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Migration, Interfaith Engagement, and Mission among Somali Refugees in Kenya: Assessing the Cape Town Commitment from a Global South Perspective One Decade On

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Abstract: In the last decade, since the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (2010) in Cape Town, South Africa, the world has significantly changed. The majority of the world's Christians are located in the Global South. Globalization, conflict, and migration have catalyzed the emergence of multifaith communities. All these developments have in one way or another impacted missions in twenty-first-century sub-Saharan Africa. As both Christianity and Islam are spreading and expanding, new approaches to a peaceful and harmonious coexistence have been developed that seem to be hampering the mission of the Church as delineated in the Cape Town Commitment (2010). Hence a missiological assessment of the Cape Town Commitment is imperative for the new decade's crosscutting developments and challenges. In this article, the author contends that the mission theology of the 2010 Lausanne Congress no longer addresses the contemporary complex reality of a multifaith context occasioned by refugee crises in Kenya. The article will also describe the Somali refugee situation in Nairobi, Kenya, occasioned by political instability and violence in Somalia. Finally, the article will propose a methodology for performing missions for interfaith engagement in Nairobi's Eastleigh refugee centers in the post Cape Town Commitment era. The overall goal is to provide mainstream evangelical mission models that are biblically sound, culturally appropriate, and tolerant to the multifaith diversity in conflict areas.

Keywords: mission/missions; interfaith; global south; globalization; migration; refugees



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1. Introduction

The global evangelical Church's core identity is her passion for evangelism. The 2010 Cape Town Commitment states that "Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, to persuade people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God." (Birdsall and Brown 2011). The use of the word 'itself' clearly delineates evangelism to be the core business of global Christianity. Reconciliation of the whole world to God through Jesus Christ is at the heart of the evangelical church. This is done by proclaiming the Good News to the unreached and unconverted, both near and far, through evangelism and social action. With this understanding, evangelical missionary activity has successfully traversed geographical, racial, cultural, and lingual panoramas to reach previously unreached groups of people. This effort is highly commendable. However, there is one area that the evangelical mission in Kenya has not dealt with well, i.e., the inter-religious or multi-faith context created by refugeeism. For example, "Little is known about the Muslims and their religious identity by the majority of Christians, particularly in Kenya" (Tanui and Sesi 2019). This seemingly ignorant attitude to Islam on the part of evangelical Christianity is due to several reasons, key among them being a biased approach to other faiths. As Kim has pointed out, "Islamic studies have been confined to a classical type of study that has focused mainly on dealing with the ideologies of Islam, rather than studying the people (Muslims) who hold these beliefs and live under their influence" (Kim 2016). This approach, mostly from the evangelical church, has created a

chasm between Islamic ideology and praxis in the ordinary life of Muslims where inter-faith engagement is supposed to take place. Ten years after the 2010 Lausanne Congress in Cape Town, SA, most evangelistic initiatives from the Church still lean more towards apologetic evangelism that confronts the Islamic ideology with the hope of witnessing Muslim–Christian conversions. Unfortunately, this confrontative approach does not bear much fruit. Rather, it ends up eliciting inter-religious suspicion and is likely to provoke unnecessary confrontation between the two faiths. Eventually, this might discourage inter-faith engagement all together in the evangelical Church in Kenya. According to [Tanui and Sesi \(2019\)](#), there is very little interaction between Christians and Muslims in Eastleigh, Nairobi. Consequently, the perceived inter-faith engagement (or lack of it) has hampered the mission to migrant communities in Kenya who come from a diverse inter-religious community.

The phrase ‘mission of God’ has elicited various meanings over the past decades. Still, a concrete definition is elusive in an increasingly multifaith sub-Saharan Africa. The evangelical Church, in particular, exists to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to a lost world for salvation through evangelization. The Lausanne Covenant defined evangelization as “the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, to persuade people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God” ([Birdsall and Brown 2011](#)). The historicity of Christ cited in the definition alludes to the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was born in Bethlehem, raised in the Middle Eastern context to Jewish parents, did good things in the land, and eventually was murdered by Roman authorities after betrayal by Jewish religious leaders. The Gospel is good news as told by the historical Jesus who came to save the world (i.e., all people across religions, races, genders, etc.). The last part of that definition talks about reconciliation meaning reconciliation of people to God, between people and each other and, by extension, the reconciliation of people with the environment (the earth). While the mission goal remains unitary, mission models and approaches differ contextually. Those that subscribe to a liturgical ecclesial tradition tend to lean towards a trinitarian mission model. Further, an ecclesial tradition that is not necessarily methodic tends to lean towards a Christological mission model. However, in the context of an increasingly pluralistic sub-Saharan Africa, emerging interfaith communities neither agree on the trinity nor acknowledge missions from the cross. Hence these models require a missiological critique, appraisal, and further development.

