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Church and Formation of Conscience: Towards A Liberative Ecclesiology for Peace and Justice in Kenya

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THE CHURCH AND FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE: TOWARDS A LIBERATIVE ECCLESIOLOGY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN KENYA

A thesis by

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ABSTRACT

THE CHURCH AND FORMATION OF CONSCIENCE: TOWARDS A LIBERATIVE ECCLESIOLOGY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN KENYA

Augostine Edan Ekeno, SJ

Kenya, like many other African countries, continues to experience, fifty years after independence, various challenges including political instability and violence resulting from negative ethnicity. Kenya's history is rife with examples of divisive politics and negative ethnicity ranging from ethnic violence, ethnicized politics, dictatorship of the ethnic majority and ethnic clashes. Evidence of the deeply seated hatred can be found in the apparent reality of ethnic division and intertribal clashes often experienced either before, during or after elections.

The 2007 post-election violence which claimed over 1300 lives and the displacement of more than 300,000 people demonstrated the depth of the culture of negative ethnicity. This violence, together with previous intertribal clashes especially experienced in the country in the 1990s, exposed a thorny issue regarding the impact of a deformed conscience in society. It demonstrates the extent to which human actions based on blind choices can cause immense human suffering and loss of life.

This study proposes a liberative ecclesiology based on the formation of conscience as a pastoral strategy from below capable of renewing moral imagination and reawakening of the moral endowment inherent in every human being. The strength of this ecclesiology lies in the fact that it integrates both the top-down and bottom-up

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approaches capable of fostering the kind of social agents capable of creating a just and

peaceful society. The characteristics of this ecclesiology include expanding moral

imagination through telling and sharing stories and myths, and historicizing the formation

of conscience in the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) through educational and

formational programs.

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Professor George Griener, S.J.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my late mother Mrs. Mary Alelia whose dreams for me have resulted in this achievement and without her loving upbringing and nurturing I would not have been where I am today. Keep on interceding for me as I keep you in my thoughts and prayers. You are my guardian angel.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important documents of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) is the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*). This document seeks to address and respond to the prevailing problems and issues humanity faced in the latter half of the twentieth century. One of *Gaudium et Spes'* greatest successes was the way it placed "a renewed emphasis on the role of conscience in the life of Catholics."[1] This emphasis contrasts sharply with the minimal role given to conscience before Vatican II. In a pre-Vatican II context, Catholics were encouraged and taught to accept the Magisterium's determination of what was right and what was wrong.[2] But in the spirit of Catholic tradition, Vatican II asserted the primacy and inviolability of moral conscience. It affirmed the primacy of one's conscience and stressed that no one should be forced to act contrary to his or her conscience.[3]

Vatican II defined conscience as the "most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths."[4] As understood by the Church, conscience is basically an expression of the whole person's "commitment to values and the judgment one must make in light of that commitment to apply those

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[1] Robert S. Rivers, *From Maintenance to Mission: Evangelization and the Revitalization of the Parish* (New York: Paulist Press International, U.S., 2004), 9.

[2] Ibid., *9.*

[3] Vatican II, "*Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," in *The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents* Vol. 1., edited by Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1975), no. 4. This reference applies to other documents of the Second Vatican Council that shall be used in this study.

[4] *Gaudium et Spes*, no.16.

values."[5] As a means by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act, conscience can help the human person to recognize what he or she ought to do here and now in this situation.[6] Thus, conscience, Richard Gula writes, is "me coming to a decision."[7]

Conscience is, therefore, a human capacity to know what is good and to do it, a process of discovering that which is right, and is the practical judgment and decision – a judgment of the good (a reasonable action). As a process, conscience requires formation to make an honest, faithful judgment and decision with respect to what is moral for one to do in a particular situation. Vatican II emphasized the same power of formation of conscience to address poorly formed and immature consciences. It recommended that:

> In order for individual men to discharge with greater exactness the obligation of their conscience toward themselves and the various groups to which they belong, they must be carefully educated to a higher degree of culture through the use of the immense resources available today to the human race. Above all the education of youth from every social background has to be undertaken, so that there can be produced not only men and women of refined talents, but those great-souled persons who are so desperately required by our times.[8]

These words signaled a new understanding on the part of a church recognizing its role in the formation of conscience to form men and women required by our times. Pope Francis echoed the same call and the spirit of the Council in *Amoris Laetitia: On Love in the Family.* While emphasizing the place of a formed conscience, he remarked that "every effort should be made to encourage the development of an enlightened

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[5] Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Christian Morality* (New York: Paulist Press International,U.S., 1989), 131.

[6] Todd A. Salzman and Michael G Lawler, *Catholic Sexual Ethics,* 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 11.

[7] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Christian Morality*, 131.

[8] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 31.

conscience, formed and guided by the responsible and serious discernment of one's

pastor, and to encourage an ever greater trust in God's grace."[9] While it is true that Pope

Francis is here addressing the myriad realities of families today, his suggestions affirm

the broader function of a well formed conscience. An enlightened conscience, argues

Pope Francis, can help a Christian realize "with sincerity and honesty what for now is the

most generous response to which can be given to God, and come to see with a certain

moral security that it is what God himself is asking amid the concrete complexity of

one's limits, while yet not fully the objective ideal."[10]

What is the significance of being faithful to conscience? For Vatican II, the reason

is so that Christians may be joined with the rest of humanity in the search for truth and

"for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of the

individuals from social relationships."[11] There is nowhere where fidelity to conscience is

more urgently needed than in Kenya. Like many other countries in the continent of

Africa, Kenya continues to experience, fifty years after independence, various challenges

including political instability and violence resulting from negative ethnicity. Negative

ethnicity, as described by Koigi Wa Wamwere, refers to ethnic hatred and bias; the

process of promoting that hatred and bias is then referred to as tribalism.[12] Thus, tribalists

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[9] Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family), April 8, 2015, no. 303.

https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf (Accessed May 12, 2016).

[10] *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 303

[11] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 16.

[12] Koigi wa Wamwere, *Negative Ethnicity: From Bias to Genocide* (New York: Seven Stories Press,U.S., 2003), 22.

become the champions of negative ethnicity. In other words, people who see themselves as superior to others because of "religion, food, language, songs, culture, or even looks."[13]

Pope Benedict XVI, in *Africae Munus*, following the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, had pertinently identified conflicts and ethnic hatred as some of the challenges facing some African countries. He observed that "Africa's memory is painfully scarred as a result of fratricidal conflicts between ethnic groups."[14] Kenya is scarred by negative ethnicity which has resulted in the erosion of collective consciousness. Pope Benedict reminds us that the mission of the Church in such contexts is to be "a witness in the service of reconciliation, justice and peace, as 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world', so that her life may be a response to this summons: "Arise, Church in Africa, Family of God, because you are being called by the heavenly Father!"[15]

Various examples in Kenya's history reflect the reality of a social conscience which seems immature and poorly formed. One such major instance includes the results of the bitterly disputed 2007 presidential election. The violence that followed demonstrated how deepening ethnic polarization and hatred can compel people to pursue what is morally wrong. The wrongness of this conflict consists in the fact that it claimed over 1300 lives and displaced more than 300,000 people.[16] This violence, together with previous intertribal clashes especially experienced in the country in the 1990s, exposed a

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[13] Wamwere, *Negative Ethnicity*, 22.

[14] Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus (Africa's Commitment) (*Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2011), no. 9.

[15] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, no. 15.

[16] Errol P. Mendes, *Peace and Justice at the International Court: A Court of Last Resort* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2010), 133.

thorny issue regarding the impact of a deformed conscience in society. These clashes and violence further demonstrate the extent to which human actions based on blind choices can cause immense human suffering and loss of life. Given that such actions have caused methodical extermination of a people, nation or ethnic minority in the history of humanity, more attention should be given to formation of conscience.

Recurrence of ethnic violence and clashes calls the church to employ its teaching and guiding role to awaken people's consciences and civic responsibility. The 2009 African Synod called all local churches to awaken people's consciences by promoting "multidisciplinary programs of civic education; implement programmes to foster the formation of a social conscience at all levels; and encourage competent and honest citizens to participate in party politics."[17] Arguably, this call is viable and practical in the context of Kenya because more than two thirds of Kenyans identify themselves as Christians.[18] Notwithstanding the fact that the same Christian population represents hope in terms of a favorable Christian context on which to promote a program to foster formation of conscience, the reality of ethnic division and violence in the same context reflects a Christian community that has failed to form agents of social change.

The reality of negative ethnicity and ethnic violence raises questions about why the Kenyan church and the Christian community as a whole seem to have failed to forge a common identity based on Christian values. Kenya's history is rife with examples of

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[17] Synodus Episcoporum, II Coetus Specialis Pro Africa, "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace," *Elenchus finalis propositionum*, (Vatican City: General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, 2014), Proposition 25.

[18] See Republic of Kenya, *The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Population and Household Distribution by Socio-Economic Characteristics*, Volume II (Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

divisive politics and negative ethnicity ranging from ethnic violence, ethnicized politics, dictatorship of ethnic majority and ethnic clashes. Evidence of the deeply seated hatred can be found in the apparent reality of ethnic division and intertribal clashes often experienced, at least in the last few years especially before, during or after elections. This evidence of a lack of social cohesion and harmony in a community with a large Christian population contradicts the essence of the Church as a mystery of communion with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. As a new community no longer defined by circumcision or non-circumcision, tribe, political party, or language, the people of God ought to remain faithful to the sacramental bond of unity that links all that have been reborn by means of baptism. Allowing negative ethnicity to define affiliation and association ultimately renders Christian identity a weaker substitute for a deeply entrenched belief in the exclusionary negative ethnicity and manipulative politics of identity.

In light of the above discussion of the reality of negative ethnicity and violence, this study seeks to understand why negative ethnicity thrives in a country with the largest Christian population in East Africa.[19] This makes one wonder whether Kenyan Christians see participation in social evils as sin. One may see this reality as a reflection of a Christian community that does not see personal responsibility for involvement in social evils. The public seem to see no obligation to do anything about it. In order, therefore, to form people who are conscience of their political responsibility, the Kenyan church needs to reconsider how best to carry out the task of "forming upright consciences receptive to

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[19] Lynete Lusike Mukhongo and Juliet Wambui Macharia, eds., *Political Influence of the Media in Developing Countries* (United States: Information Science Reference, 2016), 3.

the demands of justice, so as to produce men and women willing and able to build this just social order by their responsible conduct."[20]

Responding to the Kenyan challenges calls for nothing short of a new reality and a new way of being church in Kenya. The situation calls for a church that can responsibly and faithfully discern the signs of the time and embody hopeful alternatives for the promotion of peace and justice. Doing so requires going beyond a top-down approach to social justice and Avery Dulles' six models of the church. As a result, this study reaffirms Jean-marc Ela's words to have the courage to "reinvent a new Christianity so as to live it with [an] African soul."[21] Reinventing such a new Christianity is not possible through old models of the church that do not reflect the yearnings and aspirations of Kenyan people and Christians.

Avery Dulles' six models of the church highlight the different ecclesiological functions. The first one is the model of the church as institution.[22] This model defends the church as a perfect society that has a structure of governance and functions, such as sanctifying, governing with the authority of Christ, and teaching. The second model of mystical communion identifies the church as the mystical body of Christ growing into the final perfection of the kingdom.[23] The third model is church as sacrament. In this model, the church is presented as the sign of the intimate union of God with the human community. For Dulles, the church is a visible manifestation of the grace of Christ in the

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[20] *Africae Munus*, no. 22.

[21] Ela, *African Cry*, 120.

[22] Avery Robert Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: The Doubleday Religious Publishing Group, 2000), 34-46.

[23] Dulles, *Models of the Church,* 49.

human community.[24] The fourth model is the church as herald. As herald, the church

aims to proclaim that which it has heard, believed, and been missioned to proclaim. The

fifth model is the church as servant. As servant, the church focuses on serving the poor,

the oppressed, and the out outcast.[25] However, this study found this model limited to

address the sociopolitical problems in Kenya because of its focus on *diakonia* as opposed

to empowering individuals to be active agents of change in their own terms. Finally, the

model of the church as community of disciples tries to draw all the models into common

ecclesiological reflection.[26]

Therefore, different ecclesiologies, as demonstrated above, emphasize different

approaches to evangelization. This is why for Dulles we cannot exclusively commit to a

single model of the church. While Dulles' ecclesiologies have their own strengths and

values, they lack a pastoral paradigm that focuses on expanding human agency. They do

not seem to embody the kind of church Kenya needs to confront the challenge of today.

As a result of this weakness to expand the capabilities of individuals to free themselves

from the chains of negative ethnicity, this study proposes a way of being church in

Kenya. In the light of the weakness and the gap between the principles of faith professed

by the over 80 percent Kenyans and the apparent inconsistency in terms of how that faith

is being lived out, this study seeks to answer the following question, which defines the

scope and limit of this study: What kind of Church does Kenya need today? This study

seeks to find and develop a new ecclesiology for Kenya that can form men and women

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[24] Ibid., 66.

[25] Ibid., 89.

[26] Ibid., 204.

capable of discharging with greater exactness the obligation of their conscience toward

themselves and the human community to which they belong. Such a church, this study

argues, is a liberative ecclesiological approach founded on the formation of conscience.

Thesis Statement

   The thesis that this study proposes is as follows: The existent tribalism, negative

ethnicity, injustice, and violence in Kenya are reflections of a collapsed system of ethical

values and deformed conscience. This crisis in ethical and moral values demands a

renewed moral imagination grounded in the reawakening of the moral endowment

inherent to every human being. This study shows how the Church in Kenya can promote

peace and justice by developing and promoting a liberative ecclesiological approach

based on the formation of a conscience capable of equipping Kenyans with reasonable

and true principles of conduct. Given Kenya's situation, this study will demonstrate ways

in which a liberative ecclesiological approach based on Catholic ethics can form and

inform the Kenyan community to liberate itself from enslavement to negative ethnicity

and ethnicized politics. To prove this thesis, this analysis shall adopt the following

presuppositions bearing on how this study shall be conducted.

   First, the context of this study is the church in Kenya. The church in Kenya bears

all the attributes of a true Church. A true Church reflects divine and human characters. As

a human society, the church exists in a particular context characterized by sociopolitical,

economic and cultural challenges. These challenges provide opportunities for the true

church to draw strength and wisdom from its divine character on how to be a church in

difficult circumstances. As demonstrated by Kenyan history, the church in Kenya must

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always show that while it is "in the world", it is "not of the world."[27] This implies that the church of Christ which is "in" the world must always avoid to be absorbed by this world to the extent of becoming totally "of" the world. How then can the church in Kenya be "in" the world without ending up being "of" the world? To respond to such a question, the church must continue to use tools of social analysis and discernment to determine its response to any situation that calls the church to fulfill her mission in the world. Through discernment and social analysis, the church will be able to understand its identity and mission in Kenya.

