinions among Muslim scholars: those who are opposed to the use of violence draw support from the verses that encourage a peaceful call to Islamic faith, while others advocate for the use of combat against unbelievers. Another Qur'anic injunction that has gained ascendancy and also a multiplicity of interpretations and applications over centuries is the concept of jihad. The term "jihad" means to strive and struggle in the way of Allah. Usually for those who use jihad, the variety of theological meanings is overshadowed by the emphasis on combat or 'fight', as expressed in the Qur'an (47:4).[101]

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Kubai, "Religious Communities," 118.

She begins the paragraph by writing, like Maina,[102] that Islam means peace and indicating that the Qur'ān speaks of peace and forgiveness. However, the presence of violence in Islam receives more prominence, saying that theological nuances of *jihad* as struggle are "overshadowed" in both reality and in the Qur'ān "by the emphasis on combat." She also points out that Muslim scholars differ on the theologies of peace and violence within Islam. Some say that "it is peace for and among Muslims," and some scholars oppose the use of violence altogether, while "others advocate for the use of combat against unbelievers." No indication of which views may be most prevalent among Muslims is given, lending the impression that each view is relatively common. The article also notes that the Bible has stories of peace and love and those that promote violence.[103] Her intention is not to paint Islam as violent, but to demonstrate that religions may be used to promote peace or violence, though her description of Islam tends more towards violence than peace.

Kubai also gives two examples from Nairobi of interreligious conflict in which the original cause, in her view, was land use disputes between economically marginalised groups of people, but due to issues of identity became understood as religious conflicts.[104] In one example, the expansion of the central Jamia Mosque meant that some market kiosks were to be demolished. The traders responded by throwing the heads of pigs into the mosque compound. The other example is similar. In a section of Nairobi known as South B, another mosque also planned to expand its compound; a parcel of land where informal traders had normally done commerce was fenced in. During the ensuing conflict she mentions that Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church was burned down. In this incident the mosque was set

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[102] Maina, "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism," 289.

[103] Kubai, "Religious Communities," 118.

[104] Ibid.: 122.

on fire first, and the church was burnt down in response.[105] However, the author does not mention the destruction of the mosque, thus leaving the reader to wonder why Muslim youth would respond to this incident by burning down a church. There is again a tendency in this article for Kubai to present Islam as possibly violent. For her both incidents are examples of how a conflict, which she presumes began for non-religious reasons, became a religious conflict, so that in one instance traders used pig heads as anti-Islam symbols, and in another Muslim youth attacked a church. In contrast to this interpretation, Hassan Mwakimako, a Kenyan Muslim, claims that the Kenyan media only presented the Muslim attack on the church as religious, neglecting to say that the traders who burnt down the mosque were most likely Christians.[106] In other words, he would like to interpret the event as religious conflict from the beginning. Maina also addresses this incident in South B and views it as a land dispute that took on religious dimensions.[107] The religious difference between the traders and the Muslims most likely exacerbated the tensions, though religious difference was not the initial cause of the conflict. One might also ask why Kubai does not mention that the mosque was attacked first. The absence of this fact from her article means that an uninformed reader must assume that the violence was initiated by the Muslim community. Kubai seems to demonstrate bias through not including all of the facts, thus implying that Islam is violent.

In 2000 Kubai also presented a paper in Durban, South Africa, entitled *Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya since Independence*. She begins the paper by stressing "Arab hegemony" in Kenyan coastal Islam,[108] thus giving the impression that Islam in Kenya is an

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[105] Patrick Majute, *Associated Press Worldstream*, December 1, 2000.

[106] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 297. Mwakimako mistakenly identifies the church as "Our Lady of Mercy Church" and the section of Nairobi as South C, rather than South B.

[107] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 177.

[108] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 32.

Arab phenomenon rather than an African one.[109] It is a common strategy in Kenya to taint an

opposing group with an accusation of being foreign-influenced.[110] Chapter four shows that

current historiography of Islam in East Africa demonstrates that the Swahili Muslim

phenomena along the coast, while influenced by Arab traders, has its roots in Africa.

Much of the paper consists of explanations for why there is tension between Christians

and Muslims in Kenya. As Kubai explains it, the principle reason is the impression among

Muslims that Christians have had and continue to have social and political advantages over

Muslims. While acknowledging some truth to Muslim disadvantages, she also says that

religious identity issues have been superimposed over other social, economic and political

issues.[111] From this it would seem that Kenyan Muslims have been 'imagining' a religious

discrimination that in reality is due to other social and historical factors. These socio-

historical factors are rooted in colonial policies, such as the political and economic isolation

of Muslim areas from the rest of Kenya[112] and colonial missions, as Christian missionaries

sought to restrict the influence of "Islam while they fostered the spread of Christianity."[113] In

contrast, Maina strongly argued that Muslims have actually been discriminated against by

Christians in a paper presented at a seminar on Islam in Kenya.[114]

Kubai strongly implies that historical underdevelopment with its origin in colonial

policy has erroneously led many people from Muslim communities to understand their

situation in terms of religious conflict. She uses the example of the Somali people in North

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[109] See chapter 4 on how this view is commonly expressed in Kenya.

[110] For example, former President Moi often accused opponents of being "puppets of foreign masters." See Janet Muthoni Muthiki, "Rethinking Ecofeminism: Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya" (Master's Dissertation, University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2006), 15, 30. Maathai was called such by Moi.

[111] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 42.

[112] Ibid., 35, 37.

[113] Ibid., 34.

[114] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya." This paper was written before 1998 and is not used in the analysis.

Eastern Province, where there is little infrastructure due to neglect of the colonial government and the subsequent Kenyan government,[115] and where "most of the NGOs involved in the endeavour to improve the lives of the peoples of northern Kenya are Christian."[116] In this situation, conflicts between the local Muslim community and the central government take on "religious overtones"[117] that have included attacks on churches.

Additionally, Kubai attributes some of the tensions to foreign Islamic movements having influence among Kenyan Muslims.[118] These Islamist movements then contribute to anti-Christian attitudes. Recently introduced multiparty politics in Kenya are also said to have given the Muslim community a voice that they hadn't previously had, and this voice "is now becoming louder."[119] It seems that Muslims expressing their political aspirations and grievances are understood to be disruptive.

Another factor in poor relationships between Muslims and Christians is said to be attitudes of superiority of Muslims over non-Muslims. Kubai argues that since many Muslims, especially converts in the interior, can't read the Qur'ān and are "not concerned with the practice of orthodoxy," they make use of "the antiquated coastal meta-cosmology of Arabness/civilization versus bush/savage" to understand their relationship with Christians.[120] Anything that is "unIslamic" is then said to be "*ushenzi* (uncivilzed/savage),"[121] which impacts upon relations with others in the community, since Christians are therefore understood to be uncivilised.

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[115] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 37.
[116] Ibid., 39.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid., 44, 54.
[119] Ibid., 48.
[120] Ibid., 52.
[121] Ibid., 69.

She also briefly discusses some events that demonstrate conflict between Muslims and Christians.[122] These incidents are not simply described, but Muslim representations of the conflicts are called into question. For example, in the case of a Catholic sponsored school in Isiolo where Muslims constructed a mosque and protested against the singing of hymns, Kubai asks a hypothetical question concerning Muslim reaction if the Catholic Church had built a chapel in a school sponsored by Muslims. She answers somewhat speculatively, "The most likely scenario would be that of Muslims rising up in arms, accusing Christians not only of disregarding the presence of a good number of Muslim girls in the school, but also of making plans to convert them to Christianity."[123] Incidents in which church representatives spoke out negatively about Islam are also mentioned[124] to provide some balance, but the gist of the text suggests that the "peaceful co-existence" that has existed between the Christian majority and Muslim minority[125] is more threatened by the actions of Muslims in Kenya than by Christian demographic, economic, social and political ascendancy.

Kubai writes one paragraph in the context of tensions between Muslims and Christians, making theological comparisons. She wants to show that there are also theological tensions, though she maintains that less abstract issues are most significant in causing conflict.

> The doctrines of the two religions are essentially different though there are some common grounds of understanding, for instance the idea of One God, both are monotheistic. In Islam the relationship between God and humanity is that of master (*Rabb*) and servant (*Abd*) and therefore, life is a matter of service and worship (*Ibadah*). The primary goal of Islamic existence is submission to Allah. The particular emphasis of the Islamic understanding of God is on the unity/ontological Oneness of Allah (*Tawhid*). The response of Islam to Trinity is to enunciate its distinctive doctrine of *Tawhid*. It is an

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[122] Ibid., 54-61.
[123] Ibid., 57.
[124] Ibid., 54, 56, 57.
[125] Ibid., 51.

unforgivable sin (*shirk*) to attribute partners to Allah. Each Muslim must affirm *Tawhid* each day and it infuses the very life of Islam.[126]

Kubai appears to disagree with Maina when she writes that "the doctrines of the two religions are essentially different." Maina writes in contrast that Christianity and Islam "share common beliefs."[127] The main differences that she names are the relationship between humanity and God (for Muslims it is one of master and slave) and the emphasis upon *Tawhid*. The opposing Christian beliefs are not mentioned, though it may be assumed that she supposes a Father-Child relationship between God and humanity and the Trinity to correspond. She also notes that these two Islamic doctrines influence everyday life, so that Islam is about submission and the "life of Islam" is infused with *Tawhid*, though it is not specified how. Again one may assume that the counter practice for Christians is relational due to the parental relationship with God. Kubai is not attempting to analyse the Islamic theology of God, but to simply highlight points of disagreement with Christianity that produce tension.

Kubai writes in *Walking a Tightrope: Christians and Muslims in Post-Genocide Rwanda* of how Muslims were 'less guilty' than their Christian compatriots in the Rwanda genocide in 1994.[128] Since this article discusses Rwanda in particular, the details will be of less interest for the present study. However, Kubai's presentation of Islam here is of some interest. Gérard Prunier in *The Rwanda Crisis* wrote that Islam was "the only faith that provided a bulwark against barbarity"[129] during the genocide. He attributed this to the fact that Muslims were "socially marginal" in Rwanda, which gave them a clear identity as a Muslim

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[126] Ibid., 52.

[127] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 171.

[128] Anne Nkirote Kubai, "Walking a Tightrope: Christians and Muslims in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 18, no. 2 (2007).

[129] Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 253.

community rather than as ethnically Hutu or Tutsi.[130] Kubai quotes Prunier and comments

that "the view that the marginalization of Muslims in Rwanda helped forge a close-knit

community apparently immune to the perennial problem of Tutsi – Hutu identity is

tenable,"[131] though she does not fully endorse his view that Islamic identity completely

superseded ethnic identities for Rwandan Muslims. She asserts that there are two observable

"layers of identity,"[132] an individual and a community layer among Rwandan Muslims. At the

community level they formed a Muslim identity in opposition to the Christian majority, but

"at the individual level, a Rwandan is Hutu, Tutsi or Twa."[133]

Kubai also offers reasons in addition to marginality that explain why Tutsis were able

to hide and survive in Muslim areas. Tutsis who hid in mosques were spared, unlike those

who hid in churches, because of a "widely held belief" in the efficacy of "Islamic magic."[134]

Imams in the mosques also preached against participation in the genocide.[135] Islam, therefore,

gained a reputation of being a "source of protection and healing,"[136] and Islam has been

growing in Rwanda.[137] Wax, in her oft-quoted Washington Post article, says that Muslims

now make up 14% of the population.[138] American Christian mission organisations have used

this statistic to promote missions to Rwanda.[139] However, Kubai, while acknowledging that

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[130] Ibid.

[131] Kubai, "Walking a Tightrope," 228.

[132] Ibid.: 223.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.: 228.

[135] Ibid.: 229.

[136] Alana Tiemessen, "From Genocide to Jihad: Islam and Ethnicity in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association* (2005). http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2005/Tiemessen.pdf (accessed November 3, 2011).

[137] Emily Wax, "Islam Attracting Many Survivors of Rwanda Genocide," *Washington Post*, September 23, 2002.

[138] Ibid.

[139] David Taylor, "Africa in Crisis: Finding Hope in the Midst of Tragedy," *Mission Frontier* November/December(2011). http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/africa-in-crisis (accessed November 3, 2011).

Islam has grown, claims that Muslims comprise approximately 5% of the population.[140] In a separate article on Pentecostalism in Rwanda, she asserts that Pentecostalism is the religious movement that has truly gained adherents after the genocide.[141]

In *Walking a Tightrope*, she also finds that Muslims were not blameless in the genocide. For example, the editor of the influential newspaper, *Kangura*, who urged Hutus to kill Tutsis, was a Muslim.[142] Some of those she interviewed also remarked that "some Muslims participated in the genocide."[143] From discussions she had among survivors she concludes that a Hutu Muslim would not kill a Tutsi Muslim, but they might kill a non-Muslim Tutsi.[144] One purpose of Kubai's article is to dispel what she understands to be overly romanticised versions of Islam's innocence in the Rwandan genocide. She is also very critical of the church's role in the genocide and of its reaction to it.[145] In addition she calls upon Christians to develop more equal relations with Rwandan Muslims.[146] Her principle interest is missionary in nature exploring what is best for the continued witness of the church in Rwanda.

In *Striving in Faith*, Kubai addresses issues similar to those in her other writings. She emphasizes that social injustices lead to conflicts in Africa, but that these conflicts "acquire religious overtones" in which religion serves as an "identity marker" and becomes predominant, "overshadowing" the other issues.[147] She also writes that the scriptures of both

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[140] Kubai, "Walking a Tightrope," 132.

[141] Anne Nkirote Kubai, "Post-Genocide Rwanda: The Changing Religious Landscape," *Exchange* 36, no. 2 (2007).

[142] Kubai, "Walking a Tightrope," 227.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid.: 228.

[145] Ibid.: 229-232.

[146] Ibid.: 234.

[147] Kubai, "Striving in Faith," 17-18.

Christianity and Islam can be used to support either peace or violence, though noting that the "concept of jihad has gained ascendancy."[148]

She also writes about dialogue between Christians and Muslims, saying that it has been "bedevilled by mutual prejudices" and that participants "talk to" the other rather than hold a true discussion over issues.[149] She asks if there are mutual conceptions of the problems facing the communities, and if there are equal power relations in the setting of agenda for such encounters. Testimonies of a "dialogue of life" are dismissed because they do "not go beyond an exchange of pleasantries."[150] Kubai also raises the issue of dialogue fatigue in which she says that adherents of both religions claim that "there is no reciprocity between the faith communities."[151] The examples that she uses come from Muslims, who say that Christians neither recognise the Qur'ān as the word of God, nor Muhammad as a prophet. She has not found dialogue to have been, so far, a means towards better understanding and relations between Muslims and Christians.

6.2.3 Joseph Wandera

Joseph Wandera,[152] an Anglican, has written three articles on Islam in Kenya. He has also edited two books dealing with issues concerning Islam: *Christian-Muslim Co-Existence in Eastern Africa* and *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts*.[153] Similar to the above writers he approaches the subject from a socio-historical perspective, and like Maina he is critical of Christian discrimination against Muslims.

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[148] Ibid., 16.
[149] Ibid., 12.
[150] Ibid., 13.
[151] Ibid., 14.
[152] Wandera recently obtained his doctorate in Islamic Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and lectures at St Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.
[153] Abdulkader Tayob and Joseph Wandera, eds., *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya* (Cape Town, South Africa: Centre for Contemporary Islam, UCT, 2011).

Wandera provides a brief history of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya in the article *Love Thy Neighbour*,[154] which was published in a Kenyan Jesuit journal, *Hakimaki*. Wandera, like Kubai, understands "conflict in modern society including religious ones …" to be the "… result of social and economic marginalisation and exploitation."[155] Therefore, Christian-Muslim tensions in Kenya are not seen by Wandera to be primarily the result of religious difference, but due to historical and political processes that have led to marginalisation.[156] The article looks at this history from the perspective of the lack of justice for the Muslim community. Due to a variety of factors Christians have obtained a position of relative dominance over Muslims. Most significant among these factors include an educational system dominated by Christian missions during the colonial era and the move of the seat of political and economic power from the predominately Muslim coast to the interior Highlands, where later much of the local population converted to Christianity.[157] He writes that "Muslims remained suspicious of modern facilities such as education, health and industry because they associated them with Christianity,"[158] due to the evangelistic methods of colonial era Christian mission. The resultant delay in the pursuit of education has left the Muslim community in a disadvantageous position from which they have yet to catch up.

Wandera accepts Muslim claims of discrimination at face value, similar to Maina, but unlike Kubai who suspects exaggeration. An example is his view of President Kibaki's declaration of "Idd Ul Hajj"[159] as a national holiday in 2007. Wandera says that this Muslim holy day should have been a holiday as a matter of normal government policy, considering the

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[154] Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour."
[155] Ibid.: 33.
[156] Ibid.: 35.
[157] Ibid.: 34.
[158] Ibid.
[159] *Eid al-Adha*.

significant Muslim minority in Kenya, rather than being done as an election ploy.[160] He also

mentions that Kenyan Muslims express the opinion that they are treated as foreigners instead

of "fellow citizens" in their own country.[161] He believes that the formation of some radical

Islamic groups in Kenya may be due to the discrimination felt by the Muslim community.[162]

Wandera also notes in the article that Christians opposed making *Eid al-Adha* a holiday.[163]

They have also resisted moves by political parties concerning agreements with Muslims over

"their grievances."[164] In one instance Wandera does claim that Muslims may have obtained

some advantage since the advent of a multiparty system, in view of the fact that the Muslim

community is primarily urban and thus votes at a higher rate than rural Christian

communities.[165] On the issue of social justice, Wandera advocates for the Muslim community

in this article. Therefore, he writes similarly to Maina, but somewhat differently than Kubai.

In laying blame for Christian-Muslim tensions primarily at the feet of colonial-era policy and

mission, he agrees with the Kenyan mainline Christian intellectual tradition as outlined by

Gifford.

In *Christian-Muslim Co-Existence in the Light of Sacred Texts and Present

Contexts*[166] on the emergence of street preaching (*mihadhara*[167]) by Muslim preachers,

Wandera advocates the development of a "pluralistic theology" that would recognise that

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[160] Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour," 35.

[161] Ibid.: 37.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.: 35.

[164] Ibid.: 38.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Joseph Wandera, "Christian-Muslim Co-existence in the Light of Sacred Texts and Present Contexts: With Special Reference to Mihadhara in Nairobi," in *Christian - Muslim Co-existence in Eastern Africa*, ed. Fritz Stenger, Joseph Wandera, and Paul Hannon, Tangaza Occasional Papers (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2008).

[167] According to Wandera *mihadhara*, the Swahili plural of *mhadhara*, means attendance. According to John Chesworth it is the Swahilization of an Arabic word meaning lecture.

salvation may be found in both Islam and Christianity.[168] He is also concerned with the

negative effect that *mihadhara* has on relations between Muslims and Christians. The Muslim

preachers normally attack Christian beliefs and the Bible in the highly polemical manner of

the late South African Muslim debater, Ahmed Deedat.[169]

Interestingly, Chanfi Ahmed believes that this preaching "contributes to improved

mutual understanding between the religions"[170] simply because the Bible is being spoken of

by Muslim preachers in a mixed Christian-Muslim audience. Chesworth views the *mihadhara*

as being comparable to open air crusades by Christian preachers,[171] thus explaining it as a

problem of competing fundamentalisms. However, Wandera understands them to be a sign of

increased "Islamic radicalism in East Africa" that "marks the end of the period of religious

tolerance of local Islam."[172] He adds that Muslim identity in Kenya is now being formed

"over and against the 'other' who is Christian."[173]

He finds two principle problems with the *mihadhara*. First, the Muslim preachers use

and interpret the Christian scriptures in a negative manner, showing considerable disrespect

for the Other.[174] Their message about the Bible is that it is "an inferior version of the Qur'an,

a corrupted scripture."[175] Secondly, these events are marked by an "inherent" hostile

atmosphere,[176] in which any Christians who speak out are usually jeered.[177] He concludes that

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[168] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104.

[169] Ibid., 102.

[170] Chanfi Ahmed, "The Wahubiri wa Kislamu (Preachers of Islam) in East Africa," *Africa Today* 54, no. 4 (2008): 4.

[171] Chesworth, "Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa."

[172] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 102.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid., 95.

[175] Ibid., 105.

[176] Ibid., 104.

[177] Ibid., 103.

both Muslim and Christian leaders need to speak out about these events and teach mutual respect between the religions.[178]

Wandera offers a pluralist theology that recognises salvation being found in both religions as a solution to the problem. He writes:

> What possibilities are there for both Muslims and Christians to lay claim to the complete revelation of truth from the One Almighty God? Although, there are apparently conflicting claims in the Qur'an and the Bible, is it not possible to witness to that truth without conflicting with one another? For example, is it not possible to come to an understanding of how God shows us His holy will in revelation in a way acceptable both to the Muslims and the Christians? That indeed God has not left himself without a witness, the witness even of a fully saving knowledge in other faith traditions?[179] I have a sense that perhaps such a pluralistic theology would save both Muslims and Christians from imperialistic tendencies that tend to pit them against each other.[180]

This paragraph reveals some dependence upon the pluralist theology of Samuel Kibicho, a Kenyan theologian and professor. There are two indications in this paragraph that Wandera's call for a pluralistic theology has practical and social goals more than theological ones, namely peaceful relations between the two groups. He suggests in a rhetorical question that Muslims and Christians can recognise "conflicting claims in the Qur'an and the Bible … without conflicting with one another." He also contrasts a pluralist theology with "imperialist tendencies," (Kibicho's phrase) which he views as being a reason for conflict. Within the context of African theological discussion the reference to imperialistic tendencies carries connotations of colonialism, foreignness, and being non-African,[181] thus subtly reproaching those who don't recognise truth in each other's religion of being very much like the "puppets

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[178] Ibid., 105.

[179] Here Wandera cites Samuel G. Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006). This is a fascinating and controversial book that was originally Kibicho's doctoral thesis at Vanderbilt in 1972. He argues that the Kikuyu traditional religion, worshipping *Ngai*, was a full and salvific revelation of God, who also revealed himself in Jesus Christ. See chapter 9.2.

[180] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104.

[181] See for example the section titled, "Cultural invasion and Alienation," in Mugambi, "Evangelistic and Charismatic Initiatives in Post-Colonial Africa," 121-125.

of foreign masters" whom former president Moi frequently found among advocates for democracy.[182] This would apply equally to Muslims and Christians.

Though Wandera's principle concern is peaceful relations, he also raises some theological issues through the use of four rhetorical questions, which are a stylistic choice that enables the author to make more daring statements, while disarming the reader. By asking if Muslims and Christians have "the complete revelation of truth from the One Almighty God," he implies that this truth is larger than either religion; therefore, neither religion can claim a monopoly on truth. This is Wandera's explanation for why there are "apparently conflicting claims" between the two scriptures. Following Kibicho, Wandera suggests that a "fully saving knowledge" of God exists outside of either Christianity or Islam, as well as within each of these traditions. It would naturally follow that each religion should than accept the other. It is also important to recognise that his theological understanding remains practical and ethical, as it is God's "holy will" that Muslims and Christians should come together to understand each other. The fact that Wandera introduces the idea of a pluralist theology through rhetorical questions suggests that this theological approach towards Islam may not be easily accepted in Kenyan mainline Christianity.

Some interesting peeks into the views of church leaders are found in *Anglican Responses to Kadhis Courts in Kenya*,[183] where Wandera reviews official statements and interviews Anglican bishops. While noting that not all churches, nor all Anglican leaders, opposed the new constitution because of the *kadhi* courts, Wandera is critical of the generally negative response of much of the Kenyan Church. Some Anglican leaders supported the constitution and the inclusion of the *kadhi* courts, while some bishops supported voting for

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[182] Muthiki, "Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya", 15, 30. See also Maupeu, "Une Opposition en regime autoritaire," 258. Other African political leaders, such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, have similarly accused opponents of being foreign agents.
[183] Wandera, "Anglican Responses to Kadhis Courts in Kenya."

the new constitution while maintaining reservations concerning provisions for these courts in the constitution.[184] Perhaps most interesting in this article are the glimpses that he is willing to allow the reader of the misinformed and prejudiced views of some Anglican bishops, who claim to "know Muslims."[185] Their primary view of Muslims seems to be that they are untrustworthy and desirous of taking political control of Kenya.[186]

6.2.4   Joseph Mutei

Joseph Mutei, from the African Evangelical Presbyterian Church, presented a paper, *The Bible: Classical and Contemporary Muslim Attitudes and Exegesis*,[187] at the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission Symposium on African Theology at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) in Nairobi in 2006. Mutei recently completed a doctorate in Islamic Studies at the Catholic University of East Africa. He is currently head of the Department of Church History, Mission and Practical Theology at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. St. Paul's University is sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the Anglican Church of Kenya, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Methodist Church of Kenya and the Reformed Church of East Africa. Therefore, though Mutei presented this paper at NEGST and it was published in an Evangelical journal, his article may be discussed along with those from the Kenyan mainline scholars.

Mutei's article, based on his master's thesis at St. Paul's, discusses the method of Islamic *da'wa*, *mihadhara*, which has become common in East Africa. His thesis is that this current method is based upon a much older approach of polemical writing by Muslims

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[184] Ibid., 43.

[185] Ibid., 45.

[186] Ibid., 45-46.

[187] Joseph M. Mutei, "The Bible: Classical and Contemporay Muslim Attitudes and Exegesis," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 31, no. 3 (2007).

opposing Christianity. He says these polemical writings approach "the Bible from a Qur'ānic standpoint."[188] However, he maintains that neither the Qur'ān nor the Bible can be correctly understood and evaluated according to the standards of the other scripture.[189]

Mutei begins by briefly discussing attitudes towards the Bible by classical Muslim scholars Ibn Hazm, 'Abd al Jabbār, and al-Tabari. He classifies these approaches under four categories: *tahrīf* (falsification),[190] *naskh* (abrogation),[191] biblical exegesis,[192] and lack of *tawatūr* (lack of reliable transmission).[193] He provides a few examples for each category, then after discussing this historical development concludes:

> What were Muslim scholars attempting to do in using the Bible? To understand that would help us to understand their attitude to the Bible. They wanted to show respect for the Bible because of its place as the one preceding the *Qur'ān* and for the Prophets contained within it, Moses, David and Jesus in particular. They also had a desire to use the Bible to show that Muhammad and Islam are clearly foretold in it. Some scholars wanted to attack the Bible in order to warn Muslims. … Finally they wished to use the Bible in a polemical manner, to show Jews and Christians how corrupted it was, to show them the error of their ways and to lead them to the truth.[194]

Mutei views the Muslim approach to the Bible as one of paradox. The Bible is respected as a previous scripture that tells the stories of prophets familiar to Muslims, yet since much of the Bible also seems to contradict the Qur'ān, it must also be corrupted in some way. The accusations of corruption and the claim that the coming of Muhammad is foretold in the Bible serve both to guard Muslims from error that might occur from reading the Christian scriptures and as polemical argument against Christians.[195] They would, therefore, make use of the Bible to both argue for the truthfulness of Islam and to demonstrate the unreliability of

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[188] Ibid.: 207.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.: 209-211.
[191] Ibid.: 211-212.
[192] Ibid.: 212-213.
[193] Ibid.: 213-214.
[194] Ibid.: 214.
[195] Ibid.: 210.

Christianity and its scriptures. By being read in this manner, the Bible remains a relatively unknown book among Muslims.

Mutei then brings the recent phenomena of *mihadhara* in Kenya into the discussion. He finds the teachings involved to be derived from the approach to the Bible of classical Muslim scholars,[196] writing "both the Bible and the Qur'ān are used side by side either to discount some Christian teachings or endorse some Islamic teachings."[197] For example, a Muslim speaker will ask if Jesus is God. Then using the biblical texts he (the speakers are always men) will show that they teach "the unity of God," thus denying notions of the divinity of Jesus. The Qur'ān will also be used to demonstrate that Jesus was only a messenger of God.[198]

Mutei also claims that Muslims believe that Islam is the only true religion (i.e. exclusivism); the Bible is then used to demonstrate this.[199] Biblical texts are used to show that Ishmael received God's blessing, that Muhammad was foretold, etc. Worship is also included in the debates; speakers attempt to show biblical support for the five pillars of Islam, the performance of ablutions, the prayer posture, etc.[200] Christian religious terminology, such as *uzima wa milele* (eternal life) and *kuokoka* (to be saved), is also used to describe Islamic teachings.[201]

He also considers these public debates from a social perspective. Concerning *mihadhara* he writes:

> In the East African context, *Mihadhara* are a means of Muslims exerting themselves in a dominantly Christian setting. Having been for a long time passive and less active in outreach, while Christians continued to make

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[196] Ibid.: 218.
[197] Ibid.: 215
[198] Ibid.: 215. Mutei gives several examples of how the Bible is used to show that Jesus is not divine.
[199] Ibid.: 216.
[200] Ibid.: 217.
[201] Ibid.: 220.

headway in many parts, *Mihadhara* may be seen as a reactionary attempt to catch up. This has made Christianity their sole target for outreach.[202]

They are part of the new dynamism of Islam in East Africa, which has played a back seat role to Christianity for decades. They are a means for the Muslim community to assert itself and its new found confidence. While Mutei appreciates the social factors leading to the development of this practice, he is dissatisfied with their conduct. In his view Muslim preachers involved in *mihadhara* will use anything in an attempt to discredit the Bible and Christianity, including contradicting themselves as they speak[203] or falsely advertising that prominent converts from Christianity, such as former bishops, would be speaking at the event.[204] For Mutei a lack of integrity is an almost inherent part of the method of *mihadhara*.

A more subtle indictment is located in the discussion as a whole. By linking the current practice of *mihadhara* by Muslims in Kenya with the longer tradition of Arab Muslim polemics against Christianity, Mutei indicates that *mihadhara* – despite its outward appearances (i.e. African Muslim debaters) – is non-African at its core.

6.2.5 Conclusion

After examining the principle Kenyan mainline Christian scholars of Islam, it is clear that they explore and interpret the same history from a relatively similar perspective. Current tensions between Christians and Muslims are understood to have their origin in the policies and practices of the colonial government and the actions of the Christian missionary movement. Social, economic and political factors are generally considered to be primary, while theological and religious differences are assumed to be less significant in causing tensions and conflicts. Islamic movements external to Kenya are also understood to have had a detrimental effect on relations between Muslims and Christians. Mutei, whose only article

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[202] Ibid.: 218.
[203] Ibid.: 219.
[204] Ibid.: 220.

discusses *mihadhara*, finds this method of *da'wa* to have detrimental effects on interreligious relations. Kubai differs from Maina and Wandera mostly on the degree of blame that can be apportioned to Muslims and Christians in the conflicts, Kubai placing a greater degree of fault on Muslim actions and response. Though none of these writers gives much space to theological discussion, they agree that there are theological similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. Mutei hints at the concept of understanding each religion from within its own tradition when he advocates that the Qur'ān and the Bible must be interpreted on their own terms, rather than according to other religion's scriptures. Maina and Wandera stress the similarities between Christianity and Islam, while Kubai emphasizes the differences. Both Maina and Wandera propose a theological understanding in which Muslims and Christians would recognise the validity of each other's faith.

6.3 Discussions of Islam by other Kenyan Theologians

Kenyan theologians, who are not scholars of Islam, have also written on certain aspects of Islam. Their works will be examined in this section.

6.3.1 Jesse Mugambi

Mugambi, an Anglican, who is the leading Kenyan theologian of the current generation, edited a textbook on comparative religions to be used in universities in Africa.[205] This book was originally published in 1990 and re-issued in 2010. Since the book was considered significant enough to be re-published (within the timeframe for this study), be used as a university textbook, and gain a new readership, it will be briefly examined.

Mugambi has contributed two chapters on Islam and Waruta has written another. These chapters differ significantly from typical introductory chapters on Islam in Western

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[205] J. N. K. Mugambi, ed. *A Comparative Study of Religions*, Second ed. (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2010).

textbooks on world religions. For example, while the five pillars of Islam are discussed,[206] these are found in a section entitled "The Teachings of Muhammad"[207] rather than the teachings of the Qur'ān, as would be common in modern Western textbooks, even ones written from a Christian perspective.[208] It has become common practice in Western, both secular and Christian, writing on Islam to say that "the Qur'ān says" in respect of Muslim belief in divine revelation. Using the expression "Muhammad says" when referring to words from the Qur'ān is frequently understood as a denial of the divine revelation of the Qur'ān. Mugambi simply ignores this issue. The section title suitably indicates his overall perspective, which is that Muhammad, using the religious material available to him (i.e. Arab paganism, Judaism and Christianity) masterfully united the people of the Arab peninsula. For Mugambi, divine revelation is irrelevant as Muhammad provides an example of creative human genius to bring about unity in a factious environment.

He understands Muhammad to have incorporated the "Kabah ritual" (the pilgrimage to Mecca) into Islam as a necessary continuity with the Arab pagan past.[209] For Mugambi this compares somewhat to African Christianity "incorporating some aspects of the African heritage."[210] He also sees Muhammad as appropriating monotheism which gave the Jewish people a strong sense of "unified Jewish identity,"[211] and using this similar type of identity to create a new community in Arabia. Both of these emphases – continuity with the 'pagan'

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[206] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Muhammad as the Founder of Islam," in *A Comparative Study of Religions*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2010), 273-274.

[207] Ibid., 270.

[208] For example, see the articles on Islam by David Kerr and Montgomery Watt in R. Pierce Beaver, ed. *Eerdmans' Handbook to the World's Religions*, Revised ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994).

[209] J. N. K. Mugambi, "The Religious Heritage of Arabia Before and During Muhammad's Time," in *A Comparative Study of Religions*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2010), 262-263.

[210] Ibid., 263.

[211] Ibid., 264.

religious heritage and a united community that will build society – form the core of

Mugambi's approach to Christian theology.[212] Mugambi's interpretation of Islam appears to

be driven by his Christian-based theological goals for Kenya.

6.3.2 D.W. Waruta

Waruta, a Baptist, writes a short chapter on the history of Islam.[213] He depicts the

early expansion of Islam as the result of military and political activity, discussing the status of

'protected minorities' somewhat extensively.[214] He also writes of the current "divide" within

Islam between "progressive" and "conservative" Muslims.[215] He concludes that neither the

"extreme secularization" of the progressives nor the return to the "primitive past" of the

conservatives is likely to succeed, but Islam will probably "evolve and adapt itself to the

demands of the modern world."[216] This conclusion again mirrors a concern of Kenyan

mainline theologians.[217]

6.3.3 Cathy Majtenyi

Cathy Majtenyi, a Comboni lay missionary, wrote a short article, *Making a

Difference*,[218] in *Wajibu* that gives a positive description and recommendation of Islamic

banking. The article is written because the "first bank in Kenya fully compliant with Islamic

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[212] See Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 63-78. He discusses Mugambi's theology, as well as other Kenyan "theologies of culture", as Gifford calls them.

[213] D. W. Waruta, "Islam: A Living World Religion," in *A Comparative Study of Relgions*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi, (Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2010).

[214] Ibid., 278.

[215] Ibid., 281.

[216] Ibid., 282.

[217] For example see J. N. K. Mugambi, "Religion and Social Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa," in *Church-State Relations: A Challenge for African Christianity*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi and Frank Küschner-Pelkmann, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004). He criticizes Western models of secularization.

[218] Cathy Majtenyi, "Making a Difference: Islamic Banking Comes to Kenya," *Wajibu* 23, no. 4 (2008).

law"[219] was opened in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi. The majority of the text is a description of how Islamic banking works through the example of building a house. Islamic banking is portrayed as more community-oriented and more moral than Western banking, which is said to be more speculative and risky, and to transfer money that is connected to activities such as "drug trafficking, gun running and terrorism."[220] Majtenyi also reports that both Muslims and non-Muslims are using the bank in Eastleigh.[221]

The article, while seemingly written for information purposes, also provides the opportunity for the author to criticise Western banking, and by extension the financial and economic system of the West. While criticising Western banking, Islam functions as a foil in the sense of announcing that African Christians are not bound to Western (i.e. Christian) economic systems, but they could even choose to endorse an Islamic system. Although subtle, this can be seen where she writes that the bank is popular among both Muslims and non-Muslims and where she links Western banking with terrorism, rather than the typical Western media stereotype that links Islam to terrorism.