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (2010) met in Cape Town a decade ago to analyze among other things the mission of God and interfaith engagement in what is known as the Cape Town Commitment. It adopted the model of love for God and one’s neighbor for effective witness of Christ in a broken world. The Cape Town Commitment (2010) defined evangelization as “the whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole world” ([Birdsall and Brown 2011](#)). The world has significantly changed in the last 10 years. The fact that this evangelical conference was held in South Africa was a statement to the world that a third of the world’s Christians are now found in the global south and east. In light of increasing globalization and transmigration, the church has since evolved in terms of its composition, geographical location, and its mission. The church is increasingly becoming non-mainstream and adopting a more independent denominational composition. Various denominations welcome all people receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, including marginalized communities such as the LGBTQ community, hence deviating from the conservative church positions on the same. Leveraging on these global trends, the church is not confined to the four walls of the church building. Instead, the church is interconnected across the globe, leveraging on current information technological advancement. Consequently, the mission is not from the West to the rest anymore. Rather, the mission is being understood as from everywhere to everywhere. Due to these and other¹ changing global dynamics, there has been significant development in

¹ Decolonization and postcolonial initiatives; urbanization; climate and land use change; increasing poverty intervention measures.

the interconnectedness of people across the world leading to new communities, both real and virtual.

Flexible migration and transmigration have led to cross-border movement of people throughout sub-Saharan Africa causing super-diversity within diversity. This super-diversity of people has naturally created interfaith communities in African nations as immigrants travel with their religion. As Christian migrants move from one point to another within the continent, they become witnesses of Christ in the new lands. So are Muslims; as Muslims migrate from the rest of the world to sub-Saharan Africa so is Islam rapidly spreading in the continent with mosques being erected in both rural and urban centers. Therefore, urban centers in the Global Southern cities are representative of a religious diversity that calls for immense ethnic and interreligious tolerance and learning. All these developments have in one way or another impacted missions in twenty-first-century sub-Saharan Africa. As both Christianity and Islam are rapidly advancing on the continent, new approaches to a peaceful and harmonious existence have been developed that have slightly departed from the mission of the church as stipulated in the Cape Town Commitment. Do these developments facilitate or hinder the mission of God as understood by global evangelicalism?

In the year 2020, ten years since Cape Town, South Africa, where over 4000 Christian leaders from 198 countries gathered together to call the church to action through a commitment of faith, has shaped the evangelical global mission as understood today. Ten years on, the world is still stricken by divisions and conflict, interstate, interethnic, and most commonly, interreligious. While Christians may not be surprised by this as it is the consequence of sin, the question remains as to what the Church is going to do to heal the world of its conflicts of creed, race, color, and religion. Lausanne's Cape Town Commitment is both a confession of faith and a call to action. How does this look in the face of a highly globalized and multifaith sub-Saharan Africa? The third Evangelical Lausanne spelled out a blueprint for what a Christian mission would look like in the post-conference global church. "The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross" (Birdsall and Brown 2011). That reconciliatory call is fundamental to a world that is wounded, broken, and bleeding in order to restore healing among fractured communities in our society. It is our evangelical commitment and duty to ensure that the church plays its role in creating an enabling environment for God to perform his reconciliatory work as a demonstration of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The perfect unity that is in heaven ought to be typified on earth, with people from all walks of life and religious backgrounds living in harmony with one another.

2. Somali Refugeeism in Kenya

The East African region has had the highest numbers of forced migrants due to high volatility and long-standing conflicts, generating 80% of sub-Saharan Africa's refugees (Hanciles 2008). By the turn of the millennium, the East African region still housed 46% of African refugees. The usage of 'forced migration' in this article is restricted to the forceful displacement of Somali people, caused by conflict and war in Somalia, into Kenya as refugees. Due to the highly volatile and conflict-stricken nature of this Horn of African country, subsequent Somali regimes have been unable to establish stable governments. With the emergence of various rebel groups led by war lords, intra-state political strife, violent attacks and destruction of property, the result has been that of perennial violent conflicts which have resulted in destabilization of the country and mass displacement of millions of Somalians who have been forced to leave their homes and enter neighboring countries. Kenya has been a major destination for the Somali refugees since the late 1980s.

In the early 1990s, there were approximately 300,000 Somalians officially registered as refugees in Kenya (Carrier and Scharrer 2019). Whereas some refugees are camp based at Dadaab refugee camp in North Eastern Kenya, others find their way to the city and become urban refugees. There is an increasing trend in migration into cities with informal

