Intolerance before and after the 1517 Reformation and the Kenyan context: A theo-historical review

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Abstract

The article sets out to demonstrate that theo-social intolerance in both colonial and post-colonial Kenya, a phenomenon which reminisces other forms of intolerance during and after the 1517 reformation and the persecutions in the early Church, can be overcome. In Kenya, theo-social intolerance was evident when both the missionaries and the colonial authorities blocked any room for dialogue with the practitioners of African religion. It reached its climax when African Instituted Churches and their founded schools were closed down in 1952 by the colonial authorities. Intolerance also manifests itself through the tensions that are evident among Christians and Muslims, afro-Pentecostals versus mainline Churches and so on. As we mark over 500 years of reformation (1517–2019), are there lessons that can inform our theo-social discourses in the 21st century, especially in regard to theo-social tolerance? How can this *Ubulwane/Unyama* (beastly) behaviour be avoided in our future socio-ecclesial discourses? Despite borrowing broadly in order to build the case for religious tolerance, the article has cited the case of St Andrew's Kabare, an Anglican Mission centre that was established in 1910, where Rev. Edmund Crawford demonstrated that dialogue between African culture and the Gospel has a positive impact on the society being evangelized.

Keywords

Religious intolerance; African context; colonial expeditions; Kenya

Introduction

Religion, which is perceptively regarded by Paul Tillich as the ultimate concern (Gathogo 2013), is indeed vital for humanity, and indeed, comes first in real life situations. To this end, it has both manifest and latent functions, including dysfunctions that characteristically play out in society. One critical religious dysfunction is extremism and/or fundamentalism and its

resultant intolerance thereof. Put it differently, while religion has critical functions such as the priestly role, a buttress function, a self-identification role, a conflict resolution role, a social control function, a psychological function, an emotional function, a group-solidarity, explanation function, and an age-grading function among others, religion is equally undermined by intolerance that is manifested in fundamentalism and/or extremism. Among the members of one religious group, religious harmony has been greatly undermined by blind denominationalism that sees nothing good in others. Such denominational intolerance has historically undermined ecumenism.

In African context, religion, from time immemorial, has always served as a cohesive instrument for the African people. Additionally, it has always played its role in the cultural understanding and awareness of the people and their communities (Ikenga-Metuh 1987). A critical dysfunction in our contemporary world that surpasses the post 1517 ecclesiastical reformation and its diverse impacts to Africa and the rest of the world is the emergence of Jihadist terrorism, which is camouflaged as a religious concern. Nevertheless, this article seeks to explore some historical realities in Kenya that compares with the intolerance in the post 1517 Europe and in the early Church. In other words, is the intolerance seen in post-reformation Europe and the previous events in the early Church comparable with the various cases of intolerance in the colonial and post-colonial Kenya?

In Kenya, the anti-Terrorism Bill (2003) and the debate over the inclusion of the Islamic Kadhi courts into the Kenyan constitution polarized the Christian-Muslim relations in Kenya. These contentions revealed the simmering religious tensions between the two religious faiths. As we moved towards voting for or against the 2005 Kenyan constitution, which was rejected by a popular vote (43 versus 57 percent), I noted that the lack of open dialogue promoted mistrust, and invited radicals on both sides of the divide to take extreme positions. In particular, Christians could not understand why Muslims needed an "extra court" when the country had a common law for all. When dialogue was finally given a chance, the 2010 constitution passed by 60% after a plebiscite was done countrywide. Theologically, the Jew-Gentile dialogue remains the way forward in addressing diverse concerns.