6.3.4 John Mbiti

John Mbiti, an Anglican and the most widely known Kenyan theologian, wrote a chapter subtitled, *African Religion Looks at Islam*,[222] for a book on how religions view other religions. He writes of growing up in rural Kenya, recalling his interactions with Muslims in school and in the town of Kitui from the perspective of Akamba tradition and religion, though he acknowledges that he was raised in a Christian family.[223] He tells of how "the Muslim

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[219] Ibid.: 35.
[220] Ibid.: 36.
[221] Ibid.: 35.
[222] John S. Mbiti, "The Hen Knows When It Is Dawn, But Leaves the Crowing to the Cock: African Religion Looks at Islam," in *Religions View Religions:Explorations in Pursuit of Understanding*, ed. Jerald D. Gort, Henry Jansen, and Hendrick M. Vroom, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).
[223] Ibid., 160.

boys" in his middle school were viewed as outsiders.[224] He gives several reasons: they lived in town rather than on *shambas* (small farms in Swahili), they didn't follow Akamba traditions such as the circumcision rite, they spoke Kiswahili rather than Kikamba, and they learned their religion and prayed in Arabic, a language that even the Muslim boys didn't understand.[225] Mbiti and his friends also found some admirable qualities among the Muslims, such as their discipline to fast during Ramadan, the white robes worn by the Muslim boys, their sophistication and the commerce practiced by Muslims in Kitui, which brought outside goods into the area.[226]

As boys they were also wary of "getting too close to Muslims" due to rumours of "Muslim men taking boys and young men to sell them to the Arabs" as slaves,[227] though it is highly unlikely that there was any actual slave trade happening at that point in the history of Kenya. Muslims were known to be good, though cunning and dishonest traders.[228] Even today in the Kitui area the expression that someone "acted like a real Muslim"[229] indicates that the person cheated someone. Muslims were also thought to be violent, carrying a walking stick for the purpose of fighting.[230] He adds that though Muslims shared a belief in God with African traditionalists, the sense was that they "did not accept the God in African Religion to be the same God as in Islam."[231] As Mbiti points out, these observations came out of the African "cultural heritage,"[232] rather than a specifically Christian perspective. However, as Gifford noted, Kenyan theologians have operated with a certain theology of culture that is not

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[224] Ibid., 158.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] Ibid., 160.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid., 161.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid., 162.
[232] Ibid., 161.

far removed from this type of observation on the relation between Christianity and African tradition.[233] It seems that Mbiti is evaluating Islam with the same methodology that he uses to do African Christian theology.

For the rest of the chapter he makes more general statements on Islam. For example, he writes that "*shari'ah* violates human rights severely,"[234] using the example of a young woman being stoned to death in northern Nigeria in 2002. He also contrasts the freedom women have in African Religion with the restrictions upon them in Islam[235] and the continuation of slavery in Islam, using Sudan as an example of where African traditionalists are "forced into slavery by Muslims,"[236] with the "big NO" that African Religion has always said to slavery.[237] He finishes the article by discussing how violence within Islam is perceived by Kenyans as he learned on a visit home in 2002. He says that there was a lot of discussion about Muslim terrorist attacks and Muslim suicide bombings. These discussions gave rise to questions about what sort of religion could advocate such acts. It seemed that all previous knowledge of Islam had been overwhelmed by these events.[238] For Mbiti the main point is that African Religion is based upon the promotion of life,[239] rendering these acts of violence committed in the name of religion as incomprehensible. Gifford has also noted that Kenyan theologians often present African culture in an idealised form, comparing this ideal form with the colonial past and modern Western culture.[240] In this chapter Mbiti compares an idealised African Religion with recent negative events in Islamic history, and the results are predictable.

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[233] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 72-76.
[234] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam," 173.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid., 174.
[238] Ibid., 175.
[239] See for example, Magesa, *African Religion* and Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy*.
[240] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 73.

6.3.5   Ruth Muthei

Ruth Muthei[241] presented a paper, *Emerging Gender Issues in Interfaith Relationships in Kenya*,[242] for a consultation in Togo in 2000 sponsored by the AACC. The main thrust of her paper is that women are the primary religious teachers in society due to the role of teaching their children.[243] Therefore, both Muslim and Christian leaders need to promote the religious education of women, who play a vital role in interfaith relationships.[244] Elsewhere, she visits themes similar to those already seen in other writers above. Difficulties between Muslims and Christians today were sown by a "hostile relation between Christian missionaries and Muslims during the colonial period."[245] Missionary domination of the educational system meant that Muslims had less access to education than others.[246] She also brings up the popular idea that Muslim men systematically marry Christian women in order to spread Islam.[247] As can be seen, Muthei writes consistently with other Kenyan mainline scholars by finding fault within Western and missionary action for current disaccord between Muslims and Christians in Kenya. The claim that Muslim men marry Christian women with the main purpose of propagating Islam is a relatively popular allegation in Kenya, though it is difficult to either prove or disprove.

6.3.6   Shorter References to Issues Involving Islam

In addition to these articles written specifically on Islam related matters, Islam is also mentioned in a few sentences in other articles and chapters by Kenyan theologians. These

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[241] Muthei is the wife of Newton Kahumbi Maina.

[242] Ruth Muthei, "Emerging Gender Issues in Interfaith Relationships in Kenya: A Case of Christians and Muslims," in *Christian Dialogue with Peoples of Other Faith Communities*, ed. Arnold C. Temple and Johnson A. Mbillah, (Nairobi: All Africa Conference of Churches, 2001).

[243] Ibid., 70.

[244] Ibid., 65.

[245] Ibid., 62.

[246] Ibid., 63.

[247] Ibid., 64.

brief mentions of Islam are of interest as the writers are not experts in Islam, nor have they necessarily done any research on Islam. Therefore, what they've written in a few sentences often expresses more closely the general views of educated Kenyan Christians concerning Islam.

Mugambi refers to Islam relatively frequently in his writings on social reconstruction. It is appropriate here to revisit Mugambi's twofold project in a theology of reconstruction. Mugambi is concerned with a theology of culture in which a genuine Africanness[248] is considered the ideal in Christian theology and in the development of society. He also writes of a move from liberation to reconstruction,[249] where the liberation paradigm of the Exodus under Moses is replaced by an emphasis on rebuilding society using the biblical model of Nehemiah. He writes that Nehemiah was able to get people to "overcome their sense of alienation"[250] and work together in unity to rebuild Jerusalem. They were able to "take control of their own history."[251] As applied to contemporary Africa, Africans have been alienated by colonialism, racism, and neo-imperialism; the current need is for the cultivation of a unity that brings African people together, overcoming their alienation, to work for African solutions to their problems.[252] It is a nation-building project.

For Mugambi religion is foundational in this nation-building project in Africa,[253] and Islam, Christianity and African Religion are understood to have equal value and ability to

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[248] While strongly advocating a genuine Africanness, the concept remains somewhat ill-defined.

[249] This is the title of one of Mugambi's earliest works on the subject. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*.

[250] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 25.

[251] Ibid., 26.

[252] Ibid., 129.

[253] Ibid., 38; J. N. K. Mugambi, "Religion in the Social Transformation of Africa " in *Democracy and Reconciliation: A Challenge for African Christianity*, ed. Laurenti Magesa and Zablon Nthamburi, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 75.

mobilise society for reconstruction.[254] The goals of this project are democracy, economic development, and African dignity. While Mugambi doesn't openly state this, it seems that he would like to enlist Muslims into the nation-building project. This can be seen where he affirms Islam's ability to contribute towards nation-building elsewhere. In North Africa Islam has promoted unity and social transformation, including modernisation.[255] It has been a factor in the process of bringing about more democracy in North Africa, also.[256] It has provided political stability in predominately Muslim African nations.[257] These brief statements appear in longer sections in which he is discussing similar contributions of Christianity to nation-building. He also says that adherents of both religions can work together to promote peace within the nation, using Liberia and Kenya as examples.[258] While making these subtle appeals to include Islam into the nation-building project, he does not address the question of how Muslims might attach themselves to such a project, which is heavily driven by African and Christian theological categories and symbols and the biblical model of Nehemiah.

However, both Islam and Christianity are also said to be foreign religions, therefore having had detrimental effects on the African world-view,[259] though in some contexts he writes of African resiliency in the face of these foreign religions.[260] Both religions are accused

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[254] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 30; Mugambi, "Religion in the Social Transformation of Africa ", 77.

[255] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 81; Mugambi, "Religion in the Social Transformation of Africa ", 77.

[256] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 105.

[257] J. N. K. Mugambi, "The Christian Ideal of Peace and Political Reality in Africa," in *From Violence to Peace: A Challenge for African Christianity*, ed. Mary N. Getui and Peter Kanyandago, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 71.

[258] Mugambi, "Religion in the Social Transformation of Africa ", 82-83.

[259] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 38.

[260] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Religions in East Africa in the Context of Globalization," in *Religions in Eastern Africa under Globalization*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi and Mary N. Getui, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 6.

of permitting the slave trade,[261] of justifying war (e.g. crusade and *jihad*) in the name of religion,[262] of denigrating African culture[263] (i.e. Christian missions sought to Europeanise Africans, while Muslims sought Arabisation) and of supporting racism (e.g. in South Africa and in Sudan).[264] He also stresses that in the democratisation processes in Africa, it has made no difference if a nation is predominately Muslim or Christian.[265] While Christians and Muslims are expected to contribute towards reconstruction, they are reminded to recognise their failings and the goodness of Africa.

Mugambi also writes, "Four Abrahamic faiths co-exist with varying intensity from region to region across the whole continent: African religion, Christianity, Islam and Judaism."[266] African Religion is considered to be Abrahamic by virtue of being monotheistic. He also makes the curious declaration that "the Old Testament is a common text for Jews, Christians and Muslims."[267] Muslims do not ordinarily recognise the Old Testament as their scripture. It would seem that for Mugambi (and other Kenyan Christians?) that one of the identities imposed on Islam is a Judaic origin in a similar manner to Christianity. The similarity between some Qur'ānic and Old Testament stories, and references to the *Taurat* (Torah) and *Zabur* (Psalms) may be the origin of his interpretation.

Another Kenyan Christian scholar, Chepkwony, defending African Religion against modernist forces, writes that "the Kenyan government is more favourable to Christianity and

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[261] Ibid., 12.

[262] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 11-12.

[263] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today," in *Marriage and Family in African Christianity*, ed. Andrew A. Kyomo and Sahaya G. Selvan, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 237.

[264] Mugambi, "Religions in East Africa in the Context of Globalization," 24-25.

[265] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 104.

[266] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Responsible Leadership in Education and Development: An African Perspective," in *Responsible Leadership: Global Perspectives*, ed. Christoph Stückelberger and J. N. K. Mugambi, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2005), 30.

[267] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 151.

Islam."[268] He also notes that adherents of each of religion have committed atrocities against Africans.[269] More positively he suggests that African Religions have borrowed from both Islam and Christianity, and he lists them along with African Religion as indigenous to Africa.[270] Gichure, also defending African Religion, writes that "for one to be considered civilized, he or she had to embrace Christianity or Islam,"[271] and reject their own cultural heritage.[272] In these writers' view Islam (and Christianity) is seen primarily as antagonistic towards African traditions.

Ayanga positively comments that Islam teaches not only other-worldly salvation, but also a way to a peaceful and healthy life.[273] While saying that religions often teach reconciliation,[274] she remarks that sometimes they sanction violence, using *jihad* and crusades as examples.[275]

Galgalo writes that Christianity disappeared from North Africa for several reasons, including the "onslaught of Islam."[276] Mugambi also writes several times of the "onslaught of

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[268] Adam K.A. Chepkwony, "African Religion and Modern African States," in *Religion and Politics in Africa Theological Reflections for the 21st Century*, ed. Peter I. Gichure and Diane Stinton, (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008), 27.

[269] Ibid., 30.

[270] Ibid., 31.

[271] Peter I. Gichure, "Religion and Politics in Africa: The Rise of Ethno-Religions," in *Religion and Politics in Africa Theological Reflections for the 21st Century*, ed. Peter I. Gichure and Diane Stinton, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2008), 34.

[272] Ibid., 38.

[273] Hazel O. Ayanga, "Waging Peace: The Role of Religion in Reconciliation Processes," in *Religion and Politics in Africa Theological Reflections for the 21st Century*, ed. Peter I. Gichure and Diane Stinton, (Nairobi: Pauline Publications Africa, 2008), 113-114.

[274] Ibid., 114.

[275] Ibid., 117.

[276] Joseph Galgalo, "The Teaching of Theology in Africa: Some Reflections on Sources, Methods and Curriculum," in *Theological Education in Contemporary Africa*, ed. Grant LeMarquand and Joseph Galgalo, (Eldoret, Kenya: Zapf Chancery, 2004), 7.

Islam"[277] causing Christianity to disappear in either North Africa or Sudan. It would seem that this has become a standard phrase in Kenya.

Nthamburi remarks that the British administrators preferred Muslims in positions such as the military and domestic servants, even to the point that some Christians would hide their faith in order to gain employment.[278]

Among Kenyan scholars who are not experts on Islam, African themes gain more prominence. Mugambi and Waruta, in writing chapters in a textbook on world religions, present Islam in terms similar to the development of African Christian theologies. Mugambi also looks to Islam as a partner in a Christian-led project of nation-building. In addition he would like to find Christianity, Islam and African Religion to have common origins in Judaism. Majtenyi presents Islamic banking as a possibly more African friendly alternative to Western banking. Mbiti finds Islam to be a stranger to his understanding of African religious values. Chepkwony expresses wariness of both Islam and Christianity as possibly destructive forces against African religious values. Ayanga deems Islam to promote an African religious goal of peace and health in life. The manner in which Islam interacts with and relates to the African heritage becomes central. Additionally, the idea of competition between Christians and Muslims appears in Muthei, Galgalo and Nthamburi.

6.4   Two Evangelical Scholars of Islam

Two Evangelical scholars of Islam have also produced a few articles. These will be briefly discussed here, though they will not feature significantly in the analyses in the thematic chapters eight (*Contesting Public Spaces*) and nine (*Emerging Theologies of*

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[277] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 11, 83, 84, 158; Mugambi, "Religions in East Africa in the Context of Globalization," 15.

[278] Zablon Nthamburi, "Mainline Christian Churches: A Historical Survey," in *Religions in Eastern African under Globalization*, ed. J. N. K. Mugambi and Mary N. Getui, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2004), 80.

Religion), because the sample size is too small to be considered representative of Kenyan Evangelicals. Their inclusion at this point is in the interest of a thorough examination of what Kenyan Christians have written about Islam.

Josephine Sesi and the late Stephen Sesi (who were a married couple) obtained their PhDs from Fuller Theological Seminary, taught mission studies and Islamic studies at Nairobi Graduate School of Theology (NEGST),[279] were active members of the Africa Inland Church, and were involved in missions among the Digo people of the coastal region.[280] As can be seen, their experiences are so similar that their writing cannot be understood to be representative of Kenyan Evangelicals as a whole.

The three articles to be discussed were published in *African Missiology*,[281] a volume prepared by the missions department of NEGST. The articles are concerned with ways to better understand and improve Christian ministry among the Muslim Digo of the coastal region. Josephine Sesi contributes two articles in which she describes the impact of Islam and Christianity upon Digo women.[282] Stephen Sesi writes on methods to contextualise Christian practices among the Digo people.[283]

Josephine Sesi provides an overwhelmingly negative picture of the impact of Islam upon Digo women. Her principle argument is that the conversion of the Digo people to Islam

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[279] NEGST is now called Africa International University (AIU).

[280] This information comes from conversations with Stephen Sesi.

[281] Stephen Mutuku Sesi and others, eds., *African Missiology: Contribution of Contemporary Thought* (Nairobi: Uzima, 2009).

[282] Josephine Mutuku Sesi, "Impact of Christianity among Digo Muslim Women," in *African Missiology: Contribution of Contemporary Thought*, ed. Stephen Mutuku Sesi et al., (Nairobi: Uzima, 2009). Josephine Mutuku Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women," in *African Missiology: Contribution of Contemporary Thought*, ed. Stephen Mutuku Sesi et al., (Nairobi: Uzima, 2009).

[283] Stephen Mutuku Sesi, "Context and Worship among Digo Muslims in Kenya," in *African Missiology: Contribution of Contemporary Thought*, ed. Stephen Mutuku Sesi et al., (Nairobi: Uzima, 2009).

caused a cultural change from a matriarchal to a patriarchal society, which had devastating

results on the status of women. She writes:

> When Islam arrived on Digoland, it came with patriarchal kinship that traces inheritance through men and gives men ownership and control of land, depriving women of the right to own and control property. Muslims also came with a religion that allowed only men to participate in worship. The shift from a predominantly matriarchal to patriarchal kinship structure parallels a similar shift that the major historian W. Montgomery Watt[284] noted in Arabia at the time of Muhammed. This fact gives credibility to my thesis that the role of women in the primal context was more important than in the Islamic context that followed, thereby stripping women of their honored place in the primal society.[285]

As can be seen Sesi believes that Islam caused Digo women to lose property rights,

positions of spiritual prominence, and honour. Women are now seen to be oppressed and

discriminated against. However, Parkin has argued that Digo society, rather than transforming

into a "patrilineal system of inheritance," that the current historical situation is more complex

with a mixture of systems, so that women have not been completely displaced from control of

land.[286] Later in the article Sesi attributes economic underdevelopment among the Digo to a

history of enslavement by the coastal Muslims of Mombasa.[287] It seems doubtful that the

Digo had ever undergone such widespread slavery as she suggests.[288]

In another context Sesi writes,

> Through this ministry a Digo Muslim woman finds Christian people who are full of love. Her traditional consciousness of hate that was imparted in her by the Muslim teachers is changing to appreciate not just the love of the Christians but also the love of the Christian God.[289]

She perceives hatred to be taught by Muslims, which is contrasted with the love of

Christians and the Christian God. Her mention of the "love of the Christian God" indicates

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[284] She cites Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953, 17.

[285] Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women," 178.

[286] David Parkin, "Swahili Mijikenda: Facing Both Ways in Kenya," *Africa* 59, no. 2 (1989): 169.

[287] Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women," 184.

[288] I can find no references to enslavement of the Digo, except in the article by Sesi.

[289] Sesi, "Impact of Christianity among Digo Muslim Women," 168.

that Sesi considers Allah and the "Christian God" to be separate ontological beings, and possibly that Allah is associated with hate. In explaining why Digo women are oppressed under Islam, she attempts an explanation of "Islamic culture"[290] in which Allah is said to be understood primarily in terms of power and majesty.[291] The resultant Islamic culture is then seen to be inherently oppressive.

Sesi also addresses the experience of folk Islam among the Digo, claiming that the continued presence of former Digo religious practices and beliefs indicates that Islam has proven to be spiritually ineffective and unfulfilling.[292]

Stephen Sesi searches for some points of dialogue in *Context and Worship among Digo Muslims in Kenya*,[293] generally following his former professor Dudley Woodberry.[294] He finds some similarities in prayer and worship between Christianity and Islam, due to the fact that both religions trace their origins through certain Old Testament prophets and Moses, back to Abraham.[295] Some of these similarities are drawn out more fully. He considers a few Muslim worship practices and finds antecedents for them in the Old Testament. For example, as Muslims prostrate in prayer, Abraham and Moses also prostrated in prayer.[296] The *shahada* is compared with the Jewish *shema* and the use of Christian creeds.[297] As Moses removed his shoes at the holy ground of the burning bush, Muslims remove their shoes upon entering a

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[290] Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women," 185-190. She depends somewhat upon Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God*. New York: University of New York Press, 1994.
[291] Ibid., 186.
[292] Sesi, "Impact of Christianity among Digo Muslim Women," 163-164.
[293] Sesi, "Context and Worship among Digo Muslims in Kenya."
[294] Sesi cites extensively from Dudley Woodberry, "Contextualization Among Muslims: Reusing Common Pillars," in *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean Gilliland, (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989). and Dudley Woodberry, *Muslims and Christians on the Emmaus Road* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1989).
[295] Sesi, "Context and Worship among Digo Muslims in Kenya," 202.
[296] Ibid., 206.
[297] Ibid., 208.

mosque.[298] These and other similarities do not, however, serve the purpose of mutual understanding, but they are to be used as methods of evangelism and contextualisation.

Differences are also highlighted as similarities are discussed. Most telling is Sesi's explanation of how conversion from Judaism to Christianity in the early church is different from the conversion of a Muslim to Christianity. He writes, "Though Muslims and Christians have a lot in common, they adhere to two different religions with different sets of beliefs and views about cardinal theological issues, like the nature of God and the ultimate solution to the human problem of sin."[299] While he finds similarities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the latter two religions remain essentially different for him.

He also compares the Lord's Prayer and *Al-Fatihah*. He concludes that while there are similarities, there is a "lack of forgiveness in the Islamic prayer, while forgiveness is at the center of the Lord's Prayer. Muslims do not have a concept of forgiveness, which accounts for a great deal of conflicts in the Muslim world today."[300] The lack of a mention of forgiveness in the Muslim *Fatihah* leads to the essentialised declaration that Muslims lack a "concept of forgiveness." Then the political and social complexity involved in situations of conflict is reduced to the perceived essence of Islam and the resultant inability of Muslims to forgive.

While Stephen Sesi has found some points of commonality for dialogue – dialogue being understood as an attitude of listening and understanding that would "awaken sympathy, love, and prayer, until the Muslims' bonds burst, their wounds healed, their sorrows were removed, and their desires satisfied in Jesus Christ"[301] – difference remains the essential trait between Christianity and Islam.

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[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid., 203-204.
[300] Ibid., 217.
[301] Ibid., 204.

The two Evangelical scholars demonstrate much less openness towards Islam than the Kenyan mainline Christian scholars. It seems doubtful that Allah may be identified with the Father of Jesus Christ. Muslims appear to be especially suspect of a lack of moral attributes, being connected with slavery, oppression of women, hatred, lack of forgiveness and conflict. The sole relationship possible between Christians and Muslims appears to be one of Christian evangelism.

6.5   Conclusion

The majority of the writing was produced for seminars or conferences in which issues concerning Christian relations with Muslims were at least a partial focus. The primary audience at these conferences is Christian, though some Muslims may be present, and the writers assume that most readers will be Christians. With very few exceptions the articles have been published by Christian publishers. It should be seen as a Christian theological endeavour, rather than Christians engaging in Islamic studies.

These scholars write history, ascribe fault, describe and interpret Islam, analyse current affairs, do theology, etc. Most of the scholarly discourse on Islam is of a social and historical character. Scholars explore the current social and political relationship between Muslims and Christians, using history to explain the reasons for contemporary tensions and conflicts. This history then has a certain ideological component depending upon the point of view of the particular author. For Maina and Wandera, history shows a past of injustice towards Muslims and Christian dominance in which the colonial government and Christian missionaries played a negative role. Therefore, they advocate more justice for Muslims and more understanding on the part of Christians. The situation is similar for Kubai, though she also writes of Arab hegemony along the coast. This leads her to write more critically of current Muslim actions and attitudes. These three scholars share a common viewpoint that the

Muslim community has remained backwards in comparison with the Christian community. The Sesis, however, describe and interpret a history that portrays Islam as essentially oppressive of a local African people. Due to educational capital, and the relative symbolic power it bestows upon these scholars (see 1.2.3), their interpretations of the history of Islam and Christianity in Kenya can impact socio-political spaces as well as religious and theological spaces.[302]

The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Kenya is said to have been generally peaceful with only isolated incidents of conflict, which are often attributed to political reasons. As Soares points out, peaceful co-existence is assumed to be – or it is assumed that it should be – the norm of interreligious relations within society.[303] This perspective allows the writers to ignore internal systemic issues,[304] and locate the origin of current tensions primarily in external forces, such as Islamic movements and revival, Western media and Western Christian missions, which receive special condemnation from Maina and Wandera. Behind some of the culpability placed on external forces is an assertion of the good and life-giving attributes of the African heritage. Mbiti, for example, especially finds Islamic slavery in Sudan and suicide bombers in Palestine to be incomprehensible to the life-promoting world view of African Religion.

The concern to promote the goodness of the African heritage also leads the writers to portray Christianity and Islam as equally good, or in some cases as equally bad. For example, if the Qur'ān is said to have passages that can be interpreted to encourage religious violence, then the same is also said of the Bible. Chepkwony says that both religions have looked down upon African Religion. When it is suggested that Islam may have patriarchal tendencies, then

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[302] This will be looked at in Chapter 8.
[303] Soares, "Introduction: Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa," 2.
[304] Such systemic issues are raised in a previously cited article by Mwakimako.

the patriarchal inclinations of Christianity are also brought up. In contrast to other writers, Maina states that traditional African patriarchy is at work in limiting the political rights of Muslim women in Kenya.

Some current happenings in the Muslim world are understood to have had negative consequences on interfaith relations in Kenya. A few writers address the relatively recent phenomena of Islamic political movements, usually finding them to have encouraged a more radical foreign element among Kenyan Muslims. The contemporary Muslim practice of *mihadhara* is addressed by a few writers, who generally view these public and polemical debates as detrimental to peaceful relations between Muslims and Christians in Kenya.

The goals of the writers are primarily practical. They hope to promote peace between the two religious communities and the national development that can result from the two communities working together. It seems that Islam is sometimes understood to have arisen out of Judaism, like Christianity, so as to be seen as a sibling religion, though the beliefs and history of Islam are accurately portrayed in general. Mugambi's Theology of Reconstruction seems to provide the blueprint for a Christian approach to nation-building and church-state relationships, and Muslims are welcomed to participate in the building of Kenya. Yet little thought has gone into considering how Muslims might feel about participating in such a Christian-driven project. Kubai raises the issue that Christians and Muslims may not agree on their understandings of society's problems, though she does not address specifics in the Kenyan situation.[305]

While the writers concentrate on social and historical issues, theological questions are also raised, usually for the practical purpose of encouraging peaceful co-existence. For

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[305] Kubai, "Striving in Faith," 12.

scholars of Kenyan mainline Christianity the purpose of examining Christian-Muslim relations is to encourage peaceful co-existence.

A frequently raised question concerns whether Islam and Christianity are considered to be more similar or different. While all the writers would seem to acknowledge doctrinal differences, they disagree over their emphasis. Maina, for example, stresses that Muslims and Christians are "children of one God," and that differences provide an opportunity for dialogue, learning about the other and learning to live with diversity. In contrast, Kubai highlights doctrines such as the trinity to point out the essential difference between Islamic and Christian theology. Evangelical scholars, Josephine and Stephen Sesi, insist upon the differences as overcoming incidental similarities.

A related question is whether Muslims and Christians worship the same god. It is an underlying assumption that they do, in fact, worship the same God. Maina says that they are "children of one God." Kubai writes that they understand the nature of God differently, but she assumes that they are speaking of the same God. Wandera follows Kibicho, who argued that the Kikuyu *Ngai* is the same as the God of the Bible, and assumes the same for Allah. Mugambi links African Religion, Islam, Christianity and Judaism to Abraham under the same God.

Several writers raise the question of the relationship between the secular and the sacred in Islam in order to explain the present Islamic revival and its political manifestations. There is something about the Muslim understanding of this relationship that seems to trouble the writers; however, Kubai is the only one to contrast the non-separation of the sacred and the secular in Islam with the separation of church and state in Christianity. Mugambi understands the separation of sacred and secular as a Western phenomenon, rather than a

specifically Christian one.[306] The African tradition is usually understood to have no such separation.[307] For the most part, these scholars advocate some type of relation between the sacred and the secular, though they are uncomfortable with the way it is expressed in Islam.

To briefly summarise, social issues take precedence over theological ones. Peaceful co-existence is understood to be the norm that has existed and it is to be strived for, while current tensions and isolated conflicts are understood to have their ultimate origins in forces external to Kenya. Since nation-building and development are goals, unity and working together for the good of the nation are valued, though how Muslims may be involved in such a Christian-oriented project remains unclear. Theological issues have not been examined with any real depth.

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[306] See for example, Mugambi, "Religion and Social Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa," 14.
[307] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POPULAR CHRISTIAN WRITING ON ISLAM

In this chapter popular Christian writing on Islam will be examined. These Christian publications provide a window into the theological world of Kenyan Pentecostal Christianity, which makes up over half of the Kenyan population.[1] The messages, prophecies and news published here reflect the sermons and teaching heard in churches throughout Kenya. A few articles specifically deal with themes about Islam, though brief references to Islam or Muslims do appear in many other articles. Several articles in which Islam is a major theme will be examined. Other relevant articles and books that mention Islam and hold interest for the research topic will also be looked at briefly. The (Neo)Pentecostal community has not produced much scholarly literature in Kenya, especially concerning the topic of Islam, but the popular literature offers an opportunity to explore its views. These views are examined through the method of implicit theology (see 1.2.4), in which the less reflected popular writing is rescripted through the use of scholarly literature on African Pentecostalism and African Religion. Power, understood in the texts as spiritual power, but which can also be understand as symbolic power (see 1.2.3) provides a framework for a careful reading of the socio-political aspects of the texts.

7.1   Popular Christian Literature in Kenya

Popular Christian literature is here defined in contrast to scholarly writing. Whereas the scholarly writing is addressed primarily to the academic community, popular Christian writing in Kenya seeks to reach ordinary Kenyan Christians, who are literate in English. The reading audience would, therefore, have at least a primary school education and most likely

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[1] *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals*, 4.

some secondary school education. The popular writing itself, unlike the scholarly writing, does not usually cite sources, nor contain footnotes. Grammar and spelling errors are more frequent, probably reflecting less editorial attention.

Popular Christian magazines are available through street vendors who display a large variety of local and international magazines and newspapers on the sidewalks of downtown Nairobi. Seventy-five issues of twenty-two different Christian magazines were collected over more than a 2-year period (2006-2009) through the process of periodically walking throughout the downtown area of Nairobi and searching the displays of numerous street vendors. Several of the more prominent magazines were also contacted in order to purchase back issues, however only *Revival Springs* responded, and an additional eighty-four issues (April 1998 to March 2010) were obtained.

The sample is weighted towards *Revival Springs* both numerically and in its representation of a longer period of time. Therefore, reaction to certain national events involving Muslims and Christians occurring before 2006 are only available in *Revival Springs*. However, this type of article appears to be relatively rare. Though more than half of the magazine issues examined were from *Revival Springs*, only nine of the twenty-five articles analysed in the chapter come from this publication. While it can't be claimed that every popular Christian magazine article that may comment on Islam has been found, the articles examined can be said to represent what is typically found in Kenyan popular Christian literature.

The majority of these twenty-two magazine publications[2] are associated with certain ministries or church denominations. These churches and ministries, usually located in Nairobi, are overwhelmingly Pentecostal in nature. *Revival Springs*, which has its own

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[2] A list of these magazines can be found in Appendix Two.

publishing house,[3] is not associated with a particular church or ministry. *Revival Springs'*

primary target seems to be Neo-Pentecostal church members. The primary *raison d'être* for

the publication of these magazines and books is to convey a message that is deemed

important. Some have a very particular emphasis that they wish to communicate. Sermons

and prophecies are relatively common components of the magazines, and the churches and

ministries desire a larger audience for these messages. Periodicals connected with church

denominations also provide news of various events, such as the planting of new churches,

mission activities, seminars, etc. Additionally, church and ministry related magazines provide

publicity for the respective institutions (e.g. advertising for special church services or

'crusades' in a local venue). A church, a ministry, or even an individual who is able to publish

a magazine also gains a certain prestige, which seems to be an important motivation for

publication in many cases.

These periodicals are relatively inexpensive, ranging from 50 KSh for those in a

newspaper format to 200 KSh for those in the most glossy magazine format. Additionally,

magazines, newspapers and books are passed around among friends, co-workers and

acquaintances in Africa at a higher rate than generally happens in Europe, so that a typical

single copy of a magazine will be read by more people in Africa than in Europe.[4] Therefore,

the readership of these various publications is rather significant, demonstrating a widespread

influence of the viewpoints that are found in popular Christian literature in Kenya.

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[3] Boniface Gitau, "Visiting Minister," *Transformation Newsletter* (2008).
http://vesselofhonor.org/newsletters/fall08.pdf (accessed 6/18/2010).

[4] Readers-per-copy statistics are notoriously difficult to accurately obtain. However, see Michele
Levine, Gary Morgan, and Marcus Tarrant, *"Readers-per-copy": Beyond the Phoney Figure Debate to
Understanding Reader Choice and How to Drive it Your Way* (Cambrdige, MA: Worldwide
Readership Research Symposium, 2003)., which reviews several market research reports. Readers-per-
copy of most Western magazines vary from 2.5 to 5. In Contrast, Bukedde, a Luganda language
newspaper in Uganda, claims to have readers-per-copy numbers of around 15.

Pastors and other church leaders generate the principle ideas found in most articles written in these publications. Some articles are directly written by these church leaders, while others go through a more complicated process involving a journalist working for the magazine. Sermons, speeches and interviews are often published in the church leader's name, though it is obvious that a journalist is also involved in the writing. At other times the journalist is also given credit. The testimony is a common genre found in almost all of these publications. Testimonies can come from church leaders, Gospel musicians or lay people within churches, if they have compelling stories to tell. These stories provide a glimpse into the lives and perspectives of average Christians who are not necessarily leaders, though it does so through the writing of a journalist. A few publications give the editors/journalists, who are also most likely leaders within churches, opportunities to express their opinions on church and national issues. The points of view expressed can be considered the quasi-official positions of the churches and ministries represented.

7.2   Conversion Narratives: Moving from Islam to Christianity

Four testimonies of people who converted from Islam to Christianity were found.[5] These will be examined first. The conversion stories, though primarily told in the first person, are written through the interpretive lens of a journalist. It is obvious that at a minimum the journalist, who has condensed the story for written purposes, has offered some interpretive comments. The journalists have also appeared to structure the narratives to fit certain desired patterns.

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[5] There are few conversions between Islam and Christianity in Kenya. See *Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 2.

Conversion stories are a "special form of autobiographical narrative,"[6] in which "one universe of discourse" is displaced by another.[7] Staples and Mauss interviewed young converts from "born-again Christian" fellowships in the north-western USA, finding their conversion narratives to incorporate a "repudiation of a sinful past."[8] This past should not be understood as simply a factual recording of an individual's pre-conversion history, but the person's biographical narrative is "reconstructed in accordance with the new … universe of discourse."[9] In this reconstruction of the past, an individual will create a "past self" that is understood by the convert as a "spurious self" in relation to the "real self" after the conversion.[10] In other words the convert's past is interpreted in a relatively negative manner from the perspective of a new universe of discourse that includes new values, new religious and spiritual meanings and symbols, a new community, new scriptural reference points, and so forth. Snow and Machalek additionally speak of "demonstration events," which they define as "public displays of conversion" that verify for the new community that the convert has indeed truly converted.[11]

Luhrmann offers a corrective to what she considers to be the overly cognitive approach to the study of conversion.[12] In her study of "fundamentalist Baptists" in the United States she finds that "intense spiritual experience," which includes emotional and corporal

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[6] Ulrike Popp-Baier, "Narrating Embodied Aims: Self-transformation in Conversion Narratives - A Psychological Analysis," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 2, no. 3 (2001). http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/ (accessed January 13, 2012).

[7] David A. Snow and Richard Machalek, "The Sociology of Conversion," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10, no. (1984): 170.

[8] Clifford L. Staples and Armand L. Mauss, "Conversion or Commitment: Reassessment of the Snow and Machalek Approach to the Study of Conversion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26, no. 2 (1987): 143.

[9] Snow and Machalek: 173.

[10] Staples and Mauss, "Conversion or Commitment," 143.

[11] Snow and Machalek, "The Sociology of Conversion," 171.

[12] Tanya M. Luhrmann, "Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity," *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 3 (2004).

involvement, is important in the conversion process.[13] The specific spiritual experiences that were most often found among Baptists were "falling in love with Jesus," "walking with God," and finding "peace."[14] In the African context spiritual experience takes a central position, though these experiences are different from those found by Luhrmann. In the following conversion narratives, healings, visions, triumph over adversity, success and finding joy and peace will be seen to be the primary spiritual experiences. These spiritual experiences are understood to be more readily available through Christianity than through Islam, which in itself is perceived as a valid reason for conversion. Religious truth is validated through spiritual experience, more than through intellectualisation.

In the following conversion narratives, in which individuals convert from Islam to Christianity, there is an obvious displacement of the universe of discourse. While neither the Muslim nor the Christian universe of discourse is articulated clearly, a close reading of the texts reveals how the converts and their journalist interpreters understand the important differences between the Muslim and Christian universe of discourse. However, there also appears to be the maintenance of a more primary universe of discourse before and after the conversion, which is that of the African religious worldview. The creation of a 'spurious self,' in relation to a new or real self, is also evident. It may be anticipated that the spurious self may reflect not only personal sin and deficiencies, but also deficiencies perceived to be present within Islam.

7.2.1 The Conversion of Rose Muhando

The story of Rose Muhando,[15] a popular gospel singer, is told in 2008 in *EndTime Christian News*, a publication of Redeemed Gospel Church. The article is subtitled, "Rose

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[13] Ibid.: 518-519.