patterns of settlement alongside the existing population (Saunders et al. 2016). The Somali migrants who do not make it to the Dadaab refugee camp end up settling in the major cities in Kenya. A majority of Somali migrants have settled in Nairobi and Mombasa. Eastleigh estate in Nairobi county is known to have been home to Somali migrants for many decades (Carrier and Scharrer 2019). Eastleigh a suburb east of Nairobi that is largely inhabited by Somali Muslims and has become a major commercial hub in the East African region (Wandera 2015). Eastleigh has become a key destination for most urban refugees in Kenya's capital city, who now run the economy of the suburb. They own shops and run various kinds of business establishments with many kinds of trade. According to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report there are 491,258 refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya as of 31st January 2020 (UNHCR-Kenya 2020). The total number of camp-based refugees and asylum seekers in Kenya is 411,473, which represents 84% of the refugee population in the country (UNHCR-Kenya 2020). 53.9% of the total number of refugees and asylum seekers come from Somalia (UNHCR-Kenya 2020). Urban-based refugees and asylum seekers constitute 79,785 people, which is 16 percent of the total number of refugees in Kenya (UNHCR-Kenya 2020). Of the total number of refugees from Somalia, 77 percent are women and children (UNHCR-Kenya 2020). This is an indication of how women and children are the most vulnerable populations, due to violent conflict and mass displacement of people from neighboring Somalia into Kenya. For urban-based asylum seekers, men are able to find jobs and improve themselves economically while women, especially single mothers, are limited in their movement as they have to take care of their children.

The Somali refugee situation in Kenya raises missiological concerns at various levels. Firstly, for many years Kenya's evangelical Church has been unable to send its missionaries into Somalia due to the life-threatening hostile situation for non-Muslims in Somalia. However, destabilizing and dehumanizing this forced displacement of people, Somalis have relocated into Kenya, and especially in Nairobi, which has a heavy Christian presence. What was difficult for Churches, i.e., sending missionaries into Somalia, has happened in reverse. Secondly, the economic situation in the refugee camps is not pleasant. Kenya is a developing country with meagre resources, often unable to feed its own population, especially the marginalized communities in the Northern Kenyan region. The situation is worse in the cities, especially Nairobi's Eastleigh informal settlements which have been home to Somali refugees for decades now. This poses serious humanitarian concerns as living conditions in the slum areas are not conducive for children. Such dehumanization of large populations of Somali refugees presents an opportunity for the evangelical Church in Kenya to reach out in love of the gospel and touch families with God's love. Somali refugees, being mostly Muslims, may not be attuned to the gospel message, but they can see God's love through acts of care and good hospitality from the Church. Thirdly, missiologically speaking, the Somali refugee presence in Kenya ought to provoke the evangelical Church to think of alternative methods and modes of evangelism that break bounds with the traditional verbal proclamation of the gospel to a more social action centered ministry among these populations. Unfortunately, the 2010 Lausanne Congress held in Cape Town, SA did not foresee the developing complex nature of multifaith cities in Saharan African due to forced migration. Therefore, the evangelical Church did not create methodologies for migration and interfaith engagement. The reality is that the sub-Saharan African context has changed significantly in the last ten years creating multifaith urban contexts which are ripe for more interfaith engagement, rather than the usual approach of discursive dialogue. Food shortage, lack of access to good education and healthcare facilities, and lack of clean water in urban refugee camps are humanitarian concerns that are worthy of the Church's missionary engagement.

3. The Evangelical Church and Interfaith Engagement in Kenya

There has been mission activity amid the migrant and refugee situation in Kenya. However, that too has been confronted with a host of challenges, as a conflict of interest

ensues while the Church attempts to play her missionary role of proclamation and evangelization. At Dadaab refugee camp in North Eastern Kenya, Somali Muslims are not faced with a diverse interfaith context, as their new neighbors (hosts) are mostly Muslim. Contrariwise, urban refugees are steeped in an interreligious environment. The diversity of religious groupings in Eastleigh, Nairobi, presents a new challenge for both the Somali migrants as well as their hosts. Little research has focused on the tension between refugee migrants and their host nations, as well as with the Church. At the center of this tension is the question of whether the evangelical Churches in Kenya should focus on the proclamation of the gospel (euangelion) or social action. The latter seems to be what Somali migratory communities are in immediate and urgent need of in order to first address the humanitarian crisis. But the former has been the emphasis of the evangelical Churches, among them the Baptist, Presbyterian, Anglican, African Inland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. In interfaith engagement, however, preoccupation with evangelism alone may not be the ideal approach to missionary work. Ideally, both evangelism and social action are important and required to make the mission complete. In the context of migratory communities, the latter approach either assumes or ignores the humanitarian concerns that Somali migrants are facing within the city. This section will discuss the evangelical church's mission task among Somali migrants in the urban settlements of Nairobi. The discussion will essentially evaluate the level of interfaith involvement of the church among Somali Muslim migrants. Does interfaith action have a place in the evangelical mission in Nairobi or not, and if not, why not?

3.1. Mission and Interfaith Engagement

“Truth is like a baobab tree; one person's arms cannot embrace it.” (African proverb) The greatest challenge to evangelical mission work among the migrant populations in Kenya and the region at large is religious pluralism. Evangelicals in Kenya claim an exclusivist hold on the truth, the truth here meaning that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone. Hence the Christian church claims a monopoly of truth amid her mission work to the Muslim migrant populations. Tension arises where the mission to proclaim personal salvation through Christ to Muslim refugees is held supremely prioritized over and above the humanitarian crises facing the refugees. While the humanitarian needs are to be addressed and any help is welcome, evangelism efforts are met with some form of hesitation and sometimes resistance. This is because Muslims hold to their religion keenly and with a commitment, just as Christians do. Muslims neither recognize the person of Jesus Christ as the savior of the world nor the claim to the exclusivity of Christianity. Additionally, a famous and prolific pluralist theologian, Azumah, argues that “any claim to absolute truth precludes inter-religious dialogue” (Azumah 2007). This is true since exclusivism closes the door to dialogue inhibiting the nurturing of understanding of the other. The evangelicals are therefore torn between addressing the humanitarian need presented by refugeeism and migration and ignoring the proclamation of Christ, or going ahead and proclaiming Christ, albeit that these efforts may be ineffective.