Intolerance in the early church

A brief look at the initial stages of the existence of the Church will show the great intolerance and/or extremism that she underwent. Indeed, it was persecuted by the prevailing dominant religious system. Considering that Christianity posed a threat to Judaism, the persecution was partly carried out by the Jewish religious authorities, especially in Jerusalem, Judea, and the surrounding areas (Schaff, 2006; Arnold, 1999, Walker, 1959). With time, religious persecutions and/or intolerance was slowly replaced by political persecutions. These extremists' attacks against the Christians were done by the Roman political system, a phenomenon that commenced during the time of Emperor Nero (54–68). It was continued in varying degrees by successive Emperors who included Domitian in AD 95, Trajan from 98–117, Hedrian from 117–138, Antonious Pius from 138–161, and Marcus Aurelius from 161–180, Septimus Severus (193–211), Decius (249–251), Valerian (253–260), Lucius Verus (161–169), Commodus or Caesar M. Aurelius (176–192), Aurelian (270–275), Tacitus (275–276), Diocletian (284–305), Maximian (286–305), Constantius (305–306), Galerius (305–311), Severus (306–307), Maxentius (306–312), and Constantine (307–337) (see Schaff 2006; Arnold 1999).

The latter is credited for stopping Christian persecutions in 313 after his victorious battle on the Milvian Bridge in AD 312. With the growing acceptance of Christianity, Emperor Constantine made a cross which he was to use as a military sign in AD 312. After overcoming his opponents and eventually took control of the entire Eastern part of the Empire in AD 313. He followed this by recognizing Christianity as a lawful religion (*religio licita*) (Schaff 2006). Likewise, Galerius (305–311) had previously issued the famous Edict of Toleration in 311 in Serdica (today Sofia, Bulgaria). In turn, the Edict of Toleration of 311 was delivered as a measure of ending the Diocletian persecution (284–305) of Christianity. It was the first step towards religious toleration in the early church; and indeed, preceded the Edict of Milan of AD 313 that Emperor Constantine issued after the battle of the Milvian Bridge. In view of this, it is critical to appreciate that there were some instances where religious tolerance existed during those turbulent moments of Christian persecutions. These intolerances would at times subside and then re-emerge. In particular, the era of Emperor Decius

(249–251) witnessed widespread extremist persecutions and downright violence. Nonetheless, as Tertullian (AD 160–220), the early Christian apologist and a polemicist against heresy, remarked: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church" (Schaff 2006:143). Tertullian was also an early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa.

Among the martyrs in the early Church there is included Bishop Ignatius of Antioch (now a major town of South-Central Turkey) in AD 115 during the era of Trajan, Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna (renamed Izmir in Turkey) in AD 155 during the time of Antonius Pius, and the great Christian Apologist of the time by name Justin Martyr. Martyr was martyred in Rome during the era of Marcus Aurelius in AD 166. Another case of religious intolerance is seen in AD 112 when the Roman Provincial Governor Pliny executed Christians in Asia Minor for refusing to sacrifice to the cult of the Emperor Trajan. During the era of Septimius Severus (193–211) persecutions were mainly confined to Egypt and Carthage[1] in 2002. Generally, intolerance and extremist positions can be seen in the fact that the Christian faith was deemed illegal (*religio ilicita*) from the beginning of the second century to the beginning of the fourth century. In reality, however, the degree of Christian persecutions and/or intolerance depended on whichever emperor was in power at a particular time.

The 1517 Reformation in Europe

As Jack Arnold (1999) perceptively notes, the Protestant reformation of the 16th century Europe was the greatest religious movement for Christians since the early Church. In his view, it was a revival of Biblical and New Testament theology. His views agree with those of Philip Schaff (1819–1893), a Swiss-born protestant theologian and Church historian, who held that:

> The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history. It marks the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern times. Starting from religion, it gave, directly or indirectly, a mighty impulse to every

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1   Carthage is in the northern shore of Africa, on a peninsula in the Bay of Tunis and near modern Tunis (Walker 1959).

forward movement, and made Protestantism the chief propelling force in the history of modern civilization (2006:117).

The Reformation is said to have started on 31st October 1517 through a German monk, Martin Luther, who pinned 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. In turn, these 95 theses were arguments in which he attacked the weaknesses of the Church, especially with regard to abuses seen in the selling of indulgences for the forgiveness of sins. While Luther only wanted to reform the Roman Church especially on matters to do with indulgences, he had no idea of the impact this would make on the German society and the rest of the world. The 31st October 1517 event changed the course of history (Arnold 1999).