[14] Ibid.: 521-524.

[15] Isaac Onamu, "Rise Up, Go and Serve Me," *EndTime Christian News*, August 2008.

Muhando swapped Islam for Christianity and she today scales nations healing souls."[16] She

tells the story of her conversion while growing up in a Muslim family in Tanzania. As a

young adolescent girl, she became very ill, in great pain and unable to walk. She says, "The

disease crunched my soul,"[17] so that she considered suicide. Then she describes her

conversion as follows:

> At around 3 A.M., I was wakened by a bright flash of light that filled the house. On looking closer, I saw a hand touching me. Then I heard the first voice telling me, "I am Jesus I have healed you." The second voice told me, "Raise(*sic*) up, go and serve me," suddenly the excruciating pain stopped.[18]

This short account has allusions to biblical miracle stories. The bright flash of light

reminds the reader of Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus. (Acts 9:1-9) The voice also

tells Paul to "Arise, and go into the city." (Acts 9:6 KJV) Muhando later says that her father

observed the incident though he did not hear the voices, which again is similar to Paul's

experience though reversed as Paul's companions heard the voice but did not see Jesus. (Acts

9:7) Jesus frequently touches those whom he heals. (Matthew 8:15, 23; 9:20, 29; 20:34; Luke

22:51) Jesus also says "rise up," or a similar cognate (in the KJV), while performing a

healing. (Luke 5:23-24; Luke 6:8) These biblical allusions indicate that her testimony has

been shaped by her subsequent experience as a Christian. She compares her experience with

Paul's, finding a new scriptural reference point to tell her life narrative, therefore allowing the

New Testament to define her personal experience. This comparison then lends authority to

Muhando's ministry as a Gospel singer.

It is also important to observe that her conversion is linked to healing and a vision.

That Jesus healed her is understood to indicate that more spiritual power for life is available in

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[16] Ibid., 8.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.

Christian faith than in Islam. As Kalu writes, healing "is the restoration of life,"[19] and "an important aspect of religious life in Africa."[20] Muhando's illness has also been reconstructed to include a spiritual dimension – it 'crunched her soul' – therefore, she is not dealing with a simple physiological phenomenon. Visions are understood to be a means of communicating with the spirit world.[21] Therefore, Muhando's vision (and her father partly sharing it) validates her experience and elevates Jesus and Christianity above Islam, which had presumably provided neither a vision nor healing. Significantly no human beings are involved in her experience, which is meant to indicate that she was not convinced by argument nor enticed by possible benefits that an encounter with Christians may have proffered. Christianity can then be proclaimed as superior because of direct spiritual experience, rather than human reason.

She continues the story saying that people, including her brothers, refused to believe that she had been healed by Jesus, "because they were staunch Muslims."[22] Her father having witnessed the vision was the only person to believe her. Muhando says that she continued to attend a *madrasa* at the mosque until she was 16 years old, when she heard another voice which said, "I am Jesus, go and serve me."[23] It was at this point that "the girl finally crossed over to Christianity by accepting Christ as her personal saviour and lord,"[24] in the words of Onamu, the journalist. Muhando described what followed:

> My brothers rose up in arms because by then there was no single
> Christian in our family. Their resolve was that I was not fit to live with them. It
> was traumatic as I was driven away from home and became sort of a nomad
> roving from relative to relative in search of an abode for several years. It's

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[19] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 265.
[20] Ibid., 263.
[21] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 56.
[22] Onamu, "Rise Up, Go and Serve Me," 9.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.

during this period that I fell prey to the men who impregnated me and dumped me.[25]

Onamu labels this as persecution. A sharp opposition between Christianity and Islam is drawn. Despite her obvious healing, even her family (with the exception of her father) refuses to believe that Jesus healed her, simply due to the fact that they are "staunch Muslims." Once again valid spiritual experience in Christianity is contrasted with human reason in Islam. Muhando, remaining obedient to her parents, attends a *madrasa* until she hears Jesus again in another mystical experience, who tells her to go and serve him in words reminiscent of the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19) The opposition of her brothers to her conversion led to Muhando being forced from her family's home. However, although she was the only Christian in the family, she was able to live with relatives moving from one to another. This appears to be an unintentional admission that her entire family was not as radically opposed to her conversion. This expulsion from the family home is to blame for her pregnancies out of wedlock. It should be noted, however, that her sexually immoral, 'spurious self' is not linked with her life as a Muslim, but as a young, undisciped Christian.

Later, through another miraculous intervention she attends a Neo-Pentecostal church, where she learns more of her new faith and where she is helped to reconcile with her parents, who also eventually convert to Christianity.[26] This reconciliation with her parents is again a type of healing that the Christian community helps to facilitate. Magesa has shown that reconciliation is an aspect of restoring the 'vital force' (i.e. healing) in African Religion.[27] In this sense separation, and therefore an enemy to the vital force, had been brought about by the Muslim community around Muhando, whereas the Christian community brings about reconciliation and healing. She proceeds to become a successful gospel singer in East Africa,

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Magesa, *African Religion*, 208-209.

which contrasts with the difficulties she experienced after being forced from her home and ties in with the biblically reminiscent calls from God to serve Him that she recounts.

Of interest is also the choice of vocabulary by the writer to describe Muhando's conversion. Onamu writes that she "swapped Islam for Christianity" and that she "crossed over to Christianity." While each metaphor comes from a different semantic domain – swapping implies an exchange of objects and crossing over implies movement from one place to another – each suggests two distinct entities: Christianity and Islam, between which one can simply choose.[28] These metaphors contradict the premise of the conversion story that Christianity is spiritually more powerful and more life-giving than Islam. While the vocabulary choice may be an idiosyncrasy of the writer, it seems to unintentionally describe the reality of her experience, which represents a view that Islam and Christianity are two distinct spiritual powers that may be accessed independently without necessarily inferring equality between them. In this way he describes her experience more accurately than he intends, as Muhando interprets her conversion as making a choice between two centres of spiritual power, choosing the greater power.

7.2.2 The Conversion of Shakira Asia

Shakira Asia tells of her conversion to Christianity in *Triumph over Adversity*.[29] As she recounts her story, Asia was born in Mombasa, though raised in Mumias[30] in Western Kenya after moving at an early age. Her father was compelled to take a second wife by his relatives since his first wife had given him no sons, leaving Asia and her sisters living alone with their mother. She then tells about attending secondary school:

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[28] Interestingly, Onamu's metaphors conform to the social science interpretations discussed earlier, but differ significantly from typical theological interpretations, which tend to view conversion as a work of God through the Holy Spirit.

[29] Esther Kimani, "Triumph over Adversity: The Story of Shakira Asia," *Revival Springs*, September 2008.

[30] Mumias is one of few small cities of the interior that has a large Muslim population.

> Dad was a Muslim. He was determined that I would join a Muslim high school, but the only admission letter I received was from a Christian school. Mom was glad because she was a Christian. I now look back and see God had His plan.[31]

The notion of a universe of discourse is very obvious in this passage as the pull is between a Muslim and a Christian education. Asia notes that her father wanted her to attend a Muslim secondary school; however, when she is only accepted at a Christian school there is no indication of opposition on his part, though her mother is said to have been happy that she would attend a Christian school. This suggests a degree of religious discord within the family. Asia concludes that her attendance at a Christian school was God's plan. The contrast with the description of Muhando's conversion as swapping Islam for Christianity should be noted; Asia's anticipated conversion was not a matter of choice, but it had been planned by God.

This is the first time in the text that the reader is informed of the religious structure of her family. Since the religious affiliation of the family is not mentioned until several paragraphs into the article, conversion from Islam may not be the most important feature of the story. A religiously mixed marriage would also not be completely unusual for a Luhya family in Mumias, which has a significant Muslim population,[32] although as a whole the Luhya ethnic group is majority Christian.[33]

While Asia was away in secondary school,[34] her mother died. This led to a conflict, which is described as follows:

> A conflict arose on the day of the burial when my Dad's relatives demanded that she be buried by Muslims, which meant being buried without a coffin, but Mom was a Christian and her church members also wanted to bury

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[31] Kimani, "Shakira Asia," 19.

[32] Oded, *Islam and Politics in Kenya*, 12.

[33] The Christian population is said to be 90% and the Muslim population 2% of the Luhya people. Barrett, "World Christian Database."

[34] Most Kenyan secondary schools are boarding schools.

her. We finally convinced Dad to do what would have pleased her. He obliged.[35]

The conflict is over burial rites, which are religiously significant in African tradition.[36] Funeral rites, properly performed, enable the vital force of the deceased to be transmitted to the community.[37] Therefore, interfering with proper religious funeral rites is often understood to prevent the transmission of the deceased's vital force. For this reason conflicts over burials are much more than quarrels about religious tradition.[38] Issues unmentioned in the article may have been which religious community was entitled to receive the transmission of the mother's vital force, that her vital force may be lost altogether if she were buried improperly, or that her spirit may haunt the community.

Significantly, the father is depicted as a good man, though his true historical-moral character can't be known with certainty. He reluctantly took a second wife, forced by his relatives. He accepted that his daughter attend a Christian school, though he wanted her to go to a Muslim one, which are much less common in Kenya. Finally, he allowed his wife to receive a Christian burial against the wishes of his relatives. Asia is also shown to love her father and to mourn deeply when he passes away soon after her mother,[39] and she was well cared for up to his death. It would have been possible, perhaps expected, for the Christian journalist to portray the Muslim father as morally deficient to some extent, yet this portrayal is resisted and the readers encounter what they consider to be a good man and father. A Muslim can, therefore, be seen as a moral person in a popular Kenyan Christian magazine; a

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[35] Kimani, "Shakira Asia," 19.

[36] For a description of Luhya funeral rites and related beliefs see Alembi, "The Abanyole Dirge."; Magesa, *African Religion*, 147.

[37] Magesa, *African Religion*, 147-148.

[38] During three years of teaching at theological school in Nairobi, I observed that a major question for students concerned funeral rites when some family members were Christians and others practiced the traditional religion.

[39] Kimani, "Shakira Asia," 19.

point of view that is less commonly found among similar American religious groups.[40] Moral values do not play a significant role in the differences between the universes of discourse of the two religions in this conversion narrative.

Asia says that she became a Christian while away at secondary school. The only comment that she makes about her conversion is that she "now knew God,"[41] which would indicate that she previously had not known God. While it is not specifically said that she converted from Islam, the context implies that God is known only in the Christian religion and not in Islam.

The father's Muslim relatives play the role of antagonists. They force a second marriage upon Asia's father, which negatively affects her life. They attempt to have her Christian mother receive a Muslim burial. Last, after the death of her father, they reject Asia, who had converted to Christianity while in secondary school. She must then move to Nairobi and live in poverty without help from her family.[42] As the story continues, Asia considers prostitution,[43] but she is rescued by a Neo-Pentecostal church, where she receives employment and funding to get further education, thus succeeding in life. The testimony takes the common form of a person who, through the aid of God and/or Christians, overcomes obstacles to find financial and personal success,[44] which is the primary focus of the article.

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[40] Contrast this, for example, with calls for boycotts of an American TV show about ordinary Muslim families by a conservative Christian group. Their concern is that the TV program depicts Muslims as good people rather than as a danger to American society, thus misleading its viewers. See E.D. Kain, "Lowe's Pulls Ads from TLC's 'All-America Muslim' and the US Military Wages a Drone War in Afghanistan," *Forbes* December 12(2011). http://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2011/12/12/lowes-pulls-ads-from-tlcs-all-american-muslim-and-the-us-military-wages-a-drone-war-in-afghanistan/ (accessed January 11, 2012).

[41] Kimani, 19.

[42] Kimani, "Shakira Asia," 20.

[43] This is the central piece of the narrative; that Asia escaped a life of poverty and possibly prostitution, due to the actions of the Christian community. Triumphing over adversity is the central theme, not conversion from Islam.

[44] This narrative form is very common in testimonies found in popular Christian magazines in Kenya. Muhando's testimony described above also follows this narrative construct.

Unlike Muhando's story above, the conversion from Islam plays a minor role in this testimony, though a clear contrast is drawn between the Muslim relatives who reject Asia and the Neo-Pentecostal Christians who help her to succeed. The portrayal thus focuses on which religion produces a more supportive and life-giving community.

7.2.3   The Conversion of Veronicah Wanjiru Njoroge

The story of Veronicah Wanjiru Njoroge, who converted from African Religion to Islam and later converted to Christianity, is told in *Today in Africa*.[45] She tells a heart-rending life story that includes attempted rape, torture by her father, attempted suicide, single motherhood, the murder of her children by her father-in-law and rape.[46] To support her one surviving child, she found a job cleaning rooms at a guesthouse that was owned by a Muslim. She converted to Islam, which she says pleased her employer. Nothing else is said about her experience as a Muslim. While still working at the guesthouse, she became ill and was diagnosed with AIDS. When her employer learned that she was "HIV positive he immediately sacked (her) without mercy."[47]

At this point she went to Kijabe Hospital, which is associated with AIM (formerly African Inland Mission),[48] for treatment. Wanjiru received free drugs and AIDS counselling. Later, she "gave (her) life to Christ and God restored my hope of living longer with AIDS."[49] She speaks of her new faith saying, "Although I have faced many challenges in my life, I believe that God still loves me."[50] Then she lists the ways in which she has seen this love: she

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[45] Kahura Chege and Arthur Gitu, "The Cry of an AIDS Victim: He Murdered my Five Children," *Today in Africa*, September 2006.

[46] Ibid., 1-2 of special AIDS insert.

[47] Ibid., 2.

[48] AIM also is associated with the magazine in which the article is found.

[49] Chege and Gitu, "AIDS Victim," 2.

[50] Ibid.

has been provided with free anti-retroviral drugs, and her new landlord has treated her well by taking care of her and supporting her.[51]

Notably absent in either of Wanjiru's conversions are intense spiritual experiences and prominent changes in her universe of discourse. Instead both conversions seem to be a combination of having received help – from a Muslim employer and from a mission hospital – and a possible desire to remain in the good graces of those assisting her. She comments that her Muslim employer was pleased that she converted to Islam, and she ends her testimony by saying, "May God bless all those who have helped me in one way or the other."[52] While at first glance these conversions may appear to be matters of convenience, from the perspective of Wanjiru's African religious world view there is most likely another process that is occurring. Within the African religious world view there is a strong connection between the spiritual world and the material world, so that what happens in one of these worlds affects events in the other.[53] While receiving help in the form of employment from a Muslim guesthouse owner, Wanjiru understood that the god of her Muslim benefactor had also blessed her life and conversion was a sincere expression of gratitude. When her Muslim employer fired her, the association with his god was also affected. Her new benefactors, being Christians, meant that their god was now blessing her life, and she converted to a new religion. For Wanjiru, her experiences of being assisted were both material and spiritual experiences, though her universe of discourse remained profoundly and religiously African.

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[51] Similar stories are not uncommon in Kenyan newspapers; and I have also personally heard of similar, though less dramatic, life stories and generous responses.

[52] Chege and Gitu, "AIDS Victim," 2.

[53] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 15. The idea that the spiritual world has priority is also found more explicitly in articles in Kenyan popular Christian magazines. For example, Kenneth Mando says, "Everything you see in the physical has a spiritual dimension." J.N. Muchai, "If My People who are Called by My Name," *God's Champions*, December 2009, 4.

A religious contrast is presented in the testimony between the lack of mercy of the Muslim employer when he learns that Wanjiru has AIDS and the care that she receives from the Christian community at Kijabe Hospital. Similar contrasts between a life-giving Christian community and a life-denying Muslim one were also portrayed in the previous conversion narratives.

7.2.4   The Conversion of Edward Buria

In an interview, Rev. Edward Buria gives his testimony.[54] He recounts that he "was raised up in a Muslim environment."[55] This is the only statement in the article that refers to Islam. He says that he became a devout Catholic at age twelve, and later, after being miraculously healed from a terminal illness, he converted to Pentecostalism, which is understood to have also given him salvation. While very little is said of his experience as a Muslim, it is apparent that Islam and Catholicism are perceived as equally deficient in comparison with Pentecostalism and its apparent spiritual power.

7.2.5   Conclusion

In these conversion narratives overcoming obstacles is the primary theme. The narratives would be viewed similarly to other testimonies by magazine readers. The testimony format is generally that of a person overcoming difficulties in life to find abundant life in Christ. Islam is simply one of the obstacles to overcome. The fact that they have converted from Islam plays a minor role in the stories. Their own religious involvement in Islam never arises in the narratives; it is family or an employer who are the examples of committed Muslims. Their conversion from Islam does not involve moral transformation, but the discovery of new found spiritual power to deal with the uncertainties and difficulties of life. Their 'spurious selves' under Islam were not about sinfulness, but about being powerless. The

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[54] Mona L Nduilu, "The Life and Ministry of Rev. Edward Buria," *Revival Springs*, November 2002.
[55] Ibid., 3.

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contrast is then between being powerless prior to conversion and being empowered by Christian faith. They also find a new caring community that aids the convert in finding a new life, which is sometimes contrasted with a less compassionate Muslim family or employer. This caring community should be understood to represent the ideal African community, which has been produced by Christianity rather than by either African Religion or Islam. The African universe of discourse remains in place throughout the conversions, though African Religion is also never viewed as a viable religious option.

7.3   Conversion Narratives: Meeting Muslims along the Way

A few conversion narratives in which Islam plays a less important role will be examined. In these narratives the principle protagonist has a significant encounter with Muslims or Islam that has left enough of an impression to become a part of the story.

7.3.1   Testimony of Irene Mwangi

Irene Mwangi recounts her testimony in *To Save Life or to Kill It*,[56] in which she considered converting to Islam. She says that she converted to Christianity (presumably from a nominal Christian status) and became active in Christian organisations while still in secondary school.[57] After graduation she found a job and moved to Mombasa, where she became pregnant without marrying and drifted away from her former level of commitment.[58] She also seemed to have felt judgement from Christian friends.[59] At this point Mwangi decided to "take radical action" as she narrates:

> I decided since I had betrayed my salvation, I would become a Muslim. I asked a friend near our office if she would help me. She agreed to take me to the mosque. Since I had found out I was pregnant, I had stopped praying. I was

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[56] Esther Kimani, "To Save Life or To Kill It: Patricia Oyamo and Irene Mwangi," *Revival Springs*, February 2009.

[57] Ibid., 28.

[58] Ibid., 31.

[59] Ibid.

often down and cried a lot. I asked my friend if I would still be accepted as a Muslim if I aborted the baby I was carrying. She assured me that I would.[60]

Since she had become pregnant outside of marriage, she decided that she was no longer a valid Christian, "betraying her salvation." A non-religious life, however, was not a valid option for her, because her alternative was to convert to Islam. Her thought process was that since she had failed at Christianity, she would try Islam. A part of this process was that having an abortion would be unacceptable in her Neo-Pentecostal church, but she had the impression that it would be acceptable within Islam. A Muslim friend told her that she would be "accepted as a Muslim" though she had an abortion. Her friend's answer could be interpreted as a sign of mercy within the Muslim community, but the narrative portrays it to mean that abortion is acceptable in Islam, thus contrasting the 'moral stance' of the Neo-Pentecostal church with the 'immoral stance' of Islam from the perspective of the typical reader of the magazine.[61] Assured that she could have an abortion and convert to Islam, Mwangi went to a doctor where she believed she would receive an abortion. The doctor, however, was revealed to be a Christian, who then prayed for Mwangi and helped her to accept her unborn child.[62] This reinforces the contrast that Christianity stands for life (i.e. opposed to the abortion) while Islam does not.

Two aspects of this short depiction of Islam should be noted. First, Islam is misrepresented when it is portrayed as permitting easy abortions for reasons of unwanted pregnancies. As Rispler-Chaim notes "Abortion is a complex subject in Islamic law, and is legally judged 'reprehensible.' This means that it is permitted only when a 'good' reason can be furnished, and only up to 120 days into the pregnancy, which is the stage before

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[60] Ibid., 31.

[61] Kenyan Pentecostals have an anti-abortion stance.

[62] Esther Kimani, "To Save a Life or to Kill It (Part 2)," *Revival Springs*, March 2009, 28.

ensoulment."[63] Second, the Muslim friend's comments could also be understood to indicate grace and mercy in the forgiveness of wrongdoing by the Muslim community and Islam, yet this interpretation is not pursued in the narrative. The architects of the narrative (Mwangi and Kimani, the reporter) miss an opportunity to humanise her Muslim friend and the Muslim community, instead relegating them to a one-dimensional, morally suspect role in the story. Similar roles have been seen previously, such as the families of Rose Muhando and Shakira Asia in their respective stories and the guesthouse owner in Wanjiru's narrative.

7.3.2   Testimony of Joseph Njuguna

In *I Hate You Heroin*,[64] Joseph Njuguna tells his story. He tells of moving to London and becoming deeply involved in drugs. Islam is not specifically mentioned in the article; however, when he narrates why he began using drugs he says, "My room-mates were from Kenya. Many of them were from Mombasa."[65] He also mentions the name of the friend who got him involved in selling drugs as Ishmael.[66] In this way, Islam is subtly associated with his involvement in drugs. Mombasa, as a port city, is notorious for the prevalence of illegal drugs, especially heroin,[67] and Muslim Swahili people, as well as others, are involved in both its use and trade.[68] The facts in Njuguna's narrative are, therefore, not in dispute. However, within the structure of the conversion narrative his conversion to Christianity brings victory over addiction to heroin, whereas his association with Mombasa (read Muslims) and Ishmael

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[63] Vardit Rispler-Chaim, "The Right not to be Born: Abortion of the Disadvantaged Fetus in Contemporary Fatwas," *The Muslim World* 89, no. 2 (1999): 133.

[64] Joseph Njuguna, "I Hate You Heroin," *Revival Springs*, March 2009.

[65] Ibid., 16. Mombasa, on the primarily Muslim coast of Kenya, often functions as a geographic symbol for Islam.

[66] Ibid., 17.

[67] Clement Deveau, Barry Levine, and Susan Beckerleg, "Heroin Use in Kenya and Findings from a Community Based Outreach Programme to Reduce the Spread of HIV/AIDS," *African Journal of Drug & Alcohol Studies* 5, no. 2 (2006): 96.

[68] Susan Beckerleg, "'Brown Sugar' or Friday Prayers: Youth Choices and Community Building in Coastal Kenya," *African Affairs* 94, no. 374 (1995): 24.

(probably a Muslim)[69] brought him into addiction and crime. The intention is not to present Islam as immorally linked to heroin abuse, but the representation of the power of Christianity to overcome drug addiction is subtly contrasted with the inability of Islam to do so. There is similarity with Muhando's narrative in that Christianity is portrayed as more mystically powerful than Islam for healing.

7.3.3 Testimony of Josephat Obare

A conversion narrative with an interesting difference is told by Josephat Obare in *Dove Harvest*.[70] Similar to Njuguna's story, Obare converts from a life of crime and debauchery to become a Christian minister. He does not encounter any Muslims in his tale, but has a mystical experience that is loosely tied to Islam. He met a beautiful woman in a night club on the Nairobi-Mombasa highway and left with her. What happened next is described: "Everything else happened very fast, the only thing he remembers was seeing a mosque behind them and entering a house which had a lot of cats."[71] The next day he realised that he had spent the night with a '*jinni*' (Swahili version of the Arabic *jinn*) in the guise of a beautiful woman. From this moment he changed his life and converted to Christianity.

The point of this episode seems to be that Obare's careless and corrupt lifestyle led him into the clutches of an evil spiritual force from which he was fortunate to escape with his life. The presence of cats at the house indicates that witchcraft is involved. Yet the reference to a mosque and jinn identify the evil spirit with Islam. The more common Swahili word for depicting evil spirits is *mapepo*; therefore, the word choice of *jinni* is significant as an indicator of association with Islam. As the purpose of the '*jinni*' was to take the life of its victims, it is also associated with death. Obare escapes death through, what he later

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[69] Ishmael could be either a Christian or a Muslim name, though in the context he seems to be referring to an Ishmael from Mombasa, and thus probably Muslim.
[70] Josephat Obare, "Crime does not Pay," *The Dove Harvest*, June/July 2008.
[71] Ibid., 9.

understands to be the intervention of God (understood as Christianity's God), thus associating Christian faith with life. There is again the contrast between Islam and Christianity that has been seen earlier in which Islam is linked with life-denying forces and Christianity with life-giving ones.[72] Additionally, here is an instance of Islam being associated with a mystical, spiritual evil.

7.3.4 Story of John Omino

Another fascinating, though fictional, conversion narrative is told by John Omino[73] in a booklet titled, *Satanism: How the Devil Is Trapping God's People*, which can be found reprinted in *Devil Worship in Kenya: The Untold Story*.[74] In this narrative Omino becomes trapped working for an international Satanic organisation in which he becomes wealthy through the procurement and sale of human body parts for use in witchcraft rituals. Later through his mother's Neo-Pentecostal church he converts to Christianity and is delivered of evil spirits.

Blunt analyses this story in relation to the economic and political crises that Kenya was experiencing in the late 1990s.[75] Only ways in which the narrative speaks about Islam will be discussed. Omino first becomes involved when he finds work as a driver for a wealthy Cameroonian businessman, named Ali. His employer leads Omino into the dark world of kidnapping and dismembering human beings and selling the body parts.[76] It is significant that the man who leads him into Satanism has a Muslim name. Blunt comments on the presence of a Muslim in the narrative, and it is appropriate to cite his analysis in full.

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[72] See the above narratives of Muhando, Wanjiru and Mwangi for other examples.

[73] Omino is the fictional character who undergoes the conversion.

[74] *Devil Worship in Kenya: The Untold Story*, (Nairobi: Pawak Computer Services, 2000).

[75] Robert Blunt, "Satan is an Imitator: Kenya's Recent Cosmology of Corruption," in *Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age*, ed. Brad Weiss, Studies on Religion in Africa (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[76] *Devil Worship in Kenya*, 30.

Despite East Africa's long, often peaceful history with Islam, Ali's Muslim name connects his illicit wealth with what Kenyans, especially after the 1998 US embassy bombings, began to perceive as a 'foreign' religion with supposedly violent tendencies. Islam is implicated in the same transnational world of subterranean commerce that western NGO's are. But, such depictions also convey much older associations between the Arab world and the commodification of human life under the Omani control of the East African slave trade. Ali confirms this sentiment even more because his 'work' takes place during 'the night,' the inversion of the Kenyan notion of honest business, which is done 'in the light of day, *bila magendo*' (without deception or corruption) i.e. not hidden, a dishonesty often attributed to coastal Muslims who allegedly conceal their economic exploitation through the use of spirit familiars known as *majini*.[77]

Blunt correctly indicates the several associations that arise from the simple use of a Muslim character in the narrative to introduce Omino into Satanism. Violence, slavery and corruption are subtly associated with Islam, which is generally understood to be a foreign religion. His employer, Ali, is a foreigner and the commerce in body parts takes on international dimensions, so that local 'Kenyan Islam' is less implicated in this trade. The East African slave trade and even the supposedly dishonest coastal Muslims are often represented as Arabs and foreigners in Kenyan discourse, as was seen in chapter four. Later in the story Omino must spend time in the coastal towns of Malindi and Mombasa so that he may learn more about Satanic practices and become more deeply involved in the organisation.[78] It is only on the Muslim coast where one can truly become an expert in the ways of Satanism. Training in Malindi and Mombasa, two centres of the East African slave trade, further elicits connections between the Arab slave trade and the contemporary seeking of wealth through evil mystical power.[79] For most Neo-Pentecostals, who are the primary

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[77] Blunt, "Satan is an Imitator," 306.

[78] *Devil Worship in Kenya*, 31-32.

[79] On the streets of Nairobi, it is not unusual to see handwritten signs posted to trees or utility poles that advertise the services of a *mganga* (healer), or a *daktari ya kienyeji* (traditional doctor), who will cure infertility, and help one to find employment, a spouse, etc. In most cases, the name on the advertisement is a Muslim name. After some inquiries, it was learned that not all *waganga* (plural of *mganga*) are Muslims, but in the popular imagination Muslims have more mystical power for such

targets of these publications, the association of Islam with mystical power and possibly with satanic practices is especially relevant. Islam then becomes a rival and opposite spiritual power whose exploitation is considered illicit and dangerous.

As McIntosh has proposed in her study of the Giriama in Malindi, many Africans "acknowledge the mystical potency (the ontological reality) of more than one set of religious or cosmological forces,"[80] which she calls "polyontologism." An individual may seek prosperity through a variety of religious and spiritual means. Omino's story also reflects this world view, and it serves as a warning to readers to be cautious of seeking spiritual blessing through Islam, which is associated with witchcraft in his story, witchcraft being the ultimate signifier of evil in African cosmological symbolism.

7.3.5   Testimony of Margaret Wanjiru

Margaret Wanjiru, a popular Neo-Pentecostal Bishop,[81] wrote of her conversion from involvement in witchcraft, which had brought her wealth, in *Wiles of the Devil*.[82] Islam is only directly mentioned once in the book, where she writes in all capitals, "Do not use items with the dragon and do not use items with the mosque,"[83] as warnings to avoid spiritually destructive objects, which are supposedly infused with demonic spirits. There are also several cryptic references to the "queen of the coast,"[84] who is an especially powerful demonic spirit that she was familiar with in her former use of witchcraft. While Islam is never mentioned in reference to this spirit, the association of the coast with Islam in the minds of most Kenyans

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things, which are generally understood to be forbidden for Christians. Such mystical power is not necessarily perceived to be evil, though Pentecostals would understand it to be evil.

[80] McIntosh, *The Edge of Islam*, 189.

[81] Wanjiru is the founder/Bishop/pastor of Jesus is Alive Ministries in Nairobi. She was also an MP. See her website at http://www.jiam.org/.

[82] Margaret Wanjiru, *The Wiles of the Devil* (Nairobi: Zirock Enterprises, nd).

[83] Ibid., 79.

[84] Ibid., 35, 56, 72, 78, 91.

raises the possibility that readers might make this connection, thus linking Islam with dangerous spiritual forces.

7.3.6 Conclusion

In the above conversion narratives moral transformations play a much more significant role than in the conversion from Islam narratives. The association of the protagonist with Muslims often intensifies involvement with sinful practices. Islam is portrayed as a potential spiritual and mystical danger to the central character in each narrative, where it serves as a warning to readers who might be tempted by Islam. Overcoming obstacles remains the principle theme of the narratives, and Islam is viewed as an obstacle to overcome, either as a spiritually demonic trap, as a temptation to conversion, or with Muslims as illicit business partners. While Christianity is portrayed as powerful, Islam is not benign; it also has spiritual power. However, accessing and manipulating this power is understood to be similar to witchcraft, involving demonic forces and proving mystically dangerous to those implicated.

Horton[85] has argued that conversion from African Religion to Islam, or to Christianity, has been motivated by the rapid changes that have been occurring in Africa over the past few centuries as Africans have encountered other cultures. The changes have necessitated movement from religions that dealt with 'microcosmic' issues to the 'macrocosmic' religions of Islam and Christianity. In other words Islam and Christianity offer means to break with the past and to become modern.[86] However, the above conversion narratives identify Islam with

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[85] He has argued this in a series of articles. Robin Horton, "African Conversion," *Africa* 41, no. 2 (1971); Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part 1."; Horton, "On the Rationality of Conversion, Part 2."

[86] Maxwell argues this point for urban Pentecostals in Zimbabwe. Maxwell, "Delivered from the Spirit of Poverty?."

the microcosmic spiritual world of the African "ontological past."[87] Islam is represented as spiritually impotent, possibly evil (i.e. witchcraft) and backwards.

7.4 Islam as a Spiritual Enemy

There are also a few articles that speak more specifically of Islam as a rival spiritual power. Christians are understood to possess more power through the Holy Spirit, but they are warned to be careful of rival spiritual powers.

7.4.1 Satanic Priesthoods

The association of Islam with dangerous spiritual power is further seen in an article by James Kitavi, *Satanic Priesthood in our Localities and Tribes*,[88] in *Mercy Missions*.[89] The article is intended as a teaching document for church members who are involved in evangelism and missions. The idea of a satanic priesthood is related to the concepts of spiritual warfare and spiritual mapping promoted by C. Peter Wagner[90] and others,[91] in which it is understood that spiritual forces of evil control certain geographic regions.[92] The solution is to 'map' these forces and their supposed origins,[93] then to act against them by praying special 'warfare prayers'[94] and through prophetic actions known as power encounters.[95] Kitavi's terminology of "satanic priesthood" seems to be his own, though many of his ideas

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[87] The term, ontological past, comes from Bediako, *Theology and Identity*, 4.

[88] James Kitavi, "Satanic Priesthoods in our Localities and Tribes," *Mercy Missions*, August - October 2008.

[89] Mercy Missions is the magazine of the Chrisco Church in Kenya. They have churches in several African countries, and Mercy Missions represents only the Kenyan branch.

[90] See for example *Engaging the Enemy* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1991.), *Breaking Strongholds in Your City* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993.), and *Confronting the Powers* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996.)

[91] Others include John Dawson, Cindy Jacobs, George Otis and Ed Silvoso

[92] René Holvast, "Spiritual Mapping: The Turbulent Career of a Contested American Missionary Paradigm, 1989-2005" (Doctoral Thesis, Universiteit Utrecht, 2008), 1.

[93] Ibid., 2.

[94] Ibid., 89.

[95] Ibid., 105, 121.

are similar to those typical of the spiritual mapping movement.[96] There are only two direct

mentions of Islam, but these are of interest because of their very direct accusations linking

Islam with the demonic. The main interest of the author is combating African Religion.

Most of the article consists of instructions on how to identify a "Satanic priesthood" in

one's neighbourhood or village. He writes:

> … to identify Satanic priesthoods as you do spiritual mapping, through observation, look out for places of worship such as temples, mosques, churches that do not preach salvation through Jesus Christ, or that pray with the rosary. We see some of these as we enter towns, for example, in northern Kenya.[97]

Temples refer to Hindu temples built by the Indian community in Kenya. "Churches

that do not preach salvation through Jesus Christ" most likely denote mainline Protestant

churches, which the author probably considers to be too interested in social issues. Churches

that "pray with the rosary" signify the Roman Catholic Church, whose members most Kenyan

Neo-Pentecostals consider to be 'unsaved.' Later in the article African Religion is especially

targeted as contributing to the formation of "satanic priesthoods." These religious

communities, including Christian ones that the author (and presumably his church

denomination) does not approve of are joined by Islam, represented by "mosque." Islam is

further singled out, when Kitavi mentions seeing satanic priesthoods upon entering towns in

northern Kenya, which has a large Muslim population. Each of these religious groups is

understood to operate as a priesthood for Satan (i.e. interfering with the growth of what the

author perceives to be the true Christian church in the vicinity). Simply being near one of

these places, such as a mosque, one may "feel a satanic presence,"[98] according to Kitavi. It is

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[96] Kalu maintains that when African Pentecostals utilize spiritual warfare they remain within "the African maps of the universe." Though some of the terminology comes from Western sources, it connects with the African view of the world. Kalu, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Reshaping," 104.
[97] Kitavi, "Satanic Priesthoods," 8.
[98] Ibid.

unclear if Hindus, Muslims and Catholics are understood to be aware of their rather devious role.

Later he comments, "Recently in a local newspaper, an article on '*majini* [99] (demonic spirits)' said that Muslims believe there are both 'good' and bad *majini*. What good can come out of demons?"[100] In providing an English translation for *majini*, he deviates from the most basic meaning that the word signifies for Swahili speakers, spirits,[101] by adding the negative descriptor 'demonic.' Also, Muslims do not believe in good and bad demons, but the standard belief is that some jinn are Muslims, therefore obedient to Allah and thus good, while others are not.[102] Jinn are understood to be supernatural beings that were created from fire, rather than earth or light as humans and angels were respectively created from,[103] but the jinn are not understood to be identical to demons. Kitavi distorts the beliefs of Muslims, by implying that they believe that some "demons" are good. It is difficult to know if he intentionally misleads his readers, or if it results from a combination of a lack of knowledge of Islam and his own Pentecostal theology of *majini*, which views all traditional spirits to be demonic.[104] These statements also associate Islam quite closely with *majini*, suggesting that Muslims are not centred in the worship of God but in dealing with spirits. This suggestion, that Muslims deal primarily with spirits, would align Islam with many understandings of African Religion; in this way it portrays Islam as an unacceptable religious alternative to those seeking modern religious solutions.

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[99] *Majini* is the Swahili plural for *jini*, or *jinn* in Arabic. *Pepo* (pl. *mapepo*) is the Swahili word that is usually used to designate evil spirits.

[100] Kitavi, "Satanic Priesthoods," 10.

[101] See the entrance for *jini* in *Kamusi ya Kiswahili-Kiingereza*, TUKI.