Some evangelicals in Kenya have dared to join the inter-religious dialogue as a missional entry point into the Muslim refugee settlements. A majority of evangelicals involved in inter-faith engagement, however, are still fixated on the goal of conversion. Others have surrendered to the accusations laid against them by pluralist theologians who accuse them of abhorring the inclusivity of other religions. Before getting into further discussion about religious pluralism, interreligious dialogue, and mission, some caveats raised by Azumah regarding interreligious space should be pointed out. Azumah points out that, “so far the debate as to the appropriateness of absolute religious truth is large is not wholly an internal Christian debate and that people of other faiths have hardly taken notice of the debates, let alone joined in them” (Azumah 2007). While Azumah's claim is true, to some extent the inter-faith ground has since shifted theologically. There are growing inter-faith apologetic debates (mihadhara) on the streets of Nairobi and Mombasa where large urban Muslim populations are found. Secondly, Azumah (2007) argues to counter the notion

that the debate on religious pluralism is still a western Christian debate. In agreement with him, religious plurality has always been an integral part of the African experience. In the African tradition, people have always been on the move. Whenever they moved, they carried with them their religion. Settling in new lands they either created or encountered an interfaith environment. In the Kenyan context, religious pluralism and a multifaith population have been occasioned by refugee migration. Specifically, this has been caused by the forced migration of Somali people into Kenya due to conflict and war in Somalia.

Therefore, with the above argument, how can the evangelical Church be effective in her mission work among the Muslim refugees and still maintain a solid Biblical theology? In [Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct \(2011\)](#), the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), the World Council of Churches (WCC) and, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) produced a document offering a set of recommendations for conduct in Christian witness around the world. The document, though not a theological statement on missions, does suggest practical issues involving Christian witness in a multi-faith context, and categorically underscores its purpose:

“The purpose of this document is to encourage churches, church councils and mission agencies to reflect on their current practices and to use the recommendations in this document to prepare, where appropriate, their guidelines for their witness and mission among those of different religions and among those who do not profess any particular religion.” ([Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct 2011](#)).

Therefore, the document does not suggest any theological processes in inter-faith engagement. Rather, it simply gives guidelines to inform good practice in helping the Christian church in her mission work among other faiths. It is noteworthy that on the question of the person of Jesus Christ, the PCID, WCC and WEA did agree that “Jesus Christ is the supreme witness (cf. John 18:37), and that Christian witness is always a sharing in his witness, which takes the form of proclamation of the kingdom, service to neighbor and the total gift of self even if that acts of giving leads to the cross” ([Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct 2011](#)). First, even without intending to do so, that statement does settle the theological issue of the supremacy of Christ among other prophets and gods. Second, the statement expands the meaning of the proclamation of the Good News of the kingdom to the neighbor to include service. This is to suggest that service to humanity is equally and sufficiently a form of the witness of Christ in a multi-faith context. Lastly, the statement pre-empts that this is a sacrificial undertaking for Christians where the multi-faith context might be hostile to Christianity and the gospel. Providentially, Christianity is the majority religion in Nairobi, hence the chances of hostility against evangelicalism by Muslims are minimal. This, however, does not discount the possibility for rejection of the gospel by the targeted diverse religious minorities.

3.2. *What Is Mission?*

In this discourse, the usage of the word ‘mission’ refers to evangelism (proclamation of the Good News), and social action. [Schulz \(2009\)](#), a Lutheran missiologist, postulates that “Mission is reserved for describing the activity of God, in particular His work in reconciling sinful humankind to Himself, whereas “missions” imply the activities of the various denominations or congregations as they plan to accomplish the mission of God” ([Schulz 2009](#)). While partly in agreement with such an understanding of the terms, the statement does not separate the place of God in his mission and the role of his church, and might raise follow up questions such as ‘Is every work of God including creation, mission; and are all activities of the church mission?’ Does mission leave room for the Church to creatively think of alternative approaches to Christian witness that involve engaging with other religions through social action? How we respond to that question depends on our context (Western or non-Western), denominational tradition, affiliation, and theological formulation.

Speaking of context, there is an urgent need to redefine mission in non-Western contexts such as East Africa. This is because of “the distinctive realities and dilemmas confronting burgeoning Christian communities” (Hanciles 2014). Total dependence on Western mission models can greatly impair the capacity for understanding the movement of God in new mission frontiers such as migrant and interfaith contexts in Eastern Africa. Therefore, an attempt is made in this article to define the term ‘mission’ to fit the aforementioned new realities and the African Christian experience. To do so, a historical and theological exploration of the term ‘mission’ in the church and among scholars will help to give a background.