Secondly, this study understands that the church is comprised of human beings in need of formation. To become good, argues Aristotle, human beings need teaching and formation.[28] As a community and institution whose function is to teach the gospel values and revealed truths, the Kenyan church has a role as the salt of society to form and help all the Kenyan people to live in accord with their God-given purpose.[29] But since Kenyan society is not only Christian, the church must not only promote a Christian ethic, but also a human ethic that promotes the universal aspect of what it means to be Christian in the world. That is the only way the church can form faithful national and global citizens capable of making responsible choices. As proposed by the Synod Fathers, the church in Africa faced by the problem of injustice and conflicts must engage in forming "consciences receptive to the demands of justice, so as to produce men and women

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[27] See the High Priestly Prayer in which the Lord prays for his disciples and those who will believe in him through their word. John 17:11-16.

[28] Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 2009), bk 10.9.

[29] For more on the ethic of discipleship see Patricia McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics: A Liberationist Approach* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1993), 139.

willing and able to build this just social order by their responsible conduct."[30] Producing

such men and women capable of building a just social order requires the church to

develop an ecclesiological pedagogy of faith that "allows people to resist the injustices

surrounding them every day."[31] Thus, this study goes beyond confirming this need for a

shift in ecclesiological pedagogy to suggesting a liberative ecclesiological approach

based on the formation of conscience.

Thirdly, a liberative ecclesiology is not an organic church model like those

developed by Avery Dulles. Rather, it is an approach or way of being church. It is an

approach that proposes strategies or ways of being church that should be present in the

pastoral priorities and practices of the church in Kenya. As a way of being church, this

liberative ecclesiological approach integrates aspects of existing ecclesiological models

necessary to enhance people's agency to be prophetic and social agents. This way of

being church is defined by two concepts. The first keyword is the concept "liberative".

This word comes from the term "liberation", which literary means the act of being freed

from oppression, exploitation, injustice, domination, and other forms of exclusion. The

second keyword, ecclesiology, means the study of the doctrine, nature, and function of

the Church. In his multi-volume book, *Christian Community in History*, Roger Haight

defines ecclesiology as "the study of the church in an effort to understand its nature and

mission."[32] We study the church because "different historical conditions and contexts

determine different viewpoints, premises, basic values and methods of approach to the

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[30] *Africae Munus*, no. 22.

[31] Jean-Marc Ela, *My Faith as an Africa*, trans. John Pairman Brown and Susan Perry (Eugen, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1988), 11.

[32] Roger Haight, *Christian Community in History: Volume 1, Historical Ecclesiology* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2004), 21.

church."[33] The function of the church described in this study includes empowering the poor to liberate themselves from restrictive conditions such negative ethnicity, ethnic hatred and ethnicized conscience.

Fourthly, this study recognizes that notwithstanding how one chooses to approach it, "Church" stands for a large reality. As such, this study focuses on the Catholic Church and it acknowledges the reality of the Church as universal and as particular churches in the Church universal. The study further acknowledges that the term church may also refer to other Christian churches. But where that is applicable, a much more nuanced distinction will be applied. For purposes of this study, the church in Kenya, which is the context of this study, concerns the aspect of Church as particular. Like other particular churches, this church is obliged to implement the mission of the Church as universal. In other words, it is called to live out the mission of the Church of Christ, which is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. The Christian mission in the world involves acting as a prophetic community sent out to live faith prophetically and in good conscience. This implies that in the Kenyan context, ecclesiology can and must function validly in terms of universality and particularity – generalization and localization.

Contextual Method of Theologizing

In order to develop a transformative ecclesiological approach capable of transforming individuals within and outside the Church according to Gospel values, this study employs a contextual theological approach based on social analysis. This approach does not only seek to understand the complexity of a particular context but also to make faith-informed action plans that can transform the context for people to live the fullness

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[33] Ibid.

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of life that Jesus came to give.[34] The ethic proposed here for the church to apply is not exclusively Christian but human as well. By using a contextual theological approach, this study approaches the Kenyan reality with faith in order to seek the meaning of life in that context in the light of Scripture and Tradition. This methodology begins with a social analysis (See) of the context – here and now of the present situation, moves into theological reflection (Judge), and then advocates specific forms of action (Act) needed to free the Kenyan community from the chains of negative ethnicity. The transformative aspect of this methodology arises from its prophetic dimension. To build a prophetic ecclesiology in Kenya, this study proposes a liberative ecclesiology based on the formation of conscience. In order to use a systematic analysis of prophetic theology, a liberative ecclesiology will rely on the See-Judge-Act methodology as a means to transform the Kenyan context into conformity with God's project of transformation. The significance of this methodology of doing contextual theology is that it takes sides with the poor and the oppressed.

Procedure

This study will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter considers the Kenyan sociopolitical context since independence in 1963. This analysis aims to expose the Kenyan sociopolitical reality in order to deeper understand the reality of ethnic divisions and negative ethnicity threatening peace and justice in Kenya. Such reading of "the signs of the times" in Kenya highlights the challenges experienced today and how they serve as a threat to the conscience of the Kenyan people. The second chapter explores the Kenyan ecclesial context as well as its successes and challenges in terms of

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[34] See Jn 10:10

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how it has performed its function of stating moral principles in the social sphere. In particular, this chapter shows how the complex issue of identity complicated the relationship between the church and State. The third chapter suggests a great resource in Catholic Social Ethics that the Catholic Church in Kenya can use to form responsible and faithful citizens. This resource is the formation of conscience. The formation of conscience will empower Kenyans, especially Christians who make up more than 80 percent of the Kenyan population to actively participate in realizing the Kingdom ideal. Since this study draws upon the resources of contextual theology, it must therefore lead to plans for transformative action. As such, the fourth chapter proposes a liberative ecclesiological approach founded on the formation of conscience as a means of building a united, peaceful, and just Kenya.

CONSCIENCE AND THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF KENYA

"On some positions, Cowardice asks the question, "Is it safe?" Expediency asks the question, "Is it politic?" And Vanity comes along and asks the question, "Is it popular?" But Conscience asks the question, "Is it right?" And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must do it because conscience tells him it is right."
—-*Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*, in his Feb. 6, 1968 speech in Washington D.C. entitled "*A Proper Sense of Priorities.*"

Dividing Kenya's history into pre- and post-independence periods suffices to expose important events in the history of the country for purposes of this paper. Moments in these two periods expose the nation's trajectory in matters of conscience and morality. A brief examination of these moments point to a degradation of the collective consciousness of the people and a loss of their moral compass. This is evident in a number of social and political events that define the country. Negative ethnicity, corruption, nepotism and violence, for instance, are hallmarks of this degradation. A better understanding of these phases and events is important in appreciating the argument for the formation of conscience as a foundational principle in the quest for a liberative ecclesiological approach for peace and justice in Kenya.

1.1 The Sociopolitical Context of Kenya before and after Independence in 1963

One major issue that points to how Kenya reached the current state of degraded consciousness is colonialism. Like many other African nations, Kenya became a colony after the European expansionist idea of the "scramble for Africa."[35] Numerous reasons or

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[35] Muriel Evelyn Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (London, UK: Routledge, 2014), 3-5.

justifications account for the scramble. The first reason was ideological. Europe was driven by the idea that it was culturally "superior" and thus obligated to spread its "superior" culture – which included Christianity – to the "dark continent." The second reason was political competition or the clamor for power and prestige especially among European nations; this gave in to the idea of conquest of other nations. Lastly, there was industrialization. In particular, the advances in tropical medicine, transportation, and technology made it possible to explore the vast interior of Africa for raw materials to feed the Industrial Revolution.

These three reasons or justifications were, however, not mutually exclusive. In fact, their impact in terms of how they eroded the African sense of worth and dignity was the same. There is a sense in which the scramble infused into the mentality of the Kenyan elites the idea of exploitation, oppression, and division. For instance, on the issue of degradation of collective consciousness, the British, in order to maintain their conquest, restricted Kenyans' access to quality areas of grazing and agricultural lands. The British occupied such areas and lands and then restricted Kenya's tribes to live in reserves in the semi-arid and arid savannas. The movement of the indigenous population was restricted. People were issued with passbooks that came to be known in Swahili as *Kipande*.[36] These passbooks intensified ethnic consciousness because details of one's tribe were given prominence in the passbook and different ethnic groups were not allowed to mix.

The geographic division of the continent into fifty countries opened a new era in the history of the continent associated today with the present political, social, ethnic, and economic challenges faced by many African nations. Some communities were forcefully

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[36] Rok Ajulu, "Politicised Ethnicity, Competitive Politics and Conflict in Kenya: A Historical Perspective," *African Studies*, 61, no. 2 (December 2002): 255.

divided and assigned new homelands, regions or countries as the settlers appropriated

land for themselves. To legitimize their occupation, the colonial government assumed a

"divide and rule" governance system that was full of subjugation, exploitation of the

people in ways that undermined the indigenous systems.

An exposition of the ethnic composition in Kenya is important to understand how

the divide and rule principle worked for communities in Kenya, especially how it

fossilisized ethnic consciousness. Kenya is made up of the Bantu, the Nilotic and the

Cushitic communities.

> Among the Bantu-speaking people, a main division may be made between the
> western group (Luyia and Gusii), the central or highlands group (Kikuyu, Embu,
> Meru, and Kamba), and the Coastal Bantu (the Mijikenda). For the Nilotic
> speakers, the divisions are the River-Lake or Western (Luo), the Highlands or
> Southern (Kalenjin), and the Plains or Eastern (Maasai, Teso, and Samburu). The
> Cushitic-speaking groups comprise the Oromo and the Somali speakers. The
> Kikuyu, who made up 17 percent of the population at the 2009 census, are
> Kenya's largest ethnic group. Next largest are the Luyia (14 percent), the Kalenjin
> (13 percent), the Luo (10 percent), the Kamba (10 percent), the Somali (6
> percent), and the Gusii (6 percent).[37]

These numbers played a great role in political formation as they did provide avenues of

manipulation and exploitation by the colonialist.

Unfortunately, the same situation continued even after independence in 1963 as

the governance system informed by tactics of "divide and rule" continued to shape

Kenyan politics.[38] For instance, tribal politics dominated the first independent political

system of governance under the leadership of President Kenyatta. Kenyatta's government

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[37] David William Throup, Thomas P. Ofcansky, and Robert M. Maxon, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya* (New York, NY, United States: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 3. For more see also Republic of Kenya, *The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Population and Household Distribution by Socio-Economic Characteristics*, Volume II (Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

[38] John O. Oucho, *Undercurrents of Ethnic Conflict in Kenya* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23.

was dominated by the Kikuyu elites from central Kenya. Later on during President Moi's regime, which started from 1978, the same politics of identity continued to play out. Moi's government was dominated by tribalism and factionalism that essentially amounted to one tribe versus the rest of the tribes.[39] This was evident from the number of the members of the Kalenjin community who dominated the civil service.[40] Geoff Sayer observes that during Moi's reign "government investment favoured the home areas of the Kalenjin and their allies. These allies included the Kamba, Maasai, and Kisii.[41]

As a result, both Presidents Kenyatta and Moi failed to unite the country. By using the tactic of divide-and-rule, which was formerly a colonial ruling strategy, Presidents Kenyatta and Moi discouraged any attempts to create a nation state. Gradually, the ethnic factor permeated not only the political landscape but also the social and the economic spheres. Tribal links started to form the basis for political patronage and loyalty, which determined deployment of personnel into the public and private sectors as well as resource allocation across the country.[42]

For President Moi, the ethnic balkanization was also instrumental in firming up power amidst opposition from the Kikuyu and Luo communities, Kenya's largest and fourth-largest ethnic groups respectively. These two ethnic groups mounted fierce political battles against Moi's presidency and leadership. Their political pressure saw president Moi personalize and centralize power as a political strategy to counter dissent.

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[39] Joel Krieger, *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2001), 464.

[40] Geoff Sayer, *Kenya: Promised Land?* (Oxford: Oxfam Professional, 1998), 23.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Mũtonya Maina and Maina Wa Mutonya, *The Politics of Everyday Life in Gikuyu Popular Music of Kenya: 1990-2000* (Nairobi, Kenya: Twaweza Communications, 2013), 30.

His attempt to maintain a military dictatorship became evident after the 1982 attempted coup d'état. Later on, the constitution was amended to make the country a *de facto* one-party state and the ruling KANU the sole legal party in Kenya.[43] However, this amendment was later changed in the constitution in December 1991 to allow for multiparty democracy.

1.1.1 Divide and Rule Conscience

Any form of association or principles of moral conduct that motivate hatred and injustice defy the dictates of conscience. Ethnicity has implanted within the conscience of some Kenyans a sense of unequal entitlement. This is because ethnicity has become a key principle characteristic of identity in Kenya. In fact, it has become a moral maxim guiding people's conduct within and without the political sphere. Later in this chapter, we shall discuss the implications of the negative dimensions of this ethnic factor on the sociopolitical life of the Kenyan community.

Manipulation of ethnic divisions or differences started with the British colonial authorities. The British "solidified ethnic identity and associated it with certain areas of the country."[44] That rule came to be known as "the divide and rule policy." According to that rule, people with a specific ethnic identity were supposed to reside in a particular territorial area. Thanks to modernity and political development, many people migrated to urban areas leaving what was set as their traditional residence. Post-independence rulers and politicians used the same policy to galvanize support for political and economic

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[43] Kimani Njogu, *Youth and Peaceful Elections in Kenya* (Nairobi: Twaweza Communications, 2013), 111.

[44] Throup, Ofcansky, and Maxon, *Historical Dictionary of Kenya*, 3.

survival. Instead of ethnic identity providing a strong sense of social belonging and loyalty, its negative dimensions eroded the sense of Kenyan national identity. The task of reconstructing an inclusive Kenyan-conscience will require an expansive and comprehensive collective approach; one where the Church must play a critical role. With the help of liberative ecclesiology, Kenyans will be conscientized to reimagine their national and human identity by transcending negative ethnicity and retrogressive 'norms' tied to a particular place, narrow mindset, and time.