[102] *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), s.v. "Angels."

[103] Abu Baker Jaber Ben Al-Jaza'iri, *The Methodology of the Muslim*, trans., F.Amira Zrein Matraji (Beiruit: Dar El Fikr, 1994), 25.

[104] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 65.

To summarise, Kitavi views mosques to accommodate satanic priesthoods, Muslims to consider demons good, and for Muslims to be especially interested in spirits. Though only a few sentences speak of Islam, they strongly connect it to evil spiritual power in much the same way that Neo-Pentecostals associate African Religion with demonic power. Kalu argues that Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on spiritual power, speaks to the "African primal worldview," strengthening its understanding of mystical-spiritual causation, but offering answers through Christian faith and power.[105] In this vein, resistance to the church and to evangelism are understood as mystical-spiritual resistance engendered by opposing religious ritual. It needs to be reemphasized that Islam is not the sole religion treated as spiritually evil. Improper forms of Christianity (mainline churches and Catholicism), and more importantly the author's and the readers' own African religious heritage is described as demonic. Potentially, Kenyan readers of the article find parents and families accused of participating in satanic priesthoods when they perform traditional practices or attend non-Pentecostal churches. For the typical Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal reader, identifying Islam with a satanic priesthood may to a certain extent identify Islam with their own African religious heritage. It is thus likely that the strong connections said to be present between the demonic and Islam may be understood less antagonistically within the Kenyan context than in a Western perspective. This also communicates to those looking to move beyond the old ways towards modernity that Islam remains in the past; this may be the more significant aspect.

Yet one should take note of Geib's warning that a potential abuse of the Spiritual Mapping movement is "holistic social demonizing."[106] Kalu is also critical of the "Nigerian Pentecostal rhetoric" in the "demonization of Islam" that has worsened relations between the

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[105] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 178-182.

[106] John Geib, "An Examination of the Spiritual Mapping Paradigm for Congruence with Biblical Orthodoxy and Ethnography" (Doctoral Thesis, Oxford Graduate School, 1997), 280.

two religious communities and "hindered conflict transformation" in that nation.[107] Most

likely, the Kenyan Muslim community does not appreciate being associated with satanic

priesthoods and demons.

7.4.2 Godly Altars

Kitavi writes another article, *Building a Godly Community Altar*, with similar themes.

A community altar[108] is defined as "a place where people from different churches,

communities, tribes, etc. come together to worship God."[109] People of other religions are

welcome if they "lay their gods aside and worship Jesus."[110] He uses the example of inter-

faith meetings in Uhuru Park,[111] where leaders of different religions pray for Kenya. He

characterises these as "defiled altars" and "idolatry"[112] in which the worship of false gods is

intermingled with the worship of the one true God.[113]

He later writes:

> We must not forget that altars are used to possess the land, and if we do
> not raise altars for God, satanic altars will be raised on our land. Not that they
> are not there already as many altars of different religions litter our cities and
> towns, while tribal altars litter our villages and urban areas too. But if we raise
> Godly community altars, the satanic altars are weakened and phased out
> because He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. So-called
> humanitarian clubs in our communities, free masons, mosques, etc are not
> godly altars. Allah acknowledges that the Creator of heaven and earth is God.
> How is he a god then? He is not.[114]

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[107] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 240-241.

[108] Mbiti notes that building an altar near a homestead is common in certain ethnic groups among adherents of African Religion. Therefore, Kitavi is following an African model. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa*, 396.

[109] James Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," *Mercy Missions*, May - July 2009, 8.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Uruhu Park is a large park near downtown Nairobi where large political and religious gatherings are often held.

[112] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 8.

[113] Gavin D'Costa is also cautious about interreligious prayer, using the metaphor of marital infidelity, though he also finds ways to be open to it. Gavin D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 145.

[114] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 10.

Some key components of Kitavi's implicit theology appear in this paragraph. There is an underlying political theology shown in the phrase, "to possess the land," which Kalu has demonstrated to be an important theme in African Pentecostal political theology.[115] The political contest over the land is spiritualised through the physical act of raising competing altars.[116] The hostility is stark, between godly altars and satanic altars. Further clarification is given; satanic altars are the centres of worship of non-Christian religions. The strategy to gain possession of the land seems to involve starting churches (NPCs) and prayer groups in neighbourhoods and locations where non-Christian religion predominates. The contestation is understood to be primarily spiritual, assuming that the presence of true, praying Christians will cause other religious institutions to gradually weaken and disappear. Prayer is the key political act.

By saying that these non-Christian religious institutions "litter our cities and towns," they are also characterised as trash. No respect is shown for other faiths. In the last few sentences Kitavi clearly indicates that he includes Islam among the competing religions that are raising satanic altars. His argument that Allah cannot be God shows a distinct lack of understanding. He may be arguing that Allah is a minor spiritual being, such as those Mbiti calls 'divinities.'[117]

Returning to the implicit Pentecostal political theology, Kitavi does not demonstrate interest so much for the allegiance of the soul, but for the possession of the land, which ultimately represents the nation. The enemies, against whom Pentecostals are contesting for

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[115] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 215.
[116] Kalu points out that building altars is a commonly used metaphor within the larger Pentecostal political theology of the land.
[117] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 163.

political dominance, are African Religion, Hindus, mainline churches[118] and Islam. As Kalu

points out, African Pentecostals view this as delivering "the land from the hostile

occupiers."[119]

There is, however, also a hint of welcome in the text. Kitavi recommends that people

of any religion be welcomed to participate, albeit with the caveat that they leave their gods at

the door and worship Jesus. Respect for the African (and biblical) notion of hospitality among

neighbours is in tension with desire for religious purity. In this instance the desire for

religious purity prevails, but it could be asked if hospitality might triumph under a different,

less religiously oriented scenario.

7.4.3   David Owuor and Wilfred Lai

In 2009 a report on the viewpoints of two major Neo-Pentecostal leaders concerning

the Inter-Religious Forum (IRF) in Kenya was published in *The Shepherd*,[120] the newspaper

of the Deliverance Church, which is one of the largest Neo-Pentecostal denominations in

Kenya. The two Neo-Pentecostal leaders, Wilfred Lai[121] and David Owuor,[122] are critical of

Christian leaders who have joined the IRF. Lai is quoted as follows:

> These days, we have these associations intended to bring people of
> faith together to work for a particular cause. I am telling you, that is the highest
> level of deception. … I respect every religion. I respect Muslims and Hindus.
> But I don't agree with their faith. How can two walk together unless they
> agree? … We don't believe in the same God. And it is not true that we are all
> going to heaven using different roads – religions. If we join our hands with

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[118] Mainline churches would provide the Christian participants in interfaith gatherings mentioned earlier.

[119] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 215.

[120] Francis Ayieko, "Don't Mix with Them, Interfaith Bishops Told," *The Shepherd*, April 2009.

[121] Lai is the pastor of a very large Redeemed Gospel Church, Jesus Celebration Center, in Mombasa. He also has regular television broadcasts on Kenyan television. See also http://www.jccmombasa.org/.

[122] Owuor, who has a PhD in molecular genetics, is a controversial figure in Kenya. He considers himself to be a prophet. His messages can be found at http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/.

Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Hare Krishna, we are not speaking the truth.[123]

In Lai's thinking there is a multiplicity of gods, and each religion is centred on its own god. The Christian God is understood to be the true God, while others are viewed as false gods or lesser gods. This is made clear when he states that those of other religions "are not going to heaven," and therefore, in his theology they must be condemned to hell. For him this prevents Christians from working together with Muslims.

Owuor asks:

> How could the so-called chief spiritual leaders of this land have paraded themselves at KICC[124] together with priests of the idol eastern gods and purport to be speaking to Jehovah to come and heal this country?[125] Tell me, how blind does it get? How can the bishops even parade themselves on national television and radio, agreeing with the other idol eastern gods to be equal to Jehovah?[126]

The "idol eastern gods" is the terminology by which Owuor combines together Allah and the Hindu deities.[127] Similar to Lai, Owuor imagines a spiritual world of many gods in which the Christian God is the true God. Both men view Allah (as well as other gods) as spiritual rivals to the Christian God, implying that there are various spiritual power centres as suggested by McIntosh.[128] However, different from previous examples, Lai and Owuor also include a significant truth claim regarding the Christian God, rather than relying only on a claim of superior power.

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[123] Ayieko, "Don't Mix with Them, Interfaith Bishops Told," 3.

[124] Kenyatta International Conference Centre.

[125] He alludes to Jeremiah 7:9-10.

[126] Ayieko, "Don't Mix with Them, Interfaith Bishops Told," 3.

[127] The use of this, and similar, terminology can be found in several of his prophecies found at http://www.repentandpreparetheway.org/.

[128] McIntosh, *The Edge of Islam*, 189-190.

7.4.4 Teresia Wairimu

In *Revival Springs* in 2001 Teresia Wairimu, a popular Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal preacher, tells a story of her Indian neighbour, whose daughter "is possessed by demon spirits."[129] Wairimu says, "I don't care if they are Hindus, Muslims, or what they are, but the moment I walk to their gate and say, 'I have come to set your daughter free in the Name of Jesus,' the devil will have to go."[130] She wishes to demonstrate that Christianity has more power than Islam (or other religions).

7.4.5 Conclusion

Islam is viewed as spiritually other. It can be understood to be idolatrous, demonic, or simply false. Christian faith is not generally contrasted with Islam in a relationship of truth, but one of power. Christians, preaching, prayer, the gospel, and Godly altars are understood to have more power than Islam, therefore rendering its dangerous spiritual otherness ineffective. African Religion is understood to be the principle religious opposition; conversion to Christianity is seen to give the convert power over spirits. Islam, then, relates to Christianity in ways similar to African Religion; it is perceived as spiritually impotent and backwards.

7.5 Islam as a Political Issue

Islam is also discussed as a political issue in some articles.

7.5.1 Wanjiru on *Kadhi* Courts

Margaret Wanjiru was interviewed in *Revival Springs*[131] in 2002 about concerns over the proposed draft constitution.[132] When asked how she first became interested in the draft constitution, she responded that the "Lord spoke to" her on the eve of her ordination, saying

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[129] Teresia Wairimu, "Expand Your Horizons," *Revival Springs*, April 2001, 13.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Michael Wambugu and Margaret Wanjiru, "The Time is Now," *Revival Springs*, December 2002.
[132] The draft constitution that is discussed was defeated and is not the current constitution of Kenya newly passed in 2010.

"the enemy has slipped into our nation."[133] He also said that she "should pray prophetically concerning the destiny of our country."[134]

Satan is the enemy that she speaks of, demonstrating again the firm belief in spiritual causality. There are three issues with the draft constitution that Wanjiru finds troubling: equality for gays, legalised abortion, and special consideration for Islam concerning *kadhi* courts.[135]

Wanjiru is asked if it is true that the Christian community has not presented its views to the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC). She answers:

> It is not true. Christians came out and presented their views. However, we should realize that whereas Christians were possibly not very articulate in their presentations, the Muslims on the other hand made very well-prepared presentations, because they knew what they were doing. They sent scholars to make the presentations. We need to understand that what is happening here is part of a well-orchestrated drive to Islamize Africa. And they know they can achieve that, if they get entrenched in the constitutions of the African states.[136]

There is a veiled reference to the Abuja Declaration, where she speaks of a "well-orchestrated drive to Islamize Africa." It is probable that the Muslim community was well-prepared because the issue is important to their community; however, Wanjiru is only able to interpret their preparation as a sign of a larger conspiracy. Wanjiru, and other similar Kenyan Christians, see religio-political issues related to Islam through a lens formed by self-contained isolation in a social "ghetto," where the "reality" of the situation is defined uniquely by other like-minded Christians, allowing no authentic input from the Muslim community.[137]

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[133] Wambugu and Wanjiru, "The Time is Now," 3.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid., 3-4.

[136] Ibid., 4.

[137] See the discussion in Magesa, *African Religion in the Dialogue Debate*, 176. Magesa is referring to ideological positions of isolation, hostility and competition proposed in David Lochhead, *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

She continues her response saying, "the battle for the constitution is a spiritual battle,"[138] because the nature of the new constitution will determine the future of the nation, "spiritually and physically."[139] The debate over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution is perceived to be more than a political issue. The stakes are the future of the nation, which is thematically similar to what was seen in the previous chapter by writers such as Maina[140] and Mugambi,[141] though the approaches are radically different. Maina and Mugambi understand Kenya's future progress to depend upon cooperation and unity between Muslims and Christians, whereas Wanjiru believes that it depends upon Muslims politically submitting to Christian leadership.

7.5.2 Isaac Kiragu on Political Issues

In late 2008 the Senior Pastor of Chrisco New Life Church in Nairobi, Isaac Kiragu, was interviewed in his church's magazine, *Mercy Mission*, for an article, *Vision 2030 & God's Destiny for Kenya*.[142] It is not a true journalistic interview, as Kiragu is essentially the reporter's superior; the questions provide the opportunity for Kiragu to express his opinions on a series of Kenyan current affairs. A few questions, which are mostly political in nature, are directed at issues related to Islam in Kenya. In the first question the interviewer asks:

> Recently we have seen Kenya partnering with nations in the East and Middle East that were not previously traditional trade partners, some of which have rampant persecution of Christians and a hatred of Christianity. … would you say it is important for Kenya to be wise in selecting trade partners, keeping in mind God's vision for this nation? And can an ungodly nation introduce its ideologies and ungodly practices in a nation under the cover of economic investment?[143]

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[138] Wambugu and Wanjiru, "The Time is Now," 4.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Chapter 6.2.1.

[141] Chapter 6.3.7.

[142] Isaac Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," *Mercy Missions*, November-January 2009. The magazine, *Mercy Mission*, can be easily found among street vendors.

[143] Ibid., 3.

The interviewer expresses concern over the spiritual ramifications of trade relations with non-Christian nations. The reference to the Middle East indicates that some are Muslim nations, and the mention of "rampant persecution of Christians and a hatred of Christians" would also be understood by the interviewer to include these. These nations are not only understood to be non-Christian, but ungodly. The expressed concern is that "ungodly" ideologies and practices will enter Kenya. While these ideologies and practices are not specified, it seems that the beliefs and traditions of Islam are being indicted.

Kiragu begins his answer by deflecting the question towards the responsibility of the church,[144] which suggests that the question harbours the anxieties of those in his church, and he wishes to redirect their thoughts on the matter elsewhere. He mentions the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the mission of the church to "reach the nations with the Gospel."[145] Then he says, "God has chosen to use this nation for that purpose,"[146] so that by trading with "ungodly" nations an opportunity to fulfil this purpose is before them. He acknowledges that "they are hostile to Christianity," but that Kenyan Christians will have the occasion to do business in these nations and to "preach Christ" as they interact with people.[147] He has redirected the political aspects of the anxiety towards a concern for Christian evangelism in a way that should be reassuring for readers.

Then he warns of the possible "danger" in these new trade relationships:

> Yet the Church must be awake to the dangers of this, and not allow them to convert us instead of us converting them. If we are not awake, they could sell their gods to us, and this will result in more idolatry in this nation. We are supposed to dominate and not to be dominated over.[148]

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[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Ibid.

[147] Ibid., 4.

[148] Ibid.

The dangers, as seen by Kiragu, are for Christians to be converted to another religion (idolatry) and for Christians to be dominated. These dangers have personal, religious and political dimensions, which bring readers back to the anxieties of the original question. It is clear that from a personal religious viewpoint, conversion to Islam is deemed a possibility for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals by Kiragu. Since Kenya is developing trade relations with these nations, he uses the metaphor that they may "sell their gods" to Kenyans, which would worsen idolatry in Kenya in his view. Though he is likely attempting a clever wordplay, this metaphor implies that an attractive product (i.e. another religion) could be bought by Kenyan Christians. These two potential "dangers" suggest that Islam may be a viable option for Kenyan Christians, demonstrating that Islam is a true religious rival. The notion that Christians must "dominate" rather than be "dominated" makes political and social relations between Muslims and Christians in Kenya difficult, eliminating the possibility of compromise.

Kiragu is later asked about "spiritual insights" that he has concerning the constitutional review process. His response subtly alludes to the controversy over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts. He says that legislators must "create a conducive atmosphere for the gods to fight for themselves (ref. Judges 6:31-32)."[149] The passage from Judges concerns Gideon who has destroyed an altar to Baal. The people wish to kill him, but they are told to allow Baal to defend himself. The implication, of course, is that Baal is a false god and unable to act. Kiragu is similarly imagining the god of Islam to be a false god,[150] and therefore of little threat. He admonishes Christians to "obey the Lord's command and preach the Gospel.

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[149] Ibid., 7.

[150] While it seems certain that Kiragu would think similarly about any religion, the context of the constitutional review process suggests that Islam is in mind.

He will do the rest."[151] The inference is that the Christian God, being the true god, will be successful against the false god.

The interviewer then directly asks Kiragu about the *kadhi* courts as follows: "Do you see Kadhi courts as a leeway for Islamising this nation according to previously stated intentions by Muslim leaders in international conferences to Islamise sub-Saharan Africa?"[152] The question alludes to the Abuja Declaration from the Islam in African Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria in 1989.[153] The communiqué issued at the end of the conference, which became known as the Abuja Declaration, advocates a plan for *da'wa* in Africa.[154]

Kiragu agrees that having *kadhi* courts in the Kenyan constitution is part of a plan to Islamise Kenya; however, his answer is mostly irenic. He says:

> Muslims are 'evangelizing' the same way Christians are evangelizing. They are seeking followers through preaching Islam. What Christians should focus on is the Great Commission. If Christians preach to Muslims and they get saved, then what the Muslims are planning to do will not worry them. The problem is worrying without spreading the Gospel. Preach the Gospel and let the Word work on behalf of this nation. That's what we are called to do. Nevertheless, we should not create carnal barriers to the Gospel through such things as Kadhi courts.[155]

His statement is that Muslims are simply doing the same thing that Christians are doing. Both are preaching their religion and trying to gain converts. His words must be very disarming for the typical Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal reader. Kiragu expresses tremendous confidence in the Gospel; if both Muslims and Christians are preaching their message,

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[151] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Nura Alkali, ed. *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books, 1993).

[154] Two versions of the Abuja Declaration are in circulation. One entails a much more militant Islamic approach. It isn't clear which version of the declaration is being discussed here. A discussion of this declaration can be found in John A. Chesworth, "Challenges to the next Christendom: Islam in Africa," in *Global Christianity: Contested Claims*, ed. Frans Wijsen and Robert Schreiter, (New York: Rodopi, 2007), 119-124. and Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 64-65.

[155] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.

Muslims will convert and Islamic *da'wa* will not be effective. Christianity is seen to be more spiritually powerful than Islam. He also illustrates common African Pentecostal political theology; the role of the church is to "preach the Word" and allow it to work for the nation. This is an expression of the deeply held belief in spiritual causality; events in the "physical realm" are determined by the "spiritual realm."[156] Preaching the Word is understood to effect change in the spiritual realm, which will bring about changes in the political situation.

The response to a political challenge does not, however, remain only spiritual. Kiragu's last statement – Kenyans "should not create carnal barriers to the Gospel through such things as Kadhi courts" – certainly indicates a concerted effort to keep the courts out of the constitution. Also, through the use of biblical language (i.e. "carnal barriers to the Gospel") he appears to advocate a political solution to meet a more ultimate spiritual goal.

Kiragu also answers a question concerning tribal altars and their effects on people. He attributes poverty and lack of economic development to the presence of inappropriate tribal altars. He uses what he considers to be an obvious example concerning why certain regions are poor saying, "We know the general reasons for places like the coast and north-eastern provinces."[157] Notably, the Coast Province and the North Eastern Province are the only provinces in Kenya which have a significant Muslim population or a Muslim majority.[158] Again, belief in spiritual causality is the basis of his assumption; since Islam is prevalent in the region, the spiritual realm is negatively affected resulting in poverty and misery. Significantly, Kiragu assumes this to be obvious, in no need of explanation. He finds the "tribal altars" of African Religion to be less obviously revealed, requiring investigation and

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[156] Paul Gifford, "Trajectories in African Christianty," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 8, no. 4 (2008): 280.

[157] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.

[158] Kenya Census 2009: Detailed Census Analysis, ed. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

research.[159] In this instance, while Islam and his readers' own (and his own) traditions are understood to have spiritually equal results in the world (i.e. poverty, misery, etc.) Islam is placed slightly lower as a more obvious evil.

7.5.3 Letter concerning Rights of Christians in a Muslim Area

Sheltel Righa, a pastor from Mombasa, appeals for more Christians in positions of governmental authority in a letter to the editor in *Revival Springs* in 2002.[160] His letter was precipitated by a specific experience described as follows: "Recently when we went to preach in a certain region, we were told; 'You have no permission to preach in this area,' although we had been given a permit."[161] He attributes this to the area being controlled by "evil-minded people," who "hinder the preaching of the Gospel."[162] Considering the local context of Mombasa, it is obvious that Righa wished to hold a "crusade"[163] in an area with a significant Muslim presence and authority, which also leads him to claim that Christians are "denied our rights" in certain parts of the nation.[164] Relying upon the biblical stories of Nehemiah and Esther, he proposes that Christians should gain more political power through the electoral system, stating that prayer is not enough.[165] While not denying spiritual causality, he finds its effects limited, and therefore resorts to a call for political action.

Righa advocates Christian political involvement in order to advance the spread of Christianity and in his particular case in a traditionally Muslim environment. A personal component is also likely, since a successful crusade evangelist gains status in the Christian

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[159] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.

[160] Sheltel Righa, "Let's Clean the Politics," *Revival Springs*, May 2002.

[161] Ibid., 2.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Righa does use the word, crusade, elsewhere in the letter.

[164] Righa, "Let's Clean the Politics."

[165] Ibid.

community,[166] and he is being prevented from holding these meetings. He seems to have little concern with establishing good interreligious relations with the Muslim community, deeming its political leaders, "evil-minded" and perceiving himself and his community to be oppressed, having their rights denied. His reference to Esther "delivering the Jews from danger"[167] indicates that he wishes to portray his situation as one of persecution.

7.5.4 Religious Commentary on the National Anthem

Catherine Muriithi wrote *Kenya Arise* in 2007 as a commentary on the national anthem and a call to unity in Kenya. As a call to unity she attempts to be inclusive, writing of racial, ethnic, language and economic differences that must be overcome, though ignoring religious differences. Throughout the book, Muriithi quotes scripture and uses biblical language to comment on the anthem, which is written as a prayer to "the God of all creation."[168] There are, however, a few pages of graphics which include Islam. On one page, there are 12 small photographs of individual Kenyans, one of whom is obviously a Muslim.[169] Elsewhere, the word, thank you, is written in 18 different Kenyan languages, of which Somali and Arabic are included.[170] Both of these languages would be considered Islamic in this context. These are the only signs of fully including Muslims into the unity that is being called for.

Her goal is most clearly shown as she writes, "It is not political theology that will drive Kenya. It is a common vision that the people pursue, a common creed irrespective of differences in ethnicity, occupation, education, skill, talent, and so on."[171] Considering the

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[166] Zacharia W. Samita, *Christian Crusades in Nairobi: An Analysis of Socio-Religious Factors* (Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 1998). http://www.ossrea.net/publications/series/toc-no9.htm .

[167] Righa, "Let's Clean the Politics," 2.

[168] The lyrics in English and Swahili can be found on several travel-oriented websites.

[169] A Muslim woman is wearing a traditional headscarf. Muriithi, *Kenya Arise*, 150.

[170] Ibid., 219-220.

[171] Ibid., 153.

Christian perspective of the writer, the "common creed" that she believes "will drive Kenya" towards unity and prosperity is obviously a Christian one. While Muriithi doesn't seem to hold any malice towards Islam, Muslims are basically ignored as she mounts an appeal towards a religious-based unity of Kenya.[172]

7.5.5 Conclusion

It can be seen that (Neo)Pentecostals find it difficult to relate politically with Muslims. In some cases, Muslims are viewed seemingly as political enemies, such as Wanjiru's accusations against Muslims concerning the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution. While at other times a more irenic approach is sought; for example, Muriithi's attempts to include Muslims through the illustrations in her book, which ultimately fails as all of the writers have Christian-oriented political agendas.

A naïve theocratic vision seems present in these articles. Kiragu says that Christians must dominate, and Righa urges for Christian political control along the Muslim coast. Muriithi's idyllic interpretation of the national anthem also lends itself to theocratic ideals in which Christianity sets the agenda of the state. The theocratic vision remains naïve, because there is no concrete theocratic agenda, nor even a realisation or acknowledgement of such a vision. However, this vision is sharp enough to render political dealings with the Muslim community difficult at best.

7.6 Polemics

Polemics seems to be a rather uncommon Kenyan approach to Islam in the Kenyan context. One article was found that describes a seminar in which a polemical approach to Islam was taught, seemingly as an evangelistic method.

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[172] It should be noted that unity built upon a common religion, or spiritual belief, is an important component of African Religion.

In a 2009 issue of *Mercy Mission* there is a report on the missions programs of Chrisco

New Life Church in Nairobi, which includes an account of the training of teams for Muslim

evangelism.[173] One of the teachers who taught the teams is identified as Evangelist John

Asige. He is quoted as follows:

> Nairobi has been invaded by Islam from all the four gates. The heart of
> the town has been invaded and bought too. Not to mention Eastleigh.[174]
> Christians have been in their comfort zones, but they are now realizing what is
> happening. If we don't wake up and not only pray, but also evangelize, it will
> be very difficult in future to preach the Gospel. Unless we act now, it may take
> people's lives to take back what we've lost. Islam is using technology,
> craftiness, anything it can use, to spread the religion. People have testified how
> they were being offered money in order to join Islam; some Shs 70,000, others
> Shs 40,000,[175] etc. This is in a bid to increase the numbers of Muslims in case
> Sharia law, which can be effected because of numbers, can be applicable in
> future. It is a trick of the enemy. In this hard economic times, some people are
> falling victim to this. While the church is busy preaching prosperity gospel,
> Muslims are busy 'buying' people into Islam. The government is also
> embracing Islam in the name of wooing investors to the country.[176]

The intention of Asige's words is to motivate members of Chrisco Church's

evangelistic teams to evangelise Muslims, seemingly through the use of fear. Images from

economics (bought, buying people, investors, offered money to convert), war (invaded, take

people's lives to take back what we've lost, enemy) and deception (craftiness, trick) are used

to describe the apparent growth of Islam in Nairobi. Current happenings in Nairobi are

alluded to in the paragraph.

First, since the dissolution of Somalia, many Somali businessmen have invested

heavily in the Eastleigh section of Nairobi. This area of Nairobi now has many multi-story

buildings, hotels, shopping centres and banks, becoming a rival business centre to downtown

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[173] "Evangelistic Resource Center: Ikalaasa Crusade, Kitui," *Mercy Missions*, May - July 2009.

[174] Eastleigh is a section of Nairobi with a large Somali population.

[175] At the time that the magazine was published the exchange rate was approximately 75 Ksh = 1$.
The sums mentioned would then be $500 to $1000, which could amount to nearly a year's salary for
some lower echelon jobs.

[176] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

Nairobi. Many computer and technology shops in downtown Nairobi are also owned by

Somali, Arab or South Asian Muslim businessmen. The supposed economic power of the

Muslim community seems to be envied (the church preaches prosperity gospel, while

Muslims do actual buying) and the perceived source of the growth of Islam. His viewpoint is

that if Islam has power, then Christians may convert to Islam.

This visible economic growth is portrayed as an Islamic invasion, which Asige links

with the *kadhi* court debate. The purpose of this invasion is to increase the number of

Muslims so that s*hari'a*[177] may be implemented. Invasion also implies that Muslims come

from outside Nairobi; they are foreigners. For now he recommends evangelism and prayer as

effective strategies to counter the invasion. Without evangelism the future appears to be

ominous, possibly requiring the sacrificing of lives. It is not clear if Asige envisions this as

possible Christian martyrdom or deaths incurred during a Holy War against Islam. Either

way, he paints a grim picture of a violent future in which Muslims may be in the majority.

The *kadhi* court debate remains at the forefront of this picture. In Asige's thinking, the *kadhi*

court provision in the constitution can be defeated or rendered null, if Pentecostals evangelise

Muslims.

He also accuses Muslims of buying converts, thus defusing Islam of any spiritual

power to attract converts from Christianity in any 'real' sense.[178] The convert can be said to

have been bought, to have sold out for money, rather than to have found an authentic spiritual

attraction in Islam. The assumed economic power of Islam would also be associated with

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[177] No important Muslim groups in Kenya are advocating the full implementation of *Shari'a* in Kenya, however many Christians opposed to the clause in the constitution concerning the *kadhi* courts refer to it as *Shari'a*.

[178] The issue of buying converts is not an uncommon accusation thrown about by both Christians and Muslims, though the actual practice is difficult, if not impossible, to verify or refute. I've personally heard this accusation many times from both Christians and Muslims.

either Somali immigrants or Arab oil money, implying that the alleged financially induced

conversions are a subtle form of national disloyalty as well.

"A team of teachers involved in Muslim evangelism"[179] is said to have taught the

following at the training centre. It is not clear who this team of teachers consists of, though

from the small pieces of teaching that are presented in the articles it appears that resources

provided by *Njia ya Uzima*[180] (Way of Life) were used, and it is probable that this Christian

ministry provided the teachers. One part of their ministry is to provide polemical resources in

English and Swahili on Islam. Light of Life Publishing of Villach, Austria produces much of

their material. The writer presents a few examples of the teaching, which may be assumed to

be those parts expected to hold the most interest for the readers of the magazine. The first

piece of teaching is presented as follows:

> The Quran teaches that every Muslim has to go through hell first, and
> only those whose works on earth were good will make it out of hell into a good
> place. They taught that Islam is founded on the spirit of deception. It denies the
> divinity of Christ, and when one approaches a Muslim to witness to him/her,
> one is preaching to someone who has already made up his/her mind to oppose
> God.[181]

Two main points are made in this paragraph. The first claims that the Qur'ān teaches

that all Muslims must go through hell before they can go to *jannah* (paradise). The second

claims that Islam is a deception. Both of these accusations are somewhat commonly used in

Christian polemical attacks against Islam.

The first polemical point, which comes from Sura 19:70-72, is used to show that Allah

(often understood in Christian polemical writing to be the Muslim god as opposed to the

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[179] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

[180] *Njia ya Uzima* is a Christian ministry focused on Islam linked to Call of Hope, based in Stuttgart, Germany. *Njia ya Uzima* was founded in Nairobi in 1987 by a German, Rudi Hofmeister. Its ministry consists of providing small books and tracts aimed at Muslim readers, or Christians evangelizing among Muslims (often very polemical) and operating seminars to train Church workers. Chesworth, "The Use of Scripture in Swahili Tracts", 192.

[181] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

Christian god) is not kind nor loving towards Muslims.[182] Some Muslim interpreters have

understand the passage to indicate that all people will indeed pass through hell at the Day of

Judgment.[183] Yusuf Ali offers two alternate interpretations in addition to the above. In one,

rather than all people passing through hell, a 'you' in the text is understood to refer only to the

wicked. In the second alternative, the passage is understood to refer to the "Bridge Ṣirāt,"

which passes over hell and "over which all must pass to their final Destiny."[184] In any case, it

is clear that the intentions of the team of teachers and the writer of the article were not to

understand Islam better and inform students and readers about Islam, but to communicate a

negative image of the Muslim concept of God.

The second polemical point, that Islam is a deception, is very common.[185] It follows

its own internal logic. First, it assumes the absolute truth of Christianity and its doctrines,

including the divinity of Christ. Since Islam teaches that Jesus was a prophet and not divine,

then according to the internal logic of the polemics Islam is in error, and by "denying" the

divinity of Christ Islam is therefore "deceiving" its followers.

The analogous claim that a Muslim has "made up his/her mind to oppose God," while

seemingly unreasonable, follows a similar logic. The Qur'ān contains verses that specifically

address certain Christian doctrines concerning Jesus and the Trinity.[186] According to this type

of polemical thinking "Islam has so redefined biblical teachings and concepts (such as

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[182] See the following websites for examples of the use of this polemical point: http://answering-islam.org/Shamoun/muslims_in_hell.htm, http://www.thespiritofislam.com/bible-quran/22-guarantee-of-eternal-life.html, and http://www.thestraightway.org/FAQ.asp.

[183] This interpretation can be found in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* and *Tafsīr Ibn 'Abbās*, for example.

[184] A. Yusuf Ali, *Commentary on the Holy Qur'ān* (Brentwood, MD: Amana Corp, 1983), 782. Footnote 2518 for Sura 19:71.

[185] See two book-length examples of this polemical logic. Abd-al-Masih, *The Great Deception: How Muhammad Tried to Win the Christians for Islam: A Critical Study of Sura al Imran 3:33-64* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, 1995); John W. Tharph, *The Quran: God's Word or Satan's Great Deception?* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, Inc., 2011).

[186] See, for example, the Qur'ān 4:171, 5:116, 19:34-35, 112.

heaven, Christ, and God) that it is impossible to find common ground."[187] Similarly, Abd-al-

Masih[188] who produces material for Light of Life (thus *Njia ya Uzima* also) writes, "Islam is a

post-Christian religion which has consciously dealt with Christ and has developed into an

anti-Christian power."[189] Muslims have therefore "become immune to the spirit of Christ."[190]

Abd-al-Masih adds that Sura 112 is a "compilation of" Islam's "revolt against God and his

anointed one."[191] Therefore, the difficulty of convincing a Muslim to convert to Christianity is

attributed to the deception of Islam and to the Muslim having previously made up his/her

mind to oppose God. The Kenyan Christian reader of this paragraph (and the Kenyan

Christian recipient of the teaching) would be influenced to perceive Muslims as unduly

stubborn and deceived by their own god, who is probably demonic.

Another example of the teaching is presented:

> There are confessions that one makes when becoming a Muslim and
> these become a powerful stronghold in their lives. Some Muslims have got
> saved but when they have tried to confess Christ as Lord, the confession of
> Islam comes out of their mouths instead. We've had to pray for them and break
> that stronghold so that they are able to confess Christ as Lord and saviour.[192]

The *shahada* is here considered to be a spiritual stronghold, which is defined as "a

place where the devil and his forces are entrenched"[193] by an early proponent of the spiritual

warfare movement. Abd-al-Masih writes that the *shahada* "cuts every Muslim off from Christ

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[187] Don Richardson, *The Secrets of the Koran: Revealing Insights Into Islam's Holy Bible* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2008). Cited in Richard Cimino, "No God in Common: American Evangelical Discourse on Islam after 9-11," *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 2 (2005).

[188] Abd-Al-Masih is the pseudonym of a German Christian polemicist, who writes on Islam. See http://isaacandishmael.blogspot.com/2008/03/gabriel-and-jibril-part-1.html (accessed on 3/5/12)

[189] Abd-al-Masih, *Why is it Difficult for a Muslim to Become a Christian* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, n.d.), 19.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Abd-al-Masih, *Islam Under the Looking Glass* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, n.d.), 33.

[192] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

[193] C. Peter Wagner, *Warfare Prayer: How to Seek God's Power and Protection in the Battle to Build His Kingdom* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 1992), 64.

and binds him to Allah as his slave."[194] The idea seems to be that by repeating the *shahada* innumerable times throughout one's life, a Muslim comes under the influence of a spirit that will not permit the convert to confess Jesus Christ as Lord (i.e. a Christian equivalent confession of faith). Instead, even upon attempting to say, "Jesus Christ is Lord," the convert says the *shahada*.[195] The only remedy for this situation is special prayer to break spiritual strongholds. The paragraph resembles a generalised conversion narrative, but rather than narrating a conversion from a sinful past[196] or recounting an intense spiritual experience,[197] it narrates the convert's lack of power to overcome the hold of Islam.

The article continues by quoting the teaching team, who say that "God loves Muslims" and even though many "Christians view them as violent," they should also "love them, deal with the spirits that bind them and preach the Gospel to them, that they might be saved."[198] This pattern – first, to present a negative and fearful picture of Islam, then to advocate love and evangelism of Muslims – seems to be the common pattern of Christian polemical works aimed at evangelising Muslims.[199]

Finally, the article says that Muslims have difficulty with Christianity because of the latter's "connection with the Jews."[200] Muhammad is said to have "cursed the Jews and Christians" just before his death, so that "a curse from God hangs on anyone who professes Islam."[201] Muhammad is reported to have cursed the Jews and Christians on his deathbed for

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[194] Abd-al-Masih, *The Occult in Islam* (Villach, Austria: Light of Life, n.d.), 37.

[195] In Abd-al-Masih's book there is a story of a convert who attempts to confess Christ as Lord, but instead repeats the *shahada* until he receives special prayers of deliverance. Ibid., 41.