The underlying background causes for the October 1517 Reformation were political as the Western Europe experienced the rise of nation-states with their own strong central governments; Intellectual as the European Renaissance that had just taken place had introduced radical changes in the intellectual life of the people through emphasis on critical evaluation of issues; and Economic as the Church was largely seen as corrupt after having taken huge chunks of land. With the basis of wealth in much of the society in Western Europe viewing land as their economic basis of their wealth, the Church and the nobility and indeed the entire society were seen as in dire need of reform, one that was eventually supported by these unhappy groups in society after Luther pulled the trigger (Schaff 2006).

The causes of the reformation were also social, moral, and a carry-over from earlier disappointments. With the lower classes of society blaming their plight on the higher classes and on the Church, it was all too easy for such disadvantaged groups to welcome those who fought against those who wielded power (Schaff 2006). The moral aspect is seen in the fact that the corruption among the clergy and other Church leaders had reached its peak. To this end, the clergy were seen as unworthy examples in the sphere of morality; others stated categorically that many priests lived in open sin or kept concubines. Additionally, there were previous attempts to reform the Church that were heavily suppressed. When Martin Luther came on the scene, many now saw a new hope. As Jack Arnold (1999) has noted:

> There had been numerous attempts to reform the Roman Church before the 16th century, but they had always been squelched by the

Inquisition. There were also groups outside the Roman Church, such as the Albigenses and Waldenses. They opposed the Roman Church and their blood flowed like water in martyrdom. Men such as John Wycliffe (1320–1384), John Huss (1360–1415), and Gerolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) spoke out against the papacy, auricular confession, purgatory, pilgrimages, worship of saints, relics, etc. Huss and Savonarola were burned at the stake as heretics. Rome herself made some half-hearted attempts to reform at the Councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1414–1418) and Basel (1431), but these were not successful. There was a group within the Roman Church called *The Brethren of the Common Life* that came into existence around 1350 for the specific purpose of bringing reform. Some famous men who belonged to this group were John of Wessel, Erasmus and Thomas à Kempis.

It is unfortunate that the Reformation has variously been called the Protestant Reformation yet there were no Protestants then. It has also been referred to as a Protestant Revolution yet there was no revolution akin to French Revolution of 1789 or the Chinese revolution of 1949. Nor does it compare with the Russian Revolution of 1917 where the Bolsheviks (majority) defeated the Mensheviks (minority). The fact that there are political and economic factors that contributed to its causes does not make it a revolution whatsoever. Rather, the fact that the Roman Church controlled everything made the Reformation to include political and economic elements. Despite its political, social, economic, and moral dimensions, the 1517 Reformation spread across Europe and beyond (Arnold, 1999). Over the years, the reformation that began with Martin Luther as the de-facto leader saw the emergency of other leaders. They included: Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560) from Germany, Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) of Northern Switzerland, John Calvin (1509–1564) of Southern Switzerland, John Knox (ca. 1505–1572) of Scotland, and Menno Simons (ca. 1496–1561) of the Netherlands. Even though it triggered the Counter Reformation within the Roman Church, the reformation settled down along three major branches; namely the Lutheran (who were mainly conservative and in Germany and Scandinavia), Reformed (who were largely moderates and strongest in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and England), and Anabaptist (Schaff 2006). The latter were characteristically on the extreme and were

very radical in their demand for change. As we shall see, the intolerance visited at them was unfortunate.

Despite some intolerance that was evident, it is worthwhile to concede that the doctrinal unity of reformers is clearly manifest in their unifying doctrinal positions. Such included the emphasis on: Bible Only (*Sola Scriptura*), Christ Only (*Solo Christo*), Grace Only (*Sola Gratia*), Faith Only (*Sola Fide*), and God's Glory Only (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Again, the impacts of the reformation are huge. Indeed, it is difficult to understand the modern history apart from the Reformation (Arnold 1999). It has affected our modern view of law and politics; for prior to the Reformation, the church governed politics, controlled emperors and kings; and indeed, governed the law of the land. It laid down the right and/or obligation of the individual conscience. In so doing, it sought to empower the individuals on the right to follow the dictates of the individual conscience. To a large extent, the modern world owes its liberties to this 1517 event.

Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521

Diet (assembly) of Worms refers to the meeting of the Diet (assembly) of the Holy Roman Empire held at Worms, Germany, conducted from 28 January to 26 May 1521 (Schaff 2006). It is in this imperial meeting, which was presided over by Emperor Charles V, where Martin Luther was summoned to appear to answer charges of heresy. Though it was part of post 1517 religious intolerance, Luther boldly committed himself to the cause of Reformation, despite the great risk that he was staring at. His teachings on reformation were however condemned in the Edict of Worms (*Wormser Edikt*). In this "court", Luther boldly refused to recant his teachings and/or his 95 thesis and insisted that he could only do so if the scriptures convicted him otherwise.

The display of religious intolerance and extremism is clear when we mull over the fact that Martin Luther was particularly intimidated by being tried by an Imperial Diet (assembly). Being tried by an Imperial Diet meant that Luther was prosecuted and tried directly by the highest representative assembly in the Roman Empire. Certainly, an Imperial Diet was a formal deliberate assembly of the whole Empire, a phenomenon that made the

accused (Luther in this case) appear like he was the greatest enemy of the Empire (Walker 1959).

Luther fought religious intolerance when he defied the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V by refusing to recant his writings and/or theo-ecclesial position (Schaff 2006). As Professor of Biblical hermeneutics at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, he drew up his 95 theses condemning the Roman Catholic Church for its corrupt practices of selling "indulgences" or forgiveness of sins. In 1521, Pope Leo X (1475–1521) excommunicated Luther from the Roman Catholic Church for the sin of requesting the Church to reform and be a corrupt-free religious organization. Pope Leo X who reigned from 1513 died in December 1521, a few months after excommunicating Luther. In turn, Luther, at the Diet of Worms of May 1521, had been declared an outlaw and a heretic. Luckily, powerful German princes protected him from execution (Arnold 1999; Walker 1959). By the time of his death in 1546, Luther had significantly altered the course of Western thought despite this theo-religious intolerance meted on him as he sought ecclesiastical reforms. Such intolerance is also evident in the Kenya colonial context and in the post-colonial Kenya, as is demonstrated below.

Intolerance via colonial expeditions

As noted in Julius Gathogo (2008), the capture of central Kenya (lands occupied by Mbeere, Embu, Meru, and Kikuyu communities) by the colonial authorities came in three murderous, brutal and, indeed intolerant expeditions. The first one took place in 1887. It was led by Count Teleki and his caravan who reached Dagorreti near Nairobi, and who demonstrated open arrogance. Despite being received with warm African hospitality (*Ubuntu/Umundu*), a phenomenon where strange visitors are seen as ancestors who have returned in disguised ways, Count Teleki, working with the Imperial British East Africa (IBEA) company (which was running Kenya on behalf of the British government) went on to encourage more European expansionists such as Captain Frederick D. Lugard and George Wilson to come over to *Muthamaki* (community leader), Waiyaki wa Hinga's (1840s–1892) Dagoretti home compound. The latter arrived in 1890. The second intolerant expedition arrived at *Muthamaki* Waiyaki's homestead in 1891. The ruthless team came in 1891 and was

led by Eric Smith and A. Purkiss (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966). Their *Ubuluwane/Unyama* (inhospitality) came out clearly when they camped at Waiyaki's compound, set up Fort Smith (Dagoretti) and burnt over 30 villages, rendering people homeless all of a sudden. They also destroyed the environment by cutting trees, destroying crops, taking countless livestock, and finally captured *Muthamaki* Waiyaki who was protesting these atrocities hitherto unknown. It is orally reported that he remained defiant even as he was being deported to Kibwezi where he was buried alive (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966).