3.2.1. A Trinitarian View

This view, which began in Europe in the 1930s, held that ‘mission’ is primarily the initiative of God. Theologian Karl Barth was the first to write about mission as the “sole activity of God” (Thomas 1995). Later, at the fifth International Missionary Council in Willingen (1952), a Trinitarian mission model (*Missio Dei*) was conceived that mainstreamed the theocentric mission model. According to Thomas (1995), delegates affirmed that mission is derived from the very nature of God. Accordingly, even amid mission in the interfaith context, God is at work.

Therefore the ‘send’ terminology was adopted. The church thus participates in the mission of God as an initiative of God the Father who sent his Son. The Son sends the Church into the world. Vicedom argued that “the Bible in its totality ascribes only one intention to God: to save mankind” (Vicedom 1965). Saving mankind here means conversion. According to Vicedom, if the church’s task is not geared towards the salvation of man, then it is not mission. Later, Vicedom (1965) added references to the establishment of the Church and its task in his definition of mission. With this view, the Church only becomes the agency through which God’s mission flows. God is a missionary God who sends.

3.2.2. Post-Edinburgh Trinitarian View

Post-Edinburgh trinitarian mission theologians have expanded the role and function of the Trinity into what is now known as a contextual mission. According to contemporary interpretations of this approach, “Mission is contextual, embedded in the community and expressed in a relationship—as God the Trinity is relational and whose ultimate expression before the Second Return of Christ is through the Incarnation” (Kim and Anderson 2011). This theological approach combined both the trinitarian and incarnational models as foundational to the mission of God. However, it is important to note that according to many trinitarian mission theologians, the mission of God is rooted in the Bible. “Foundations for mission, of which the central foundation is the witness to Jesus in Holy Scripture, provide the framework through which authentic Christian mission is discerned” (Kim and Anderson 2011).

While the above explanation of a trinitarian theology of mission is rested on “three foundational elements: The *Missio Dei* (God’s mission), the church, and the Kingdom of God” (Kim and Anderson 2011), it is flexible in the context of modern-day mission work. The mission of God flows through the church but neither exclusively nor restrictively. God’s light can impact non-Christian communities with the gospel even when dealing with the movement of people through migration. In this study, which supposes a multi-faith context, the mission of God is not only confined within the church but also open to the work of the Holy Spirit who, like the wind, as the Apostle John put it, “blows wherever it pleases” (Jn. 3:8). A limitation to the trinitarian understanding of the mission of God is that its “theology as articulated by the Church is before experience of God as individuals or communities” (Kim and Anderson 2011).

Therefore, its theology, which is still confined within the church’s interpretation, is superior to experience. In the context of migration and inter-faith communities, people’s unique experience of God comes at times before their encounter with any church dogma. Conversion in some East African contexts is not always a personal experience, but also a

communal one. Salvation is, more often than not, a communal experience in collectivistic societies. Therefore, the trinitarian approach, though comprehensive, needs some expansion. In a multi-faith context among immigrants in Kenya, the Trinitarian theology is likely to confront a multiplicity of understandings of who God is and what his mission looks like. In disagreement with Tennent, I argue that a strictly Trinitarian mission definition inhibits missions in a multi-faith context.

3.2.3. Incarnational View

One of the pioneer proponents of the incarnational model of God's mission is Wright. Wright was instrumental in the organizing and convening of the 2010 Cape Town Convention. Wright bases his understanding and definition of the mission while taking cognizance of God's work in his world through his people. Speaking of his definition of the mission of God, Wright writes that, "Fundamentally, our mission (if is Biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation" (Wright 2006). According to Wright (2006), our mission flows from and participates in the mission of God.

However, he does not hesitate to express his dissatisfaction with the use of the theme of 'sending'. Wright (2006) argues that this tends to lay primary significance on the dynamic of sending or being sent than on the mission of God itself through his people. Thus, he settles for using the word mission in a broader sense. He puts it that: "Within such a broad mission (as applied to any group or enterprise), there is room for subordinate missions, in the sense of specific tasks assigned to a person or group that are to be accomplished as steps toward the wider mission" (Wright 2006). In this sense, then, God's mission flows through God's people into God's world, as his Word has revealed to us. This view might resonate well with East African People.

While scholars who, like Wright, recognize mission as a divine initiative, they also acknowledge the place of the Church as God's agency through which the world is evangelized. The incarnational model then takes shape in a context where the Church simply, in obedience to Jesus, lives out her life in the world and impacts on the world with the love of Christ. There is no specific designation of an official title to a missionary who takes the gospel to a lost world. The Church plays the missionary role through incarnational means: obedience to Christ in a fallen and broken world, and living amidst the people to demonstrate Christ's love.