[196] Staples and Mauss, "Conversion or Commitment."

[197] Luhrmann, "Metakinesis."

[198] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

[199] See, for example, Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, *Unveiling Islam: An Insider's Look at Muslim Life and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002). and Reza A. Safa, *Inside Islam: Exposing and Reaching the World of Islam* (Orlando, FL: Creation House, 1996).

[200] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

[201] Ibid.

having taken the "graves of their prophets as places of worship."[202] This hadith is used by some Christian polemicists to demonstrate Muhammad's 'negative' character;[203] however, it seems to be less common to conclude that Muslims are therefore cursed by God. From the viewpoint of African Pentecostals a curse would offer an explanation for why Muslims 'suffer' an inability to recognise the truth of the Gospel.[204] Though Western polemical sources are used, it would seem that they are used creatively from an African perspective. The alleged curse upon Muslims is reported so that the readers may know to pray to break the curse so that God might have "mercy and grace over them despite these."[205]

The polemical teaching reported in the article is strongly influenced by Western anti-Islam Christian polemics and Western Pentecostalism. Much of the polemics seem to be drawn from the writings of Abd-al-Masih indicating that *Njia ya Uzima* was most likely involved in the teaching, since the polemical material that it provides include several books by this author, and his works are primarily available through its ministry. If *Njia ya Uzima* led this seminar then Kenyans would have very likely been involved in the teaching,[206] which should then be seen as a Kenyan adaptation of Western polemical material. Additionally, the writer of the article selected examples of the teaching that appealed to Kenyan readers. In these brief snippets, Islam is portrayed as deceptive and demonic. Its followers are understood to be under the influence of curses and spirits opposed to God, which can make them both frightening and objects of sympathy. The polemics are designed to convince Christians of the need to evangelise Muslims, rather than for debate with Muslims.

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[202] Hadith Sahih Bukhari Vol. 7, Book 72, Number 726.

[203] See for example the polemic website, www.answering-islam.org.

[204] Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to 'Set the Captives Free'," 390.

[205] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.

[206] Chesworth, "The Use of Scripture in Swahili Tracts", 192. He notes that Hofmeister worked with a staff of several Kenyans from early in the ministry.

7.7   Islam as the Ideal Other

There are also several seemingly innocuous references to Islam that reveal a perception of Muslims as the embodiment of Otherness. The general purpose of these short statements are either to castigate Christians by comparing them unfavourably with Muslims, or to enhance the reputation of a Christian leader by saying that even Muslims recognise the leader's gift. A few examples will demonstrate this.

In an article from 2007 on disagreements among Christians over important national issues, Okumu writes in *The Shepherd*, "While Muslims have problems with some specific aspects of the Quran, Christians seem to differ on almost the entire Bible, leaving many ordinary Christians wondering who among the many voices and interpretations is representing the voice of God."[207] This sentence is part of his argument in criticising Christian leaders for voicing public disagreements, while each side uses the Bible to defend its position. His insinuation is that 'even' Muslims (the ultimate Other) are united; therefore, Christians should more so be united.

In a *Revival Springs* article from 2001 a Pentecostal revival in Nanyuki, Kenya is reported on. The reporter writes of several wonderful changes in Nanyuki because of the revival, and then adds, "Muslims are also turning to God for salvation."[208] This last sentence functions as more than mere reporting; it intends to say that this was more than an ordinary Pentecostal revival, because 'even' Muslims (those least likely) are affected.

Similarly, a 2007 article in *Arise Africa* promoted the arrival in Kenya of Nigerian evangelist William Kumuyi, who founded Deeper Life Church.[209] One of his key attributes that is mentioned in order to attract people to his evangelistic meetings was that his church

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[207] Paul Okumu, "OK dear bishops, do we go by the letter or Spirit?," *The Shepherd*, February-March 2007, 3.

[208] Daniel Munene Michanjo, "Nanyuki in Spiritual Uplift," *Revival Springs*, September 2001, 3.

[209] "Do you Want a Miracle?," *Arise Africa*. [2007].

has a large membership "in northern Nigeria which is pro-Islam."[210] The exceptionalness of Kumuyi is supposedly demonstrated by noting this last fact.

David Owuor frequently speaks of even Muslims converting to Christianity after witnessing miracles at his preaching events. A reporter for *Arise Africa* writing on one of Owuor's evangelistic meetings says, "The open-heaven event that took place at Kakamega, Bukhungu on June 25th, 2005, is one such event that would sweep away even a Muslim's heart to be caused to swiftly accept the Jesus of Nazareth without much delay."[211] In addition to showing the wonders of Owuor's miraculous gifts that "sweep away even a Muslim's heart," it can be seen that the Muslim Other is perceived as especially obstinate.

Maximum Miracle Times reported on the candidature for president of Neo-Pentecostal pastor, Pius Muiru in 2007. It reports as follows on the meeting in which he announced his candidature: "Among these were Muslim faithful who expressed unswerving support for Pst. Muiru."[212] To show that Muiru had a political appeal beyond the Neo-Pentecostal community, Muslims are used as the example, chosen as the most Other from Neo-Pentecostal Christians.

In 2006 Muchai wrote concerning a Nairobi city ordinance that limits outdoor noise in *God's Champion*. Many Christians, including Muchai, saw this as a means to limit the number of open-air preaching events that are frequently held in Nairobi. He calls the new law "persecution" of the church then says, "tell me what fee Muslims remit to our councils for the nuisance they cause the residents of any city particularly during every early morning."[213] Christians are portrayed as oppressed, while Muslims are represented as especially favoured by the city government.

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[210] Ibid., 2.

[211] "Raila's Historic Baptism: Analysing the Upshot," *Arise Africa.* 2009.

[212] "I am Going for the Top Job: Pastor Pius Muiru," *Maximum Miracle Times*, February 2007, 3. This magazine is sponsored by the church of which Muiru is pastor.

[213] J.N. Muchai, "Local Authorities: The Writing is on the Wall," *God's Champions*, November 2006 2006.

In Revival Spring in 2003 Wairimu is reported to have said the following at a crusade: "The Church is being fought. Just the other day, we saw on television churches being burnt to ashes.[214] … If Christians burn a mosque, we will have a riot in the country. But churches are being burnt and nobody is saying anything!"[215] Christians are again represented as victims, while Muslims are seen to be aggressors who will riot if offended.

In each of these examples Muslims are viewed as those who are of the greatest contrast with Christians, the ultimate Other. This viewpoint is considerably different from that of most Kenyan mainline scholars, who tend to view Christianity and Islam as Abrahamic religions with many similarities.

7.8   Conclusion

Much of the discussion is centred on issues of power, which can be understood as vital force. Conversion from Islam to Christianity is connected with healing and spiritual power. While Islam is viewed as an opposing, even demonic, spiritual power, Christianity is consistently understood to be more spiritually powerful. This can be manifested in prayers, building 'Godly altars,' sermons, revivals, etc. In some instances, Islam is associated with witchcraft (an African symbol of evil), lending it an illicit and dangerous dimension. This serves as warning to readers to be cautious of contact with Muslims. Islam, through being associated with spirits and witchcraft, is also portrayed as backwards rather than as a path to modernity. Christianity, on the other hand, is viewed as a means towards engagement with modern society and economy.

Political and economic power can also be evoked. Islam can be seen as a political rival, as in the constitutional debate over *kadhi* courts and also in the Pentecostal political

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[214] She is most likely referring to five churches in the Tana River district north of Mombasa that were burnt down by some Muslims in June 2003. See http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/11049.htm.
[215] Teresia Wairimu, "Put on the Full Armour of God," *Revival Springs*, August 2003.

theology concerning the land. Through a naïve theocratic vision, it is affirmed that

Christianity (i.e. its symbols, values, institutions, etc.) must remain supreme in the nation.

There is concern that if Islam has economic and/or political power, Christians may convert to

Islam. The worry over Islamic political power exposes an ambivalent Pentecostal attitude

towards Islam. On one hand, Islam is seen to be spiritually and mystically impotent in

comparison with Pentecostal Christianity, on the other hand, a small Muslim minority is

perceived to wield such political and economic power that it poses a serious challenge to the

much larger Christian community.

　　While the popular view of spiritual power sees it as a mystical power that can affect

material change in the world through healing, prosperity, etc., spiritual power can also be

understood as a form of symbolic power. Those who are understood to possess the mystical-

form of spiritual power accumulate spiritual capital.[216] There is then the possibility of

exchange with other forms of capital, such as economic capital and political capital. Examples

would be of well-known Neo-Pentecostal (and mainline) pastors pursuing political careers or

gaining economic wealth due to their position. This can also help explain the hidden

mechanism behind the naïve theocratic vision. Christianity in Kenya is understood to have

accumulated a sufficient amount of spiritual capital to transform some of it into political

capital (i.e. the theocratic vision). However, if spiritual capital can be converted into

economic and political capital, then the reverse must also be true. Therefore, when Islam

accumulates considerable economic capital and political capital, this may be transformed into

spiritual capital (increasing spiritual power) and thus enhance the likelihood that some

Christians may convert to Islam. Since spiritual power is understood popularly as a mystical

power effecting material change, the increased spiritual power – though having been gained

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[216] Spiritual capital could also be accumulated through other means, such as being an effective
religious leader, a good preacher, etc.

through converted economic and political capital – is understood mystically. Expressed popularly, one would say that the wealth and political power of Muslims demonstrates that they must have spiritual (i.e. mystical) power.

Islam as a religion is never seriously considered nor understood. It is often grouped with other non-Christian religions, such as Hinduism and African Religion, and with non-approved forms of Christianity, such as Catholicism and mainline Protestant churches. Together with these other religions it is then perceived to be an opposing spiritual power that impedes the growth of the true church. It could be said to be a part of the general religious background against which true (i.e. Pentecostal) Christianity must contend in its mission.[217]

Christians and Muslims are never understood to worship the same God. Allah, in fact, is often judged to be something less than a god, though it is not clear what that might be. He can be portrayed as a false god or as demonic. The two faiths are never seen to have commonalities. In fact, Islam is sometimes depicted as the ultimate Other to Christianity.

The conversion narratives offer two interesting perspectives that are not found in other genre. One, the Christian and Muslim communities are contrasted with the Christian community portrayed as more compassionate and moral, perhaps more fully demonstrating the African ideal of *ubuntu*.[218] These attributes of the Christian community are then presented as valid reasons for conversion. Two, while converts exhibit some change in their universe of discourse from a Muslim one to a Christian one, their primary universe of discourse remains profoundly African. The conversion from Islam to Christianity takes place according to criteria from an African religious world view, which confirms insights from Sanneh and Bediako.[219]

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[217] I owe this insight to Dr. David Thomas.
[218] See chapter 3.5 for more on *ubuntu*.
[219] See chapter 1.2.1.

The popular writers can be characterised as exclusivist in their approach towards Islam. Christian exclusivism is normally thought of as a theological position that believes that only Christians will achieve salvation. However, these Kenyan popular (Neo-Pentecostal) writers seem to wish to exclude Muslims theologically, socially and politically. It appears to be a rather harsh position that makes the peaceful relations between Muslims and Christians sought by mainline Kenyan scholars[220] difficult to achieve.

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[220] See chapter 6.

PART THREE

THEMES IN INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTER IN KENYA

CHAPTER 8

CONTESTING PUBLIC SPACES

This chapter will examine certain themes concerning the contestation of public space that arise from earlier historical chapters four and five, and chapters six and seven, which analysed the scholarly and popular Christian literature on Islam.

8.1   Nation-building

Since independence African governments have emphasized nation-building[1] in their political ideologies. African states have employed the educational system, the mass media,[2] a "reassertion of African culture,"[3] language policy[4] and African religious symbolism associated with "primary resistance movements"[5] to promote feelings of national identity.

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[1] See for example Ogoh Alubo, "Citizenship and Nation Making in Nigeria: New Challenges and Contestations," *Identity, Culture and Politics* 5, no. 1&2 (2004). Edward Miguel, "Tribe or Nation: Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya versus Tanzania," *World Politics* 56, no. (2004). Ali A. Mazrui, "Africa Between Nationalism and Nationhood: A Political Survey," *Journal of Black Studies* 13, no. 1 (1982).

[2] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 113.

[3] Peter G. Forster, "Culture, Nationalism, and the Invention of Tradition in Malawi," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no. 3 (1994): 478.

[4] Chege Githiora, "Kenya: Language and the Search for a Coherent National Identity," in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew Simpson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). See also Miguel, who is less positive about Kenya's language policy as compared to Tanzania's.

[5] T.O. Ranger, "Connexions between 'Primary Resistance' Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa: II," *Journal of African History* 9, no. 4 (1968).

Elements of banal nationalism,[6] such as popular music, styles of dress, national football teams[7] and cuisine,[8] have also instilled national sentiment among a country's inhabitants.

The Christian church has also been active in nationalist projects, as Pobee suggested "Christians can join hands with nationalists,"[9] and Mugambi's theology of reconstruction[10] could reasonably be called a theology of nation-building. Hastings even claims that nationalism in Africa has always been a Christian, and specifically not an Islamic, phenomena with Bible translation as a key element,[11] though this claim may be tenuous.[12]

The Christian and Muslim discourse in Kenya contesting public space centres primarily upon this nation-building project. The principle contested question is: Which religion will define the national identity? Recognising their minority status, Muslims often seek to define the place of Islam within the nationalist discourse, whereas Christians are more apt to imagine a dominant role for Christianity in nation-building. As this study concerns Christian perceptions of Islam, the Christian contribution to this discourse will be examined, while the Muslim contribution will be looked at only as necessary to clarify the contestation. As discussed in chapter one, this contestation takes the form of a symbolic confrontation.[13]

Establishing the legitimacy to properly claim a voice in nation-building is a primary means by which Christians and Muslims contest public space. Legitimacy is claimed through

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[6] The term 'banal nationalism' comes from Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

[7] Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, "Challenges to State Building in Africa," *African Identities* 4, no. 1 (2006): 74.

[8] Igor Cusack, "African Cuisines: Recipes for Nation-Building?," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2000).

[9] John S. Pobee, "Churches between Nationalistic Endeavor and Ecumenical Demand," *Mission Studies* 8, no. 2 (1991): 181.

[10] I've not seen this suggested anywhere, but Mugambi frequently writes of nation-building in his works on a theology of reconstruction. For example, see Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*. Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*.

[11] Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, 159.

[12] Anthony D. Smith, "Adrian Hastings on Nations and Nationalisms," *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 1 (2003): 26.

[13] Chapter 1.2.3.

contesting for historical/mythological space, moral space and spiritual/theological space. Each of these contested spaces will be examined in this chapter.

The writing of mainline Christian scholars and the popular Christian literature of the Neo-Pentecostal churches will be treated separately.

8.2   Contesting Historical/Mythical Space

The symbolic contest over historical/mythical space is especially concerned with the origins and nature of Kenya. As Appiah says concerning Africa, "mythical and historical narrative is an unavoidable ingredient for the formation of group as well as individual identity and for defining inclusion in a given clan or tribe."[14] Mythical and historical narrative in the modern African nation-state has also become strategic in defining national identity.

The Muslim community, especially the Swahili and Arab components, views Kenya's origin in the emergence of the Swahili Muslim city-states along the coast.[15] Ebrahim says, "Muslims … have been the longest settled group of the major religions in East Africa," noting that "while the rest of the country was still a jungle," Muslim "cities witnessed phenomenal development."[16] Islam is portrayed as the carrier of civilisation to Kenya, implying its foundational role over that of Christianity, which arrived later, and over other Africans, who were living in the 'jungle'.

8.2.1   Scholarly Christian Writing

The Christian scholarly community, in contrast, tends to locate origins in Africaness. Nationalist movements in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, were in opposition to foreign,

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[14] Simon Kofi Appiah, "The Quest of African Identity," *Exchange* 32, no. 1 (2003): 57.

[15] See chapters 4.2, 4.3 and 4.3.1. See also Mohamed Bakari, "The Prospects for Shar'ia in East Africa," in *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference*, ed. Nura Alkali et al., (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993).

[16] Abusufian Ahmed Ebrahim, "Islam in Kenya," *Jamia Mosque Nairobi*, http://islamkenya.org/attachments/article/94/ISLAM%20IN%20KENYA.pdf (accessed 12 February 2013).

European colonialism,[17] finding solidarity in the common racial and cultural heritage of being African.[18] The establishment of postcolonial nation-states was understood mythically as the resurgence of African community and values.[19] The writers examined in this thesis assume this historical/mythical foundation of the nation. Rather than reassert the story of African nationalism, this story underlies their descriptive analysis of the current situation and their prospective theologies of reconstruction.[20]

Mugambi writes that "the African cultural and religious heritage contains the foundations upon which social transformation"[21] … reconstructs the … "economy, politics, ethics, aesthetics and ontology" of Africa.[22] He suggests that the future success of African nations and societies depends upon, not imitating foreign ways, but truly following an African path. While Islam and Christianity are invited to contribute to the reconstruction of Africa, they are asked to leave all foreign imposition at the door.[23] Mugambi makes the case that associating "Islam with Arab culture and ethnicity" incorrectly portrays Islam, which has been 'ethnically ecumenical' historically.[24] Yet he also finds fault in Islam for the Arabisation of African converts.[25] For Mugambi, Christianity and Islam can be either African or foreign, and it is only their African manifestations that can be truly beneficial to the nation-building of Kenya.

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[17] Pobee, "Churches between Nationalistic Endeavor and Ecumenical Demand," 180.

[18] Mazrui, "Africa Between Nationalism and Nationhood," 24.

[19] Forster, "Culture, Nationalism, and the Invention of Tradition in Malawi."

[20] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 204.

[21] Ibid., 37.

[22] Ibid., 38.

[23] See chapter 6.3.7.

[24] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 111.

[25] Mugambi, "Rites of Passage and Human Sexuality in Tropical Africa Today," 237.

The Christian ascendancy in the historical origins of Kenya is explained by Wandera.[26] He writes, "Islam tended to be confined to the Coast" … while … "Christianity spread more evenly in the interior. … Muslims remained suspicious of modern facilities such as education,[27] health and industry … Christians on the other hand, embraced modernisation."[28] This was because these services were initially in the hands of Christian missionaries. The "modernisation and development" associated with modern nationalism is linked with the non-Muslim African peoples of the Kenyan interior who converted to Christianity. In this way the national foundation of Kenya is attached to up country Kenya[29] rather than the Muslim coast. The story of African nationalism underlies this historical/mythical interpretation, since the interior of Kenya is generally regarded as African, while the coast is often thought to be more Arab. It then becomes possible to align Christianity with African nationalist beginnings.

Chepkwony writes, "African Religion is the central pillar around which all other social institutions stand. Political values in Africa are thus closely linked to the belief in … God as the custodian of democratic values and good governance."[30] That which is foundational for building the nation is to be found in African religious and cultural values. Yet he also observes that nation-building in Africa will come through "the Gospel," when it is properly taught with "mercy, dialogue, patience, understanding and conversion of heart and mind."[31] Christianity as a missionary religion is understood to be foreign, yet he also understands it

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[26] Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour."

[27] The reality of Wandera's statement on education is shown in the story of Shakira Asia, who was obliged to attend a Christian secondary school since a Muslim one could not be found. (see chapter 7.2.2).

[28] Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour," 34.

[29] Up country is the local terminology that refers to Kenyans of the interior (i.e. away from the coastal areas).

[30] Chepkwony, "African Religion and Modern African States," 18.

[31] Adam K.A. Chepkwony, "Political Pluralism in Africa," in *Theology of Reconstruction: Exploratory Essays*, ed. Mary N. Getui and Emmanuel A. Obeng, (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2003), 249.

capable of genuinely reflecting African values when divorced from European arrogance. African nationalism is seen to be compatible with Christianity.

Kubai seeks to disarm Muslim claims concerning Kenyan origins, writing:

> Prior to the establishment of colonial administration in Kenya, Islam had been a core element of Arab hegemony in the East African coast for centuries. Though in the minority, the Muslim Arabs were politically and economically powerful and formed the ruling class. Over the centuries, this society functioned through 'a sort of coastal meta-cosmology whose key oppositional dyads … are *ustaarabu*/*nyika* (Arabness/civilization and town/bush), Muslim/*mshenzi* (pagan or savage), *waungwana*/*watumwa* (freemen/slaves).' … As these concepts were transmuted in places far away from the coast after the establishment of British colonial administration, Swahili-Islamic culture was considered to be superior to African culture.[32]

A contrast is subtly drawn between Muslim domination on the East African coast and British control in Kenya. Muslims are therefore not associated with Kenya itself. Kubai also turns the Swahili 'meta-cosmology' on its head, demonstrating how it denigrates African culture. The Arabness of the early Muslim communities of the coast[33] and the continued value placed on Arabness seem to disqualify them from making any historical claims on Kenya. Kubai has adopted the colonial interpretation that coastal Swahili Islam was Arab in nature and origin, rather than the postcolonial evaluation that it was African. The story of African nationalism can again be seen to underlie her evaluation of Islam and its historical/mythical claims to Kenya.

Mbiti further contributes to this discussion by evaluating Islam from an African Religion perspective, as a leading Kenyan Christian theologian who was raised in a rural Akamba Christian home.[34] He notes that the Muslims at his school were considered outsiders to Akamba/African culture, while instinctively including Christian children as insiders to that cultural context. Christianity is viewed as compatible with African values; therefore, it may be

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[32] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 32.

[33] The Arabness of the early Muslim communities on the coast is a colonial construct. See chapter 4.1.

[34] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam."

concluded that African values and Christian values may contribute to the establishment of an African nation. Mutei subtly connects the current, popular Islamic form of *da'wa* with Arabness, thus implying that it is not African.

These examples show that in prioritising an African up country nationalist origin for Kenya, Islam, often perceived as Arab, is marginalised from the nation-building discussion. On the other hand, since the peoples of up country Kenya converted to Christianity, Christian faith, once cleansed of European dominance, is accepted as an integral part of the national reconstruction of Kenya. Islam is nominally invited into the nation-building conversation but under strict conditions that it demonstrate its Africanness and diminish its Arabness. Kenyan mainline scholars claim the symbol of being African for Christians, and call into question the use of this symbol by Muslims.

Mainline Christian scholars construct their argument for the mythical/historical foundation of the nation academically by using the resources of history and cultural studies. It can be said that they expend educational capital to acquire a form of political capital that bestows the symbolic political power to define the foundational myth. The generative effects of *habitus* are also apparent. The up country scholar knows that she/he is a Christian and also deeply feels African. That which feels odd or different about African Muslims is viewed naturally as foreign and Arab.[35] This can be seen in Mbiti's article, in which he and other Akamba Christian children sense no doubt about their own Africanness yet easily question the Africanness of Akamba Muslim children.

Subjectivity enters the seemingly objective academic discourse over history, not because mainline Christian scholars are performing as political propagandists, but due to embodied dispositions – knowing that they are both fully Christian and fully African, while

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[35] As seen in chapter 4.1, Kenyan Islam is portrayed as Arab in the public school system, which forms part of the *habitus* of Kenyan Christian scholars.

intuiting a foreign element among African Muslims. The symbolic power (through education

capital) employed to inadvertently marginalise Kenyan Muslims, who seemingly desire to

inhabit a degree of Arabness, operates not by recognising the situation but through

misrecognition,[36] that is the misrecognition of the identity of Kenyan Muslims. At the same

time, there is recognition of the possibilities that Christians and Muslims can be either unduly

influenced by foreign religio-cultural elements within their own traditions, or they can

Africanise those traditions. The question is: can Kenyan mainline scholars accept the

Africanness of Kenyan Muslims on their own terms, or must mainline Christian scholars

impose the conditions?

8.2.2 Popular Christian Writing

In the popular literature the Christian character of the nationalist agenda becomes

obvious, while historical arguments become less important. Since popular literature and the

Neo-Pentecostal leaders who produce it accumulate spiritual capital, rather than educational

capital, they don't use historical arguments (i.e. academic-style reasoning), but they convert

their spiritual capital into a form of political/mythical capital by declaring Kenya a Christian

nation. However, their declarations are recognised only in circles that accept their particular

spiritual capital.

Muriithi provides the most comprehensive example of the popular view. Commenting

on the phrase, "May we dwell in unity," of the Kenyan national anthem, she writes:

> Our intent as Kenyans has to reflect our unity as brothers dwelling
> together in love, focused on bringing honour to God – the God of all creation.
> Otherwise, we have simply been singing sweet but empty words over the last
> almost half century of independence as a republic. If we believe in God and
> choose to pursue a true relationship with Him, then genuine love will be our
> banner. And love will spur the nation to great heights for the glory of our
> Maker. Our national anthem declares words of life.[37]

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[36] Misrecognition is a term employed by Bourdieu (*méconnaissance* in French).
[37] Muriithi, *Kenya Arise*, 42-43.

There are two things to especially note in this paragraph. First, much of the language is borrowed from Christianity: "dwelling together in love," "pursue a true relationship with Him," and "words of life." The Christian character of the statement is clear, and throughout the book Muriithi quotes from the Bible. Second, nation-building, rather than personal religious experience, is the subject of the paragraph. The national anthem is understood to be a Christian hymn or prayer, and the future success of Kenya depends upon the Christian commitment of its citizens. Muriithi demonstrates little interest in the story of African nationalism, instead declaring a 'finished' myth of Kenya as a Christian nation. She makes no attempt to specifically exclude Islam, but there is no room for it in her vision of Kenya, united in Christian faith.

Elsewhere two underlying mythical themes emerge briefly but without explanation. These mythical themes are that Islam is foreign and only Christians may govern in Kenya. As was seen in chapter four, the foreignness of Islam is a common theme in Kenya even within the secular school system. In the popular Christian literature, Islam was referred to as an invasion force at an evangelistic training seminar.[38] Kiragu comments that Christians "are supposed to dominate and not be dominated over,"[39] while Neo-Pentecostal bishop and politician, Wanjiru, viewed the issue of *kadhi* courts in the constitution as an open contest between Christian and Muslim political control.[40] The underlying mythical constructs used in these examples are that Christian control of the nation (i.e. Christian nationalism) guarantees future success for Kenya through the mystical means of God's favour, and that Islam is disqualified from contesting for this control, not only because it is understood to be spiritually impotent, but because Islam is an intruder into Kenya. It may be asked how Islam is

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[38] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.
[39] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 4.
[40] Wambugu and Wanjiru, "The Time is Now."

considered to be an intruder, but Christianity is not. Pentecostals view the God of African Religion to be in continuance with the God of Christianity, once certain elements of African Religion are removed,[41] but Allah is not similarly understood by Pentecostals.

A good synopsis of the popular point of view is found in an editorial of the *EndTime Christian News,* "Christianity as the leading faith in this nation has already gone a step ahead and what remains of the other religious groups … is follow example and the rest will be history."[42] Perhaps one could read this as Kenyan Christians have accumulated a sufficiently large amount of spiritual capital, so that spiritual competition is no longer realistically feasible. There is no place for Muslims in the public space other than being subordinate to Christians.

In the popular writing the history of Islam and Christianity in Kenya is not considered. Instead the contestation is over a theologically constructed mythical space. The national anthem becomes a Christian prayer for a Christian nation; Christians are understood to be the legitimate rulers of Kenya, while Muslims are not given a place to belong.

8.2.3 *Kadhi* Courts Issue

The debate over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution reveals more about the contest for historical/mythical space. Muslim sources generally portray the history of *kadhi* courts in Kenya as one of deteriorating authority and religious integrity as both the British colonial government and the African postcolonial government interfered with internal

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[41] The word used for God among most African Christians corresponds to traditional local vocabulary for the/a deity. Kenyan Muslims use Allah, or *Mungu* (Swahili), but normally not traditional ethnic names.

[42] "Good Example from the Church," *EndTime Christian News*, March 2008.

Muslim affairs.[43] Christians are understood as aggressors whose goal is to weaken or destroy Islam.

Two Christian mythical constructions are examined. First, the presence of *kadhi* courts in the constitution is said to be the first step in a political conquest of Kenya by Muslims. Second, churches are viewed as powerful actors that can dramatically influence the populace.

The NCCK said the following in a press statement concerning the *kadhi* courts:

> It is clear that the Muslim community is basically carving for itself an Islamic state within a state. … The embedment of Islam in the constitution … is a snare to the country. This is routinely the first step towards introduction of Sharia law in a country. This is the warning we bring to Kenyans today. Entrenchment of one religion in the constitution is a risk we should not take.[44]

First, it should be noted that the NCCK is the ecumenical association of the mainline churches of Kenya, which includes the churches that the Kenyan mainline scholars are members of. While most of the scholars studied would disagree with the above sentiment,[45] the line between the mainline churches and the NPCs on this matter is not so sharp. As can be seen in the above text, the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution is viewed as a secretive attempt, a "first step," towards a greater Muslim goal of political control of Kenya. Also commenting on the *kadhi* courts Neo-Pentecostal leader, Wanjiru, says that it is "a well-orchestrated drive to Islamize Africa."[46] Both comments are an allusion to the Abuja Declaration in which Muslim leaders are said to have conspired to take over Africa.[47]

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[43] Bakari, "The Prospects for Shar'ia in East Africa."; Ebrahim, "Islam in Kenya."; Mwakimako, "The Historical Development of Muslim Courts."

[44] "Entrench Islamic Sharia Law."

[45] See the essays in Tayob and Wandera, eds., *Constitutional Review in Kenya and Kadhi Courts: Selected Papers Presented at Workshop, 20 March 2010, St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya*.

[46] Wambugu and Wanjiru, "The Time is Now," 4.

[47] See "The Abuja Declaration", East African Center for Law & Justice. http://eaclj.org/the-issues/islam/10-the-abuja-declaration.html (accessed August 29, 2011). For a more in-depth discussion of this declaration see Chesworth, "Islam in Africa."

Blanuša says that conspiracy theories are pre-ideological constructs of the enemy that are used to explain why things have gone wrong.[48] For these Kenyan Christians, the nation is to be united under one religion[49] that provides the values and symbolic structure by which it is to be governed and its people live. Muslims, by demanding the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution of the nation, undermine the Christian claim to unique representation of Kenyan values and symbolism. Thus the conspiracy theory concerning secret Muslim intentions explains why Christians have not been able to attain these goals. Additionally, the contention that Muslims secretly plan to take over becomes difficult for Muslim leaders to counter, as any rebuttal can be understood as an attempt to conceal their hidden design. Thus this conspiracy theory, believed to be true by many Christians, proved to be a powerful ally in the symbolic contestation for mythical space; Muslims were put on the defensive, eventually settling for the status quo concerning *kadhi* courts in the constitution,[50] though one suspects that the debate provided powerful symbolic representation for uniting Muslims.

While the symbolic power of the Christian leadership becomes apparent through the use of the above conspiracy theory to maintain the status quo, Christian leaders imagined themselves to be even more influential over the public space. They were convinced that they could prevent the ratification of the new constitution, if it contained provisions for *kadhi* courts. In a press statement entitled, *Kenyans, Reject This Draft*, the NCCK called for all Christians to vote against the new constitution in the upcoming elections.[51] Church leaders sent a memorandum to the National Assembly in which they asserted "If the Proposed

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[48] Nebojša Blanuša, "Depathologized Conspiracy Theories and Cynical Reason: Discursive Positions and Phantasmatic Structures," *Politicka Misao: Croatian Political Science Review* 48, no. 1 (2011): 101-103.

[49] See the discussion above concerning Muriithi's commentary on the national anthem. Muriithi simply states more explicitly a widespread sentiment among Kenyan Christians. Chapter 7.5.4.

[50] See chapter 5.4.3. Muslim leaders had originally sought to expand the role of *kadhi* courts.

[51] "Kenyans, Reject this Draft," *NCCK,* , 28 April 2010.

Constitution shall contain any reference to Kadhis Courts, we shall REJECT[52] the draft in total. To avoid another rejection of the draft constitution at the referendum, we propose that"[53] *kadhi* courts be removed from the constitution. However, as was seen in chapter 5.4.2, the new constitution was ratified with over 70% of the vote, indicating a lack of influence by Christian leaders. After ratification the Catholic bishops released a statement saying, "We … as the shepherds placed to give moral guidance to our people, still reiterate the need to address the flawed moral issues in this new Constitution."[54]

The assertion by Christian leaders that they have great influence is a declaration of victory in the symbolic contestation for public space. Through this declaration of supposed victory Kenya is proclaimed to be a Christian nation wherein the moral values and symbols of the nation must necessarily be Christian. It can be seen as an attempt to impede others who contest for public space. As a mythical construct its primary purpose is to prevent other values and symbols from gaining national prominence. However, as demonstrated above this has not been entirely successful, though the frequent reporting in the public media of the views of Christian leaders provides them with a certain symbolic victory. However, it would seem that Christian leaders either possess less spiritual capital than they believe, or spiritual capital may not be as readily convertible to political capital as these leaders had hoped.

8.2.4 Conclusion

The three different examinations of Christian ways of contesting mythical space provide insight to the issues underlying this symbolic contestation. Briefly, these three ways of contesting mythical space consist of the historical/mythical origins of Kenya as African,

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[52] The emphasis via all capital letters was in the original.

[53] "The Memorandum by the Kenyan Christian Leaders Presented to the Members of the Kenya National Assembly." Almost all of the major Christian ecumenical organizations and major church denominations were represented in this group.

[54] "May God be with Kenya! - Catholic Bishops Statement on the Constitution."

the pronouncement of Kenya as a Christian-oriented nation, and a defence against Islamic symbols and values. This is a symbolic contestation over what is acceptable religious symbolism in the public space that defines the identity of the modern nation-state of Kenya.

While different attitudes are exhibited by groups contesting differently, the commonality is that specifically Islamic symbolism is either restricted or rejected, leaving room for only African and Christian symbolism to contest for the national mythical space. If Islamic symbolism is successfully restricted, then Islam's corresponding symbolic power will be limited, thus reducing Islam's ability to contest symbolically, to gain symbolic capital and to acquire social and political capital. Islam would, therefore, remain socially and politically marginal.

Postcolonial Kenya is religiously plural, and in a democratic society[55] space will need to be made for Islamic symbolism. This has, of course, happened to some extent with the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution; Christian denominations and individuals who have welcomed this are making space for Islamic symbols and values on a national stage. The history of the trade-oriented Muslim community on the coast could also enrich the mythical history of Kenya upon which a modern nation engaged in international commerce builds itself.

8.3   Contesting Moral Space

The contestation over public moral space concerns claims of who has the legitimate moral right to guide the nation-building project. Each group attempts to increase their own relative symbolic capital by discrediting the Other, and thus reducing the symbolic capital of the opposing party.

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[55] Democracy is a socio-political value that both mainline Christians and Neo-Pentecostals advocate.

The Muslim community has a propensity to view the Kenyan government as Christian; therefore, problems related to the government, such as corruption, discrimination, etc. are understood and portrayed as the moral failings of Christians.[56] In particular, Muslims say that obtaining certain official documents (e.g. identity papers and travel documents) are more difficult for Muslims because the government clerks are Christians.[57] Another stated concern is that Kenyan Christians attempt to discredit Islam by associating it with East African slavery, while playing down the trans-Atlantic slave trade.[58]

8.3.1 Scholarly Christian Writing

Arab slavery in East Africa forms part of the historical curricula found in the Kenyan public school system.[59] It is therefore not uncommon for Kenyan Christians to speak of Muslims as those who formerly attempted to enslave their ancestors.[60] Even President Moi spoke of Muslims as former slave traders[61] in order to control Muslim political aspirations. The historical fact of Arab slavery has thus become a symbolic tool for contesting public moral space in Kenya. Christian scholars of Islam, however, recognise that Christian missionaries used the issue of slavery to distance the African populace of the interior from Islam,[62] and have thus been careful in making these accusations.

Some scholars allude to slavery. Josephine Sesi, an Evangelical scholar, forthrightly accuses coastal Muslims of having enslaved Digo people,[63] though mainline scholars tend to be more circumspect. Mbiti writes of his childhood, "there was some talk about Muslim men

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[56] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 298-299.

[57] Bakari, "Muslims and the Politics of Change in Kenya," 244.

[58] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 293.

[59] Maranga and others, *History and Government*, 74-75, 80-82.

[60] This is a sentiment that can be heard when one questions Kenyan Christians about Islam, though it is more subdued in the written material.

[61] Mwakimako, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 293.

[62] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 122; Nnyombi, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 160.