The second expedition took place in 1894, and was led by Francis Hall and Major Smith. It carried out a ruthless expedition in Kiambu and Murang'a counties of the present-day Kenya. Born in Sangor, India, in 1869, Francis Hall led in the establishment of Fort Hall (now Murang'a Town) as the second camp in central Kenya after Fort Smith (Dagoretti), and died from blackwater fever in 1909, at barely 40 (Gathogo 2008). Before being sent to establish Fort Hall (Murang'a, IBEA first posted him at Fort Smith in 1892 and tasked him with the role of building 200 kilometres of road that would serve caravans from the Kenyan coast to Uganda. Intolerance within Hall's team is clear when we mull over the fact that they did not consult local clan leaders when building roads or when expropriating land. The third expedition in central Kenya (also called Mount Kenya region) took place in 1904; and was led by another inhospitable European leader, Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen. In this brutal expedition, Meinertzhagen, the key conqueror of Embu-Kirinyaga counties (1902–1904) wrote in his diary (*The Kenya Diary, 1902–1906*) words that vividly show the events as they happened on daily basis, as he went on to "take" Embu Fort by 1904. By taking Embu Fort, it automatically meant that he had taken the entire trans-Tana region, whose main Fort was Embu.[2]

As noted in Julius Gathogo (2013), the brutal 1902 to 1904 European expedition that began in Mbiri (renamed Fort Hall in 1901, and Murang'a in 1963) had heavy casualties that no African warrior team was able to overcome. In this conquest, an estimated 797 residents of Fort Hall (Murang'a), Ndia, and Gichugu were killed. Additionally, over 250

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2   The Trans-Tana area refers to Ndia, Gichugu, Embu, and Mbeere groups (Gathogo and Nthukah 2019).

inhabitants of Mbeere-Embu were killed as they attempted to offer resistance. Some people who were oblivious of what was happening as Meinertzhagen's caravan passed through Murang'a to Embu were gunned down when they came out to observe the day's happenings. As they herded their flocks, death found them there. It is after establishing a Fort in Embu in 1904 that he moved upwards to crash the Nandi rebellion (1895–1906). In Nandi lands, Colonel Meinertzhagen cunningly invited the Orkoiyot – the Supreme leader, Koitalel Arap Samoei (1860-1905), to negotiate a truce on 19 October 1905, but killed him instead (Meinertzhagen 1957).

Another form of intolerance in the colonial Kenya is seen in the European missionaries, during the 19th and 20th centuries, as they were seen "as largely too radical, unfair, and pushy in addressing African concerns such as polygamy, female circumcision (Female Genital Mutilation), traditional beer, [African] dances, songs and other rituals" (Gathogo 2017:40). In Kigari Mission of Embu County, Rev. Douglass Hooper, unlike John Mbiti (1969) who saw African religious discourses as raw materials for the Gospel and in theologizing Christianity in Africa, could not see any positive contribution at all. Hooper, the resident European clergy at Kigari in early 1914 could not understand how African religio-cultural systems could be entertained in a "holy" religion of God (Euro-American Christianity). As a result of these harsh treatments, African Anglican Christians in the local Kigari-Embu Church left it and formed an African Instituted Church, where they could sing joyfully, jump, employ their own figurative, riddles, dances, metaphors, narratives, and dramatize as their ancestors did (Gathogo 2017).

Religious intolerance in the colonial Kenya

African religious discourses have been systematically suppressed in the colonial Africa since the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, where Africa was partitioned by several European powers, whether the prospective subjects liked it or not. After this scramble and partitioning, Britain, Belgium, Portugal, Spain and Germany divided Africa into segments according to their liking, thereby creating their respective spheres of influence (Gathogo 2008). Religious intolerance was also experienced during the missionary era during in the 19th and the 20th century when African religion and culture

was dismissed as pagan, fetish, animistic, and lacking in substance without any dialogue whatsoever. Equally, African religion was ruthlessly suppressed during the Portuguese early attempts at introducing Christianity in the Kenyan Coast in the 15th and 16th centuries.

As noted earlier, the religious intolerance meted at the African religious discourses by the European missionaries, the colonial era, the Portuguese and Islamist Arabs in the Kenyan coast is all in tandem with the post May 1517 religious intolerance meted on Luther, Calvin, and Anabaptists among others. This intolerance went a notch higher when the Lutheran missionary bishop of Bukoba in the then Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Bengt Sundkler dismissed the rise of African Initiated Churches in the 1930s "as the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathendom" (1961:297). In other words, he could not see any authentic contribution that the African Initiated Churches would positively make to the African Christianity. For him, it was unnecessary evil that needed to be exterminated in good time.