3.2.4. Hybrid Model: Trinitarian and Incarnational

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries saw the entrance of African theologians who understood mission from the perspective of those who were on the receiving end. They seem to have merged the trinitarian and incarnational models to dispel the popular thought that Western missionary activity was simply "a minor subplot in the history of Western imperialism" (Tennent 2010). Tennent (2010) cited the late Lamin Sanneh, a West African scholar, who observed that Western missionary activity was more complicated than that. According to Tennent (2010), Sanneh discussed mission as two distinct forces: the historic transmission of the gospel and indigenous assimilation. In the historic transmission of the gospel, the missionaries brought the gospel to various specific contexts including Africa. Further, in indigenous assimilation as the second force, the local people "adapts it and applies it to the local context, sometimes in surprising ways (Tennent 2010). Therefore, we shouldn't equate gospel transmission with assimilation as the latter "empowered people in ways the missionary could never have anticipated. Hence the human agency through the Western missionary and the local people in advancing mission is a response to God's initiative. "In other words, the missionaries set into motion a process of religious change in which the Africans themselves became the key players" (Tennent 2010). Without this human agency in a two-pronged manner, there would not have been such an impact as has been felt today.

In the context of East African mission work, the Church ought to realize that the God who has already gone before the church is already at work in the local context, however complex this is. “Mission is contextual, embedded in the community and expressed in a relationship—as God the Trinity is relational and whose ultimate expression before the Second Return of Christ is through the incarnation” (Kim and Anderson 2011). The church has to steep herself in the local culture and context to discover God already at work amidst the people. This brings hope that mission work even in complex contexts such as migration and multifaith environments is possible because of God’s initiative in being already at work there. He is calling upon the church to go and discover him there and let his mission flow through the Church to transform communities. The mission is therefore both witness and proclamation. How does witnessing of Christ and this proclamation appear in the context of twenty-first-century complex environments caused by migration and multifaith populations? The next section discusses the mission of God amidst the interfaith context in Nairobi, Kenya.

4. Discussion

4.1. *Ecumenism on Interreligious Dialogue*

Since the Cape Town Commitment theology did not foresee the forthcoming global trends that would lead to forced migration and its impact on mission work, the Congress failed to develop a mission theology for an interfaith context, especially for reaching Somali Muslims who are refugee migrants within Africa. As a result, other denominational entities have sprung into action. The ecumenical church body has collectively, under the representation of the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), World Council of Churches (WCC), and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), come up with a document that addresses practical issues regarding Christian mission in a multifaith world. The document highlights “Christian witness in a pluralistic world including engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures (cf. Acts 17:22–28)” (Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct 2011). Dialogue in the context of ecumenism is described as “a conversation with a center, not sides” (World Council of Churches 2016). It is important to underscore the two-pronged purpose of interreligious dialogue according to the ecumenical church body in its report, as articulated in the Interreligious Dialogue Resource Manual. Firstly, dialogue “deals with personal and collective preconceived notions and prejudices by focusing on questioning, listening, the suspension of judgment, and the search for commonalities based on the respect of difference” (Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct 2011). For evangelicals especially, it calls for the understanding other religions than seeking to be understood, to remove any misunderstandings and biases about the religious other. The evangelical church in Kenya needs to tap into the educational component of interfaith dialogue for purposes of removing its prejudices and theological blind spots regarding other religions. Secondly, there is a need to “build bridges of communication among those who are different and to transform the relationship from a state of intolerance, stereotyping and misunderstanding to a state of deeper understanding and respect of each other’s differences” (World Council of Churches 2016). Stereotypes against Muslims by Christians can be attributed to a lack of engagement with them. Building bridges of communication cannot be done only by education, but by a life-on-life sharing of lived experiences. Moving from mere dialogue to engagement opens up room for unbiased knowledge about religious otherness. Building bridges must, therefore, transcend abstract theological dialogue and concretely engage in life situations on level ground. How do we know this level ground? It is known in shared humanity and common needs. Common needs, such as clean water, sanitation, security, are just a few examples of shared vulnerabilities between Christians and Muslims in Eastleigh.

As Hanciles (2014) has opined, the evangelical church in Africa, therefore, needs to know how to deal with stereotypes leveled against Muslims by the Christian fraternity in general, especially amidst concerns about the presence of radical Islam. The evangelical

church, however, struggles with the idea of settling for a mere desire for ‘respect’, ‘communication’, ‘tolerance’, and ‘building commonalities’ at the expense of sharing the gospel of Christ’s salvation. This is dismissed by some Christians as a distraction from the main goal of the church’s mission. Others in the evangelical church are of a contrary view in the realization of the indispensability of interreligious dialogue if the church is to succeed in witnessing Christ to Muslim migrants in Kenya. These two positions create tension as to whether or not evangelism supersedes social action. This tension also preempts as to whether or not the mission includes both evangelism and social action. The evangelical church in Kenya has held the idea that the proclamation of the gospel takes preeminence over social action. It also goes further to suggest that social action in an interfaith context is secondary to the mission. How can both proclamation and social action be seen as mission and employed together to broaden the scope of the church’s interfaith engagement in Kenya? This is where interfaith engagement comes in to expand and stretch dialogue and to deal practically with concrete shared vulnerabilities and needs.