[63] Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women." See chapter 6.4.

taking boys and young men to sell them to the Arabs who used them as slaves in Arab countries."[64] This brief statement most likely indicates the effectiveness of the missionary use of Arab slavery to discredit Islam, as the slave trade would no longer have been present in Kenya during Mbiti's childhood.[65] These rumours did, however, cause some fear of Muslims among Mbiti and his friends. Mugambi critiques both Christianity and Islam for participation in slave trading in Africa.[66] Though both scholars speak of Muslim slavery, neither uses it to denigrate Islam. Considering the local context, however, in which Kenyans have learned in school, from politicians, from religious leaders, from family, etc. (i.e. *habitus*) that Arabs and Muslims once traded in African slaves from Kenya, the more benign approach of mainline scholars may still elicit strong emotions from readers.

Islam can also be associated with aggressiveness and violence. Kubai writes, "The term 'jihad' means to strive and struggle in the way of Allah. Usually for those who use jihad, the variety of theological meanings is overshadowed by the emphasis on combat or 'fight,' as expressed in the Qur'an."[67] Violence is shown to be the most normative and Qur'ānic understanding of *jihad*, implying that combat is in the very nature of Islam. Kubai also writes of Christian-Muslim violence in the South B neighbourhood of Nairobi. She tells of the destruction by fire of a Catholic church, but does not mention that this act was done in response to the destruction of a mosque.[68] Kubai also produced an article on the Rwandan genocide in which one purpose was to correct supposed errors that credited Rwandan

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[64] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam," 160.

[65] The events that Mbiti describes would be from the early 1940s in a rural Akamba village, when the slave trade would have no longer existed.

[66] Mugambi, "Religions in East Africa in the Context of Globalization," 12.

[67] Kubai, "Religious Communities," 118.

[68] Ibid.: 122. See chapter 6.2.2 for more details.

Muslims for rejecting participation in the genocide.[69] While she never directly accuses Islam of being violent, there is a subtle link made between Islam and violence in her writing.

Mbiti recalls a visit home to Kenya in 2002 in which Kenyans reacted to Muslim terrorist attacks by asking what kind of religion could advocate such things.[70] For Mbiti this is an indication of how Islam compares unfavourably to African Religion which promotes life. It should also be remembered that Mbiti finds Christianity to be compatible with African Religion; therefore, Islam, as a religion that promotes violence, seems to have no moral place in the public space of a truly African nation.

Mutei, discussing the proselytising method of *mihadhara*, brings up the notion of dishonesty in the manner in which some Muslims relate with Christians.[71] While his statements concerning supposed Muslim dishonesty are confined within the particular context of *mihadhara*, the idea of a lack of integrity among Muslims resonates among many Kenyan Christians. This can be seen in Mbiti's account of interaction with Muslim merchants in Kitui, where he writes that Muslims were known to be good, though dishonest, traders.[72] As in the preceding paragraphs discussing slavery and terrorism/violence, direct accusations of dishonesty are not made against Muslims in general. However, the subtle indictments present in the scholarly articles dovetail with popular Christian sentiment concerning Muslims.[73]

Maina offers a contrast to the other scholars by focusing on Christian historical injustice towards Muslims,[74] though he tends to place primary responsibility upon colonial-era missions rather than upon present-day Kenyan Christians. Wandera, perhaps less

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[69] Kubai, "Walking a Tightrope."

[70] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam," 175.

[71] Mutei, "The Bible: Classical and Contemporay Muslim Attitudes and Exegesis," 160. Chapter 6.2.4.

[72] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam." Chapter 6.3.4.

[73] There are Muslim shopkeepers in towns throughout Kenya, and it is not uncommon to hear Kenyan Christians pose questions concerning their honesty.

[74] See chapter 6.2.1.

forcefully and consistently, also addresses the issue of historical Christian injustice towards

Muslims in Kenya.[75]

Slavery, violence and dishonesty form the primary moral issues found in the scholarly

literature that challenge Islam's legitimacy to contest for public space. None of mainline

scholars directly challenge Islam's moral legitimacy in symbolic confrontation. However,

taking into account the local context, which is described in Mbiti's article,[76] the discussions of

slavery, violence and dishonesty are likely to have a greater impact upon readers' views of

Islam than the writers may have intended. Interestingly, despite the terrorist attacks in Kenya

by Islamic extremists, terrorism is not used to question the moral legitimacy of Islam, though

question concerning violence must elicit thoughts of terrorism among Christian readers and

listeners.

8.3.2 Popular Christian Writing

While issues of Arab slavery and Islamic terrorism may be alive within Neo-

Pentecostal churches, these issues do not appear in the written material.[77] When the terrorist

attacks are discussed the issues are corruption in the government,[78] end time scenarios[79] and

the need to always be spiritually prepared to meet one's fate.[80] It is unclear why issues of

slavery and terrorism, which seem to be alive within churches, are ignored in written material.

It is possible, since an attack on Hope FM,[81] which was broadcasting anti-Islamic polemics,

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[75] See chapter 6.2.2.

[76] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam." My personal observations confirm Mbiti's description. In the minds of many Kenyan Christians: Islam is associated with slavery, Muslims are thought of as aggressive and possibly violent, and the honesty of Muslims is considered suspect.

[77] However, I have personally heard these issues of Arab slavery and Islamic terrorism in private conversations with Neo-Pentecostals concerning why Islam is morally unacceptable.

[78] Michael Wambugu, "From the Editor's Desk," *Revival Springs*, December 2002. Government corruption is blamed for allowing terrorists to enter into Kenya.

[79] Michael Wambugu, "Editorial," *Revival Springs*, October 2001.

[80] Wilberforce Wangalwa, "The Bomb Tragedy: What Spiritual Lessons," *Revival Springs*, September 1998.

that the editors of popular Christian magazines have been careful to not publish overly negative material concerning Islam.

While the morality of Islam is impugned in a few articles by associating Islam with abortion[82] and the Muslim coast with drug use,[83] this is not a primary concern in the popular literature. The moral problems of Islam are associated more strongly with demonic spiritual powers than with particular socio-political activities. Kenyan Pentecostal theology of evil ultimately places the source of moral failure in the spiritual world. Subtle allusions that associate Islam with witchcraft are made,[84] witchcraft being the symbol of evil in African cosmology. It is in this way that a moral indictment is levelled at Islam. Rather than citing particular historical moral failings, Islam, itself, can be characterised as evil through these witchcraft allusions.

8.3.3 Conclusion

The history of Arab slavery is the strongest and most frequently used symbolic tool in questioning the moral integrity of the Muslim community by the Christian community. The use of this strategic moral weapon was introduced by Christian missionaries, and it continues among Kenyan Christians and politicians. It was seen in the discussion of Evangelical scholars that slavery is sometimes used uncompromisingly as a means to assail the moral legitimacy of Islam.[85] There is enough truth[86] in the claim to put Muslim political leadership on the defensive and render the tactic effective.

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[81] "Radio Station Under Attack," *The Daily Nation*, 13 May 2006.

[82] Kimani, "To Save Life or To Kill It: Patricia Oyamo and Irene Mwangi."

[83] Njuguna, "I Hate You Heroin."

[84] See chapter 7.3.3, 7.3.4 and 7.3.5.

[85] Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women," 184. See chapter 6.4.

[86] See chapters 4.3.4 and 5.3.4 for more details. The coastal economy was a slave-based economy in the 19th century, and the Arab and Swahili people of the coast both owned slaves and participated in slave-trading. However, it is debatable how much Kenyan Africans were actually affected by the slave trade, as most of the trade was directed toward Tanzania and the Great Lakes region.

The advent of Islamic terrorism has added another means by which Christians cast doubt upon the moral legitimacy of Muslims to contest for public space, though it seems to be accepted that these are the acts of extremists and reflect less upon average Muslims. However, some Christians appear to view Islam as inherently violent.[87] The integrity of Muslims is also portrayed as deficient, and one sometimes hears Christians talk of the hidden Islamic agenda.

The association of Islam with spirits and witchcraft in popular Christian literature, while a serious accusation, seems to have a limited range of influence (i.e. among Pentecostals). It is unlikely to contend as strongly in the contestation for moral space in public discourse as the history of slavery, allusions to violence and terrorism and accusations of dishonesty.

The question that becomes contested by both the Muslim and Christian communities concerns who is the oppressor and the oppressed. Allusions to Muslim slavery depict Islam as oppressive towards Africans. Josephine Sesi directly states that Islam has oppressed the Digo women.[88] From the Pentecostal perspective the oppression is displaced into the spiritual sphere; Muslims are both oppressed by spirits (of their own choosing) and threats to bring spiritual oppression upon others. Muslims writers counter that the Christian (in their view) government of Kenya oppresses Muslims by limiting their participation in government and by denying them access to documents, such as passports, etc. The contestation over who is oppressor and who is oppressed necessarily engenders a contested search for liberation. Each seeks to be liberated from the other.

This mode of contesting operates via each side (Christian and Muslim) arguing from history and current events that its people are oppressed by the other; their people stand on the moral high ground, while the Other merits condemnation. As Volf says, "The categories of

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[87] See for example Stephen Sesi's comments on a lack of forgiveness in Islam. Chapter 6.4.

[88] Sesi, "Impact of Christianity among Digo Muslim Women," 159.

oppression and liberation provide combat gear … they are good for fighting, but not for negotiating or celebrating."[89] While in the Kenyan situation the "fighting" primarily takes the form of symbolic confrontation,[90] the use of an oppression/liberation mode of discourse results in contestation, rather than cooperation.

Maina and Wandera take a first step in moving from confrontation to cooperation by examining how Muslims have been oppressed and discriminated against.[91] They also open the discourse towards another mode of thinking by writing that Christians and Muslims can "work together" for peace and the common good. In seeking to work together they move towards a model of reconciliation. This combination of recognising the discrimination and oppression perpetuated against the Other (the Muslim community) by one's own community, and repositioning the discourse towards one of reconciliation and working together offers a way through the impasse of symbolic confrontation.

8.4   Contesting Spiritual/Theological Space

Both Islam and Kenyan Christianity reject the notion of a secular – sacred divide in society and government.[92] For this reason Islam and Christianity also contest for spiritual/theological space.

8.4.1   Scholarly Christian Writing

Kenyan mainline Christian scholars do not elaborate specific theological agenda to be used in contesting with Islam for public space. In fact, these scholars promote theologies that

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[89] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 103.

[90] There have been a few incidents of violent confrontation between Muslims and Christians in Kenya. These have, however, been isolated and local; and religion has rarely (if ever) been an immediate cause.

[91] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya." Maina, "Historical Roots of Conflict." Wandera, "Love Thy Neighbour." See chapter 6.2.1 and 6.2.3.

[92] Mugambi, "Religion and Social Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa."

encourage cooperation and understanding between Christians and Muslims.[93] However, the

theology of reconstruction, which is popular among mainline Christian scholars, promotes a

nation-building project that is based upon the biblical story of Nehemiah. Though these

scholars may wish to include Muslims within the national project, they appear to be unaware

that nationalism built upon the Christian scriptures may not appeal to Muslims.

Mugambi writes:

> From the perspective of the Theology of Reconstruction, Nehemiah's approach is useful to the extent that he helps us to appreciate the relationship between prayer and planning; between work and worship; between despair and hope; between the elite and the ordinary people; between the priesthood and the laity. … Post-Exilic Judah is ethnically, religiously and politically pluralistic. At the community level the conflicts are not only between the returnees and the remnants; it is also between the Jews and other communities. … It is the complexity of this context that makes Ezra-Nehemiah very insightful as a textual frame of reference for the Theology of Reconstruction.[94]

First, the theology of reconstruction is meant to be the theological basis for building

the African nation in the way that the theology of liberation worked, most specifically, in

South Africa as a foundation for obtaining political freedom. Therefore, the specifically

Christian character of the language used in the above paragraph is expected. There are,

however, two problems that this theology poses for nation-building in a religiously plural

context.

Mugambi cites the fact that the post-exilic Judah of Nehemiah was religiously plural

as a positive recommendation for the use of this text to build a theology of reconstruction

upon. However, as Gathogo notes, the theologians of reconstruction have "failed to see the

political motivation behind Nehemiah's rebuilding project," which is the protection of "his

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[93] See especially the previous chapter that discusses the works of Maina, Kubai and Wandera; 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

[94] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 75-76.

own people" from others.[95] The enemies of Jerusalem (Arabs, Ammonites and Ashodites) threaten to attack those building the walls, and Nehemiah arms his Jewish workers in response.[96] Interethnic and interreligious marriage is also condemned,[97] as Nehemiah "cleansed (Israel) from everything foreign."[98] While the situation of this particular biblical book is pluralistic, the response to pluralism is reactionary in search of ethnic and religious purity. Mugambi does not deal with the issue of Nehemiah and Ezra's responses to pluralism in any of his works, leading one to ask how a theology of reconstruction (i.e. nation-building) based on these texts may include Muslim fellow citizens. Maina suggests that Christians and Muslims can work together for the common good,[99] and Mugambi invites Muslims to participate in this nation-building project.[100] However, neither provides any guidance on how working together for the common good might be achieved.

The second problem is that Muslims are being invited[101] to participate in a nation-building project that is based on a text from the Hebrew Scriptures. Mugambi attempts to solve this difficulty by saying that Muslims share the Old Testament as a sacred text with Christians.[102] Islam does refer to the *Taurat*, the *Zabur*, and several persons from the Hebrew Scriptures; however, Nehemiah is not among them. It would therefore seem incorrect to justify Muslim participation in this project, based upon the text of Nehemiah, by referring to a common Old Testament between Christians and Muslims.

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[95] Gathogo, "African Philosophy," 47.

[96] Nehemiah chapter 4.

[97] Nehemiah 13:23-28.

[98] Nehemiah 13:30 (NRSV).

[99] See chapter 6.2.1.

[100] See chapter 6.3.7.

[101] This is invitation is subtle and not universally made, but it does appear to be genuinely offered by several mainline Kenyan scholars.

[102] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 151.

At the heart of this dilemma is the rejection of the secularist model of the state by Kenyan theologians.[103] The alternative is understood to consist in the participation of religion in the creation of national unity, democracy, development, etc.[104] However, religions are never religion in general, but specific religions (such as Christianity and Islam) each with its own symbols, scriptures, values, institutions, and traditions. The cooperation of religion and state in a pluralistic society (if secular models are rejected) must take into account specifics, differences and similarities among the actual religions present. Kenyan mainline Christian scholars acknowledge the religious plurality, while working primarily with a Christian symbolic universe.[105] Given the relative population[106] and influence of Christianity as compared to Islam in Kenya, this religious approach to nation-building effectively excludes Muslims from participation in the public theological space. If Muslims are to be included in a religious model of nation-building, then Islamic symbolism and values must also gain presence in shared public space.

8.4.2 Popular Christian Writing

Within popular Neo-Pentecostal Christian literature there are two closely related means by which Islam is deemed ineligible from engaging spiritually and theologically in the public space. First, Islam is linked with the evil spiritual world. Second, political theology is often expressed through the idea of possessing the land, which is accomplished spiritually.

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[103] See for example: Chepkwony, "Political Pluralism in Africa."; Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*; Mugambi, "Religion and Social Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa."; Zablon Nthamburi, "Theology and Politics in Africa," in *Democracy and Reconciliation: A Challenge for African Christianity*, ed. Laurenti Magesa and Zablon Nthamburi, (Nairobi: Acton Publisher, 2003).

[104] Adam K.A. Chepkwony, "Religion and Democracy in Africa," in *Democracy and Reconciliation: A Challenge for African Christianity*, ed. Laurenti Magesa and Zablon Nthamburi, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003); Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*; Mugambi, "Religion in the Social Transformation of Africa ", 73-75.

[105] They also make use of African Religion symbols, values and traditions by incorporating them into African Christian theology.

[106] See Chapter 2.

Islam is frequently identified with evil (or demonic) spirits in popular Christian literature. In Josephat Obare's conversion narrative, he encounters a '*jinni*,' understood as an evil spirit, in the form of a woman who takes him into a house near a mosque.[107] In another story John Omino works for a Muslim who is an international leader in witchcraft and the trade in body parts for performing witchcraft rituals.[108] Kitavi misinterprets Muslim understandings of *majini*, which is a Swahili word that is defined differently by Muslims and Christians.[109] For Muslims it is the plural of *jinn*, spirit beings, who can be either good or evil. For Christians, the word means demons; therefore, they can only be evil. Kitavi's purpose is to associate Islam with *majini* (i.e. demons), whom he says Muslims believe may be good.

By associating Islam with evil spirits and demons, these Neo-Pentecostal writers also attempt to disqualify Islam from carrying any spiritual legitimacy for discourse in the public space. The state and society are understood to be in need of a strong spiritual foundation so that the people may prosper and flourish. In the popular Christian literature, Neo-Pentecostal leaders and prophets are understood to be in direct contact with God,[110] while Muslims are strongly suspected of association with the demonic. From this perspective, Muslim discourse that attempts to find a place for Islam in the public space can only be viewed as leading towards malevolent ends, thus disqualified. While Neo-Pentecostals understand this spiritual confrontation literally, it can also be viewed as a symbolic confrontation in which the spiritual capital of Neo-Pentecostals may be converted into economic (or socio-economic development) capital, while the spiritual capital of Islam is seen as corrupted, and thus nonconvertible.

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[107] Chapter 7.3.3.

[108] Chapter 7.3.4.

[109] Chapter 7.4.1. It is unclear if this misinterpretation is intentional or ill-informed.

[110] See for example "The Man who Baptized Raila," *Arise Africa.* 2009.

Kitavi uses the metaphor of Godly altars to express a political theology of possessing the land.[111] He writes, "We must not forget that altars are used to possess the land, and if we do not raise altars for God, satanic altars will be raised on our land."[112] Land is claimed through the building of altars; these altars can only be Godly or satanic according to Pentecostal dualistic theology.[113] While the altars may indirectly refer to places of worship, they should not be understood literally. A Godly community altar is erected when a significant portion of the community is spiritually engaged, praying to and worshiping Jesus Christ.[114] A satanic altar is present when spiritual activity that is not related to Jesus Christ occurs. As seen in the above quote, there is a competition for the land (i.e. the nation) that can be won through raising Godly altars, which eliminates opposition through spiritual means.[115]

Similar to the previous examples, Islam (and other religions) is connected with satanic altars, while Christianity is related to Godly altars. Therefore, Islam is disqualified from public space through this disreputable association. Additionally, victory, understood as possessing the land (or nation), is seen to be inevitable on the condition that Christians are committed and prayerful. Seen in this way, there is no reason to acknowledge Muslim participation in the public space since Islam's presence is only fleeting.

8.4.3 Conclusion

Because of the rejection of a secular state, spiritual/theological space becomes an important public and political point of symbolic contestation. Mazrui has proposed the model of an ecumenical state that "accommodate(s) the different religions through official

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[111] Chapter 7.4.2.

[112] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 10

[113] See chapter 9 on the emerging theologies of religion.

[114] The metaphor seems to function as an encouragement to prayer and commitment.

[115] Kitavi cites 1 John 4:4 to indicate that God is the one who overcomes the opposition.

institutions or through official processes."[116] The state is neutral towards each particular religion but promotes all religions equally. This position, which is also favoured by other Kenyan Muslim intellectuals,[117] seems to have advantages for religious minorities (because the majority religion needs less official state support). An ecumenical state also appears to be compatible with the politico-religious vision of mainline Kenyan scholars; however, it is in direct confrontation with Pentecostal naïve theocracy. It raises the question if Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals can develop (or accept) a theological justification for social, political, and religious pluralism in the nation.

8.5   Christians Contesting Public Space

This chapter has examined ways in which Christians have contested with Muslims for legitimacy in public space. Three different areas of symbolic contestation over legitimacy were looked at: mythical/historical, moral and spiritual/theological. Some important Muslim positions were briefly stated so that the Christian positions could be seen within the larger context, though only Christian views were elaborated upon. The Christian arguments were divided between those made by mainline Christian scholars and those found in the popular literature.

The scholars make use of education capital by examining and interpreting history, Islam, current events, culture, etc. In contrast, the popular Christian literature uses spiritual capital by claiming to have spiritual insight in their understandings. In considering how their respective arguments might impact upon public space, reflecting upon where in the social structure these types of capital might find favourable conversion into social and political capital should prove helpful.

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[116] Ali A. Mazrui, "Shifting African Identities: The Boundaries of Ethnicity and Religion in Africa's Experience," in *Shifting African Identities*, ed. S.B. Bekker, Martine Dodds, and Meshack M. Khosa, Identity? Theory, Politics, History (Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 2001), 159.

[117] Tayob, "Muslim Responses to Kadhis Courts," 59.

First, education capital and cultural capital can be considered easily interchangeable,[118] so that those who are thought of as 'educated' and 'cultured' generally belong to the same social class. Therefore, the initial impact of these Christian scholars should be among a higher social class of well-educated and cultured individuals, who ironically[119] have benefited from Western-style education and modernising trends in Kenya. These are often the individuals who are able to set the cultural and political agendas of the nation. The impact, the arguments and the ideas of the scholars may then also flow to other groups through various means (i.e. pastors to parishioners, teachers to students, etc.).

Second, the valuation of spiritual capital will depend less upon social class and more upon the religious worldview of individuals. Even though popular literature is produced by Neo-Pentecostals, it should not be assumed that the value of this spiritual capital will be limited to fellow Neo-Pentecostal Christians. As was seen in chapter three, *The African Religious Heritage*, the Neo-Pentecostal spiritual understanding shares many similarities with that of African Religion. The debate over the inclusion of *kadhi* courts in the constitution offers an example; mainline Christian leaders sometimes partnered with Neo-Pentecostal leaders – often using similar arguments – to oppose the inclusion of *kadhi* courts. This spiritual capital (and thus the views expressed in the popular literature concerning Islam) will be most valued among ordinary Christians, whose access to social and political capital is often limited and temporary (i.e. mobilising support for a particular issue, party or candidate).

The mythical/historical contestation centres upon the nature of the Kenyan society and nation. Mainline scholars emphasize the African character of the nation, while tending to promote the view that Islam is foreign to Africanness. At the same time Christianity, divorced from its European distortions, is understood to be compatible with Africanness. The Kenyan

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[118] See Bourdieu, *Distinction*.
[119] I say 'ironically', because mainline scholars strongly promote Africanness.

government, when confronted with Islamic political movements, has also promoted the understanding of Kenya as specifically African,[120] which has proven to be successful. African Muslims have frequently chosen African symbolism over Islamic symbolic politics promoted by coastal Arab Muslim leaders.[121] This would seem to affirm the effectiveness of the mythical/historical argument of Kenyan mainline Christian scholars.

Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals in the popular literature dispense with historical argumentation and simply declare Kenya to be a Christian nation, calling for Christianity to lead in public political and social space.

Moral legitimacy is also contested, though on a more subtle level. Christians do not assert that Muslims are immoral, but scholars may allude to the history of Arab slavery in East Africa and to violence that has been done in the name of Islam, which connote images of oppression. Evangelicals are an exception, as Josephine and Stephen Sesi rather freely highlight the immoral and oppressive nature of Islam.[122] In this way Muslims are frequently put on the moral defensive in contestations for public space. Though Maina and Wandera, Kenyan experts on Islam, offer critiques of historical Christian injustice towards Muslims in Kenya, their discourse does not seem to carry much influence into the larger discourse contesting moral legitimacy in the public space.

Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals in the popular literature treat moral issues from the perspective of evil spirits, finding Muslims to be linked in some ways to these. Islam, itself, can then be understood to be essentially immoral and backwards; the acts of individual Muslims become irrelevant to the discourse. However, in conversion narratives Muslims

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[120] Hassan J. Ndzovu, *Muslims and Party Politics and Electoral Campaigns in Kenya* (Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa, Northwestern University, 2009), 5-7.

[121] O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations*, 95.

[122] See chapter 6.4. Sesi, "Impact of Christianity among Digo Muslim Women." Sesi, "Impact of Islam among Digo Muslim Women." Sesi, "Context and Worship among Digo Muslims in Kenya."

frequently play the role of immoral antagonists to the principle character who is overcoming obstacles to find new life in Christian faith. These are powerful stories that create impressions upon readers that potentially leave them with the understanding that Muslims are morally untrustworthy.

Since Christians and Muslims in Kenya tend to reject secularism, spiritual/theological legitimacy is also contested. Mainline Christian scholars promote a Christian-oriented nation-building theology of reconstruction through which they unintentionally exclude Muslims. They willingly invite Muslims to join them in this theological nation-building project, seemingly with a naivety that does not ask how Muslims can join in such a Christian-based project. Kenyan scholars wish to leave a place for Muslims in the public theological space, but have difficulty knowing how to do so.

Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals in the popular literature view Islam (as well as other religions) as a harbour of evil and demonic spirits. Pentecostal political theology expressed as 'possessing the land' – given the ethnic and geographic differences between Kenyan Christians and Muslims – can give the impression of a move towards the dispossession of Muslims from their land, even though the expression is only meant to communicate symbolically and spiritually. From the perspective of this popular literature there is no place for Islam in public spiritual/theological space.

Both the scholarly and popular writing tend to assign Muslims a second-class position as they contest for public space. Kenyan mainline scholars are more open to Muslim input in the public space, but they must follow some implicit guidelines in order to gain a hearing. Muslims must prioritise Africanness over Arabness. They must acknowledge their role in slavery and violence and probably exhibit appropriate repentance and humility. They must enlist in a Christian-led project for building Kenya into a prosperous, united, democratic

nation. Maina (and Wandera to a lesser extent) call for similar repentance and humility from Christians concerning Kenyan Muslims; however, their words seem to have less influence than might be expected.

In the popular writing, Muslims must also accept a second-class position, but in this case they are barely tolerated. It seems that silence and following the lead of the churches are the only options deemed appropriate. Any Muslim participation in the public space is understood to be devious, unwarranted, regressive and potentially destructive to Kenya.

However, as the *kadhi* court debate demonstrated, Christians have less influence than they claim due to political power structures formed by ethnic alliances, which may at times include Muslim-majority ethnicities. Despite Christian contestation that attempts to relegate Muslims to second-class status, the Muslim community is able to contest against this status. Therefore, *kadhi* courts have remained in the constitution, and Muslims maintain a vocal presence in the symbolic contestation over public space in Kenya.

CHAPTER NINE

EMERGING THEOLOGIES OF RELIGION IN RELATION TO ISLAM

This chapter will look at certain theological themes that arise from the analyses in chapters six and seven on the scholarly discourse and the popular discourse respectively. The Kenyan mainline scholars and popular Neo-Pentecostal literature differ in their conclusions concerning Islam. However, as will become apparent, they share many similarities in their religious approach to Islam, which differs from that traditionally found in Europe and America. It is suggested that this difference arises from the African religious and cultural heritage.

9.1   D'Costa on "Tradition-Specific" Approaches

In *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, D'Costa argues that pluralist theologies of religion are in actuality exclusivist positions that depend upon "tradition-specific approaches," usually that of "liberal modernity" born of the Enlightenment.[1] He also shows that other traditions, such as Hinduism[2] or Buddhism,[3] may be used in a tradition-specific manner to promote a pluralist theology.

The interest in D'Costa's argument for this study is not whether pluralist theologies of religion are exclusivist or not, but in the use of his method to understand emerging theologies of religion in Kenya as tradition-specific theologies. First, his critique of John Hick's work will be briefly examined, then his analysis of Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan.

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[1] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, 19.
[2] Ibid., See chapter 2.
[3] Ibid., See chapter 3.

D'Costa[4] says that Hick uses a "Kantian epistemology" that maintains a "distinction between the noumenal, which exists independently and outside of human perception, and the phenomenal world, which is that world as it appears to our human consciousness."[5] This enables him to view all human speech about God, or ultimate reality, as myth, completely disconnected from any historical truth. Religions can then be evaluated according to a "set of values which are rooted in human nature and modern liberalism,"[6] but not in any manifestation of a specific religion. D'Costa, therefore, locates the tradition within which Hick approaches his theology as Enlightenment modernity with special focus on Kant.

Radhakrishnan, according to D'Costa, makes use of an argument from mystical experience in which the mystic is able to recognise the oneness behind apparent multiplicity. The mystical experience that he has in mind is particularly of the Advaita where "the non-empirical self (*ātman*) is identical with the divine (*Brahman*)," meaning that creation is not ultimately real, nor the person, "but only pure consciousness of pure being."[7] Radhakrishnan's Hindu pluralist theology is, therefore, not universal but based on a very specific tradition within Hinduism.

These theologies of religion, though claiming to be universal in nature, are in fact born within specific, historically formed traditions and could not be imagined without those traditions. As MacIntyre writes, "all reasoning takes place within the context of some traditional mode of thought."[8] The texts that were analysed in chapters six and seven were birthed by two traditions: the Christian tradition and a Kenyan African tradition. Therefore,

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[4] This argument is found on pages 25-30.

[5] D'Costa, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, 25-26.

[6] Ibid., 29.

[7] Ibid., 61.

[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 222.

the emerging theologies of religion to be discussed represent African Christian theologies

with specific reference to Kenya.

9.2   Prolegomena to a Kenyan Christian Theology of Religion in Relation to Islam

Before embarking upon a journey into the emerging theologies of religion in relation

to Islam, a Kenyan pluralist theology in relation to African Religion will be examined.

Samuel Kibicho, who was briefly mentioned in chapter 6.2.3, completed his doctoral thesis,

The Kikuyu Conception of God: Its Continuity into the Christian Era and the Question it

Raises for the Idea of Christian Revelation,[9] at Vanderbilt in 1972. This was published much

later (2006) as *God and Revelation in an African Context*. Wijsen remarks that it remains one

of few books by an African scholar on interreligious dialogue.[10] As head of the Religious

Studies department at the University of Nairobi for many years, Kibicho has had some

influence in Kenya, [11] though he is less well-known outside the country. His influence is

especially notable among Kenya's mainline scholars, but he also carries some influence in

Neo-Pentecostal circles.[12]

Kibicho's principle argument is that *Ngai* (God in Kikuyu), as worshipped by the

Gikuyu, was as fully revelatory and salvific as God, worshipped by Christians.[13] Mugambi

understands the book to be primarily a defence of the "African cultural and religious heritage"

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[9] Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context*, 15.

[10] Frans Wijsen, "An Appreciation of Samuel Kibicho's Work," in *God and Revelation in an African Context* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006), 6.

[11] Ibid., 7.

[12] While I was teaching at Nairobi International School of Theology from 2006-2009, the head of my department was Dr Sammy Gitaari, who is bishop and founder of Gospel Celebration Church, an indigenous Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal denomination similar to those represented by the popular Christian magazines. Dr Gitaari has also contributed articles to these magazines. He owned a copy of Kibicho's book and he recommended that I read it in order to understand Kenyan Christianity.

[13] Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context*, 171-172.

against misrepresentation by the missionary West,[14] while Wijsen sees it as a "theology of interreligious dialogue."[15] The first chapter is a description of Gikuyu religion and understanding of God. The next four chapters describe and analyse the interaction of Gikuyu religion with the coming of Christianity from the West, which can be read as a defence of Gikuyu religion. The last chapter, *The Christian Idea of Revelation and the Gikuyu Concept of God*, explores more fully the theological questions.

He uses certain criteria for judging whether a religious claim to revelation is valid, which are "the presence of love … hope and courage to be human."[16] Through his analysis of Gikuyu religion he concludes that "the same Spirit of God which was manifest in Jesus of Nazareth and which alone can elicit True Faith, love, hope, and courage to be human seems to have been no less fully present and operative in the Gikuyu community of faith than in the Christian community of faith."[17] Two ideas seem to be clear in this statement. One, Jesus is used as the ethical and revelatory norm by which other revelations may be judged. Second, Christianity and Gikuyu religion are then viewed as equals, both having been revealed by "the same Spirit of God."

Kibicho then continues by saying that a "true monotheism" should be able to encounter another religion, especially another monotheistic one, and "acknowledge readily and freely any similarities and differences" or "weaknesses and strengths" in comparing them.[18] Gikuyu religion is found to have performed this task admirably in its encounters with other African Religions and with Christianity, while Christianity is seen to have failed in its encounters with others by assuming a position of superiority. Thus, after showing that Gikuyu

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[14] J. N. K. Mugambi, "Foreword," in *God and Revelation in an African Context.* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2006), 3.

[15] Wijsen, "An Appreciation of Samuel Kibicho's Work," 6.

[16] Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context*, 178.

[17] Ibid., 178-179.

[18] Ibid., 179.

religion is the equal of Christianity through the use of criteria based on Christian teachings, he

proceeds to demonstrate that Gikuyu religion has proven to be more mature. He comments,

"A less thorough preoccupation with exclusiveness and distinctiveness might free Christianity

to discover … the more pleasant uniqueness of similarities of equality,"[19] which Gikuyu

religion has done.

A close look at his criteria of "love, hope and courage to be human," as found in Jesus

of Nazareth, also shows that Jesus is not understood to be the norm but one incarnation of the

Spirit of God, who "may be incarnate in other communities of faith in different ways."[20] The

first five chapters of the book seem to have been arranged to demonstrate that Gikuyu religion

promoted these same values historically in the Gikuyu community as they encountered

European colonialism, missionary expansion, and liberation. He maintains that Gikuyu

conversion to Christianity was a movement towards modernity in religious continuity with

Gikuyu religion.[21] A Gikuyu could become a Christian without forsaking his/her religion.

Wijsen critiques Kibicho for not citing more biblical evidence and for not elaborating

on standard Christian theology of religion categories, "theocentrism, soteriocentrism and

christocentrism."[22] However, Wijsen seems to read this as uniquely a Christian theology of

religions, though it may be more insightful to read it as an African theology of religion in

dialogue with Christianity. Kibicho refers to his position as "pluralistic revelation,"[23]

implying that no single revelation is privileged.

Read as an African theology of religion, Kibicho's criteria for evaluating true

revelation can be seen to be found in "social righteousness," which he understands to be

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[19] Ibid., 180.

[20] Ibid., 183.

[21] Ibid., 107, 111, 121.

[22] Wijsen, "An Appreciation of Samuel Kibicho's Work," 12-13.

[23] Kibicho, *God and Revelation in an African Context*, 171, 176, 183.

divinely guided establishment of "truth, justice and peace" in the community.[24] His description of Gikuyu resistance to colonialism and Western missionary misrepresentation uses the vocabulary of political and social movements, but the roots are in the Gikuyu understanding of God whose greatest blessing was the gift of life.[25] The Gikuyu believe that "what God desired most for humanity was the enhancement of life in the community."[26]

The basic foundation of Kibicho's "pluralistic revelation" seems to be that God gives vital force[27] to all peoples so that they might form just and human communities that enhance life together. When a religion promotes community in this way, then it can be considered a recipient of true revelation. The biblical witness to Jesus is understood to be one example of this revelation, thus Jesus conforms to the African religious ideal. From this analysis, it can be seen that Kibicho's theology of religion is tradition-specific, grounded in the tradition of Gikuyu religion and more broadly within African Religion. The question then becomes: Does Islam promote a community that enhances life together (i.e. Kibicho's criteria)?

9.3   The Emerging Theological Questions

The theological questions concerning Islam that arise out of the analyses in chapters six and seven are informed by their Kenyan context.[28] The questions asked are different from those asked in Western theological discourse concerning Islam, such as the status of the Qur'ān, the identity of Muhammad, the Islamic conception of Allah, or Islamic doctrines. Rather, the questions asked concern whether Christians and Muslims worship the same God, and if Islam can form a vital and just community (i.e. community that enhances life together).

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[24] Ibid., 41.
[25] Ibid., 20.
[26] Ibid.
[27] For 'vital force' see Tempels, *La Philosophie Bantoue*. Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy*. See also chapter 3.2.
[28] See chapter 1.2.1.

Wijsen comments that Christians from the West are interested in "the truth of religious belief," understood as rational thought being in accord with being.[29] Truth is based on an "exclusive dualism," accepting one proposition as true necessarily means the rejection of a different proposition.[30] He contrasts this with African Christians who view "truth in terms of interrelation," where apparent opposites can find "unity at a higher level."[31] This could be seen above in Kibicho's pluralistic revelation, where a Trinitarian revelation in Christianity is understood to be completely compatible with Gikuyu revelation of *Ngai*.[32] Nkemnkia writes that "truth is the recognition of things as they are."[33] He maintains that the movement from "concrete reality" to abstraction distances one from truth, which is found in the practical.[34] The question is not: can doctrines be argued well in the abstract, but will they help us to overcome our problems?[35]

Of course, Western Christian thought is not uniquely abstract, as Western Christians are concerned with practical matters and African Christians do not ignore doctrine. The tendencies of each system of thought, however, bring about different sets of questions that are asked in interreligious encounter. Western systems of thought tend to understand that religions may be evaluated as similar or distant according to degrees of agreement in doctrine.[36] Therefore, the doctrines of God in Islam and Christianity may be compared to

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[29] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 147.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 148.

[32] See section 9.2 of this chapter.

[33] Nkemnkia, *African Vitalogy*, 192.

[34] Ibid., 193-195.

[35] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 147-148.