One critical incident that expresses the African Nationalist zeal is seen in the late 1929. In this incident, young people of Kabete, near Nairobi, started a dance-song called *Muthirigu* to dramatize the Kikuyu religio-cultural nationalist struggle against the church and the colonial government. The government banned it in January 1930; but despite this ban, it became an anthem of resistance until in the 1940s and 50s when the *Mau Mau* revolutionary struggle started. Coupled with this ban, the *Karing'a* group (cultural Nationalists) was summarily expelled from the Mission Churches, as others led in protests (Gathogo 2008). Additionally, their children were also expelled from mission schools, a phenomenon that created education crisis in Kikuyuland. In turn, this led the cultural nationalists to urgently work towards establishing *Karing'a* Churches (read African Initiated Churches) and schools. This ultimately happened! In other words, intolerance was the key factor in the establishment of African Instituted Churches, during the missionary era, especially with regard to central Kenya context. Put it differently, the wall and the spirit of historical reality of post 1517 Europe is also visible since the 19th century until the present date.

Another form of religious intolerance and/or religious extremism is seen in the Islamic Jihadist terrorist waves, especially in Eastern Africa. In regards

to both the Kenyan Al-Shabaab (or 'Ugus' as the group is referred to by Somali Government, meaning 'the group that massacres Somali people') and the Nigerian Boko Haram, terrorism is seen as acts of unlawful violence and war, a phenomenon that leads to anarchy or lawlessness (Woods, 2015). It is an outfit that kills Muslims while in Somalia, but kills Christians while in Kenya. Indeed, the terrorists' assaults, especially in the churches, reached its climax in August 2012 when the pastors threatened to sue the government of Kenya for lack of protection. By then more than 14 churches had already been attacked within a period of four months (April to August). In October 2013, the Mombasa pastors asked the government to give them guns so as to protect themselves from these attacks, particularly after killers went into some pastors' residences and shot two of them dead (Woods 2015). The two Mombasa pastors are: Pastor Charles Mathole of the Mombasa Kisauni Redeemed Gospel Church and Pastor Ibrahim Kithaka of Kilifi East Africa Pentecostal Church.

Another critical extremist position was witnessed in January 2015 when Mombasa Evangelical and leading Pentecostal Church leaders sought to use guns to counter the Islamic Jihadists from the neighbouring Somalia. This call for guns so as to "protect ourselves" from Al-Shabaab attacks by Mombasa protestant pastors, mainly the Pentecostal wing, came again two years later (2017). This is after George Karidhimba Muriki, assistant pastor of Maximum Revival Ministries Church, was shot by gunmen who were believed to be Al-Shabab militants in Mombasa. To this end, Bishop Lambert Mbela of the Redeemed Gospel Church, Bishop MacDonald Kitwa of Good News Evangelical Centre, and Jeremiah Goodison met with Mombasa deputy county commissioner Salim Mahmoud to ask permission to carry weapons (Woods 2015). And although Alice Wahome, a member of the Administration and National Security Committee in Kenya's National Assembly, rejected the request on the ground that it would "increase lawlessness in the country if everyone is licensed to carry guns in Kenya" (Woods 2015), the inner protestant voice and the general Church frustration had been let out for public consumption, consideration, and/ or debate. How far should church leaders engage in military offensives? Is pacifism the only way out for a Christian? Do Christian ethics allow a Christian to participate in military activities, where killing is a part? Do the above samples of terrorist attacks change our "non-violence" approaches, particularly as seen in the early Christian writings (refer to Justin Martyr,

Tertullian and St. Ambrose among others)? Or should the Church now adapt St. Augustine's classical just war theory?

Tolerance at St Andrew's Kabare

There are also some isolated cases where the pioneer Anglican missionary, Rev. Edmund Crawford, of Kabare-Kirinyaga Mission of 1910,

> … displayed diplomatic gestures; and also demonstrated a sense of respect to the locals. In particular, [he displayed] respect [for the local] nine lineages (Mbari) who had a stake in the local land that the missionaries had interests in. That is, the lineages of Tiari, Ruria, Mutongu, Mwebia, Mwerero, Nyaga (father of Kamarua), Mukui, Mbwe, and Nyaga (father of Muthumba) (Gathogo 2017:41).