Deeper attachments to ethnic groups and thinking threaten basic principles of a democratic society. Individuals of any democratic society have to broaden their sympathies by involving themselves in more inclusive social networks of society, which are essential in strengthening their societal identity. In Kenya, the process of transforming a society into a socially inclusive one would call for collective efforts. Relying only on the political elites is thus counterproductive.

In true democracies, all the resources are used for the welfare of all the people of the society. But in ethnically divided governments such as the past and present governments of Kenya, state resources are used by politicians to benefit themselves and the communities they represent. This situation has given rise to the now common phenomenon where political elites buy legitimacy through sharing the spoils with the communities they represent. Evidence of this can be seen, for instance, on the gap between the poor and the relatively economically advantaged communities. This gap relates to the problem of inequitable distribution of public resources between individuals and regions. Individuals and communities from regions that were not well represented in government were not entitled to their civil, economic, social, political rights, and

sometimes even human rights. Failure to implement land policies that can ensure social stability, poverty alleviation, management of natural resources and economic growth has caused inequality in landownership and socioeconomic injustices continuing to threaten political stability. Hopefully, the current devolved government system that came into effect after the promulgation of the new constitution on August 27, 2010 would address postcolonial ethnic inequalities.

Ethnicized politics and post-colonial scramble for land, wealth and political power gave rise to a "perception of politics as a zero-sum competition" in which "one man and one community's gain was another's loss."[45] Skewed allocation of resources based on tribalism, and nepotism gave way to political office holders to accumulate and loot national wealth for personal benefit. In certain situations, politicians use their offices to direct resources toward specific communities only for their political benefit.[46] This is how money, elite corruption, negative ethnicity, and tribalism emerged as the nexus of politics and economics in Kenya.[47]

As we shall see in the following discussion on the age of democratic revolution, political conflicts became even more manifest after the reintroduction of multiparty politics in 1991. The main catalyst has been the politicization of ethnic identities leading

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[45] Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 14.

[46] Ibid., 15.

[47] Ethnicity is herein defined as a group of people living together that share not only ancestry but also cultural tradition, national origin, history, or religion. It also refers to a sense of shared experience and peoplehood as shaped by socio-cultural heritage transmitted across generations. Negative ethnicity therefore becomes that exercise of ethnicity which threatens or hinders national integration and economic development through perpetuation of exclusion and discrimination. For more, see Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 96.

to the current ethnically-framed political parties. A divided nation without a strong sense of national unity and cohesion robbed Kenyans of a sense of shared values and principles that constitute the basis of moral character and moral decency. This sociopolitical reality ate away Kenyans' integrity, conscience, and moral self-confidence. The practical implication of that moral decay led to the formation of a distorted moral imagination, a term attributed to philosopher Edmund Burke who envisioned it as the intuitive power to perceive ethical truths and abiding law in challenging predicaments, required to sustain a peaceful and just society.[48] From this perspective, human beings are moral agents with the power of imagination, which is capable of helping them to go beyond mere attractions such as tribes and appearances to perceiving enduring truths.[49]

1.2 Ethnicity and Multipartism

The 1990s marked a period in Kenya's history when the country attempted a democratic revolution that was defined by agitation for freedoms and equity in development. That freedom, however, was misconstrued to be of political freedom in general and multipartism in particular. Yet, ethnicity permeated that very fabric of multipartism. As a result, ethnicity became, even for political parties and actors, a means of securing legitimacy. As emphasized by Bethwell Allan Ogot, "ethnic citizenship enjoys greater legitimacy and exercises more persuasive authority over Kenyans than

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[48] For more on moral imagination, see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1955).

[49] The concept of "moral" is not without its negative connotations. But, as used in this study, this concept is a mere appeal to something greater. It is an appeal for one to rise to something beyond those things that are visible and apparent.

their weak and fragmented nation-state."[50] Yet, it is expected that any functioning democracy would invest resources in building the nation state. In fact, that was the promise of both Kenyatta and his successor president Moi – to keep anything that might threaten the unity of the country at bay.

The emergence of multiparty politics in 1991saw the resurfacing of the suppressed difference of class, ethnic, regional and religious, which had remained latent. This age of democratic revolution received impetus from the deep longing for representation at the regional level by those that felt excluded from the political space. What followed this era was the unprecedented explosion of political parties. The explosion of political parties and coalition based on regional politics in the 1990s eroded the sense of national identity and the common good. These parties and coalitions lack the national outlook that is necessary to enforce a strong sense of purpose and commitment to good conduct.

In spite of multiparty politics enhancing negative ethnicity, its emergence came as a 'Kairos' for a country that had experienced authoritarianism and centralization of power under the one party-state. The era of multiparty politics brought hope for many Kenyans that longed for political representation. Even at the regional and international level, Kenya's attempt to embrace multiparty democracy was interpreted as an embrace of pluralism, democracy and acknowledgment of diversity. This was a complete shift from the Moi and Kenyatta's authoritarian and centralized governance system that stifled political freedom and expression. Marginalized communities welcomed the era as

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[50] Bethwell Allan Ogot, "Essence of Ethnicity: An African Perspective," in *Ethnic Diversity and Economic Instability in Africa: Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* ed. Hiroyuki Hino, John Lonsdale, Gustav Ranis, Frances Stewart (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 119.

reintroduction of a fair and just political level-field needed for representation and access to state power and resources. Sadly, these hopes were dashed when political parties and coalitions embraced ethno-regional alliances. Ethno-regional political parties and alliances were, and still are, political formations based on ethno-territorial communities. They lack the national outlook and interest because of their purpose of representing ethno-regional interests. Evidence of this can be seen in terms of voting patterns in the country, appointment of key government positions, and allocations of public resources.

1.2.1 Ethno-Regional Political Conscience

Kenyans need to consider healthy and just ways of maintaining the current pluralistic society and ethnic diversity of the country. One way of cleansing or reconstructing Kenya's political organization would be re-imagining a politically healthy way of forming political parties and coalitions. The future of Kenya as a nation lies in prioritizing interests of the country as a whole as opposed to interests of a particular ethno-regional party or community. With the help of a liberative ecclesiological approach, Kenyans can be helped to build a citizenship defined by common interests and a deep desire to commit to that which is right for all. They will be formed to embrace discernment as a political strategy to counter ethnicized political elites and tribal kingpins manipulating ethnic identities for selfish interests.

According to Douglas Kimemia, ethno-regional politics has increased political competition as well as a greater vulnerability to political instability.[51] Whereas one may argue that healthy competition among parties in a constitutional democracy can be

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[51] Douglas Kimemia, *Africa's Social Cleavages and Democratization: Colonial, Postcolonial, and Multiparty Era* (n.p.: Lexington Books, 2015), 13.

associated with a higher quality of democracy, this has never been the case in Kenya. Like many other African countries since the third wave of democratization of the 1990s, Kenya has seen an increase rather than a decrease in the visibility of ethnic politics and conflict.[52] Part of the reason for the increase of ethnic conflict is unhealthy competition which has increased the consciousness of ethnic and religious identities. For instance, during campaigns just before elections, some politicians engage in manipulation of the tension of ethnicity and regional animosities for purposes of gaining political mileage.

Both ethno-regional politics and negative ethnicity corrode a sense of belonging and citizenship. For instance, many Kenyans feel excluded and see themselves as second class citizens of a political community called Kenya. Such feelings reflect a country that has failed to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. The same facts paint an image of a country that does not connect to the aspirations and everyday struggles of its citizens. The long term damage of this retrogressive politics is corruption of the collective conscience of the community and corruption of the democratic system supposed to enhance democratic citizenry. What a liberative ecclesiological approach based on the formation of conscience aims to achieve is the promotion of a "robust democracy which can be brought to life through democratic community, democratic individuality, and democratic society."[53] For Kenya to go beyond ethno-regional and ethnicized politics, it must transcend from a society based on loyalty to a narrow ethno-regional political group into a broader citizenship model based on the common good.

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[52] Ibid., 14.

[53] Cornel West, *Democracy Matters: Winning the Fight Against Imperialism* (New York: Penguin Group (USA), 2005), 203.

Through the liberative ecclesiological approach, Kenyans will be formed to courageously interrogate the "dark corners" of their souls and "the night alleys" of their society, "and the back roads of the world in order to grasp the deep truths about" their souls, society, and the world.[54] A well-formed conscience can redirect the soul to search and discern that which is right for one's soul, society, and the world. Ethnically polarized societies need such formation and training so that they may shatter their divisive and narrow politics. Formation of conscience empowers a community to confront "blind conformity, glib complacency, and pathetic cowardice" that has made it susceptible to manipulation.[55] Cornel West asserts that the three obstacles of "blind conformity, glib complacency, and pathetic cowardice" constitute challenges that the Socratic legacy, which a liberative ecclesiological approach is adapted to, must confront head-on.[56] With such an ecclesiology shaped by the Socratic legacy of examination and sustained questioning of how one ought to live, Kenyans will muster the courage to take back power from tribal and ethno-regional kingpins.

Emergence of "blind conformity, glib complacency and pathetic cowardice" in the Kenyan democratic space gave rise to political nihilism. This situation is characterized by perfection of the art of false justifications and disregard for the commitment to truth, integrity, and principle. By allowing ethno-regional politics to rule, the Kenyan national psyche gave way to manipulation and mendacity. The impact of that nihilism is the erosion of the sense of belonging to a community called Kenya. Erosion of nationalism and patriotism leads to disillusionment, particularly with politicians. As a

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[54] Ibid., 208.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

result, people continue to undermine the reverence for, faith in, and deep commitment to democracy. Seemingly, people have bought into the moral corruption of the ethno-politically power-hungry system. Consequently, the country as a collective has joined the game in the delusional belief that nothing can be done to change the corrupted system.

Political nihilism has bred three groups of Kenyan citizens that represent corrupted conscience; the flatterers, the floaters, and the deflated. Manthia Diawara described the disillusioned "flatterers", when he described what he experienced in Guinea, as those who cannot manage to speak with courage about the corruption of the political system. Diawara's account of Guinea and the three types of people is true for Kenya today. He observed that the "flatterers say anything the president wants to hear – that's why they become ministers, general managers, and ambassadors in every regime."[57] Flatterers and their supporters represent people with dead or corrupted consciences which cannot exercise basic democratic rights and fulfill the moral duty to do that which is right and just. The floater, as the name suggests, are people who are just hanging onto the hope that one day the situation will change and that they will be able to make the right connections or contacts.[58] Those who have no connections with the rulers are left to languish in abject poverty. Floaters, as captured by both Emmanuel Katongole and Diawara, barely survive between governments. With regard to the deflated, Diawara notes that:

> A deflated person is someone beyond good and evil, beyond feeling the blues of unemployment. He has reached a point where he says to himself, "they don't know me. They don't see me." African dictatorships are producing this kind of

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[57] Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 50.

[58] Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, William B. Publishing Company, 2011), 82.

man every day. He knows that no matter what he does, he will not get anywhere. The statistics are against him: he will die young. He sits down and looks to see if people see him. He sees from others' gazes that he is transparent. He does not know how to do anything, and he does not want to do anything.[59]

Political exclusion and poor economic reforms form the basis of the desperation consuming Kenyan society. Such "deflated" citizens need a unique kind of formation that can reignite their moral imagination. Kenyans who have framed their lives on the deflated, flatterers, and floaters *telos* need empowerment to follow the true inner aptitude for the common good. That is the voice they must listen to when making all decisions including political ones. A liberative ecclesiological approach hopes to demonstrate how Kenyans need something "more than skills and technical adjustments to improve nation-state legitimacies and operations."[60] It hopes to show that Kenyans need a special empowerment that can liberate them from the chains of ethno-regional and divisive politics. They need a formation of conscience that can guard them from becoming an easy prey for recruitment into whatever cause – ethnicized politics, tribalism, ethno-regional politics – which advances the selfish interests of tribal kingpins masquerading as national leaders. Since the political and tribal rivalry seems to be wired within the very foundational imagination of present day Kenya, this thesis shows that a new future in Kenya will benefit from a creative and liberative foundational narrative.

1.3 Consequences of Negative Ethnicity and Ethnicized Politics

In order to justify the immediate need for the formation of conscience, an exposition of some consequences of negative ethnicity and ethnicized politics, discussed

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[59] Diawara, *In Search of Africa,* 50-51.

[60] Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa,* 83.

above, is helpful. But before we do that, it is important to underscore the fact that harmful ethnicity driven by a superiority complex should never be confused with positive ethnicity expressed in different languages, cultures, songs, foods, and looks. These diversities represent neutral heritages and assets to be preserved and applied to in the fight against negative ethnicity.

In Kenya, ethnic loyalties have created many tribalists posing a great challenge to the nation's conscience. People celebrate more their loyalties to a particular ethnic grouping than their identity as Kenyans. Attention to ethnic loyalties has influenced political leaders to "develop a sense of 'obligation' that is inconsistent with ethics of public office. For instance, some politicians or leaders feel obliged to fulfill their own ethnic group's interests than those of public office or common good. It is such exclusionary principles that have resulted in some leaders deviating from established rules. Ethnocentrism forces people to see one's ethnic group as the center of everything and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. In the political sphere, fear of backlash from the person's respective ethnic community hinders faithful discharge of obligations. The same ethnocentric conscience has provided a recipe for conflicts in Kenya. Ethnic loyalties have hindered the building and sustenance of healthy human relationships. Divided societies, whether along ethnic or religious lines, create environments that impair the social self of both the perpetrator and the victim of division. Building unity and social cohesion in such environments may require transformation of individuals or communities into persons motivated by higher order of "truth, universal wellbeing of all ethnic communities and the inter-relatedness of humanity."[61]

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[61] Douglas Lucas Kivoi, "Ethnicity and Democracy: A Case of Kenya," in *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, Vol. 2, no. 2 (2010): 46.

It is true that negative ethnicity is not only a problem unique to Kenya. Many parts of the world experience its ramifications playing out in different forms. The history of the world is replete with tensions and conflicts arising from negative ethnicity. Neither is negative ethnicity limited to Africa. Examples of conflicts arising from negative ethnicity outside of the African continent include Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Tamil and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, Turkish and Kurdish in Turkey, and Spain and the Basque National Liberation Movement conflict.