[36] See, for example, DiNoia, who describes how Christians evaluate other religions in terms of doctrinal criteria. J. A. DiNoia, *The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 19-21, 26.

decide if Muslims and Christians worship the same God.[37] Questions concerning the Qur'ān are similar. If the Qur'ān can be determined to contain revelation, then there is truth in Islam.[38]

The African emphasis on concrete reality demands to know what a particular religion contributes to life. A hypothetical example may help to explain. The Western questions concerning the Qur'ān are inverted; if Islam were found to enhance life (as Christian faith does according to African Christians), then there would be reason to believe that the Qur'ān contains revelation from God.

9.3.1 Do Muslims and Christians Worship the Same God?

Kenyan Christian scholars and the popular Christian literature address the question: Do Muslims worship the same God as Christians? This is the same question that Kibicho asked concerning *Ngai* and the Christian God. A corollary to this question is: if Muslims do not worship the same God, then who is Allah? The answers provided by the Kenyan Christian scholars will be discussed first, then those of the popular Christian literature.

9.3.1.1 Scholarly Christian Writing

Kenyan mainline scholars generally affirm that both Christians and Muslims worship the same God, though this seems to be assumed rather than argued. Mugambi, for example, speaks of Islam, Judaism, Christianity and African Religion as being "Abrahamic faiths,"[39] implying that the four religions share a belief in the same God. Wandera writes of God revealing His will and "saving knowledge" in Islam[40] as well as in Christian faith, indicating

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[37] See a negative evaluation in Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2002). For a more positive approach see A. Christian van Gorder, *No God but God: A Path to Muslim-Christian Dialogue on God's Nature* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).

[38] See Gerald R. McDermott, *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions? Jesus, Revelation and Religious Traditions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), especially chapter 9.

[39] Mugambi, "Responsible Leadership in Education," 30. See chapter 6.3.7.

[40] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104. See chapter 6.2.3.

his affirmation that both Christians and Muslims worship the same God. Neither author, however, provides any argument to demonstrate why they come to this conclusion.

Wijsen, who did his field study among the Sukuma of Tanzania, notes that they believe that all religions are good, saying "*mungu mmoja, dini mbalimbali*," which means one God, many religions in Swahili.[41] It seems possible that Kenyan mainline scholars are making a similar assumption, based upon analogous understandings in their own African traditions.[42] Both Mugambi[43] and Wandera[44] acknowledge the influence of Kibicho on their theology, which would confirm an African tradition-specific influence.

Maina offers an argument to show that Muslims and Christians worship the same God; he cites the story of Jesus speaking in the synagogue in Nazareth from Luke 4:16-30. In this passage Jesus says that Elijah was sent to a widow in the Gentile city of Zarephath, rather than to a widow in Israel. Then he says that though there were many lepers in Israel, God healed Naaman, the Syrian. Maina interprets these episodes as examples of Jesus teaching that God is equally the God of the Gentiles and of Israel.[45] It then follows that Christians and Muslims are "children of one God."[46] The pragmatic acts of healing and blessing demonstrate this truth for Maina, which firmly places his argumentation within a specific tradition informed by the African religious heritage. As Wijsen says, the biblical tradition is also pragmatic;[47] therefore, Maina's argument may be understood to reflect both traditions to

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[41] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 148.

[42] Kenyan philosopher Odera Oruka in researching sage philosophers also found Kenyan sages who expressed the idea that all religions worship the same God. See H. Odera Oruka, "Stephen M'Mukindia Kithanje," in *Sagacious Reasoning: Henry Odera Oruka in Memoriam*, ed. Anke Graness and Kai Kresse, (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1999). Oruka, *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy*, 57.

[43] Mugambi, "Foreword."

[44] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104.

[45] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 178.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 149.

which he is part, African and Christian, though it does not reflect a typical Western Christian argument.

A preliminary theological statement can be made about a Kenyan mainline scholarly understanding of Allah. Allah is the same as the Father of Jesus Christ, because Allah also provides blessing, healing and goodness to Muslims as the Father of Jesus Christ provides these for Christians. One might also phrase it as God's vital force is available to Muslims through Allah, as it is available to Christians through the Father of Jesus Christ, and since God is the unique source of vital force, which brings healing and enhances life,[48] then both Allah and the Father of Jesus Christ must be one and the same.

Bennett provides a helpful categorisation for interreligious encounter, classifying them as conciliatory or confrontational.[49] These scholars universally attempt to be conciliatory in their approach to Islam.[50] However, an Islamic understanding of Allah is not used as the basis for their approach. Instead, God as known from the African religious heritage (and from Christianity) is applied to Allah. This position is open to acceptance of Muslims as fellow pilgrims, but it is not necessarily open to acceptance of Islam *qua* Islam.[51]

9.3.1.2   Popular Christian Writing

The writers of the popular Christian literature are not engaged in the same type of careful academic reflection as the Kenyan Christian scholars. Yet these authors write from certain distinctive theological – albeit less reflective – perspectives. These underlying

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[48] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 16.

[49] Clinton Bennett, *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations* (London: Continuum, 2008), 9.

[50] Some individual scholars seem to advocate inclusivism, while others support pluralism. For the purposes of this study, it is more significant that all of them have conciliatory approaches.

[51] This is a basic criticism that DiNoia and Heim level against the inclusivist and pluralist theological positions. DiNoia, *The Diversity of Religions*, see especially chapter 1. S. Mark Heim, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends.*, ed. Alan G. Padgett, Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), see especially the introduction.

theological assumptions that form their understandings of Islam and interreligious issues are examined. Through rescripting this implicit theology can be elicited and examined.[52]

In the popular Christian literature, one can detect a type of henotheism in which Allah is a subordinate, possibly evil, spiritual power. When referring to Allah, the writers usually claim that he is a false god,[53] which does not seem to mean non-existent (having no ontological reality) but an existing god that should not be worshiped. Allah is also understood to have spiritual power.[54] This spiritual power is, however, viewed to be inferior to the spiritual power of the Christian God. Prayer, evangelism and worship are the primary means used to overcome the spiritual power of Islam.

Many African ethnic groups have believed in what Idowu called a diffused monotheism, meaning that there is one creator God under whom exist various assistant divinities.[55] It is plausible that Allah is understood in a similar manner by the Neo-Pentecostal writers of the popular literature. However, within African Pentecostal theology these assistant divinities have undergone a transformation, now being generally viewed as demons.[56] Therefore, Allah is perceived as a demon of similar rank to the divinities of African Religion.[57]

The above shows how the popular literature views Allah, but it does not explain why these writers believe that the God worshiped by Christians and Allah worshiped by Muslims are not the same God. Kiragu provides a hint when he discusses the poverty of Muslim

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[52] See chapter 1.2.4.
[53] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 10. Ayieko, "Don't Mix with Them, Interfaith Bishops Told." Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.
[54] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23.
[55] See chapter 3.3.
[56] Asamoah-Gyadu, "Mission to 'Set the Captives Free'," 391.
[57] See for example, Kitavi, "Satanic Priesthoods."

regions in Kenya.[58] Poverty in North Eastern Province and the Coast Province is understood to be caused by the population's spiritual dedication to Allah. The relative poverty of these provinces is not used as proof that Allah is not God, but Kiragu's statement gives a clearer insight into the cosmology that influences the theological point of view.

In African Religion the spiritual world influences human life.[59] Demonic or evil spirits are not part of the traditional cosmology, but evil happens through the human scheme of witchcraft.[60] However, in the coming of Christianity moral dualism was introduced into the spiritual world producing cosmic dualism.[61] Healing, blessing, prosperity, etc. continue to be understood as having their source in the spiritual power (or vital force) of the one God through the Holy Spirit, but the dualism – now transferred to the spiritual world – means that it is currently understood that there are spiritual forces (or beings) opposed to the one God, who have their own, lesser, spiritual power. These spiritual forces rob people and communities of power (or vital force), rather than enhance it. Thus the above argument about poverty in Muslim provinces of Kenya demonstrates (for its readers) that Allah does not and cannot bless these areas and its people, but rather he robs these communities of vital force. Allah, therefore, cannot be the true God. If Allah were the true God, then these areas would not suffer such poverty.

One reason that Neo-Pentecostal leaders insist upon such views of Allah is that ordinary church members frequently hold polyontological beliefs[62] (i.e. there are multiple ontological sources of blessing). Leaders can discourage members from seeking blessing from a known Muslim source of power by the insisting that Allah is demonic and harmful to life.

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[58] Kiragu, "Vision 2030 and God's Destiny for Kenya," 7.
[59] Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 75, 204. See chapter 3.1 and 3.3.
[60] Magesa, *African Religion*, 167.
[61] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 65.
[62] See chapters 3.3.

A preliminary theological statement from a Pentecostal perspective on a Kenyan Christian understanding of Allah can be made. Allah is not a source of blessing, as there is only one true source of blessing, which is the Father of Jesus Christ; all other spirits or gods, who claim to bless independently of Christian faith, are in reality demonic in origin. Therefore, Allah is not god but of demonic origin.

According to Bennett's categorisation the Kenyan Pentecostal position is confrontational.[63] Regarding Allah as demonic must make interreligious dialogue difficult.[64] In fact, there is little interest in dialogue, as Muslims remain primarily objects of evangelism, or even as people to be avoided on a personal level.[65]

9.3.1.3 Conclusion.

Different conclusions are reached based on arguments concerning the concept of being blessed by God in community. Mainline scholars have intentionally interacted with their own African religious and cultural heritage,[66] finding continuity between it and the more recently arrived Christian faith. This interreligious dialogue with their own religious heritage has allowed them to selectively retain elements of the traditional cosmology that permits them to view Allah as the same as the Father of Jesus Christ. To put this in another way, they have adapted a pluralist (or inclusivist) theology of God based on tradition-specific cosmological elements from the African religious heritage. Allah, understood to be capable of blessing and creating community, is deemed to be the same as the Christian God.

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[63] Bennett, *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations*, 9.

[64] However, Ibrahim Omondi, pastor of Dove Fellowship in Nairobi, has expressed to me similar ideas concerning Allah, yet he has participated in interreligious forums, and claims to be good friends with Muslim participants.

[65] In speaking with Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals, I've found that friendships with Muslims were generally not sought, nor encouraged. Though there are some notable exceptions.

[66] Tinyiko Maluleke, "Half a Century of African Christian Theologies: Elements of the Emerging Agenda for the Twenty-First Century " in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu Kalu, (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007), 415.

Pentecostalism, as a global movement, has viewed the world "as torn between dualistic forces."[67] Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals have thus interacted less positively with their own African religious heritage,[68] where they often find demonic spirits. The dualistic cosmology has been reinforced through exposure to Western and African Pentecostal[69] literature on spiritual warfare that is widely available in Kenyan Christian bookstores.[70] The dualistic cosmology, grafted into the traditional one, can be seen in the popular literature where Allah is understood to be incapable of blessing and creating healthy community; therefore, Allah cannot be identical to the Christian God.

9.3.2 What is the Goal of Religion?

In this section the goal of religion[71] will be examined, not necessarily in its general sense, but as it relates to an interreligious relationship with Islam. The religious goal is the formation of healthy community, by which is meant a community that produces prosperity, peace and the general well-being of its people. The other questions to be discussed later are in reality subsets of this question concerning the religious goal. The related questions will then include a deeper look at what this community is[72] and the problem that must be overcome to form this community.[73]

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[67] Birgit Meyer, "Pentecostalism and Globalization," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan H. Anderson et al., The Anthropology of Christianity (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 118.

[68] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 112.

[69] Some examples are: Wilson Mamboleo, *Prayer Warfare Declared* (Nairobi: Prayer and Word Publications, 2003). Nancy Koech, *Snatched from Satan's Claws* (Nairobi: End-Time Evangelistic Ministries, 2002).

[70] Hackett, "Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond," 63.

[71] DiNoia uses the term "aim of life" and Heim uses "religious aim" or "religious end" to express similar ideas.

[72] See chapter 9.3.3.

[73] See chapter 9.3.4.

9.3.2.1 Scholarly Christian Writing

Only Wandera specifically mentions salvation as a goal of religion,[74] writing that God has left a "saving knowledge" of himself in other faith traditions.[75] However, the concept of a saving knowledge is not defined any further. In none of the writings is there any hint of eschatological salvation as the goal of religious faith. Wachege, a Kenyan Catholic priest, acknowledges the eschatological aspect of Christian salvation,[76] but insists that African understandings of salvation emphasize life as it is lived daily in community.[77] The writers examined would most likely agree with Wachege that salvation has a future aspect, but their primary concern is "living in salvation."[78]

Maina advocates for interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians so that they may "work together for the common good" of Kenya.[79] This will lead to a better Kenyan community.[80] Wandera also expresses that peace between Muslims and Christians would be the result of a pluralist theology.[81] Kubai is also concerned with "peaceful co-existence."[82] Mugambi's theology of reconstruction seeks to include Muslims and Christians working together in a nation-building project.[83]

The religious goal is understood to be the formation of a healthy community that enhances the lives of those who participate in the community. Though the writers don't use this exact vocabulary (i.e. healthy community), it accurately reflects their ideas. Mugambi, for

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[74] Salvation is generally thought of as the "Christian religious end." Heim, *Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends*, 19.

[75] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104. See chapter 6.2.3.

[76] Wachege, *Salvation and Being Saved*, 45.

[77] Ibid., 120.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Maina, "Historical Roots of Conflict," 99. See chapter 6.2.1.

[80] Maina, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Kenya," 179.

[81] Wandera, "Mihadhara in Nairobi," 104. See chapter 6.2.3.

[82] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 51. See chapter 6.2.2.

[83] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 30, 81. See chapter 6.3.7.

example, evaluates the Prophet Muhammad in terms of having created a viable and united community out of a tribally divided Arabian society.[84]

Since both Islam and Christianity are understood as capable of creating healthy community, interreligious dialogue contributes to better understanding, which allows Muslims and Christians to work together to create a better community in Kenya. They can work together for the prosperity of Kenya, because both religions offer the prospect of creating healthy community. This is not understood as a practical goal of interreligious dialogue in addition to other theological goals, but the creation of healthy community is viewed as a primary theological goal. Interreligious dialogue, rather than seeking clarity in doctrinal understanding, has the creation of community as its religious goal. Ideally, interreligious dialogue becomes palaver, which Bujo explains is a model based on traditional African dialogical approaches to resolving new issues that confront the community.[85] Therefore, palaver is the concern of the entire community rather than the concern of uniquely educated individuals, which tends to be the Western pattern of interreligious dialogue.

However, interreligious dialogue, as it has been practiced in Kenya[86] (and in Africa in general), is inclined to follow a Western imported pattern in which scholars of each faith present papers on topics from their own religion's perspective. African scholars, rather than presenting papers on theological topics, more often speak of the socio-cultural issues involved in interreligious relations. As Yahya insightfully claims, each religious group points out the need for tolerance as well as the problems that the other religion has caused for their own

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[84] Mugambi, "Muhammad as the Founder of Islam," 37.See chapter 6.3.1.

[85] Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue between North and South*, trans., C.N. Nganda (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998). See Bujo's discussion of palaver as ethical method, 36-42.

[86] Frederic Ntedika Mvumbi, ed. *Interfaith Dialogue: Towards a Culture of Working Together* (Nairobi: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2009). Richard Nnyombi, ed. *Christian-Muslim Reflection*, Tangaza Occasional Papers, 9 (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000). Stenger, Wandera, and Hannon, eds., *Christian-Muslim Co-Existence in Eastern Africa*.

group.[87] The goals of interreligious dialogue have corresponded with those of palaver (i.e. finding communal solutions to problems, conciliation between Christians and Muslims to work together for the common good, etc.); however, the use of non-African methods in dialogue has perhaps hindered the achievement of their goals.

Wijsen indicates that a "theory of interreligious relations from an African perspective" will be both "theological and socio-scientific."[88] While Wijsen is undoubtedly correct, Kenyan mainline scholars consider the empirical socio-scientific aspect to be a vital component of the theological process.[89] Thus a Kenyan Christian theology of religion in regards to Islam empirically examines the (religio-) historical, social, political and economic facets of Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya in order to ascertain ways to work together to build better community, because authentic, healthy, peaceful, African community is the theological goal.

9.3.2.2. Popular Christian Writing

Lonsdale has written that evangelical (includes Neo-Pentecostal) churches in Kenya are characterised by a concern with personal salvation and life after death.[90] However, in examining the popular Christian literature on Islam, very few references to life after death were found. In the most significant such reference Lai says that Muslims and Christians are not "all going to heaven using different roads."[91] There are also two references to Muslims converting and finding salvation through the Gospel,[92] though salvation is not further defined.

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[87] Yahya, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa South of the Sahara," 18-26.

[88] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 177.

[89] See especially Mugambi and others writing on a theology of reconstruction.

[90] Lonsdale, "Compromised Critics," 10.

[91] Ayieko, "Don't Mix with Them, Interfaith Bishops Told," 3. See chapter 7.4.3.

[92] "Evangelistic Resource Center," 23. See chapter 7.6. Michanjo, "Nanyuki in Spiritual Uplift," 3. See chapter 7.7.

To obtain more perspective on the views found in popular Christian literature on personal salvation and life after death, twelve issues of five different magazines were randomly selected and examined for references to these teachings.[93] Articles ranged from those promoting healthy lifestyles to advice on marriage and parenting. Advice on steps to obtain blessings (e.g. children, success, prosperity) were among the more common types of articles. Personal salvation was referred to with relative frequency. Forgiveness of sins and personal ethical transformation were normally viewed as the signs of salvation. Only very rarely were any references made to any sort of life beyond an earthly one, usually a single statement about final judgement. Only one article could be described as having eschatological salvation as a major theme.[94] Personal salvation, which appears to be defined in terms of ethical change and receiving blessings, was one important theme in these magazines. It is probable that a heavenly life after death was assumed for Christians, though not emphasized. The principle emphasis was consistently on receiving some type of blessing in this life. Personal salvation and receiving blessing (i.e. vital force) are linked as the religious goal.[95]

The religious goal in the conversion narratives examined in chapter seven is primarily concerned with overcoming difficulties in life to obtain success in some form. The success is usually personal, such as Rose Muhando becoming a well-known Gospel singer,[96] or Joseph Njuguna overcoming heroin addiction to become a pastor.[97] The spiritual power of the Holy Spirit is most commonly cited as the reason that one is able to overcome certain obstacles,

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[93] *EndTime Christian News*, March 2008. *EndTime Christian News*, July 2008. *God's Champions*, September 2007. *Mercy Missions*, Feb-April, 2009. *Revival Springs*, October 2009. *Revival Springs*, February 2010. *Revival Springs*, March, 2010. *The Voice of Restoration*, Nos. 3, 4, & 5.

[94] Esther Kimani, "Has Your Love Grown Cold," *Revival Springs*, October 2009, 29.

[95] This understanding of salvation is not unique to Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals, but relatively common among Pentecostals around the world. Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 91.

[96] Onamu, "Rise Up, Go and Serve Me." See chapter 7.2.1.

[97] Njuguna, "I Hate You Heroin." See chapter 7.3.2.

which include demonic spiritual powers. Christian community may also be portrayed as helping one to succeed, such as in the story of Shakira Asia.[98]

In writings that are not conversion narratives the primary religious goal is the future success of Kenya,[99] sometimes expressed as possessing the land.[100] Muriithi views national unity as a religious goal for Kenya.[101] In these understandings the socio-economic and political advancement of Kenya is sought through spiritual allegiance to Christ[102] rather than through historical and socio-scientific analysis of the situation as was seen in the writings of Kenyan mainline scholars.

As seen in the previous section, mainline scholars view the goal of religion as building healthy community. The popular literature demonstrates a similar understanding, though more emphasis is often placed on the individual's success within the community. The successful individual is expected to contribute towards the community's success. There is also a more mystical element in the Pentecostal conception found in the popular literature, viewing the Holy Spirit as directly enabling health and prosperity. The understanding of community also seems to be different, but this will be looked at more in chapter 9.3.3.

The religious goal is blessing from God, which results in personal and communal success.[103] This blessing is understood to be only available through relationship with Jesus Christ. One could, therefore, say that according to the popular Christian literature the religious goal in relation to Islam is to assure allegiance to Christ which will ensure that individual and

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[98] Kimani, "Shakira Asia." See chapter 7.2.2.

[99] Wambugu and Wanjiru, "The Time is Now." See chapter 7.5.1.

[100] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 10. See chapter 7.4.2.

[101] Muriithi, *Kenya Arise*. See chapter 7.5.4.

[102] Gifford claims that the success theology of the Neo-Pentecostal churches rarely extends beyond the personal to include the entire nation. However, this theme is relatively common in the magazines that were examined.

[103] See Lovemore Togarasei, "The Pentecostal Prosperity Gospel in African Contexts of Poverty: An Appraisal," *Exchange* 40, no. 4 (2011): 345-348.

communal success may be obtained. This success may come through the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit or through the assistance of a caring Christian community. Islam may be viewed as either a part of the spiritual background over against which the narrative of success is played, or Islam may be understood as an obstacle that must be overcome in order for success to be achieved.

9.3.2.3 Conclusion

In the scholarly and popular writings the religious goal is practical and related to the socio-economic aspect of life in Kenya, which is understood as healthy community from an African religious perspective. The mainline scholars generally regard success in terms of economic development for the community. The economic position of the individual is assumed to fit within the progress of the community. The popular writing speaks more in terms of individual success, though personal success is understood to occur within a healthy community and to contribute to it. Mainline scholars are able to include Islam as a potential partner in developing (or reconstructing) the society to bring about more socio-economic progress for all. The popular literature tends to view Islam as primarily a spiritual hindrance to success.

9.3.3 What and Who are Community?

As was seen earlier (9.3.2) when discussing the religious goal, both the scholarly and popular writing view the formation of healthy community as an essential goal. Community is broadly understood here as referring to a group or organisation beyond the individual. This section will take a closer look at the idea of community, and it will also look at who is considered to be a part of the community. While community is emphasized in both types of writing, they differ in their understandings of the nature of community and of who belongs in the community.

9.3.3.1   Scholarly Christian Writing

A definition of the community envisioned in the religious goals (9.3.2) may be ascertained through examining the writings of the Kenyan mainline scholars. Community may be defined as people living peacefully and united[104] so that they are able to work together for the common good.[105] This definition should be viewed in the context of a theology of interreligious relations and not in the framework of an ecclesiology.

Mugambi writes of "the Church as a utopian community,"[106] indicating that it is a community that is different from the world context in which it is located, but its members are also integral parts of the larger societal community to which they belong. In the larger community Christians should "provide exemplary leadership"[107] and be models of morality and justice. He maintains that African churches will need to focus less on their denominational and missionary heritage and more on an African-oriented ecumenism in order to meet this challenge.[108] From the point of view of Kenyan mainline scholars the goal of religion in interreligious perspective is the building of this larger societal community.

Mugambi understands religion to play a foundational role in reconstructing society. He dismisses the ideology of "secularisation"[109] as an "erroneous" European import that ignores "the fact that individuals are citizens at the same time that they are worshippers."[110] It is in this religious vein that Christians and Muslims are to work together, though being of different faiths, in order to reconstruct a better society.

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[104] Mugambi, "Religious Heritage of Arabia." Living together peacefully is also discussed in some manner by Maina, Kubai, Wandera, Muthei, etc.

[105] Maina, "Historical Roots of Conflict," 99.

[106] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 107.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 108-109.

[109] Mugambi, "Religion and Social Reconstruction in Postcolonial Africa," 13.

[110] Ibid., 14.

Maina, Kubai and Wandera[111] see a competition in Kenya between Muslim and Christian communities, impeding the unity and peaceful relations needed to work together that would make for an interreligious national community. The community, as expressed in the definition, is therefore a goal to be strived for through better understanding and dialogue. However, since the envisioned community is Kenyan society, it does presently exist in reality but not in its theologically ideal form.

As was seen earlier (9.3.2), the religious goal as understood by Kenyan mainline scholars is the creation of healthy community, implying socio-economic progress. It has been shown that this community consists of more than the church community to include the entire Kenyan society, so that the religious goal is to create a better, more socially and economically advanced Kenya. The African religious ideal for the local and ethnic community is transferred to the nation. The Church is understood to have a role in this process as a "utopian community" in Kenyan Protestant thought. The national community, however, being larger than the Church also includes Muslims, who are invited to work together with Christians to help create this better society.

Without denying the genuine nature of their invitation towards Muslims, one weakness of the position of Kenyan mainline scholars is that their understanding of a healthy community is based upon two primary sources: the Christian Bible and African tradition. There is very little indication that the Muslim community has been consulted about its vision for the future of Kenyan society or its notion of the good society.[112] Muslims have been invited to participate in an African Christian endeavour, and those inviting them do not appear to be aware of this contradiction.

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[111] See chapters 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 respectively.

[112] Kubai has recognized that Muslims and Christians lack a mutual understanding of the problems and issues facing Kenyan society. Kubai, "Striving in Faith," 12.

9.3.3.2. Popular Christian Writing

The discussion of community takes two primary forms in popular literature. First, community is seen as the church community consisting primarily of Pentecostal Christians. This community is to expand to the detriment of other communities through evangelism[113] or through building community altars.[114] Comparisons are also made between the Christian community and the Muslim community. For example, in the conversion narratives of Rose Muhando,[115] Shakira Asia[116] and Veronicah Wanjiru Njoroge[117] the Christian community is portrayed as helping these women, while the Muslim community is depicted as adversely affecting their lives. Competition is also found between the Christian community and the Muslim community over political issues,[118] in getting permits for Christian evangelistic 'crusades,'[119] and even in the growing prosperity among Muslims.[120]

The popular literature also seems to perceive more fluidity between the Christian and the Muslim community than do mainline scholars.[121] The popular literature demonstrates an interest in evangelising Muslims and a concern that Christians may convert to Islam.[122] This seems to arise from a polyontological world view, where Islam with spiritual, economic or political power may represent an alternative source for those seeking blessing.

The church as community figures more prominently in the popular literature of Neo-Pentecostals than in the mainline scholarly writing. Perhaps the best expression of this ecclesiology comes from Anderson: "These churches see themselves as the born-again people

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[113] Chapter 7.5.2.

[114] Chapter 7.4.2. Conversion would also be viewed as the end result of the use of community altars.

[115] Chapter 7.2.1.

[116] Chapter 7.2.2.

[117] Chapter 7.2.3.

[118] Chapter 7.5.1.

[119] Chapter 7.5.3.

[120] Chapter 7.6.

[121] Data, however, suggests that there is in reality very little movement between the two communities.

[122] See especially the conversion narratives and chapter 7.5.2 and 7.6.

of God, with a strong sense of belonging to the community of God's people" with an "identity as a separated and egalitarian community with democratic access to spiritual power, whose primary purpose is to promote their cause to those outside."[123] The church understands itself to be in opposition to the world, which includes Islam, and its primary means of relating to the world is Christian evangelical witness and mission. Dualistic images of light and darkness are often used to reinforce the strong boundaries between the Church and the world.[124] This theological point of view necessitates that the Muslim community be seen as inferior to the Neo-Pentecostal Christian community.

Second, community is also understood in the sense of the larger societal community, similar to what is found among mainline scholars. This is sometimes expressed in terms such as "possessing the land,"[125] where the Neo-Pentecostal community is seen to spiritually take the nation in order for the national community to receive blessing. Muriithi's commentary on the Kenyan national anthem is a profound example of this perception of community, as she calls upon Kenyans to unite as one community around a Christian conception of God.[126] Wanjiru views the Christian and Muslim community to be in competition over the future of the greater Kenyan community.[127]

The blessings of God, usually understood to be in the form of increased economic prosperity and geopolitical importance, upon Kenya do not depend upon all Kenyans being converted to Pentecostal Christianity. However, an aura of Christian faith, symbols and values is expected of government and of the national community as a whole in some non-descript

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[123] Allan H. Anderson, "The Newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches: The Shape of Future Christianity in Africa?," *Pneuma* 24, no. 2 (2002): 183.

[124] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 139.

[125] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 10.

[126] Chapter 7.5.4.

[127] Chapter 7.5.1.

way. For example, Githii's *Exposing and Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya*[128] calls for the destruction of many non-Christian symbols in government buildings,[129] the removal of the word *Harambee* from the currency,[130] etc. Some allegedly Masonic symbols were destroyed at Saint Andrew's Presbyterian Church while Githii was moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.[131] Githii's prescriptions for ridding certain physical symbols from certain places in Kenya is very specific, and he believes that this will bring about more prosperity and better governance by ridding public places of physical (sacramental) connections to evil spirits, but he does not have a true plan of action beyond that.

A brief look at a sermon by Teresia Wairimu in which she uses the story of Nehemiah to speak of the rebuilding of Kenya,[132] using the same biblical story and similar vocabulary to Mugambi's theology of reconstruction,[133] will help to clarify the Pentecostal understanding of the larger national community and how it receives blessing from God. She speaks of rebuilding the nation by calling upon her listeners to build a metaphorical (or spiritual) wall around the nation.[134] The wall symbolises prayer that will end corruption in Kenya and make Jesus Christ the "foundation" of the nation. This process also includes the moral cleansing of the Kenyan church so that corruption is removed from it.[135] Other actions included are: bringing God into the schools, hospitals and parliament,[136] and the election of "godly people" to political office.[137] This somewhat theocratic vision is said to be achieved through spiritual

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[128] David Githii, *Exposing and Conquering Satanic Forces over Kenya*, 2nd ed. (Nairobi: Fragrancia Books, 2008).

[129] Ibid., 59-68.

[130] Ibid., 41-58. Githii understands the term, *Harambee*, to be derived from a Hindu goddess.

[131] Ibid., 96-105.

[132] Teresia Wairimu, "Come, Let Us Rebuild Our Nation," *Revival Springs*, June 2001.

[133] Mugambi, *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*.

[134] Wairimu, "Come, Let Us Rebuild Our Nation," 12.

[135] Ibid., 13.

[136] Ibid., 12.

[137] Ibid., 13.

warfare.[138] The economic blessing that Kenya would receive from God comes through the mystical power of God. This is all possible because it has been prophesied that God will make Kenya "a springboard of revival"[139] and missions to the rest of the world.

Wairimu's vision of the reconstruction of Kenya is very different from Mugambi's. She does not employ socio-scientific analysis, only speaking of corruption generally. Reconstruction (to use Mugambi's term) occurs through religious purification and the ensuing mystical power of God, rather than through the contributions of Kenyans working together towards a common goal. Mugambi calls all Kenyans together, irrespective of their faith, to integrity, national pride and hard work; whereas, Wairimu calls only Christians of a certain type together to pray and act against vices, those perceived to be behind the vices, and ultimately against the demons behind it all.

Wairimu demonstrates what Kalu has called an emerging Pentecostal "theology of engagement"[140] in which Pentecostals have rejected the old missionary teaching that good Christians avoid politics, so that they are now willing to address national issues and even participate in democratic elections. Spiritual warfare, the rule of the saints, redemption of the land and prayer are the primary methods by which they "act with the vision of a theocracy."[141] Wairimu and other (Neo)Pentecostal preachers and writers who express similar ideas have some theological naivety concerning their theocratic vision. There is not only a lack of any sort of programme for instituting or operating a theocratic society, but the full implications of this vision have not been examined. It is doubtful that they view themselves as advocates of

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[138] Wairimu, "Come, Let Us Rebuild Our Nation," 14. See chapter 7.4.1 for more on spiritual warfare.

[139] Ibid., 12. The idea, that Kenya has been prophesied to be a 'springboard of revival' to the nations, is very common and can be found in many articles in the popular Christian magazines.

[140] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 215.

[141] Ibid., 220.

theocracy.[142] Their conception seems to be that a healthy community can only be formed if

certain conditions are met, and these conditions are theocratic in appearance.

In the Kenyan popular Christian literature there are two notions of community that

impact upon a theology of religions in relation to Islam. First, the Church is a community of

born-again Christians who stand in dualistic opposition to the Muslim community, and their

primary means of interaction with Muslims should be mission-oriented. Second, community

may also be understood to encompass the entire land of Kenya, whose governing should be

based upon the foundation of God, the Father of Jesus Christ. There is little expression of

animosity towards Muslims,[143] but the place of Muslims in the larger society has not been

examined. Therefore, one could say that the popular writing shows a rather unfocused

theocratic vision for the national community that has not yet addressed the issue of living

together in a religiously plural community. At present there does not seem to be an interest in

this question. Muslims are perceived, even in this larger sense of a national community, as

primarily targets of evangelism and mission.[144]

The cosmic dualism seen earlier (9.3.1.2) renders a religious encounter with the larger,

religiously plural, national community a difficult puzzle to solve. It raises the question of how

Neo-Pentecostals (who produce the popular literature) can engage positively with Muslims,

whom they deem to be influenced by the demonic. If Neo-Pentecostals wish to be politically

active in Kenya, evangelism can no longer function as the *only* religiously acceptable means

by which Neo-Pentecostals may relate to Muslims. Any form of democratic political

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[142] Githii, for example, helped to form the *Agano* (Testament in Swahili) Party for the 2007 elections. This party was criticized as being theocratic, which Githii and other Christians vehemently denied.

[143] Righa's letter to the editor may be an exception. Chapter 7.5.3. The controversy of the *kadhi* courts has also been rancorous, though often demonstrating more fear than animosity.

[144] See, for example, the interview with Isaac Kiragu, who proposes evangelism as a solution to potential political problems with Muslims. (Chapter 7.5.2) See also, the proposed solution for the perceived problem of growing Muslim influence and economic prosperity, which is evangelism. (Chapter 7.6).

involvement based on respect for human rights will necessitate a reciprocal relationship that is more willing to listen and compromise than it is to preach and dictate.

Pentecostal theologian, Amos Yong's argument for "hospitality as interreligious praxis that recognizes people of all faiths are aliens and strangers but also neighbours one to another,"[145] should provide a theological means for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals to "embrace"[146] the Muslim Other in ways of reconciliation. Hospitality remains a religious and cultural value that resonates in African society in general and African Christianity in particular.[147] Kitavi demonstrates this when he writes that people of all religions are welcome to pray at the community altar, if they leave their God behind and worship Jesus.[148] Value is placed upon hospitality in a religiously plural neighbourhood; however, it conflicts with his view of interfaith prayer and other religions in general. The question becomes: Can Kenyan Pentecostals live in hospitality with Muslims in contexts that are not specifically religious?[149]

The task for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals is to discover hospitality outside of their religious in-group by entering into mutual relationships as both guest and host with Muslims. Yong's theological method offers an advantage – for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals – over pluralist and inclusivist theologies, because Yong maintains a particularist[150] theology while offering a conciliatory approach to the religious Other.[151]

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[145] Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbor.*, ed. William Burrows, Faith Meets Faith (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 159.

[146] For this metaphor see Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*.

[147] Julius Mutugi Gathogo, "African Hospitality: Is it Compatible with the Ideal Christ's Hospitality?," *Swedish Missiological Themes* 94, no. 1 (2006): 23-24.

[148] Kitavi, "Building a Godly Community Altar," 8. Chapter 7.4.2.

[149] While Neo-Pentecostal Christians produce this popular literature, its implicit theology is also shared with other Pentecostals and Charismatics.

[150] While this position has generally been labeled 'exclusivist', those who hold to this position prefer the term, 'particularist'. For example, see Alistair E. McGrath, "A Particularist View: A Post-Enlightenment Approach," in *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, ed. Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996).

[151] Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 131-133.

9.3.3.3 Conclusion

The formation of healthy community is important in the theological perspectives of both Kenyan scholars and Neo-Pentecostals. The popular literature emphasizes the place of individuals more than the mainline scholars. Both speak of two communities: the church and the nation. For Kenyan mainline scholars the church functions within the nation, working for the nation by providing moral and competent leaders, by contributing intellectually to social and political processes, and by being an example. Since the church is one entity within the nation that is working for the nation, Islam is accepted as another community working for the nation.

In the popular Christian writing the church is prioritised. In relation to the nation, the church is to assume the role of leadership. Informed by a naïve theocratic vision, the popular literature shows a belief that Christian values, symbols, and politicians should govern in Kenya. It is thought that God will then reward the nation with prosperity and peace. There is no space for Islam within this vision. Some (non-Kenyan) Pentecostal theologians, such as Yong, have found theological means to provide space for the religious Other through the biblical understanding of hospitality. While Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals (who produce the popular literature) have not adapted this approach, it could offer a possibility for improved relations with Muslims in the future in theologically acceptable ways.

9.3.4 What is the Problem?

In a previous section it was seen that success and economic progress, understood as healthy community, are viewed as a principle religious goal. This section will look at the problem(s) that makes reaching the religious goal difficult. Again, this will be examined especially as it relates to Islam. The source of the problem(s) is viewed as external in both scholarly and popular writing, though the actual source differs.