After Arthur Wallace McGregor established various mission centres in central Kenya, it became clear that there also appeared unique cases of tolerant European missionaries (clergy) who were posted by Mombasa Diocesan Bishop (William G. Peel, 1897–1916), in those centres (Gathogo 2017). In turn, they worked hand-in-hand with the local African leaders and the general populace. One case is that of Rev (later Canon) Crawford and his team who befriended the residents and eventually followed St. Paul's inculturation model where he says: "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men, so that by all possible means I might save some of them. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessing … (I Corinthians 9:22–23, NIV). Among the first residents who eventually became friends of Rev. Crawford, and who learnt Christian Education in its initial stages, were: Njogu Mukui, Ndwiga Ndiri, Nyaga Kariti, Gituru Ngiinyi, Ndiga Ndiri, Nyaga Gatuai, and Mbiti Karunditu. Gathogo (2017:42–43) explains, thus:

> Apart from having the privilege of studying Christian education, and theological education in its abstract form, the pioneer students of Rev. Crawford also became pioneer African members of the nascent Kabare Church. In the spirit of St. Andrew, who readily followed Jesus in the new career of fishing human beings via the Gospel of Christ, the 7 pioneer African converts attracted others in the locality in a succession of events. In time, Rev. Crawford

(who was a brother to the medical missionary, Dr. Crawford, at the Kigari-Embu Mission Centre) found himself with another group of 12 trainees. In the catechism classes which were, in the real sense, a form of theological training owing to its contents and the broad curriculum that included the history of Christianity, the Christian doctrines, God's sacraments, discipleship, and the love for the neighbour, among other areas covered, Rev. Crawford found another enthusiastic class, who clearly displayed the traits seen in Andrew's conversion and desire to learn. They included: Mumae Muriithi, Nyaga Mbugici, Mukui Njogu, Kibugi Maria, Munyi Kimutwa, Munyi Micigi, Mutuura Nyaga, Kiruri, Nyaga Ciita, Thigari Igema, Njuku Gatang'I, and Gicobi Njeru. The second group ended up surpassing the first team as they became all manners of social functionaries: Interpreters, clerks, administrators, and Mumae Muriithi became the first African clergy in the entire Gichugu-sub-County of Kirinyaga County in 1935, and was christened Rev. Musa Mumae.

Apart from the first team of seven which was purely "Men Only", the second group had the first group of women who were taught how to read and write, particularly the Bible, by Rev. Crawford. It included: Wakabari Ndwiga, Keethi Mutuura, Wanjira Wamugunda, Wagatu Mumae, Wambura Kiriamburi, Mukami Nyaga, and Wangeci Njiru (Nyagah 2010). Like the woman of virtue (in Proverbs 31), the above 7 women became the beacons of modernity, the models of the new forms of dressing, cooking, hygiene, education, family, and the society looked upon them for guidance. In many ways, the above 26 first and second trainees under the pioneer European Clergy prepared a fertile ground for later conversion to Christianity and the establishment of St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare.

In observing the changed lifestyles of the pioneer trainees and the converted Christians, locals in Kabare area and beyond Mt. Kenya region had a reason to envy them; and indeed, followed in their footsteps. It is no wonder that when St. Andrew's College Kabare was established in 1977 under a hotchpotch of challenges. The doubting Thomases, within and beyond Mt. Kenya region, who were doubting its continued existence beyond ten years, owing to lack of human and material resources, were surprised to

see the College go beyond expectations. Indeed, the initial stages saw the locals donate food, labour, time, money and other resources in their bid to sustain its child – namely, St. Andrew's College. To an extent, it initially appeared like the child of St. Andrew's Church, Kabare, even though the entire Diocese of Mt. Kenya East (later sub-divided to form the current Kirinyaga, Embu, Mbeere, Meru, and Marsabit Dioceses) supported it. As other theological colleges moved from grace to grass, St. Andrew's College, Kabare went on to provide holistic education for the church and the general society. In my view, the coming of St Andrew's College Kabare in 1977, at the site where Rev Edmund Crawford engaged locals with theo-cultural dialogue at a time when other European missionaries were arrogant or ignorant, came as a result of this early encounter. Having made dialogue between culture and gospel a starting point rather than coercion, arm-twisting, and threats, Edmund Crawford set this critical pace that had to continue benefiting the area surrounding St Andrew's Kabare. Hence, when the institution started in 1977, the locals were easily socialised to support it, and they supported the college in its initial stages without much ado.