4.2. Evangelical Mission and Interfaith Engagement

A large percentage of refugee migrants in urban Nairobi is constituted of Somali Muslims. Cities have historically played a very important role in the establishment and development of the Islamic religion worldwide. Scholars (Reisacher 2016) have attributed a positive influence of the transformational relationship between Muslims and cities. However, cities can also present economic and social problems, challenge traditions in ways that produce irreparable ruptures within religious communities, and generate conflicts between Muslims and Christians when they compete for urban space, position, and power. The unhealthy competition for meager resources in Nairobi’s Eastleigh inner city has led to economic disparities in this urban context whose first casualty is the alien. These economic disparities have plunged the Somali migrant communities into serious humanitarian crises. The relationship between Somali Muslims and Christians in Nairobi is better understood when one engages with Somali migrant needs in the city. Interfaith engagement between Christians and Somali Muslim urbanities has been an overlooked conversation for many years. To meet the humanitarian needs of refugees, the church has tried to respond to the refugee crises Somali migrants find themselves in. The evangelical Church in Kenya has attempted to reach out to the Somali immigrant population in Nairobi caused by refugeeism. The evangelicals’ understanding and praxis are those of proclamation motivated by the desire for conversion, as opposed to understanding the religious other. Mission in the evangelical church in Kenya is wrapped in Western missionary clothing in that the goal to convert others supersedes other worthy goals and ends. To the Church, “Mission means the announcement or transmission and confession of faith” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015). This proclamation and announcement are understood by evangelicals in Kenya as the conversion of the Somali Muslim migrants, even with the glaring humanitarian need notwithstanding.

The evangelical church’s understanding of mission as “a one-directional undertaking associated with outreach to distant lands or peoples” (Hanciles 2014) is presently entrenched in her thinking and practice. This also “conjures the image of a white person from the West working in a non-Western context, supported by funds from their home country or church” (Hanciles 2014). On the contrary, the mission to the refugee population in Kenya is, firstly, not one-directional, as the refugee settlers also have their religion that they would like to live out and share for others to experience. Secondly, engaging with Somali refugees in Kenya does not involve long-distance traveling, as they are with us. Thirdly, established mainstream evangelical churches in Kenya typifying their Western counterparts are sending indigenous missionaries to plant churches among refugee populations. This is, however, not easily welcomed by Muslim refugees due to the Christian–Muslim animosity in the land. This tension arises due to, among other factors, what Hanciles (2014) refers to as the overuse of military imagery and terminology in depicting missionary activity (crusade, force, campaign, battle-grounds, enlist, etc.). War-like images are ‘violent’ and certainly

do not yield any productive engagement with the Somali Muslims. This is because, as forced migrants, Somali immigrants' lives have already been shattered by violence and war. Therefore, such military images repel any relationship building and interfaith linkage in the context of Somali migrants.

To ease that tension, the church ought to consider an alternative theological approach to witness Christ among the Muslim migrants. As Hanciles (2003) has observed, the version of the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18–20, which was the watchword of the Western missionary movement, no longer retains its primacy in the growing non-Western missionary movement. He argues that "the non-Western missionary movement boasts neither the economic and technological advantages of the Western missionary movement nor the protection of strong economic and military powers that the Western missionary movement enjoyed" (Hanciles 2003). Instead, the indigenous Church in Kenya is self-supporting out of its meager income and is exposed to the dangers of growing religious extremism and radical Islam in the region.

Therefore, the evangelical church in Kenya must wrestle with emerging challenges in its mission work among refugee migrants. These challenges call for a reconsideration of several factors. Theologically, the evangelical church must explore alternative Biblical texts whereby to engage missions. The use of Jesus' parables, which are incarnational stories in which Jesus lived with the people and experienced their socio-economic and political struggle to speak directly to it, is proposed. Refugee settlements being 'dangerous places' so to speak, the story of the good Samaritan can fit as a mission text. This is a fitting text to create a mission model amidst the complex web of religious plurality in Kenya. Economically speaking, the evangelical church in Kenya must realize that its mission "comes not from the centers of political power and economic wealth but the periphery" (Hanciles 2003). Therefore, her evangelism strategies must seek to adopt incarnational approaches whereby living with the people to experience their vulnerability is naturally a welcome effort.