1.3.1 The 2007 Post-Election Violence: Machete Triumphs over Conscience

What happened in Kenya in 2007 after the alleged rigging of election results is another example of negative ethnicity hurting humanity. The violence followed the abrupt proclamation of Mwai Kibaki, the incumbent president, as the winner in the highly contentious presidential election.[62] As a result, violence broke out between supporters of the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). This conflict triggered the worst intertribal conflict in the history of the country which saw over 1300 people killed and more than 300,000 people displaced.[63] While many issues constituted the origin of the crisis, but key among them was negative ethnicity. The ethnicity factor played out because of disputes relating to "land going back to the colonial times (notably between Kalenjin and Kikuyu in the Rift Valley)."[64] In the

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[62] Peter Kagwanja and Roger Southall, "Introduction: Kenya – A Democracy in Retreat?," in *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol 27, no 3 (2009), 259. For more also on the electoral crisis of 2007/8, see Peter Kagwanja, and Roger Southall, eds. *Kenya's Uncertain Democracy: The Electoral Crisis of 2008* (New York: Routledge, 2013). This book gives a detailed account of how Kenya plunged into political and economic uncertainty following the general election of December 2007.

[63] Mendes, *Peace and Justice at the International Criminal Court*, 133.

[64] Kagwanja and Southall, "Introduction: Kenya," 259.

2007 election just like in the previous elections of 1992, 1997, and 2002, political

coalitions were constructed around Kenya's 42 ethnic groups.

In fact, the unique dimension of the 2007 election was that the election campaign

was "critically shaped by ODM's rhetoric of '41 against one' (the Kikuyu)."[65] In

comparison, the 2007 post-election violence exceeded the previous ones by its magnitude

and intensity. As Peter Kagwanja and Roger Southhall emphasize, "the ensuing electoral

dispute quickly metamorphosed into a deadly orgy of 'ethnic' slaughter, rape and plunder

reminiscent of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide."[66] People who suffered the most were the

ruling party's, PNU, supporters, especially Kikuyus who were perceived to be strong

supporters of PNU. In retaliation, Kikuyu youths and militias such as Mungiki reacted to

"the killings and displacement of their kith and kin in ODM strongholds, engaged in

reprisal attacks in Nairobi and parts of the Rift Valley and central Kenya against the Luo,

Luhyia and Kalenjin groups, the ODM's ethnic support base."[67] This conflict and many

others highlight the ever-threatening risk of negative ethnicity and the extent to which the

machete in an ethnically divided society can triumph over conscience.

The African union and the international community contributed enormously in

resolving the stalemate. Through their intervention, the former Secretary General of the

United Nations, Koffi Annan, was appointed to take lead in mediation efforts which

succeeded to forge an accord with the aggrieved political parties. This accord became

known as the Kenya National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement which formed the

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 260.

basis of the National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008.[68] This accord necessitated

the way for the formation of a power-sharing government with a grand coalition of the

Party of National Unity (PNU) with Mr. Kibaki, as head of the party, becoming President

of Kenya, and the Orange Democractic Movement (ODM) with Mr. Raila Odinga, as

head of the party, becoming the Prime Minister.[69] This political arrangement helped to

reconcile, firstly, the two political leaders representing two major political alliances, and

secondly, the whole country divided along these two political lines. At the time, the idea

was to come up with a long-term solution to reconcile the then "ethnically divided

Kenyan society in which both Parliamentary and Presidential elections were heavily

informed by the politics of political tribalism."[70] A key achievement of the intervention

of the African Union team of African prominent personalities was the legislation into law

of the National Reconciliation Accord.

Although the National Reconciliation Accord succeeded to bring peace and order,

the voting pattern and ethnically charged election campaigns in the subsequent election of

2013 indicated how much still needs to be done to eradicate negative ethnicity. What this

reality demonstrates is the extent to which the negative-ethnic-conscience remains so

deep in the Kenyan national psyche. Building a peaceful and just Kenya will have to

start from re-instructing such a conscience to help Kenyans enslaved by negative

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[68] This accord was signed by Mwa Kibaki, President, and Raila Odinga, Prime Minister, in the presence of Kofi Annan, the lead negotiator representing the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities. For more on this accord, see Kenya, *National Accord and Reconciliation Act*, (2008), accessed April 14, 2017, https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/4-Agreement-on-the-principles-of-partnership-of-the-Coalition-Government-Kenya-28-Feb-2008.pdf

[69] Carl W Dundas, *Close Elections and Political Succession in the African Union* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2012), 191.

[70] Dani Wadada Nabudere and Andreas Velthuizen, *Restorative Justice in Africa. From Trans-Dimensional Knowledge to a Culture of Harmony* (Pretoria, SA: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013), 86.

ethnicity to realize their potential and capabilities. Liberating such a conscience implies teaching and forming people to value certain functions such as bringing truth to political life. This thesis recognizes the potential of an ecclesiological approach built on Catholic Social Teaching in building a liberative conscience. Ethnicized conscience will never form a faithful citizenship that can make political decisions informed by the following principles: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. People influenced by negative ethnicity perpetrate violence because they do not value the human dignity of other human persons outside their ethnic groups. Thus, the liberative ecclesiological approach will form Kenyans capable of enjoying "more freedom to lead the kind of lives they have reason to value."[71]

1.4 Conclusion

The above exposition of the sociopolitical context in Kenya is not intended to paint an image of a country that has become the most ethnically and politically divided country in the world. Neither is the analysis an attempt to argue that ethnicity and ethno-regional politics are the only problems affecting Kenyans. This deeper and critical analysis of the Kenyan sociopolitical context since independence aims to show how negative ethnicity, ethno-political competition, and political violence have become major challenges in the sociopolitical development of the country. This chapter shows how such challenges have corrupted the conscience of some Kenyans. It shows how the Kenyan imagination, which has been limited by ethnic-thinking and negative ethnicity, is in dire need of redemption. The chapter goes further to suggest that until people's conscience is

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[71] Amartya Kumar K. Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2000), 14.

formed and moral imaginations broadened, Kenya's future will continue to hang in the balance. In order to propose an effective way of being church in Kenya today, a brief account of how the Kenyan church performed its function of stating moral principles in the social sphere is helpful.[72] In particular, the next chapter will highlight the various roles the Catholic Church (the leadership and community), in collaboration with other churches, played or failed to play as a "repository of ethical principles for sociopolitical transformation" in Kenya.[73]

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[72] *Code of Canon Law*, Canon 747, §1. For an overview on what the church has done to do moral issues related to HIV/AIDS in Kenya, see Kenya Episcopal Conference, *This We Teach and Do: Catholic Church and AIDS in Kenya*, Vo. 2 (Nairobi, KE: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006).

[73] Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics: The Kenyan Dilemma," in *Theological Studies*, Vol. 70 (2009): 184.

CHAPTER TWO

CONSCIENCE FORMATION AND THE ECCLESIAL CONTEXT OF KENYA

"The Church is the conscience of society, and today's society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we go wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes."[74]

A major challenge for the church in Kenya is the extent to which the complex issue of ethnic identity continues to complicate the relationship between the church and the state. In particular, negative ethnicity gave way to fragmentation of the church and decreased her moral authority. Kenya is, therefore, in need of a truly Christian church, which can expand the capabilities and agency of people to achieve valuable beings and doings needed for the promotion of peace and justice.[75] In order to show how the Catholic Church, in collaboration with other churches, played or failed to play her role as an agent of social change, this chapter will examine the inconstant evolution of church-state relationship before and after independence. In particular, it will highlight the problem of negative ethnicity in the church and how it fractured the Christian community, especially during the 2007 post-election violence.

2.1 The Inconstant Evolution of Church-State Relationship in Kenya

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[74] These words were expressed by President Jomo Kenyatta to a gathering of East African Catholic Bishops in 1976. Cited in the pastoral letter, "Family and Responsible Parenthood," April 27, 1979, #42. This pastoral letter was published in *The Conscience of Society*, ed. Rodrigo Mejia (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995).

[75] The idea of expansion of capabilities and agency is drawn from Amartya Sen's Capability Approach which focuses on freedom as a more accurate way to build what people really value. In this approach, capability is considered as the freedom for one to pursue various functions, that is, to lead a type of life one has reason to value. For more on this approach, see Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2000).

In order to trace the roots of the evolution of the church-state relationship in Kenya, one has to go back to the 15th century when the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama reached the Kenyan coast at Malindi.[76] In his company were several Roman Catholic missionaries. The pioneer missionaries were Francis Xavier, who stopped at the coast in 1542 on his way to India by sea, and a group of Augustinian Friars who reached the Kenya coast of Mombasa in 1597. These missionaries, and many others that later joined them, continued teaching and spreading Christianity until the modern era of missionary work marked by the arrival of Ludwig Krapf and Johann Redmann in 1844 and 1846 respectively.[77] Slowly, the missionary project moved quickly westwards up to Uganda. Their movement was facilitated by the construction of the railway line in 1901.

2.1.1 Missionaries and the Colonial Government in Kenya

In general, Christianity in Kenya enjoyed a healthy relationship with the colonial government. Their collaboration and partnership were so clear that Kenyans could not differentiate between missionaries and colonialists. William Ochieng' observes that even though Christian missionaries and British imperial administrators had different approaches to the colonial life in Kenya "they pursued a common goal" meant to control and colonize Africans.[78] The activities of the missionaries that made them to be perceived as "part of a conquering race" included establishing schools.[79] Both the colonial

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[76] David B. Barret et. al., eds., *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity 1498-1973* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), 29.

[77] Marko Kuhn, *Prophetic Christianity in Western Kenya: Political, Cultural, and Theological Aspects of African Independent Churches* (Switzerland: Peter Lang Pub, 2007), 9.

[78] William R. Ochieng', ed., *Historical Studies and Social Changes in Western Kenya: Essays in Memory of Professor Gideon S. Were* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 2002), 159.

[79] Ibid.

government and the missionaries used schools to accomplish their common goal of effectively institutionalizing control mechanisms through changing paradigms with which Kenyans viewed life and the afterlife.[80] Missionaries and colonial government officials, therefore, colluded to ensure that Christian missions enjoy protection and in turn the colonial officials benefited through the articulation of the colonial state. Eventually, this reinforced the perception that missionaries were part of the colonial mechanism of communication and control of the Kenyan population.

2.1.2 The Ambiguous Church and the Colonial Government Relationship

Before independence, the relationship between the Christian churches and the State evolved from cooperation to conflict. The relationship depended heavily on the responses of the missionaries to the policies of the colonial government. In colonial times, cooperation in the mission centers had two dimensions: "with the government on the one hand, and Africans on the other."[81] The relation between the colonial government and the missionaries was uncertain. The major cause of the conflict was the missionaries' concern about the use of land by the colonial government. A similar tension had arisen prior to 1901 following the missionaries' concerns about slavery. Renison Muchiri Githigi observes that "although there were many areas of co-operation between missionaries and officials, they differed in that the officials advocated and pursued a policy of gradual abolition" of slavery.[82] Consequently, that policy caused conflict between the colonial administration and the missionaries who appealed for the immediate

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Renison Muchiri Githige, "The Mission State Relationship in Colonial Kenya: A Summary," in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 2 (1982): 123.

[82] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship," 119.

abolition of slavery. On issues of both land and slavery, the natives supported missionaries' efforts to fight for their rights. The collaboration between the missionaries and the natives enabled them to forge a collective effort to attack the colonial government for alienating lands from the natives.

Furthermore, the relation between the church and the natives remained a complicated one. For instance, collaboration of missionaries with the colonial government opened fierce resistance and hostility from the local community. Similarly, hostility arose in 1929 when the missionaries called the colonial government to exercise a hardline approach against radical nationalists.[83] The missionaries' open support for the colonial government crackdown on all grassroot movements fighting against the British colonial government set them against the local population. Their relation with the local population worsened when the government detained all the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) agitators and closed their independent schools and churches.[84]

Another cause of the conflict between missionaries and the natives was the perception among the local population that missionaries at the missions served as the intelligence wing of the colonial government. There were reports that the missions situated in the interior of the country often warned the colonial government about possible unrest.[85] Missionaries were the first to warn the colonial government that

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[83] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship," 123.

[84] Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was a political organization formed in 1924/5 by James Beauttah and Josepth Kang'ethe in colonial Kenya to provide the Kikuyu community a political platform to present its concerns to the British community. The major concern of this political organization was the expropriation of the most productive land by British settlers from Kenyan farmers. Majority of the members of this organization were from the Kikuyu tribe.

[85] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship," 124.

members of nationalist movements, such as the *Mau Mau,* were taking oaths in their plan

to fight the colonial government.[86] What was evident, however, was the fact that mission

centers provided the colonial government with major recruiting and indoctrinating

grounds for government loyalists.[87] Even rehabilitation of detainees used to take place at

the missions. Consequently, due to such complicity, nationalists started targeting

missions for what they saw as a conspiracy between missionaries and the colonial

government to pursue a common goal.

The same ambiguous, complex colonial government and church relationship

continued until Kenya gained independence. After independence, the church cooperated

with the state in order to consolidate the gains of political emancipation.[88] Under the

government of the founding President Jomo Kenyatta (1963-78), Christian churches

exercised their roles through involvement in spiritual and sociopolitical issues. In the

political sphere, they exercised their role as the conscience of society. They fulfilled that

role through issuance of "pastoral letters and exhortations to public office holders."[89]

Their unity of purpose and will enabled them to become a formidable force. The National

Council of the Churches of Kenya (NCCK) acted as an ecumenical forum where the

individual churches could not speak alone.[90] However, this collective effort by the

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[86] Mau Mau movement or rebellion was a grass-roots movement which was launched by the Kikuyu community and related ethnic groups to fight against the British colonial government in Kenya in the 1950s. This group resented the British monopolization of Land and power. Its aim was to drive the white settlers from Kenya forever.

[87] Githige, "The Mission State Relationship," 124.

[88] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics," 183.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Emily, J. Choge, "The Pilgrim Motif and the Role of the Church in Kenya in Politics," in *Religion and Politics in Africa*, ed. Peter I. Gichure and Daine B. Stinton (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008), 110.

Christian churches to support, and when necessary, challenge the government, only lasted until President Daniel Arap Moi ascended to power in 1978. His authoritarian and ethnicized regime changed the dynamic of the relationship between the church and the state.[91]

2.1.3 The Fractured Christian Community

During President Moi's regime (1978-2002), Evangelicals, Pentecostals and African Instituted Churches (AICs) avoided political affairs for purely political reasons.[92] Many of these churches became uncritical supporters of Moi's government and its pronouncements.[93] Moi's government, argues Orobator, brought about a different kind of relationship that was based on individual church leaders speaking against politicians acting contrary to their duties as public servants.[94] Some church leaders stood up in denouncing political figures by using political sermons and proclamation of the virtues and values of Christian social ethic. These leaders include the Anglican Bishops Henry Okullu, Alexander Muge and David Gitari, and the Presbyterian Timothy Njoya, Catholic bishop Raphael Ndingi Mwan a'Nzeki and Archbishop John Njue, who later became the second Cardinal in the history of Kenya.[95] These church leaders, though operating

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[91] Ibid., 109.