9.3.4.1 Scholarly Christian Writing

For mainline scholars the problems that have prevented Kenya from finding unity and socio-economic progress have clearly been colonialism, the missionary movement and neo-colonial structures.[152] Concerning Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya, conflicts are attributed to these same sources, and occasionally to external circumstances in the Arab Muslim world. The tensions and conflicts between Muslims and Christians are viewed as one reason that Kenya is not able to unite and progress socially, politically and economically.

Kubai writes:

> Education in Kenya was in the hands of Christian missionaries and it was the most promising instrument of evangelization. The result was the creation of a social system where the Christian denominations, buttressing their efforts to civilize the natives by providing western education, became effective agents of social promotion. In these circumstances, Muslims could not take advantage of western education and were left out of jobs, which required western educated personnel. Thus the Christians moved ahead and the Muslims fell behind.[153]

It was from among these educated Kenyan Christians that arose the modern political and economic elite of Kenya.[154] This quote provides a good example of how the three elements (colonialism, Western missions, and neo-colonialism) are understood to have led to conditions that cause estrangement between Muslims and Christians. These external factors are understood to be the reasons that Muslims and Christians in Kenya experience tension and lack of unity.

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[152] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*. See especially pages 71-81 and chapter 9, (215-241). Gifford is particularly critical of the tendency of Kenyan theologians and Christians to locate the source of Kenya's problems in the West, while not speaking out against internal political corruption.

[153] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 35.

[154] Ibid.

External Islamic movements are also seen to be a source of the problems between Muslims and Christians.[155] Therefore, aggressive *da'wa*, such as *mihadhara*,[156] and the terrorist acts that have been committed in Kenya are attributed to Arab origins. While not stated explicitly it seems to be understood that African Muslims, who are not influenced by external Muslim movements, are then able to maintain their Africanness, which enables them to work together with African Christians for peace, unity and progress. It is then seen to be more difficult to work with Arab-influenced Muslims. Kubai also writes of the traditional Arab/savage dichotomy with which coastal Muslims scorned traditional Africans.[157] The quality that needs to be preserved (according to the mainline scholars) is Africanness.

The mainline scholars, who are not experts on Islam, view the problem similarly but with minor differences. For them the problem is that neither Christianity nor Islam properly respects African Religion and culture.[158] Mbiti found it problematic while growing up that Akamba Muslims seemed to reject the idea that the Akamba God could be identical to Allah.[159]

The theological problem, therefore, is that external agents, either Europeans or Arabs, have entered Africa and distorted the harmony, peace and progression of Africa. One might say that the original sin of Africa was colonial invasion (continuing in neo-colonial structures), which prevents Africa from reaching its God-given potential as genuinely African. The introduction of Christianity and Islam is not perceived negatively, as religion is

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[155] Maina, Kubai, Wandera and Mutei all discuss this to varying degrees.

[156] See chapter 6.2.3 and 6.2.4 on *mihadhara*.

[157] Kubai, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Kenya," 52.

[158] See chapter 6.3.7.

[159] Mbiti, "African Religion Looks at Islam," 162.

understood to be good,[160] but their external, non-African inculturations have brought disunity, tensions and conflict, which inhibit the formation of a healthy national community.

These scholars correctly identify colonialism and the missionary movement as external factors that created a situation in which Muslims are marginalised and tensions exist between the two communities.[161] However, the continued marginalisation (and resultant tension) is also partially attributable to actions of postcolonial Kenyan Christians in symbolic contestation with Islam in public spaces over the identity of Kenya.[162] This aspect is ignored in favour of an African versus foreigner ethical dualism. As might be suggested from the writings of Mudimbe,[163] the Otherness of Africa (or the Invention of Africa) by Europeans has been internalised by Kenyan Christians. Difference (i.e. being Other) then becomes the defining characteristic of Africanness, which creates a dichotomy opposed to that which is not African.

9.3.4.2.   Popular Christian Writing

In the various conversion narratives the protagonists have a variety of obstacles to overcome in order find success: disease,[164] drug addiction[165] and rejection.[166] Though evil spiritual powers are not directly mentioned in these narratives, African Pentecostal theology generally regards these obstacles to have spiritual origins.[167] In some narratives, while other problems are apparent, such as sinfulness, the primary problem is the presence and activity of

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[160] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 148.

[161] See chapter 5.

[162] See chapter 8.

[163] V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*, ed. Charles S. Bird and Ivan Karp, African Systems of Thought (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[164] Chapter 7.2.1 and 7.2.3.

[165] Chapter 7.3.2.

[166] Chapter 7.2.2 and 7.3.1.

[167] J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pulling Down Strongholds: Evangelism, Principalities and Powers and the African Pentecostal Imagination," *International Review of Mission* 96, no. 382/383 (2007): 307.

evil spirits.[168] In the non-narrative articles, evil spiritual powers are viewed as the actual

hindrance to the spread of true Christianity and thus to personal and communal success.[169]

The external agents that "prevent the Christian from realizing a positive destiny in

life"[170] are spiritual powers opposed to Jesus Christ rather than non-African intruders into

Africa. Islam is then one of the spiritual powers that is opposed to Jesus Christ that may

hinder an individual from achieving fulfilment in life. Islam is not necessarily highlighted for

special consideration, as it often blends into the spiritual background along with other

religious expressions that are deemed unacceptable, such as African Religion, Hinduism,

Catholicism, and Mainline Christianity. Kitavi also hints that Muslims are very involved with

spirits,[171] thus offering a comparison of Islam with African Religion.

However, in discussions of the political future of Kenya,[172] Islam assumes a more

prominent role as a major hindrance.[173] The successful future of Kenya is thought to depend

upon spiritual allegiance to Jesus Christ, as seen for example in Muriithi's commentary on the

Kenyan national anthem, which urges unity among all Kenyans based on Christian faith and

scriptures so that Kenya might prosper.[174]

Amidst these difficulties caused by evil spiritual powers, it is understood that – for

those who have faith in Jesus Christ – the power of the Holy Spirit will enable one to

overcome the difficulties and the opposing spiritual powers. While metaphors from the

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[168] Chapter 7.3.3 and 7.3.4 and 7.3.5.

[169] Chapter7.4.1 and 7.4.2 and 7.4.4.

[170] Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pulling Down Strongholds," 310.

[171] Kitavi, "Satanic Priesthoods," 10. Chapter 7.4.1.

[172] Chapter 7.5.

[173] Other hindrances are also discussed, for example, tribalism, corruption, the unfaithfulness of Christians, etc.

[174] Muriithi, *Kenya Arise*. Chapter 7.5.4.

domain of war are sometimes used, the primary means advocated to 'combat' Islam are prayer and evangelism.[175]

Kalu says that African Pentecostals have a "covenant theology," which contends that "human beings and communities relate to spiritual powers through covenants."[176] This theology results in understanding "Christian life as a power-encounter and spiritual battle."[177] The spiritual world is then viewed as determinant of what happens in the physical world.[178] Spiritual beings (or forces) that promote the successful life of individuals and the community are understood to be from God (e.g. angels and the Holy Spirit), whereas spiritual beings (or forces) that obstruct the fulfilment of individual or communal destiny are viewed as demonic. The Christian scriptures are used to define the spiritual domain, since only those beings or forces specifically mentioned in the Bible are understood to be real and existent. Thus any spirit that cannot be identified with God or an angel is necessarily demonic, resulting in the association of Islam (and other religions) with the demonic.

When Islam is associated with spirits, it is also linked with African Religion and the ways of the ontological past. Therefore, Islam is seen as retrogressive, incapable of leading people into the technologically modern era and modern economic success. Christianity, on the other hand, with its long association with Western education and technology is viewed as a means towards success in the modern economy. Islam is, therefore, viewed not simply as evil or demonic but also as backwards, inhibiting individuals and communities from progressing in modern advancement.

These demonic spirits, against which Pentecostal Christians do spiritual battle, are understood to be the problem preventing abundant life, individually and communally.

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[175] See chapter 7.5.2 for example.
[176] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 67.
[177] Ibid., 68.
[178] Ibid., 80.

Amongst Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals (as reflected in the popular literature), Islam does not always figure prominently in the spiritual battle, but when Islam is included it is understood as a spiritual power that is in opposition to God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and therefore demonic in nature. Thus the problem is external to human beings, and at least theoretically, Muslims are simply deceived and not the problem.[179] The religious goal of personal success in healthy community is accomplished by overcoming opposing spirits, including Islam (especially in a national perspective) through the Holy Spirit.

9.3.4.3 Conclusion

In both scholarly and popular literature the problem to be overcome has an external source. For Kenyan mainline scholars the external source is foreign intrusion into Kenya in particular and into Africa in general, so that Western colonialism, the modern missionary movement, neo-colonial structures and Arab influence are all regarded as sources of the problems that Kenyans face in achieving wholeness in life. Islam is only problematic, if it reflects Arabness rather than Africanness. In the popular literature the problem is a demonic spiritual world that opposes Christians as they seek wholeness in life, Islam being one part of the demonic spiritual world. Healthy community may be found by overcoming these problems through either the Holy Spirit for Neo-Pentecostals or through Afrocentric unity for mainline scholars.

9.4 Two Kenyan Christian Responses to Islam

There are important similarities in the responses to Islam found in the scholarly writing and the popular writing. Both affirm that divine blessing in the form of economic advancement is a religious goal and a means of testing the authenticity of a religion and its god. True religion is understood to have the ability to create healthy community where life is

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[179] "Evangelistic Resource Center."

enhanced. Both communities approach the problem to creating healthy community and prosperity in dualistic terms, where the bad is external to Kenyan Christianity.

There are also important differences in their responses. Mainline scholars view the divine blessing to work through renewed socio-political structures, whereas Neo-Pentecostals (who produce the popular literature) understand economic blessing to happen in mystical terms through the power of the Holy Spirit. Islam is understood to be capable of forming healthy community and contributing to national well-being among mainline scholars, but in the popular literature Islam is viewed as a hindrance to national success. Neo-Pentecostals reject the notion that Allah is the same as the Christian God; mainline scholars affirm that both Muslims and Christians worship the same God. While both types of literature discuss problems to a healthy national community in dualistic terms, mainline scholars employ a dualism of African versus foreign, and the popular literature sees the world through a cosmic dualism in which good and evil are ultimately found in the spiritual world.

Two critiques of these Kenyan Christian responses will be made. First, neither mainline scholars nor Neo-Pentecostals take Islam *qua* Islam seriously. Mainline Christian scholars study the history of Islam in Kenya and seek to work together for the well-being of the nation in a Christian-imagined program, while interacting very little with Islam as religion or with Kenyan Muslim visions for the future of Kenya. In the popular literature Islam is viewed as an opposing spiritual force, occasionally being associated with African Religion. Very little knowledge of Islam as religion is demonstrated. It is plausible that their shared approach of evaluating a religion according to its ability to contribute to the enhancement of

life – which would seem 'result oriented' – does not necessarily motivate one to learn about the actual teachings and practices of the religion.[180]

What has appeared to occur is that once Islam has been determined either to enhance life (according to mainline scholars) or to hinder abundant life (in the popular literature), then there is very little reason to learn more of Islamic belief, law, culture, etc. This raises a question about the nature of the interreligious encounter from the perspective of Kenyan Christians. Is the encounter with Muslims primarily utilitarian, or is it relational? Do mainline scholars meet Muslims in order to know them and form relationships that may lead to new community, or do they encounter Muslims to gain helpers in their nation-building project? Without discounting relations that may form at the individual level, the trend from the scholarly writing suggests that encounter with Muslims is sought primarily for utilitarian purposes (i.e. to enlist helpers for an existing nation-building project).

Second, both the scholarly writing and the popular writing locate the problem to the formation of healthy community outside the community. They operate with an insider versus outsider dualism, which seems to inhibit penetrating analysis into their own community. For Kenyan mainline scholars the problem is foreignness. Therefore, Kenyan Muslims are evaluated according to their Africanness and corresponding lack of Arab-influence. However, it is doubtful that Kenyan Muslims understand Africanness and Arabness in the same manner as Kenyan Christians. It seems probable that Kenyan Muslims will not value Africanness, nor reject Arab-influence, to the satisfaction and definition of Kenyan mainline scholars, which could leave most Muslims outside the acceptable community and thus problematic. Despite their conciliatory approach, it may be asked if Muslims will ever be able to transcend the imposed barriers to be included as insiders in the community.

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[180] This is not to say that none of the writers have much knowledge of Islam. Certainly, Maina, Kubai, Wandera and Mutei, scholars in Islamic studies, have an extensive knowledge.

In the popular writing the problem is opposing spiritual powers, normally understood to be demonic. Islam is viewed to be a *locus* of demonic power, which by definition is outside the Christian community. From such a viewpoint, Islam must always remain outside the acceptable community. The transition from outsider to insider occurs only through religious conversion. While this viewpoint, when applied uniquely to concerns of religious adherence, may be recognised and accepted, the exclusive position of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals also excludes Muslims socially (in addition to religiously), impeding true inter-human fellowship as demonstrated by Jesus in the Gospels. The social exclusion of Muslims violates their own theological position concerning love and hospitality towards neighbours and strangers. Neo-Pentecostal leaders demonstrate some anxiety that their followers could convert to Islam (if Muslims were perceived to have power: spiritually, economically or politically), which may account for this reticence to extend hospitality to Muslims.

Kenyan Pentecostal social exclusivism towards Muslims is associated with anxieties concerning possibilities of conversion, Islamic political agenda,[181] supposed ties with evil spirits and cultural differences.[182] The question that this situation poses is: Are these adequate justifications for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals to remain estranged from Kenyan Muslims? Miroslav Volf[183] argues in *Exclusion and Embrace* that a movement from exclusion to embrace is inherent in a Christian life (in)formed by a theology of the cross and an experience of grace. If Volf is correct, than social exclusion and estrangement no longer remain viable options for Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals.

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[181] These are discussed in chapter 8.

[182] I've been told by several Kenyan Christians that they are wary of Muslims, because Muslims are loud and aggressive. Since the Muslims that they encounter are from a different ethnic group, it seems likely that these are cultural differences.

[183] Interestingly, Volf also has a Pentecostal background.

In the scholarly writing an emerging theology of religion is open to Islam and Muslims. Allah and the Christian God are seen to be one and the same God, who blesses both communities with vital force, enhancing life in viable, healthy communities. The well-being of the nation may be served by both faith communities working together with the common goals of economic prosperity, democracy, peace and just government. It is understood that they are able to work together in such a manner, because both religions are seen to have similar goals for its people and the nation. Further dialogue (palaver) with Muslims (i.e. learning more about Islam as a religion and Muslim aspirations in Kenya) should lead to greater understanding between the communities and to more clarity in the articulation of a theology of encounter with Islam.

The popular Christian literature, as produced by Neo-Pentecostals, demonstrates an implicit theology of religion that encounters Islam confrontationally. The religiously acceptable means of relating with Muslims is missions, evangelism and spiritual warfare. Allah is understood to be either a false god or a demon, who robs the Muslim community of true blessing (i.e. vital force). Even political relations within Kenya are strained, as Pentecostals advocate a naïve theocratic vision for Kenya.[184] Pentecostals outside of Kenya have found theological means to be more open to the religious Other. Yong has employed the biblical notion of hospitality – which should resonate with African social and theological values – to reflect upon relations with the religious Other in a more positive fashion.[185] Yong[186] and other Pentecostal theologians have also used the notion of the Spirit being poured

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[184] This is true for Neo-Pentecostals, Classic Pentecostals and Charismatics in mainline churches, such as David Githii.

[185] Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*.

[186] Amos Yong, "Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions" (Doctoral Thesis, Boston University, 1999).

out on all flesh to signal God's activity among all religious faiths.[187] It is possible (and desirable) that Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals may find these, or other, theological means to become more open to positively relating with Muslims and learning about Islam, so that they may develop a more conciliatory theology of encounter with Islam.

African Religion is also seen to be demonic, and African Religion is the chronological present and the ontological past of Kenyan Neo-Pentecostals. Their families (parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) may be adherents of African Religion, and therefore considered to be involved with the demonic. In this way ideas of demonic in Kenya differ from Western Pentecostal understandings for whom the demonic is distant and indicates an intentional seeking of evil and immorality. Kenyan Pentecostals may more easily overcome the distance seemingly implied in the use of demonic imagery in relation to Islam than Western observers anticipate.[188]

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[187] Amos Yong and Tony Richie, "Missiology and the Interreligious Encounter," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson et al., (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), 256-260.

[188] O'Brien, *Symbolic Confrontations*, 4. He notes that the Mourides calling the government "Satan" does not preclude working with them.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The present study set out to understand and examine the diverse voices of Kenyan Christians as they attempt to figure out how to live with and comprehend Muslims in present-day, pluralist Kenyan society. While Kenyan society has been ethnically and religiously plural since the nation's beginning, it was only after the bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi in 1998 that the issue of religious plurality seemed to gain significant attention. The study has shown that Christianity has held a place of relative power from the colonial period into the postcolonial period (see 4.3.5 and 5.3.5). Christians in the postcolonial era maintain the upper hand over Muslims through symbolic contestation concerning the relative legitimacy of Muslim and Christian contributions to defining national identity (see chapter 8).

Scholarly Christian literature was analysed in chapter six using the theology of reconstruction and its emphasis on the priority of African culture as a framework in examining the perceptions of Islam of the writers (see 6.1). Popular Christian literature was analysed in chapter seven by rescripting the less-reflected implicit theology of the popular writers using more scholarly writing on African Pentecostalism and African Religion (see 1.2.4) and by a close reading of the texts in regard to issues of power, which the popular writers understand as spiritual power, but which can also be understood as symbolic power (see 1.2.3). It was found that the scholarly literature represented the Kenyan mainline Christian community and the popular writing, the Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal community. It was seen that Muslims are imagined as less than fully African, especially by scholars of the mainline churches (see 8.2.1 and 9.3.4.1). In the Pentecostal imaginary Islam is also linked with demonic spirits (see 9.3.1.2 and 9.3.4.2).

Due to the above perceptions of Islam, Muslim ability to contribute to Kenyan national identity and to healthy national community formation is considered suspect. Therefore, the only possibilities for Muslim participation in the nation-building process seem to be either by integrating into an African Christian-led process (mainline scholars, see 8.4.1), or through conversion (Neo-Pentecostals, see 9.3.3.2). Neither option allows the full participation of Kenyan Muslims within their own self-identity as Muslims of Kenyan citizenship. These circumstances are mitigated by the fact that Kenyan churches are not as politically powerful as they claim. In other words, Christian symbolic contestation in public space has not been entirely successful, and Muslims have been able to raise voices in these public spaces.

In chapter nine the study also uncovered the emerging theologies of religion in relation to Islam from the two Christian communities. Other studies on Christian-Muslim relations in Africa have approached the subject from the perspectives of the disciplines of religious studies, history and the social sciences, but very few have examined the theological position from which Christians operate in understanding Islam and relating with Muslims.[1]

10.1   Theories of Interreligious Relations

As discussed in the introduction, Wijsen has suggested the need for an African theory of interreligious relations.[2] The current study makes a first step in that direction by uncovering working – yet not fully developed – theories of interreligious relations from two Kenyan Christian communities. The following exposition of the theories of interreligious relations is derived from looking at both the theological perspectives on Islam (chapter 9) and the socio-

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[1] Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, Chapter 12, 225-246. Kalu's chapter on Pentecostal interaction with Muslims in Nigeria may be one of very few works to consider the theological position of Christians in this encounter. I am also unaware of any studies that examine interreligious relations in Africa from a Muslim theological perspective.

[2] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 241-243.

political methods of contesting Islam (chapter 8). These theories appear to be formed around a normative model in which values play a significant role. Religions may then be evaluated for their effectiveness according to how well they conform to the normative model and produce the expected values. As was seen in chapter nine when discussing the emerging theological questions, the African emphasis tends to be on concrete reality more than upon abstract reasoning,[3] which lends itself to highlighting values. Religions perceived to promote similar values are then understood to be compatible, allowing for dialogue, working together, etc. First, the working theory of the mainline scholars and its connection to what was revealed in the analyses in chapters eight and nine will be outlined. The same will then be done concerning the Neo-Pentecostal community as found in the popular literature.

The normative model of the Kenyan mainline scholars emphasizes being African. The origins of the nation are understood historically and mythically to be African (see 8.2.1). The theological goals focus upon the formation of authentic African community (see 9.3.2.1 and 9.3.3.1), which may be hindered by external non-African influences (see 9.3.4.1). Whether the subject is national origins, theology, economic development, social and moral values, etc., it must reflect its African nature and its interests for Africa (or, more precisely, for Kenya as a part of Africa). Christianity becomes incorporated into this normative model, because Christian values are understood to correspond with African values (see 9.2). Incorporated into the model, Christian values, such as the fruit of the Spirit,[4] then may also be perceived to be African values.[5] There is borrowing, loaning and integration – travelling in both directions – so that African values are Christian values, and Christian values are African values. Much

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[3] See chapter 9.3. It should go without saying that Africans also may reason in the abstract; and Americans and Europeans are concerned with practical matters. The difference is principally upon where the emphasis lies.
[4] Galatians 5:22-23
[5] Wijsen, *Seeds of Conflict*, 13-14.

importance is also placed upon community, which is frequently contrasted with Western individualism. Ideally the community should be religious, prosperous and live in peace and harmony with each other and with those outside the community (see 8.4.1 and 9.3.2.1).

Other religions, then, may be evaluated by examining their values (Do they correspond with African/Christian values?) and their contributions to forming healthy community. As was seen in chapter 9.3.1.1 and 9.3.2.1, these scholars evaluate Islam positively as able to contribute towards the building of healthy community. The goal of interreligious relations, rather than theological understanding, entails the practical concerns of forming healthy community and promoting African values, which are also understood to correspond with Christian values. This goal is expressed in terms of 'working together' for national socio-economic advancement, which in practical terms most likely means cooperation in providing social services,[6] producing citizen leaders of integrity, and in advocating for better governance (see 8.4.1). This theory of interreligious relations concerns itself with the potential of Muslims (or other religionists) to cooperate with Christians in socio-cultural endeavours that promote Kenya's (and Africa's) future.

The second theory, which comes from the Neo-Pentecostal writers in the Kenyan popular literature, demonstrates a normative model that stresses being a certain kind of Christian. Christians are understood, for example, to be the necessary leaders of the nation (see 8.2.2 and 9.3.3.2), and through a theology of possessing the land Pentecostals are understood to take the nation spiritually, and eventually politically (see 8.4.2). Much that is African is integrated within the model, so that the norm becomes African Pentecostalism. African qualities that are incorporated into the model include African community (see 9.3.2.2) and spiritual causality, in which blessings from God bring about national unity and prosperity

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[6] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*, 46-54.

(see 8.2.2 and 9.3.1.2). While social and moral values are deemed important, emphasis lies more on spiritual values, which are understood to also represent moral values (see 8.3.2). The church, as a separate community of born-again Christians, obtains considerable importance. Mutual assistance, escape from poverty (i.e. prosperity), morality, interpersonal relationships, healing, etc. are expected within the community. While many of these expectations are understood to happen through the community's social processes,[7] much is also anticipated from the mystical acts of God through the Holy Spirit (see 9.3.3.2).

The nation then appears to be viewed as an imperfect extension of this church community, so that the nation should exhibit a certain amount of moral righteousness and honour for (the Christian) God, which will be rewarded with prosperity and unity, as was seen in Wairimu's sermon in chapter 9.3.3.2. Since this theory of interreligious relations centres on a norm of African Pentecostalism and an emphasis on spiritual values, other religions are by definition sub-normal and mystically troublesome. For example, Islam is linked with evil spirits (see 9.3.4.2), and non-Christians are understood to 'build' Satanic altars, while Pentecostals erect Godly ones through prayer and worship (see 8.4.2). The normative responses to other religions are evangelism (bringing the Other into the Pentecostal community) and spiritual warfare (rendering the Other mystically impotent). Concerning the nation, as an imperfect extension of the church community, the goal is to perfect it through Pentecostal leadership and prayer, which seems to include either the conversion or the acquiescence of Muslims (or other religionists). This theory of interreligious relations does not seek relationship with the religious Other. The Other is primarily encountered as mystically dangerous and as an object of evangelism.

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[7] Like mainline Kenyan churches, Kenyan Neo-Pentecostal churches also operate schools, health clinics and other social services.

These two theories of interreligious relations have a similar weakness due to their theoretical positions centring on normative models, which results in little interest being shown in the religion of the Other or in the Other as Other. Since the other religion is only seen from the perspective of one's own normative model, the vision of the Other becomes primarily utilitarian. The significance of the Other then becomes incorporating the Other (i.e. Muslims) into a Christian-imagined nation-building project (mainline scholars) or learning about the Other (i.e. Muslims) in order to evangelise them (Neo-Pentecostals). Very little space is allowed for the Other (i.e. Muslims) to speak on their own behalf about their own concerns.[8]

McGrane tells the story of the development of the concept of the Other in Western thinking, showing how the West has 'othered' people encountered in explorations of other lands.[9] African scholars have reflected on the experience of African peoples being 'othered' in the processes of colonialism, the missionary movement, neo-colonialism, etc. However, there does not appear to be much reflection upon how African peoples have created Otherness upon encountering peoples (including other Africans) who are different from themselves. When ethnic conflicts have forced this question, the answer is frequently that "it is but a product of the development imposed on the continent by colonialism."[10] Or as Katongole says of the genocide in Rwanda, they became "people who were willing to kill one another because of a story they were first told by Europeans and later learned to tell themselves."[11] Thus the most frequently provided answer seems to deflect the question as much as answer it. It remains a question awaiting a response from Kenyan thinkers.

[8] Kubai recognizes this to some extent when she says that Christians and Muslims don't agree on their understandings of the problems to be discussed during dialogues. Kubai, "Striving in Faith," 12.

[9] Bernard McGrane, *Beyond Anthropology: Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

[10] Emmanuel Okoth Manyasa, "Ethnicity: An Opportunity or a Bane in Africa's Development," in *East Africa: In Search of National and Regional Renewal*, ed. Felicia Arudo Yieke, (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005), 69.

[11] Emmanuel M. Katongole, *Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting the Faith after Genocide in Rwanda* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2009), 52.

Critiquing a key weakness from each of the above working theories of interreligious relations may offer a way forward for each community in improved relations with Muslims in Kenya. While each theory is critiqued, the goal is to critique them from within their own respective theological and value systems and not by imposing Western or personal views.

Kenyan mainline scholars express much openness towards Islam and Muslims. However, as shown in chapter eight, Muslims are accepted under certain conditions (prioritisation of Africanness over Arabness) into a Christian-led nation-building project.[12] To use the metaphor of hospitality, mainline Christian scholars are willing to act as hosts to the Muslim community (i.e. welcoming Muslims into their project); however, as Yong proposes, interreligious hospitality requires that each party act as both host and guest.[13] Learning to become guests (i.e. receiving hospitality and learning more of Kenyan Muslims, their faith, culture, history, etc.) would mark a movement towards mutuality. Becoming the guest entails vulnerability, dependence upon the Other and willingness to surrender control for the time period of being the guest. More concretely, becoming the guest would entail listening to Muslims articulate their desires, visions and goals as Kenyans. The normative model of being African can function to exclude; however, by receiving hospitality new understandings of being African may be discovered.

It is also possible to see the effects of *habitus* in the 'natural' assumption made by the scholars that a Christian-led nation-building project based on African and Christian symbolism will easily incorporate Muslims (see 8.2.1). However, a role of scholars in studying society, according to Bourdieu, is exposing the taken-for-granted nature of *habitus*

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[12] See chapter 8.5.

[13] Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 118-126.

that misrecognizes arbitrary classifications and distinctions as natural.[14] The next task for Kenyan scholars in the development of a theory of interreligious relations may be to receive hospitality from Muslims while reflecting upon the *habitus* within which the theory is being formed.

The working theory of interreligious relations uncovered in the popular literature shows that African Pentecostalism not only functions as a theological norm determining a religiously correct means to spiritual fulfilment and salvation, but it also serves as a socio-political norm that shapes social and political encounter with Muslims, discouraging true relationships with Muslims.[15] Neo-Pentecostal Christians (who produce this literature) affirm cultural, theological and biblical values of community, hospitality and love. Diversity is also an expressed value.[16] The conversion narratives examined in chapter seven showed love for Muslim family members and hinted at friendships between Christians and Muslims. This can be contrasted with the representation of Islam in a comparable, popular Pentecostal magazine from America in which Muslims are almost exclusively portrayed as violent or as terrorists.[17] However, despite hints at social openness, this working theory of interreligious relations serves primarily to exclude socially and politically as well as religiously. In religiously plural Kenya, can Neo-Pentecostal Christians extend hospitality and love socially – not religiously – to Muslims?[18] Since community and relationships (i.e. *ubuntu*) remain centrally important among Kenyans, including Neo-Pentecostals, focusing upon biblical and theological models

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[14] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (1985): 734-735. Bourdieu writes of sociologists doing research to expose what he calls *doxa*, the common sense assumptions made about social distinctions.

[15] While the model may also ideally discourages relationships with adherents of African Religion, the fact that these religious adherents are often family members changes the dynamics significantly.

[16] Mark Kariuki, *The First Quarter: Faith Power Works Wonders* (Nairobi: Life Celebration Centre International, 2008), 57, 118, 126.

[17] http://www.charismamag.com/.

[18] I say 'not religiously', because religious pluralism is not a viable option for NPCs at this time.

of relationship in addition to (rather than?) a normative model of African Pentecostalism should furnish more space for interreligious relationships with and understanding of Muslims.

This study was personally undertaken in the hopes of discovering a better, alternative model to Western models of interreligious relations. It has been found that certain distinctions between Western models and African models do, in fact, exist. African models emphasize the communal and practical results of religion, in contrast to the more typical Western emphasis upon individual salvation, doctrine and truth.[19] It is wise to take heed of Maluleke's counsel that African Christianity is neither better, nor worse, than other Christianities, and that it can also be an ally (or a hindrance) in the pursuit of solutions to problems facing the global church.[20] An African model may not have proven to be a radically superior alternative, but it adds to the pool of resources for encountering and interacting with the religious Other. The practical emphasis on the ability of Islam to produce healthy communities and individuals who live virtuous lives, especially as found among Kenyan mainline scholars, may provide more space for mutual recognition, respect and cooperation between Christians and Muslims than the Western emphasis on abstract ideas of salvation, doctrines and truth.

10.2   Questioning Popular Premises Concerning Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa

Returning to two popular premises concerning Christian-Muslim relations in Africa that were mentioned in the introduction, Huntington and Jenkins have popularised the view in the West that Africa is the location of fault lines along the clash of civilisations between Christians and Muslims. Conflicts between adherents of the two faiths are then seen to be

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[19] David Shenk examines world religions from the perspective of the practical social results that they have produced in their respective communities. His book is the only study by a Western scholar (that I am aware of) that takes this approach. Shenk grew up in Tanzania as the son of Mennonite missionaries and has lived as an adult in Tanzania, Somalia and Kenya. David W Shenk, *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995).
[20] Tinyiko Maluleke, "Of Africanised Bees and Africanised Churches: Ten Theses on African Christianity," *Missionalia* 38, no. 3 (2010): 375, 378.

harbingers of religious wars to come. In contrast African writers, such as Sanneh[21] and

Mbillah,[22] idealise the "live and let live" influence of African values upon Christian-Muslim

relations, proclaiming these religions to be more tolerant in Africa than elsewhere. This thesis

adds to the literature[23] that demonstrates that neither popular theory tells the entire story, as

both welcome and rejection form aspects of the African narrative. While mainline scholars

tend to be more welcoming and popular Neo-Pentecostal writers rejecting of Islam, there

remain elements of rejection within the scholarly writing and possibilities of welcome within

Kenyan Pentecostalism. An understanding of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa must be

discovered in the nitty-gritty of everyday life, in the routine interactions between peoples and

in the concrete ways that Christians (and Muslims) speak of the Other, the latter of which was

attempted in this study.

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[21] Sanneh, *Piety and Power*.
[22] Mbillah, "Inter-Faith Relations and the Quest for Peace in Africa."
[23] Soares, "Introduction: Muslim-Christian Encounter in Africa," 2-3.
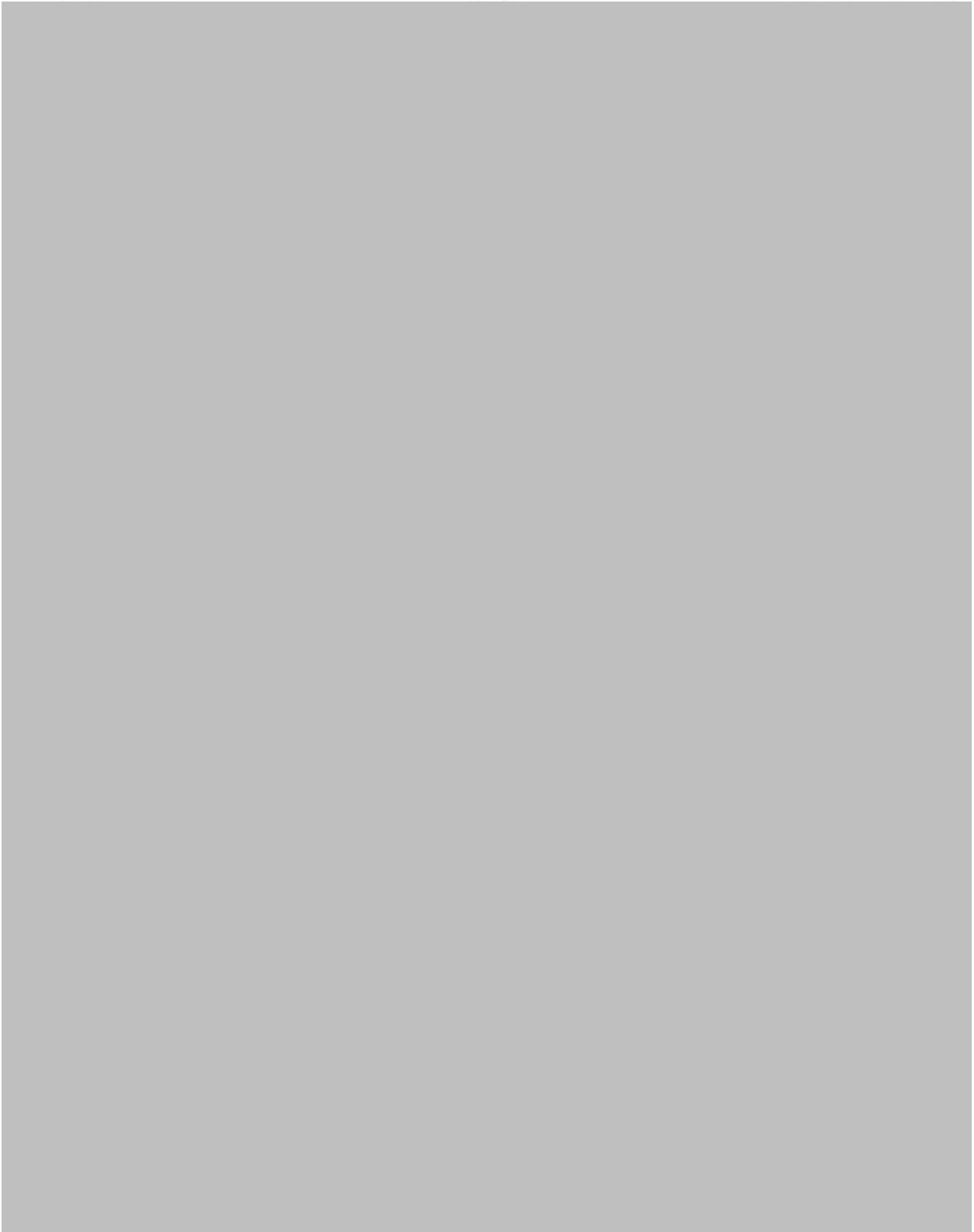
APPENDIX TWO

LIST OF POPULAR MAGAZINES

	Name of Magazine	Issues
1.	Anointing Flames	1
2.	Arise Africa	5
3.	Charismatic Leader	1
4.	Christian Army	1
5.	Dove Harvest	1
6.	End Time Christian News	10
7.	Fellowship Magazine	1
8.	Fragrance of Life	1
9.	God's Champion	7
10.	It's Time for Grace	2
11.	Light of the World	1
12.	Maximum Miracle Times	1
13.	Mercy Missions	4
14.	Miracle Magazine	7
15.	Mount Zion	1
16.	Revival Springs	96
17.	The Christian Professional	2
18.	The Shepherd	3
19.	The Solid Family	2
20.	The Voice of Restoration	5
21.	Today in Africa	5
22.	Up Up Magazine	1

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