4.3. From Interfaith Dialogue to Interfaith Engagement

For many decades, interfaith dialogue has opened up conversations in multifaith contexts in a helpful manner. Religious adherents of various backgrounds have been understanding, appreciative, tolerant, and respectful of the religious other. Dialogue has involved theological discourses between faiths that have sought the understanding of other religions for several reasons, such as peacebuilding and coexistence. These are worthy goals and are highly needed in a world that is marked by interreligious conflict. However, the dialogue has remained within the confines of theological academics and ivory tower philosophical debates about God and faith. Additionally, scholarly interfaith dialogue may not speak to the day-to-day life experience of a Muslim and Christian living next door or in the market place. Thus 'interfaith engagement' is a more recent and a better phrase in that it deals with ordinary people living life amid their vulnerabilities and challenges. It engages people across religious lines to address the common needs of humanity. 'Engagement' encounters people's daily struggle with socio-economic, political, and religious realities caused by the disparities of life in a fallen world. Therefore, the evangelical church has time and again had to reconsider navigating from interfaith dialogue to engagement. However, one who has grown, lived, and now serving Christ in Nairobi, Kenya, can attest to the reality that interfaith engagement is not taking place, despite many opportunities to do so. This is due to the following reasons, which describe the tension between evangelism and interfaith initiative.

1. The church's mission is to herald the gospel, about the Kingdom of God through evangelism.
2. The interfaith community in Kenya does not readily welcome the exclusivity of the gospel message (Jesus being the way, the truth, and life).
3. Interfaith initiatives are pitched without conversion as one of the goals.

4. The church's involvement in interfaith work is seen as a disguise for evangelism by the Somali Muslims.
5. Pitting evangelism against social action, and the temptation to replace one over the other, is common.

For these reasons several questions arise. For instance, how can the evangelical Church in Kenya enter into dialogue with Somali Muslim refugees, and at the same time position herself to fulfill the task of mission? Unfortunately, interfaith engagement has been misconstrued by the Evangelical Association of Kenya (EAK) as an element of, or preparation for, evangelism. The church's hesitance to see interfaith engagement as an end in itself requires missiological introspection on interfaith work in Kenya in general. Specifically, it calls for the establishment of a Biblical foundation of interfaith engagement. What is the basis of the evangelical Church's navigation between dialogue and engagement as complementation of each other? As explained earlier, world evangelicals have historically wrestled with the issue of evangelism and social action. A dichotomy between preaching the gospel and social action has been sustained for many decades. Can there not be a complementarity instead of competition between the two? The Lausanne Congress of 2010 issued a statement on the mission of God in inter-faith contexts known as the Cape Town Commitment, which can be a good starting point for the evangelical church in Kenya and for interfaith engagement. It states in part, "We affirm the proper place for dialogue with people of other faiths, just as Paul engaged in debate with Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue and public arenas" (Birdsall and Brown 2011). That affirmation was true for global evangelicalism then, but is not necessarily fitting for contextual missions in a contemporary Kenyan context that is increasingly multifaith. As mentioned earlier, the evangelical Church in Kenya has preoccupied herself with dialogue alone which involves theological dueling at an academic level. Theological debates are carried out in the public space whose outcome is a win-lose situation. With a Muslim preacher on the one end and a Christian evangelist on the other, debates are carried out under the public glare of crowds on the streets of Eastleigh, Nairobi. At the end of the debate, the public verdict is what determines the winner and loser. This approach is counterproductive and currently less likely to be useful. Firstly, there is the existing antagonistic nature of the theological debate between Somali Muslims and Christians. Secondly, it is motivated by a win-lose attitude on both the Christians' and Muslims' part. Thirdly, it only escalates the tension between Christians and Muslims and is not interested in de-escalating the situation. Lastly, it does not build any relationships. It is building good and healthy relationships between the two religious groups that will yield sustainable peaceful coexistence between the Somali migrants and the Christian hosts.

5. Conclusions

The Lausanne 2010, famously known as the Cape Town Commitment, underpinned a theology that was then good for the evangelical mission of the Church. However, that theological underpinning is not necessarily good today given the contextual development in sub-Saharan Africa. With urbanization and migration fueled by the conflict situation in the East African region, Somali Muslims have migrated to various countries in East Africa. Kenya is known to be a popular destination for Somali refugee migrants settling in the Dadaab and Eastleigh refugee camps.

What has been the outcome of Christian-Muslim relations in Eastleigh, Nairobi? There have been mixed feelings to the way the church has responded. For some, there has been a sense of empathy without action. For others, Christians have been indifferent about the plight of the refugee. This is evidence to the allusion that the assessment of the 2010 Cape Town Commitment does not necessarily address the missional needs of the evangelical mission outreach ten year later. Instead, the general evangelical church's response has been in either some or all of the following ways:

1. There has been Christian-Muslim polarization in the wake of global terrorism and violent extremism instigated by the Al-Shabaab terror network.

2. There has been increasing interreligious intolerance due to some factors, key among them being the radicalization of both Christian and Muslim groups.
3. The evangelical church in Kenya is shy of engaging in interfaith dialogue/engagement due to the prevailing interfaith tensions.
4. Pastors, missionaries, and academics have resolved in engaging more in polemics and apologetics rather than in interfaith engagement.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for the evangelical church to rethink its mission strategy to engage with the interfaith environment created by migration in Nairobi. To do this, she has to welcome interfaith engagement for missions, as this is less likely to resort to deception and coercive means that betray the gospel and hurt the people she is trying to reach. A Biblical foundation for work with interfaith migration is of the utmost importance at this juncture for mainstream mission work among migrants.

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