[92] The African Instituted Churches (AICs) are led by Africans rather than foreign missionaries. These churches emerged in the early 1900s. Many of them are Pentecostal. However, today, these churches are losing ground to a new wave of Pentecostal and Evangelical movements.

[93] Barret *et. al*., eds., "*Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity 1498-1973*, 37.

[94] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics," 183.

[95] Paul Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)*,* 34-46.

without coordination and a united voice, used their pulpits to make proclamations informed by the Gospel values.[96] The reason for the lack of a coordinated Christian voice was President Moi's exploitation of the ethnically-inclined Christianity.

President Moi manipulated the already divided Christian community. He maximized the support of his membership in the AICs which had its center among the Luos, Akamba and the Kalenjin in the Rift Valley. Throup remarks that President Moi, as part of his fightback, "induced his own African Inland Church and others to leave the NCCK, even to oppose it."[97] Indeed, these divisions betrayed the progress the churches had made before and soon after President Moi came into power. At the time, the churches were highly respected institutions which could not be controlled or manipulated.[98] As a result of President Moi's manipulation of the ethnic division in the NCCK, several church leaders supported him from "ethnic or patrimonial-clientelist considerations or out of a theological conviction that political involvement was not the role of churches."[99] Other Church leaders, especially from AICs, Evangelicals, Protestants, and Pentecostals, even preached and taught their followers that politics is a matter for prayer not involvement. As observed by Gregory Deacon, Pentecostal churches purported to be exclusively

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[96] David Throup, "Politics, Religious Engagement, and Extremism in Kenya," in *Religious Authority and the State in Africa: A Report of the CSIS Africa Program*, eds. Jennifer G. Cooke and Richard Downie (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 32.

[97] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya*, 35.

[98] Ibid., 41.

[99] Ibid.

concerned about "blessing, breakthrough, achievement, growth, victory, prosperity, promotion and all the other synonyms of success."[100]

The church leaders, headed by the Catholic Bishop of Nakuru, Raphael Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki, at that time the chairman of the Episcopal Conference and who later became the Archbishop of Nairobi, became quite involved during the run-up to multiparty democracy in the 1980s and 1990s.[101] Under Bishop Raphael Ndingi's leadership, and even after he became the archbishop of Nairobi, the Catholic Church operated as a united institution in a way that other churches did not. This legacy is largely owed to his neutral and just approach to Kenyan politics and the problem of negative ethnicity. Bishop Raphael Ndingi never shied away from confronting the national, provincial administration and security agencies, all of which were notorious for disregarding the rights of the people. Owing to his influence in the struggle for democracy, Bishop Rafael Ndingi remains the most influential Catholic Church leader in post-independent Kenya. In collaboration with leaders from other Christian churches, Bishop Rafael Ndingi worked so hard despite divisions among the Christian community to dismantle Kenya's one-party state. He exposed President Moi's government abuses.[102] These abuses include promoting ethnicized politics and orchestrating ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley province, where Bishop Rafael Ndingi was working.

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[100] Gregory Deacon, "Kenya: A Nation Born Again," *PentecoStudies* 14, no. 2 (August 2015): 230.

[101] Archbishop Raphael Ndingi Mwana a'Nzeki was born in Machakos District in 1931. He studied philosophy at Kibisho Senior Seminary and theology at St. Thomas Aquinas seminary at Morogoro in Tanzania. He was ordained a priest in 1961. He later travelled to the United States where he studied history and political science, for which he obtained a degree in 1969. He became the Bishop of the Nakuru diocese in 1972. In 1997, he succeeded Cardinal Maurice Otunga as the Archbishop of Nairobi.

[102] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya*, 43.

Unfortunately, the clergy was not spared this ethnic bigotry even in the province

under Bishop Raphael Ndingi. Father Moses Mahuho of St. Kizito Church, Olenguruone,

Nakuru diocese, for instance, was among those recommended for prosecution in the

Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya for being involved

in the 1991 ethnic clashes.[103] These clashes were being used to instill fear among

proponents of multiparty political system, which President Moi and his community saw

as a threat to his continued consolidation of power. For the sake of solidifying political

power, he continued to manipulate the already existing theological and ethnic differences

within the Christian churches.[104] His greatest supporters were members of the AICs. One

of the issues about which the mainstream churches differed with the government and the

AICs was the issue of constitutional changes. AICs feared confronting the government as

they saw any opposition to the government as "unnecessary and forbidden politics for the

Church."[105] Yet, the truth of the matter behind these churches' anti-politics sentiments

was their ethnic and religious alliance with President Moi. Such polarization and

fragmentation "weakens the conscience of society or influences it negatively."[106]

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[103] Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya, "Report of the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission Volume IV" (2013), 165.

[104] The mainstream churches herein referred to include the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church.

[105] Kuhn, *Prophetic Christianity in Western Kenya,* 135.

[106] Joseph Adero Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities," in *Bridge or Barrier: Religion, Violence, and Visions for Peace*, eds. Gerrie ter Haar and James J. Busuttil (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 164.

2.2 Christian Identity versus Ethnic Identity

The divided nature of the body of Christ further demonstrates how Christians – those united by the word and grace of Christ – have inwardly and outwardly betrayed the oneness expected to be displayed. The dynamics of the relation between Christians of different ethnic identities in Kenya seems to affirm Orobator's view that "being Christian appears a weaker substitute for a deeply engrained belief in the protective identity conferred by an exclusionary primary reference group."[107] This situation is largely so because of the existential fact that the African culture promises a more tangible reward than Christianity.

Owing to the loss of a unified Christian community and leadership, the advent of multiparty politics found the church less politically astute. Allegations of the church's partisanship exposed the "problem of the contradictory roles played by church leadership concerning matters of governance in society."[108] Like President Moi, President Kibaki (2002 – 2013) used Christianity to burnish his image as a Christian statesman. Church functions and funerals continued to be the grounds for doing politics.[109] Another trick, used by Kibaki to compromise the clergy's ability to speak out against sociopolitical injustices and the state excesses, was through "co-option of church leaders."[110] For instance, President Kibaki appointed Reverend Mutava Musyimi to lead the National Anti-Campaign Steering Committee (NACCSC) and Bishop Bernard Njoroge of the

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[107] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics", 183.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Gifford, *Christianity, Politics, and Public Life in Kenya*, 221.

[110] Stephen Kioko David and Michael T. Katola, "The Church-State Relationship in Kenya after the Second Liberation Struggle," *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, Vol. 3, no. 11 (2016): 48.

Charismatic Episcopal Church as a fulltime commissioner for the commission tasked with drawing up the new constitution.[111] Arguably, these appointments were meant to silence the church that raised lots of concerns. Even though not many Catholic Church leaders were co-opted to join privileged positions, still they also "lost their critical distance from President Kibaki, himself a Roman Catholic."[112] The appointment of Father Dominic Wamugunda to be a member of the Board of the Postal Corporation of Kenya is a case that demonstrates the extent to which President Kibaki attempted to manipulate even the Catholic Church leadership.[113] Thus, the loss of critical distance and voice of reason resulted from the church's hierarchy siding with the government. Aligning with the ruling establishments reinforced the church's indifference to the crucified people. Jean-Marc Ela wrote against indifference to the plight of the poor. Christianity, argues Ela, cannot be indifferent to "the real needs of the masses."[114]

In fact, the 2007 election revealed more evidence of the rift within the Christian churches. The rift had two dimensions: on one hand, most evangelical and Pentecostal churches favored Raila Amollo Odinga.[115] This was largely because these churches

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Ben Knighton, "Christian Belongings in East Africa: Flocking to the Churchs," in *Introducing World Christianity*, ed. Charles E. Farhadian (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 30.

[113] The appointment of Father Dominic Wamugunda elicited negative reactions from some Catholics. Some of them argued that the clergy should not accept political or civil appointments. For more on this, see Nyabonyi, Kazungu, "The Nation (Kenya) - AAGM:; Queries Linger As Priest Takes Up Top Posta Post," *Daily Nation (Nairobi, Kenya)*, October 24, 2006., *NewsBank*, EBSCO*host* (accessed April 17, 2017).

[114] Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1986), 31.

[115] Throup, "Politics, Religious Engagement," 35. Raila Amolo Odinga is the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the first vice-president of independent Kenya. After his father's death in 1994, Raila inherited the mantle of leadership of the Luo community. He is considered as one of Kenya's most charismatic politician. He has contested the presidency three times. He is also highly outspoken and known

operated among the Kalenjins, Luos and the people from the coastal regions that supported the opposition led by Odinga. These communities thought of themselves as economically marginalized and forgotten ethnic groups. On the other hand, the Kikuyus and other communities from central Kenya, which dominated the mainstream churches, supported the Kibaki establishment.[116] Such ethnic and Christian churches involvement in ethnicized politics also dragged the Catholic Church further into muddy political waters. The result of such politics weakened relationships even within the Catholic Church itself.

Within the Catholic Church, the scandal of a divided body of Christ unfortunately emerged between Cardinal John Njue and other bishops, especially those from western Kenya.[117] As observed by Throup, the Cardinal, who comes from central Kenya, was "condemned for being too close to President Kibaki and Kikuyu chauvinist sentiments."[118] His closeness and the compromise that followed that relationship manifested itself even before the 2002 election when the Cardinal stood against the move by the opposition and other Catholic Bishops to push for the *Majimbo* (decentralization) system. Other Catholic Church leaders from non-Kikuyu regions quickly distanced themselves from the Cardinal's pronouncements.[119] Among these dissenting voices was

for creating or breaking political parties or alliances. He seems to appeal more to the poor and marginalized communities from the Lake region of Western Kenya. Until 2013, Odinga was the Member of Parliament for Africa's biggest slum, Kibera in Nairobi, uninterrupted for twenty years.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 34-35.

[118] Ibid., 35.

[119] Kisumu Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth and Bishop Kairo of Nakuru gave a press statement declaring that "The Catholic Church has no official stand on the controversial majimbo system." The two bishops said the statement by Cardinal designate John Njue, who openly opposed the controversial

the archbishop of Kisumu (the then opposition stronghold), Zacchaeus Okoth who called on the faithful to decide for themselves how they wish to be governed.[120]

Another instance where the Catholic Church displayed contradictory roles was in the 2007 election when the Catholic Conference of Bishops issued a statement criticizing the declaration of President Kibaki as the winner of the much contested election results, only to have it "withdrawn by the cardinal and his supporters, who issued a different one, congratulating the president."[121] The Cardinal's statement went further to urge Kenyans to accept the results. As the show of hierarchical powers continued to rage on, the Catholic Church descended into a major rift. As observed by Jennifer Cooke, the impact of "the 2007 post-election violence inflicted a serious blow to the churches as their leaders once again divided largely along ethnic lines."[122] In order to solve the deepening rift between the Cardinal and his counterparts from opposition strongholds, the Vatican sent Cardinal Francis Arinze from Nigeria, the most senior African at the Vatican, at the time.[123] Undoubtedly, the outcome of such rifts and tensions in the Christian churches betrayed a political situation that demanded a much more robust and coordinated response from the church leaders.

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majimbo system, was never discussed by the Catholic bishops of Kenya at their plenary. As such, they dismissed it as a personal statement by the Cardinal designate and that it does not represent the view of the Bishops conference. For more see The Nation (Kenya) – AAGM:; Catholics Have No Stand On Majimbo, Declare Bishops." *Daily Nation* (Nairobi, Kenya), October 31, 2007., NewsBank, EBSCOhost (accessed January 11, 2017).

[120] Throup, "Politics, Religious Engagement," 35.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 34.

[123] Ibid., 35-36.

Although the Catholic Church succeeded to resolve the rift and resumed to work as a united force, as was later witnessed in its humanitarian intervention and condemnation of the postelection violence of 2007/8, it was clear that damage had already been done. This damage prompted some congregations to splinter, especially in urban areas with multiethnic congregations. As remarked by Throup, the Catholic Church "lost some of its credibility as an institution standing above the political fray."[124] The image of the Catholic Church was in "shambles because it was no longer considered an entity transcending ethnicity and capable of speaking in the interest of everyone."[125] As emphasized by Philomena Njeri Mwaura and Constansia Mumma Martinon, many people from that point "ignored its messages because its leadership was viewed as partisan."[126] Its partisanship made the Catholic Church to be accused of "complicity, of abetting the evil by its silence, and of allowing itself to be divided and driven by partisan ethnic interests."[127] From that time, the Catholic Church has never been able to rise above the existing "perception of its partisanship and lack of credibility."[128] It has remained to be perceived as ethnicized, just like so many other Kenyan institutions suffering from ethnic divisions and political loyalties.

The Church's indifference and partisanship evoked feelings of a church proclaiming a God who is indifferent to human suffering. Ela challenges such a church

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[124] Ibid., 35.

[125] Philomena Njeri Mwaura, and Constansia Mumma Martinon, "Political Violence in Kenya and Local Churches' Responses: The Case of the 2007 Post-Election Crisis," *Review Of Faith & International Affairs* 8, no. 1 (March 2010): 42, accessed January 7, 2017, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost.

[126] Mwaura, and Constansia, "Political Violence in Kenya and Local Churches' Responses," 42.

[127] Ibid., 45.

[128] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics," 185.

for preaching a God who is "a stranger to the times, indifferent to political, social, economic, and cultural occurrences, having no prospect of involvement such as would necessarily be implied in the Promise."[129] He, Ela, observes that if the church in situations such as that in Kenya decides to embrace silence and hide behind an apolitical disguise, it would fail to pronounce the socio-historical dimensions of salvation and hope.[130] Thus, what the church must do in such polarized societies is to remain non-partisan. If it remains so, it would be able to "increase its credibility as a moral authority in the secular world, precisely because it would eschew technical know-how in the mechanism of peacemaking and has a moral duty to freely articulate moral values."[131]

Mwaura and Martinon locate the misuse of ethnic identity and manipulation thereof to a deficit in Christian formation. They argue that the failure of the Kenyan society to rise above exclusionary politics of identity can be "attributed to deficits in Kenya's Christian formation, in the sincerity and prophetic convictions of clergy leadership, and in the country's overall national ethic."[132] In response to needed appropriation of Christian ethics, a liberative ecclesiological approach will have a major contribution by promoting an authentic Christian identity that transcends barriers of ethnicity and narrow self-interests. Again, without suggesting that Kenya lacks traces or rays of authentic Christianity, this study makes the point that the aforementioned reaction to the 2007 election by Kenyans, Christians and their leaders must not be glossed over. Their reaction to the situation leading to violence demonstrates a lapse in moral

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Ela, *African Cry*, 31.