Conclusion

On the whole, the article has endeavoured to explore the theo-historical realities of colonial and post-colonial Kenya. It has borrowed broadly, as a methodology, from the persecution of early Christians to the 1517 reformation, in its bid to understand intolerance. Certainly, there are cases where religious conservatism suppressed democratic ideals especially in Switzerland. The post 1517 Europe also saw the reduction of papal powers as new national states emerged. Equally, religious intolerance and its resultant extremism saw the exiling of John Calvin the French lawyer who propounded the reformation ideals. It also saw the grilling of Martin Luther during the infamous Diet (assembly) of Worms in 1521. Nevertheless, the post 1517 Europe saw not only the emergency of John Calvin (1509–1564) and Martin Luther (1483–1546); but also, the huge contributions of Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531). As the three great reformers disliked the extremism of the Anabaptists who wanted more reforms in the church, they were also intolerant to them. Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church

was intolerant to them. This intolerance rekindles the persecutions of the early church. Ironically, these intolerances provided a forum where positive developments were to emerge; as they triggered the need for inclusive initiatives such as ecumenical initiatives and democratic ideals.

The article has also appreciated the critical role of the reformers (Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli) who gallantly sought to reconstruct the (Catholic) Church from within albeit with considerable challenges. In the nature of things, they openly differed with the claim: extra *ecclesiam nulla salus*, (outside the Roman Catholic Church there is no salvation). Rather, they propounded their Reformation thesis of *Sola Scriptura* (the Bible alone) and *Sola Gratia* (salvation is by grace alone), Christ Only (*Solo Christo*), Grace Only (*Sola Gratia*), Faith Only (*Sola Fide*), and God's Glory Only (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Were they extremists in their reformation agenda? By over emphasizing unrealized eschatology (the future concerns) as opposed to realized eschatology (present concerns) were they theologically extreme? This is clearly seen when we mull over the fact that the European missionaries to East Africa, under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society, were theologically conservative as they handled local African cultures. They were largely informed by the post 1517 reformation thesis. Rather than encouraging dialogue with African cultures, they dismissed them as satanic, demonic, lacking in substance and as pagan. Such extreme and intolerant positions are clearly rooted in the post 1517 European protest theological trajectories. To this end, in modern society, the general intolerance across gender, ethnic, political and social divides has to be eradicated.

With Rev. Edmund Crawford, who pioneered the Kabare Mission of Kenya as the first resident priest in 1910, demonstrating that dialogue between culture and gospel and between peoples who belong to different schools of thought is possible, a new theo-social trajectory emerged. Unfortunately, the colonial authorities in Kenya did not learn from Crawford's dialogical method. As a result, the colonial authorities suppressed ruthlessly all African efforts at asserting their cultural identities, a phenomenon that saw the birth of Mau-Mau rebel movements (1952–60) that employed guerrilla warfare to fight the British colonialism. Such suppressions included: banning *Muthirigu* Dances of 1930s, banning *Itwika* (break away) ceremonies in 1925, closing African independent schools in 1950s, expelling children from

polygamous families from their schools, and fighting cultural elements without due dialogue. Equally, the colonial expeditions were brutal, deadly, inhumane (*Unyama/Ubulwane*) and lacked Ubuntu (humanness). In view of this, the article has argued strongly that the panacea for all theo-social challenges (including the implied xenophobia) remains honest and open dialogue of purpose. It also means appreciating the sanctity of human life. Or is appealing to the ethic of hospitality and the notion of *perichoresis* (or *circuminsession* or the mutual interpenetration), and the indwelling of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the panacea for this?

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