[131] Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa," 165.

[132] Mwaura, and Constansia, "Political Violence in Kenya and Local Churches' Responses," 45.

judgment. It exposes "a deep malaise in the social, moral, and political fabric of society" which must be treated with the seriousness it deserves.[133]

With the help of a liberative ecclesiological approach, the Christian community would be formed to "appeal to gospel values and construct a new community with new social relationships."[134] Building such a community is possible through the promotion of unity, justice, human dignity, human rights, the common good, patriotism, solidarity and national interests. These ethical principles form that basis of an authentic religion and church leadership. There is, therefore, hope that the church has the potential to reclaim its role as the conscience of society as well as engaging in active formation of Christian conscience, despite the blow to its credibility and integrity before and during the 2007 post-election violence.

The Kenyan church has a potential to reposition itself as a proclaimer and witness of the most inclusive values. Given its tradition, human resources, facilities and methodologies, the church can form Kenyans capable of embracing positive ethnicity, which respects, acknowledges, and celebrates the reality and value of ethnic diversity. However, that kind of formation must always be founded on the recognition of a common humanity shared by all people on earth. For a country with an estimated 83 percent Christian population, formation of Christian conscience would certainly go further in building a just social order founded on the themes of unity, love, and sacrifice as means of embracing each other. Champions of a liberative ecclesiological approach which is more conducive to awakening moral imagination are the Catholic Church leaders and the

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

entire Christian community. But the success of this liberative ecclesiology is only possible if the Christian community begins to dismantle negative ethnocentric loyalties which have caused "the present perception of its [church] partisanship and lack of credibility."[135]

2.3 The Church as the Conscience of Society in Action

Does the Kenyan Church, especially the Catholic Church, understand herself as the conscience of society? In the above discussion, especially in the general fight for democracy and peace, despite evidence of contradictory roles, the church's hierarchy generally performed in various ways the challenge of being the conscience of society.[136] As exemplified by some of the church figures mentioned above and the many other church leaders performing their prophetic and kingly roles quietly, the Catholic Church understands her role as that of guiding, strengthening and encouraging society.[137] We see this determination affirmed in the Bishops of Kenya through pastoral letter entitled, "Catholic Bishops' Open Memorandum to the President of the Republic" issued on November 13, 1986.[138] In this letter, Catholic Bishops emphasized their responsibility as the conscience of society and affirmed that "should the kingdom of God and values of

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[135] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics," 185.

[136] Another point to note here is the fact that different members of the church have different roles to play in acting as the conscience of society. I argue that even among the clergy, not all of them can be prophets in the sense of Elija, Amos, Hosea or Kings in the sense of David. There are Kenyan church leaders (men and women) who have played their prophetic and Kingly roles quietly.

[137] Kenya Episcopal Conference, "Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of Kenya in Respect of the Events of August 1, 1982 (foiled coup d'état)," in *The Conscience of Society*, ed. Rodrigo Mejia (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), 60. Unless indicated otherwise, all the pastoral letters referred to in this thesis are taken from that book, *The Conscience of Society*, edited by Rodrigo Mejia.

[138] For more on this pastoral letter, see Rodrigo Mejia, ed., *The Conscience of Society*, ed. Rodrigo Mejia (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995).

this kingdom seem to be endangered, we see it as our duty to point out the danger and to

seek to persuade the State to reconsider and to find a better way."[139] Even the founding

father of the Kenyan nation, President Jomo Kenyatta, reminded the Bishops about their

role when he spoke to them in July, 1976, stating that "the church is the conscience of

society, and today a society needs a conscience. Do not be afraid to speak. If we go

wrong and you keep quiet, one day you may have to answer for our mistakes."[140] This

call reminds the church to uphold its duty of social action. The church as the conscience

of the nation basically refers to:

> The Church as a vigilant watchman to sound alarm against the forces of evil; the
> Church in the image of a gadfly awakening people from their moral complacency;
> the Church in the image of guide giving direction because of her privileged
> position as custodian of the divine mysteries; the Church as the image of
> moderation and restraint. As a conscience it has to avoid the excesses of laxism
> and intolerance and rigidity in handling the affairs of people.[141]

Notwithstanding the challenges alluded to earlier, Kenyan Catholic Bishops have

tried to carry out their role of being the conscience of Kenyan society either as

individuals or as a group. We see these attempts in the Kenyan Catholic Bishops' pastoral

letters and press statements. While there were instances of the church playing

contradictory roles as already discussed above, there were also many pastoral letters

which were issued to convey a unified voice on the direction the country ought to take on

various issues. Other structures within the Kenyan Catholic Bishops conference that

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[139] "Catholic Bishops' Open Memorandum to the President of the Republic," November 13, 1986, #4; cf. #5.

[140] Cited in the pastoral letter, "Family and Responsible Parenthood," April 27, 1979, #42.

[141] Elizabeth Onyii Ezenweke, and Anthony Ikechukwu Kanu, "The Church and National Development: Towards a Philosophy of Collaboration," *African Research Review*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (April, 2012), 109.

enforced social justice and peace include the formation of the Catholic Justice and Peace

Commission (CJPC) in 1988. The Commission helped by working with the dioceses and

parishes through their offices on the ground to collect data on the question of peace and

justice in order to analyze the causes of conflict and injustice. For instance, in 1992,

during intertribal clashes in Rift Valley, the bishops used such data to challenge the

government when they remarked:

> So far the government has taken very little part in relief operations. The
> authorities came in too late and only with inadequate supplies. There are still
> people without homes staying in church compounds or with relatives. It was only
> on 3 January 1992 that a rally was held to condemn these "tribal clashes." This
> has left the impression that there was an official condoning of such violence.[142]

Contradictory as the role of the church has been, these examples show that it never

completely failed to speak. Its voice continued to be heard even though at times not as

prophetic as expected.

The period between 1990 and 2002 (the run-up to multiparty democracy) remains

one in which individual church men – Catholics and non-Catholics – came out

proactively against President Moi's authoritarian regime resulting in its weeding out

through the ballot. But before that period, various church leaders from different churches

played it safe with occasional comments against the government but little action.[143]

While commending the Kenyan Catholic Bishops for the prophetic work in the period

between 1992 and 2002 and their reaction to intertribal clashes, Pope John Paul II states:

> Your protests against violence, your defense of human rights, your proof of those
> who seek personal advantage by exploiting their neighbors, your calls to civil

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[142] "Looking towards the Future with Hope," Pastoral letter of 6 January 1992, #16.

[143] Philemona Njeri Mwaura, "East African Consultation," in *Engaging the World: Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Societies, eds.* Afe Adogame, Janice McLean, and Anderson Jeremiah, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014), 218.

authorities to renew their honest dedication to ensuring the common good, and your summons to national reconciliation, - all of these are signs of your fidelity to the demands of your apostolic ministry. They mark you out as authentic heirs of those who said: "We cannot do anything but speak" (Acts 4:20); "We cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth (2 Cor.13: 13:8).[144]

However, commendable as this work of the bishops is, their work concentrated on ecclesiastical pronouncements and declarations at the level of the hierarchy. Yet, a better process of societal transformation requires both pronouncements of the social teachings as well a bottom-up Christian formation and mobilization of the whole Christian community to participate in the implementation of the declarations. As a body of guidelines in the Catholic Church, the Catholic Social Teaching should be used at the grassroots to illuminate reason and contribute to the formation of conscience. The process should engage everyone in the church by listening to their joys and their hopes, their sorrows and their grief. This way of being church emphasizes the synodal elements in the Catholic Church itself. This word *synod* comes from the two Greek words, *syn*, which means together or with one another, and *hodòs*, which means way.[145] Synodality, therefore, emphasizes being together; a people on a journey together along the paths of history towards the encounter with Christ the Lord. Pope Francis described the synodal church as one "which listens, which realizes that listening 'is more than simply hearing.' It is a mutual listening in which everyone has something to learn. The faithful people, the

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[144] Pope John Paul II, *Address of his Holiness John Paul II to the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Kenya on their "Ad Limina" Visit*, Monday, 25 April 1994, #3, accessed January 9, 2017,

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1994/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19940425_kenya-ad-limina.pdf

[145] For more on this synodal church, see Walter Kasper, *Pope Francis' Revolution of Tenderness and Love* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2015).

college of bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the

Holy Spirit."[146] Thus, the top-down approach of making exhortations still employed by

the Catholic Church leadership in Kenya discourages active participation of all

Christians. Synodality, as a constitute element of the Catholic Church, challenges the

local church to foster participation and involvement of the Church as a family confronted

with a common enemy.

For the Kenyan church to truly act as the conscience of society, "All Christians

and all people have to feel invited in this common process towards a new and better

Kenya."[147] Kenyan Catholic Bishops understand this fact well. They know that "it would

be wrong to identify the Church only with the hierarchy."[148] All that they need to do is to

concretize that knowledge by empowering the laity and encouraging them to participate

in the public sphere. As observed by Pope John Paul II in *Vocation and Mission of the*

Lay Faithful (Christifideles Laici), participation in "public life is for everybody and by

everybody."[149] This implies that the church in Kenya must go beyond making

ecclesiastical pronouncements if it is to promote a comprehensive Christian formation. In

other words, it must offer, as reiterated by the Kenya Episcopal Conference, "moral

formation and encouragement. This includes forming moral conscience so that each one,

in considering how to behave, can distinguish between what is good and what is

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[146] Pope Francis, "Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops," (Address of his Holiness Pope Francis, Vatican, October 17, 2015), accessed March 21, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

[147] "Looking Towards the Future with Hope," #22.

[148] "Looking Towards the Future with Hope," #22.

[149] Pope John Paul II, *Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful (Christifideles Laici)*, (December 1987), #36.

sinful."[150] Only then can the church in Kenya foster "the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating just, truthful, and peaceful societies" and hence shape a sociopolitical context in which such agents will thrive.[151]

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the reality and impact of negative ethnicity and political violence in the church. It exposes situations where the church has demonstrated an "acute inability and apparent unwillingness to make a positive impact upon the conscience of its people."[152] Some of the images of a contradictory church highlighted in this chapter are not meant to discredit the image of the church. They are meant to give a critical exposition of what might weaken, undermine, or influence negatively the conscience of society.[153] This analysis proposes that such images can be redeemed through a liberative ecclesiological approach that seeks to remove the Church's social teachings and the prophetic voice from the high levels of ecclesiastical pronouncements and instill it into the conscience of Christians. In the next chapter, we will demonstrate the justification for conscience and formation of the conscience of those whose conscience is corrupted so as to enable them to participate fully in the life of the public sphere and the church.

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[150] Kenya Episcopal Conference, *This We Teach and Do: Catholic Church and AIDS in Kenya*, Vo. 2 (Nairobi, KE: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006), 25 – 26.

[151] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 21.

[152] Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa," 162.

[153] Ibid., 164.

CHAPTER THREE

A DEFENSE OF THE PRIMACY OF CONSCIENCE FORMATION

"They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them.' Rom. 2:15[154]

The above discussion on the Kenyan sociopolitical and ecclesial context demonstrates the extent to which the conscience of some Kenyans is compromised and so in need of reorientation. The orientation may require application of different methods of conscience reconstruction. One such method, embedded in Christian tradition and secular society, is formation of conscience. Formation of conscience, as presented here, is a reasonable and rich pastoral resource for the church morally and spiritually to form Kenyans into the sort of human beings they ought to be. This study proposes it as a key component of an alternative ecclesiological approach to the old Kenyan Catholic Church pastoral approach bent on decision-oriented or ecclesiastical pronouncements-oriented approach. What Kenyans need is a kind of church, which is bent on the development of moral persons; Christians and citizens capable of transcending ethnicized consciences.

3.1 Conscience

Based on the earlier definition of conscience, this section of the study lays out the essence of this principle vis-à-vis its relevance in the public sphere.[155] The key

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[154] In this verse, Paul is trying to warn Jews not to think that since God did not address his revelation to Gentiles they cannot respond reasonably to the standard of conduct inculcated in the Old Testament. Paul invites the Jews to realize that even Gentiles can respond reasonably to the standard of conduct acceptable to God because God made it possible for Gentiles to know instinctively the difference between right and wrong.

[155] *Gaudium et Spes*, no.16.

presupposition is that truth can be found in the depth of conscience.[156] This is not to suggest that the search for truth is that simple. In fact, Vatican II recognized the complexity of conscience and the process of searching for truth.[157] However, notwithstanding the complex process of searching for truth, the role of conscience in guiding human conduct remains important for all human beings. While asserting the role of conscience, Charles Curran observed that *Gaudium et Spes* "emphasizes the primacy of the subjective without denying the objective and sees the search for moral truth as taking place in the depth of the person's conscience."[158] Thus, conscience, besides its complex nature, remains a reasonable principle for responding to spiritual and sociopolitical needs of the people. As a concept derived from the Latin word *conscientia*, which means "knowledge within oneself" or "knowledge with one another", conscience basically means, to know together.[159] This implies that conscience is "neither private nor individualistic. Rather it is the 'place' and the 'means' whereby persons come to know themselves 'in confrontation with God and with fellowmen.'"[160] Conscience is, therefore, social and relational. Yet that social dimension is both the object of conscience as well as

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[156] Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 75.

[157] *Gaudium et Spes*, no.16.

[158] *Gaudium et Spes*, no.16.

[159] Robert Smith, *Conscience and Catholicism: The Nature and Function of Conscience in Contemporary Roman Catholic Moral Theology* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1998), 83.

[160] Ibid.

the regulating factor determining the formation and development of healthy, mature and well-formed conscience.[161]

Similarly, *Dignitatis Humanae* recognized the value of conscience in mediating the divine law. According to this document, "In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life."[162] By upholding the primacy of conscience, Vatican II articulated a moral framework and tradition for the church to follow. Vatican II observed that obeying a "law written by God" in a human being's heart is the very dignity of the human person.[163] It identified conscience as the place where man "is alone with God" and the place where God's voice echoes in man's depths.[164] In that sense, disregarding God's voice may lead to wrong judgment. In his comments on the capacity of conscience as the voice of God, Gula remarks that:

> The capacity of conscience is part of being human. It makes it possible to know and do the good; however exercise of this capacity requires we take the responsibility for developing ourselves as moral persons. Character formation, the development of the virtues and standing in a Christian community all develop this capacity.[165]

In other words, there exists a connection between character formation, human development, and the capacity of conscience. The same human capacity to become moral

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[161] Noteworthy also in the aforementioned opportunities of the social dimension of conscience is the potential of the same aspect being a threat to the development and formation of a healthy and well-formed conscience. For example, negative ethnicity, if embraced without a critical mind, can degrade the collective consciousness of the people and foster a loss of the people's moral compass.

[162] *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 3

[163] *Gaudium et Spes*, no.16.

[164] Ibid.

[165] Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith,* 123.

persons is also observed by James Keenan.[166] Keenan associates the same human

capacity with human beings' ability to "discover in turn our dependency on others, for

human persons are by nature relational."[167] Keenan's point highlights another seemingly

important dimension of conscience, which is that of enriching and maintaining the

relational aspect of human persons. This perspective seems to suggest that if conscience

does not build a community, then it would remain meaningless. To avoid arbitrariness,

conscience must be necessarily "intersubjective". In other words, conscience must be

intersubjective with respect to the duties we have as human beings towards other persons.

Just following one's conscience or the ethnic conscience is not enough. That conscience

must be tested against the objective conscience. In the case of this study, that objective

conscience is defined by the common good and the Gospel values. For Kenya, the

common good would be conditions, such as peace, justice and reconciliation, which will

allow Kenyans to reach their fulfillment more fully.

How is conscience helpful in discovering the right course of action? There are

two ways in which conscience can help human beings to act in ways consistent with

God's call. For Keenan, one of the ways in which conscience can act as the personal and

social seat of moral responsibility and accountability is by prompting people to confront

their sinfulness in two ways.[168] First, conscience helps people to examine their own

thoughts and deeds. In particular, it enables the one doing examination of conscience to

judge his own conduct and behavior. It acts as a mechanism for evaluating human

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[166] For more on the human being's capacity to become a moral person, see James Keenan, "Redeeming Conscience," *Theological Studies* 76, no. 1 (March 2015).

[167] Ibid., 141.

[168] James Keenan, "Called to Conscience," *America* 216, no. 1 (January 2, 2017), 16.

conduct.[169] Second, conscience acts as a lens and safeguard through which people discern

what is the right thing to do. Thus, the potential to discern is necessitated by the fact that

all human beings, as moral agents, have the capacity to gather the necessary information

which morally has bearing on the direction of the decision.[170] The challenge, however, is

seemingly in the process of discerning and the parameters being used, or ought to be used

to discern, which may lead to different outcomes. But for Christians, discernment is an

essential part of searching for the right action in accord with God's call. It is an essential

step in self-understanding and moral maturity. Unlike a dead or erroneous conscience,

which is an obstacle to good discernment, a well-formed conscience awakens people to

recognize their own misdeeds.

3.2 The Place of Conscience in the Political Sphere

In both legal and political spheres, the primacy of conscience is well recognized.

Many countries uphold and guarantee the right to freedom of conscience. Even in the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (HDHR), the importance of conscience is

equally recognized.[171] Article 1 of the UDHR asserts that "All human beings are born

free and equal in dignity and human rights. They are endowed with reason and

conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Article 18

notes that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion."

Conscience, therefore, functions as an instrumental and foundational principle in

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[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] United Nations (UN), *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (New York: United Nations, 1948), accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

contemporary political system. It is such an understanding of conscience that informs the quest of this study to explore the function and potential of the church to prioritize conscience formation for social and political transformation.

Secular societies are committed to the promotion of the political realm by virtue of which freedom of religion and freedom of conscience are guaranteed.[172] These societies recognize the role of conscience in enhancing human ability to recognize the moral correctness of an action without relying on ethnicized consciences. The same ability to tell right from wrong is the one that guides the notion of participation by the people and the common good. We see this respect and freedom of conscience being observed in a variety of ways by different States. In the United States, the model of freedom and respect of conscience is founded on six principles: "equality, equal respect accorded to every person, freedom of conscience, accommodation, none-establishment, and separation."[173] In Kenya, the concept of conscience is presented in chapter four of the Constitution which lays out the Bill of Rights.[174] Article 27 (4) of the same Constitution establishes that: "The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth." The same is echoed in article 32 of the Constitution: "Every person has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion." By way of example, in Kenya as in many other societies, conscience is upheld as an essential

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[172] Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience,* trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 22.

[173] Ibid., *23.*

[174] Government of Kenya, *The Constitution of Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: Government of Kenya, 2010).

characteristic of all human beings. Thus, like Constitutions in other civilized societies, Kenya's Constitution has a disposition that guarantees respect for conscience. Acknowledgement of conscience goes further to affirm conscience's role in regulating human behavior as well as the State's action.

Conscience is, therefore, necessary in the realm of politics. Participating in normal politics means discerning and executing decisions that enhance the wellbeing of the human society. This link between conscience and the public society is due to the fact that while conscience is a private matter, it does not function independently of the world. Conscience, argues Shiraz Dossa, "is tied to the public world."[175] The basis for this connection is because conscience helps discernment of the moral rightness or wrongness of human action in the world. If people realize the relationship between the public and one's conscience, they will be able to share insights of conscience and thereby draw each other into truth.

In light of that relationship, this study argues for the possibility to maintain such relationship without necessarily blurring the separation of religion and government. A healthy relationship between conscience and public life can be maintained by all citizens if they insist that "ethical and religious proposals in public conversation abide by the guiding norms of honesty, consistency, rationality, evidence, feasibility, legality, morality, and revisability."[176] The view that conscience can be a threat to public life is myopic and unreasonable. If anything, conscience can be used to protect secular

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[175] Shiraz Dossa, *The Public Realm and the Public Self: The Political Theory of Hannah Arendt* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1989), 134.

[176] Austin Dacey, *The Secular Conscience: Why Belief Belongs in Public Life* (New York, NY, United States: Prometheus Books, 2008), 80.

governments. Private reasons informed by conscientious actions can be used to shore up the secular government.[177] Conscience, therefore, matters because it directs human action towards something of great human concern: questions of meaning, value, and identity.

3.3 The Place of Conscience in the Catholic Church

A key component of the ethical system in Catholic moral theology is natural moral law. In this ethical system, reason acts as the tool to perceive natural law. One major characteristic of this ethical system is its deontological stress, that is, emphasis on some acts being either right or wrong. The foundation of this ethical system lies in Thomas Aquinas' view that conscience is reason making moral decisions.[178] Conscience is the act of passing a moral judgment on an action to determine its favorability.[179] The Catholic Church recognizes the same centrality of conscience in any decision making process. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed."[180] The Catholic Church understands that making a morally right action requires awareness of and listening to the God-given law "inscribed in the life of the earthly city."[181] As

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[177] Ibid., 83.

[178] For more on this Thomas Aquinas's view of conscience as something tied to human reason, see Eric D'Arcy, *Conscience and the Right to Freedom* (London: Sheed & Ward, Ltd., 1961).

[179] Donald W. Wuerl, "The Bishop, Conscience and Moral Teaching", in *Catholic Conscience Foundation and Formation,* ed. Russell E. Smith (New Haven, Connecticut: The Knights of Columbus, 1992), 125.

[180] Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: The Doubleday Religious Publishing Group, 2000), no. 1778.

[181] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 43

proposed by this study, our nature as human beings in the earthly city demands a constant accompaniment to remain attentive and attuned to the guidance of conscience. Awakening of such consciousness may benefit from the formation of people's consciences to strive to build bridges as opposed to erecting walls of separation and division.

The formation of conscience proposed by this study is not one where conscience is retuned to conform to every moral teaching and proclamation of the church. Rather, the formation of conscience referred to concerns helping people to "gain the right vision, to assess the main perspectives, and to present those truths and values which should bear upon decisions to be made before God."[182] The formation referred to is about helping people to discern the right direction and vision which orients toward and leads to God.[183] This implies that any approach to formation of conscience that only teaches conformity with or to conform to the teaching of the church runs the risk of abdicating personal responsibility in decision making. Pope Francis warned against such approaches of conscience formation when he insisted that the church is called to "form consciences, not to replace them."[184]

A true Church fulfills her function of teaching by giving both religious as well as moral instructions needed to create a peaceful and just social order. As a teaching institution, the church strives to help people make their own the church's teaching in areas of social justice and morality. Through conscience formation, the Church helps

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[182] Smith, *Conscience and Catholicism,* 75.

[183] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus,* no. 22.

[184] Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 37.

people to appreciate the fact that individual conscience has an imperative aspect that requires prior guidance and formation towards the maturity of its judgment. This form of accompaniment seeks to cultivate freedom necessary to "develop those stable interior principles that lead us spontaneously to do good."[185] The aim of such accompaniment is to develop a virtuous life capable of acting "out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within."[186] By recognizing the value of a properly formed conscience, the Church puts "herself always and only at the service of conscience, helping it" to conceive and so attain the truth about the good of man with certainty and to abide by it.[187] In this study, the process of attaining truth is understood as one of becoming "whole". In that sense, the church "provides guidelines, indeed even boundaries, which serve individuals and the community as a whole to see the truth."[188] As already mentioned, the reason for the church to provide such guidelines necessary for human beings to become whole relates to the fact that no human being fully possesses the truth. As such, human beings need the help of the community like the church to know ever more fully the "reciprocity of consciences that leads to greater insights into moral truth."[189]

How is truth to be discovered? One way is through open dialogue. This kind of dialogue will help the church to discover truth wherever it may be found. All human beings, as a community of truth seekers, must help one another to discover truth. This is

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[185] Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 267.

[186] *Gaudium et Spes*, 17.

[187] John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor,* no. 64.

[188] Smith, *Conscience and Catholicism,* 97.

[189] Ibid.

why the church is an important component as a part of society searching for truth. As a Christian community, which believes that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God, the church must collaborate with other communities outside the ecclesial community in the search for the truth. But that search cannot bear much fruit without conscience playing its role as both the center of the person as well as the freedom to search out and act on truth.[190] As already alluded to, one's conscience maintains its dignity only when one sincerely seeks the truth. The truth in this case of study is that which enhances justice and peace for all Kenyans.

3.3.1 Pope Francis Model of Conscience

In *Amoris Laetitia,* Pope Francis urges that a well-formed conscience can enhance a healthy relationship between and among the peoples and the same can help integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment.[191] For Pope Francis, objectivity is found in the conscience and that includes even the conscience of atheists. In a letter published in the Italian Newspaper *La Repubblica* on July 7, 2013, Pope Francis responded to an atheist who asked the Pope about the church's attitude to nonbelievers.[192] Pope Francis responded by noting that "the issue for the unbeliever lies in obeying his or her conscience. There is sin, even for those who have no faith, when conscience is not followed."[193] Abiding by conscience basically means making up one's mind about what is good and evil. One may wonder if this is not an endorsement of relativism. Pope

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[190] Ibid., *93.*

[191] Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 49.

[192] For more on the Pope's view that objectivity is found on conscience and that same applies even to atheists, see Pope Francis, "Letter to a Non-Believer," La Repubblica, September 4, 2013.

[193] Ibid.

Francis rejects relativism and affirms objective truth that recognizes plural and partial

truths which must be discerned by conscience informed by both internal and external

objective norms.[194]

For Pope Francis, faith and truth go together. In his first encyclical *Lumen Fidei*

("The Light of Faith"), the Pope stressed that in our contemporary culture:

> We are willing to allow for subjective truths of the individual, which consist in
> fidelity to his or her deepest convictions, yet these are truths valid only for that
> individual and not capable of being proposed to others in an effort to serve the
> common good. But Truth itself, the truth which would comprehensively explain
> our life as individuals and in society, is regarded with suspicion. Surely this kind
> of truth – we hear it said – is what was claimed by the great totalitarian
> movements of the last century, a truth that imposed its own world view in order to
> crush the actual lives of individuals. In the end, what we are left with is
> relativism, in which the question of universal truth – and ultimately this means the
> question of God – is no longer relevant.[195]

The truth is, therefore, a conviction that serves the common good – concrete aspects of

justice, peace, dignity, and equity. This implies that the truth must never be confused with

the freedom to act as one thinks best. Part of the reason some Kenyans continue to

experience marginalization, exclusion, injustice, and violence perpetrated by

manipulation of ethnicity is majorly because of people or ethnic groups which choose

truths valid only for them. Such notions of truth are a threat to the common good.

Subscribing to ideas that may threaten or crush the actual lives of others will be

propagating the kind of relativism Pope Francis is fighting against.[196] Pope Francis

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[194] Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Lumen Fidei* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2013), no. 25.

[195] Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, no. 25.

[196] Pope Francis, Post-Synodal Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2013), no. 2.

suggests that for Christians to avoid a relativistic approach to life, they must allow their stances to be always informed by scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

Pope Francis proposes the need to exercise discernment as a means to engage one's conscience in decision making and becoming sensitive towards the needs of others, especially the poor. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he observes:

> Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.[197]

In suchlike situations where the role of the civil government in service of the common good is severely challenged, Pope Francis wants a church that can stand as the light and salt of the earth. He calls for vigilance on the part of the church to ensure that the needs of the poor are not neglected. His invitation does not only apply to spiritual and physical needs but also to the formation of conscience based on gospel values and truth informed by faith and reason. As the conscience of the society, the Church must offer people a consistent ethic of life that can enrich every stage of life. For instance, when it comes to electing leaders, people need to be helped to realize how to transcend voting for people based on ethnic lines, a party, a preference, popular opinion or political polity. They need to be guided to develop a reasonable moral imagination necessary to judge the authentic values of the candidates, their ability to actually deliver what they promise, their commitment to their promises, and their commitment to the common good. Formation,

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[197] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* no. 2.

therefore, becomes critical in expanding people's moral imagination to realize the right and duties of conscience.

3.4 The Justification of Conscience: An African Perspective

African intellectuals and theologians acknowledge the positive relationship between Christian faith and politics or social welfare. Some of them associate the cause of the many sociopolitical problems experienced in several African countries to a breakdown of moral systems. In this regard, Richard Rwiza argues that "the dichotomy between the formation of conscience and the actual life experienced by a considerable number of Christians in Africa today is a crucial moral and pastoral challenge."[198] Rwiza acknowledges that the state of conscience in Africa today "indicates the necessity and urgency of working towards the formation of Christian conscience not only in what we generally refer to as the African city but also in rural areas of Africa."[199] Part of the reason scholars like Rwiza and others think Africans need formation of conscience is to enable them to cope with the "rapid changes taking place in African society today, the introduction and experimentation with new forms of political, economic and social life, many people are confused and uncertain, looking for authoritarian instruction and guidance."[200] According to Clement Majawa, people in African countries such as Kenya are in dire need of "good values and integrity to ensure adherence to democratic

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[198] Richard N. Rwiza, *Formation of Christians Conscience in Modern Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication, 2001), 11.

[199] Ibid.

[200] D. W. Robinson, "Religion: conscience and guide of society: guiding principles for the new Africa," *Afer* 8, no. 2 (April 1966): 115. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host* (accessed February 18, 2017).

principles."[201] Majawa sees the church, as a divine catalyst, capable of forming

consciences of the people to take part in good politics and public life for the highest

common good. He sees the church as obligated by its religious and prophetic mission to

become the conscience, light, guide and energy that can consolidate the human

community according to the divine principles promoted by the Church's social

doctrine.[202]

Laurenti Magesa and Bènèzet Bujo, both leading African moral theologians,

observe the importance of conscience formation. Magesa argues that unless Christians

participate productively in righteous politics and evangelize the African continent, the

church may ultimately become a passive and irrelevant entity.[203] For Magesa, this means

that the church must engage in building a Christian community that does not allow

politicians to take advantage of the dormant and political naïve context. The church must

ensure that politicians do not make dangerous political decisions that could harm the

church and society. On the question of whether African morality is merely concerned

with physical and external acts, Bujo adds that an African person has a deeply embodied

moral consciousness.[204] As in other traditions such as Christianity, argues Bujo, Africans

recognize the place of conscience and so the reason "taboos are an important step in the

formation of the moral conscience. Their function is to lead people to the formation and

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[201] Clement Chinkambako Abenguni Majawa, "Church as conscience of the state: Christian witness in politics for the transformation of Africa," *Afer* 56, no. 2-3 (June 2014): 151. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host* (accessed February 18, 2017).

[202] Ibid., 151.

[203] Laurenti Magesa, *Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 21.

[204] Bènèzet Bujo, *African Christian Morality at the age of Inculturation* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1989), 98.

interiorization of ethical norms."[205] Interiorization of ethical norms is important because whereas African morality is communitarian, it gives space to individual interiority and interiorization of communitarian norms and values. This communitarian dimension stems from the fact that African societies put more stress on the group than on the individuals. Relationship, argues Elochukwu Uzukwu, "is not simply a way in which the subject may realize itself. It is the essential element of "personhood." The quality of a person is dependent on the intensity of maintaining these relationships."[206] When it comes to decision making, an individual cannot make a decision without listening to each other.[207] The communitarian ethos invites individuals to listen to each other for purposes of showing concern for wellbeing of one another in order to advance the common good.[208] In other words, in African ethics, the "conscience" of the community puts more stress on the communion of persons.[209] However, while a collective conscience may serve as a refinement of the personal conscience, there is a danger of conformity for the sake of doing what the community requires. In effect, this danger may occur, especially when the whole community or ethnic group has an erroneous conscience.

The advantage, though, about African communitarian ethics is that it can enhance life by promoting the life of all people in the community. But the weakness of this ethics

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[205] Bénézet Bujo, "Can morality be Christian in Africa?," *Theology Digest* 36, (September 1989): 211.

[206] Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1996), 37.

[207] Bénézet Bujo, *The Ethical Dimension of Community: The African Model and the Dialogue Between North and South* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 75.

[208] Gyekye, *Tradition and Modern*, 42.

[209] Ibid.

results from the fact that it is often limited to the known other. In other words, the idea of the person and relatedness is only limited to blood ties or among people belonging to the same ethnic community. People belonging to other ethnic communities or tribes or even other nationalities may not be treated like those within one's ethnic community. The mutual relationship existing between people of the same community may vary when it comes to people from other communities. This is evidenced by the fact that each community has its own religious codifications, practices, and taboos. As such, the idea of the human person, relatedness, and ethnicized consciences needs to be given a boost to take it beyond mere blood ties to a universal vision. As we shall discuss later in this study, this boost can be given through formation of conscience as a pastoral strategy to expand human imagination needed to ensure peace and justice for all.

Formation of conscience is significant in developing a moral life that necessitates promotion of the common good and fullness of life across ethnic lines. Actions informed by conscience can help people to avoid acting for the sake of fulfilling narrow ethnicized communitarian ethics meant to ensure the survival of a particular ethnic group. In response to such a narrow moral imagination, this study proposes the formation of the total person in both spiritual and physical dimensions since both of them are indispensable as people grow in life. In places like Kenya, people whose conscience has been corrupted by the ethnic consciences, which are less concerned about the welfare of others, need to be empowered to be able to weigh up different courses of action, and see which accord or do not accord with the eternal law of God placed in their hearts. Making such conscientious decisions would build a humane society. Kenyans would greatly benefit from such an approach if applied to all issues including sociopolitical ones

currently clouded by ethnicized perspectives threatening national peace and security. As emphasized in this study, what humanity needs today in order to make responsible choices in a complex contemporary society is an inner illumination or insight. Empowering people to resist exclusive approaches to what is good means forming them to understand and commit to life as a moral good and respect the responsibility to protect and enhance its quality. For Kenyans, committing to such a life implies always examining ethnicized consciences in light of a broad range of values and virtues that are present in various traditions including the Christian tradition.

3.5 Conclusion

Conscience is the principle means of guiding decision making and human action. A well-formed conscience guides people's decisions and ensures that they are not made based on immature and corrupted conscience. As a judgment of reason, conscience helps individuals and groups of people to recognize the moral quality of a concrete act. As a result, formation of conscience becomes critical in expanding people's moral imagination to realize the right and duties of conscience. The building, therefore, of a reasonable and collective sociopolitical conscience in ethnically divided societies like Kenya should involve formation of conscience. That process is essential in developing a moral life that necessitates promotion of the common good and fullness of life across ethnic lines. As we shall examine in the following chapter, the church is imbued with "facilities and methodologies that, if used well, can have a great impact on the conscience of men and women in society."[210] One such way of using such facilities and methodologies, as discussed in the next chapter, is through a liberative ecclesiological approach founded on

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[210] Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa," 167.

the formation of conscience. This study suggests that this ecclesiology can empower the Kenyan people to develop a collective consciousness needed to replace the current narrow ethnicized conscience focused on ensuring the survival of an individual or a particular ethnic group.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS A LIBERATIVE ECCLESIOLOGY FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN KENYA

"The nature of religion imbues it with facilities and methodologies that, if used well, can have a great impact on the conscience of men and women in society and transform them to be peacemakers in their everyday life. This is the only way in which peacemaking can become a way of life."[211]

So far we have considered how the problem of tribalism, negative ethnicity, injustice, and violence in Kenya has contributed to deformation of conscience. We have also discussed how formation of conscience can help to renew moral imagination and reawaken the moral endowment inherent in every human being. In order to appreciate this capacity of conscience formation more deeply, this chapter will present a new ecclesiology that can impact on the conscience of men and women to be peacemakers. The proposed liberative ecclesiological approach based on the formation of conscience integrates both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to social change. But in order to benefit from the potential of that ecclesiology, the Kenyan church must transcend the current top-down approach focused on issuance of ecclesiastical pronouncements, declarations, and press statements. The characteristics of this ecclesiology, as discussed below, include expanding moral imagination through telling and sharing stories and myths, and historicizing the formation of conscience in the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) through educational and formational programs.

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[211] Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa," 167.

4.1 A Liberative Ecclesiology: An Integrated Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approach

In this study, the purpose for exploring a liberative ecclesiology is to understand the church in view of setting forth the kind of mission, ministry and the role of the church needed in a place like Kenya. By using the two concepts of liberation and ecclesiology, this study seeks to demonstrate that Kenyans want a kind of Church that can "illuminate the living relationship between revelation and history."[212] In other words, the kind of church, which can expand people's freedoms and social imaginations to liberate themselves from sociopolitical and economic problems.

A liberative ecclesiology can foster such social agents because of its unique and multifaceted approach; an integrated top-down and bottom-up approach to issues of social justice. The point in this discussion is that the demarcation line between the top-down and the bottom-up approach must be guardedly maintained. This is because these two approaches to social justice are mutually complementary and reinforce one another. In light of the Kenyan situation, the bottom-up approach complements the old top-down pastoral strategy to social justice. Bottom-up approach is best placed to build a collective conscience needed by Kenyans to transcend negative ethnicity and intertribal clashes or conflicts. But the use of the top-down approach manifested by ecclesiastical pronouncements, though effective especially in a society that is already socio-politically stable, is unrealistic and ineffective particularly in situations which are highly stratified ethnically, socially, economically, and politically. The bottom-up approach resonates with the synodal structure of the Church. This upside down pyramid of the church

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[212] Ela, *African Cry*, 31.

involves giving priority to the voice of the laity. This means ensuring that all the church councils and consultative bodies remain connected to the grassroots for purposes of being able to listen to the faithful. The second level of this pyramid involves the church leadership including priests and religious men and women listening to each other. The last level of this pyramid should be listening to the Pope, the supreme pontiff. This is to ensure that the body of Christ acts only with and under the Pope.

4.1.1 A Time for a Bottom-Up Approach to Social Justice in Kenya

A Bottom-up approach focuses on changing individual attitudes and behaviors. This approach is founded on the assumption that re-establishing order and harmony in society requires a renewal of a human or Christian spirit or virtuous life. This approach is fitting to religious institutions because it can enhance the church's role in moral renovation, service in teaching the precepts of the Gospel and in seeking to bind class to class in friendliness and good understanding. It can be used to strengthen people's interior courage and moral capacity to face the status quo when necessary. As we shall soon discuss in more detail, strengthening interior courage and moral capacity means expanding an individual's moral imagination. This moral imagination is necessary to help individuals focus not only on the eradication of structural injustice, but also on their personal conversion and true repentance through promotion and practice of social change.

How a liberative ecclesiology can help foster integration of individual behavior and structural changes in theory but also in practice is our concern in this chapter. One such method is promoting a simultaneous top-down and bottom-up approach to justice and peace by helping the church to exercise its public role by not just giving "public pronouncements" but by participating "in the formation of the public conscience that

effects social practice."[213] This two-way approach can be reflected in the way in which both the public or religious leaders and the masses mutually engage actively in transforming society. One such way is if the church ensures that its social teachings are removed from the high levels of doctrinal pronouncements and are used as resources to shape individual and group conscience. When the people's conscience is well-formed, they would be able to challenge an ethic that seeks to exploit, marginalize, discriminate on the basis of tribe, oppress, and dehumanize the least. In order to correct that questionable ethic, a liberative ecclesiological approach should carry out the formation of conscience of the public, and where necessary, to influence the formation of public policy. Focusing only on preaching about God's righteousness is not enough to prepare the foundation for social transformation.[214] Thus social transformation requires that faith be translated into action. The same view – essentially an echo of Tarimo – is expressed in William Bausch, when it is contended that "a faith that does not relate to action is bankrupt and plays into the hands of the oppressors."[215]

Kenya needs a faith translatable into action. Such a faith is important in mobilizing a collective response to many social problems affecting the people. The task of a liberative ecclesiology is, therefore, that of empowering Kenyans to be critical of re-introduction of the old "big-man" culture of African politics. This kind of leadership fitted traditional African political organization comprised of chiefs, kings and queens who controlled small territories and were accountable to traditional mechanisms for

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[213] Aquiline Tarimo, *Ethnicity, Citizenship and State in Eastern Africa* (Bamenda: Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group, 2011), 98.

[214] Ibid.

[215] William J. Bausch, *The Christian Parish: Whispers of the Risen Christ* (Notre Dame, IN.: Fides/Claretian, 1980), 180.

checking power. Forming Kenyans to reexamine their loyalty to ethnic chiefs purporting to be national leaders is important if Kenya is to make the kind of progress needed by all Kenyans. Such a critical political learning is needed to help Kenyans embrace bold political holiness capable of building "a community that transcends national and ethnic boundaries, to be a paradigm for society, and to serve the community."[216]

An integrated approach used by a liberative ecclesiology appreciates the fact that each social group has its own particular role to play in order to keep society functioning smoothly. A true societal transformation cannot happen without participation of various kinds of capacities and the playing of many parts. It is a political game that allows each individual in society to choose the part which peculiarly suits his or her case. The power of such an approach was witnessed in Latin America where Catholic Bishops and theologians viewed social change in more broad-based and participatory terms, with the poor emerging as the central agents of social change.[217] The strengths of this broad-based and participatory approach lie in the fact that it empowers the poor to participate in the construction of a new society. It places the poor and the marginalized as the central architects of their own liberation. In the same manner, a liberative ecclesiology can create the capacity and space for each member in the Kenyan society to be a central architect of his or her own liberation. While seeking to empower the poor, it can ensure that elites, political leaders, religious leaders, and those with more education, are not excused from

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[216] Emily J. Choge, "The Pilgrim Motif and the Role of the Church in Kenya in Politics," in *Religion and Politics in Africa,* ed. Peter I. Gichure and Daine B. Stinton (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2008), 111.

[217] For more on the Latin American Liberation theology movement and how it influenced Costa Rica, see Dana Sawchuk, *The Costa Rican Catholic Church, Social Justice, and the Rights of Workers, 1979-1996* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2004).

their responsibility to assume the struggle of the poor as well as fomenting structural change in society.

4.2 Expanding Moral Imagination as the Basis of Peace and Justice in Kenya

Moral imagination is a human ability to imagine how the ideal can be realized. That power is embedded in all human beings. It is a key distinctive feature differentiating man from an ape. In more recent times, this idea of moral imagination has been used to refer to the capacity for envisioning a new mode of existence in the midst of serious social problems. For example, while talking about the work of peace-building during his Nobel Lecture in 2009, Barack Obama observed that "I do not believe that we will have the will, the determination, the staying power, to complete this work without something more – and that's the continued expansion of our moral imagination."[218] Another ardent believer of the same power of moral imagination is John Paul Lederach, a renowned scholar considered internationally as a peacemaking guru. Lederach defines moral imagination as a creative and artistic act with "the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist."[219] What "does not yet exist", especially in the Kenyan context, is a collective and inclusive consciousness. Achieving such a consciousness, implies that the church and her partners work towards expanding people's moral imaginations to go beyond the

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[218] Barack H. Obama, "A Just and Lasting Peace,*" Nobel Peace Prize Lecture* (Oslo City Hall, December 10, 2009). The kind of work Obama is talking about in this section is the great need to bring about a just and lasting peace through making agreements among nations, building strong institutions, promoting human rights and investing in development. Obama defines these issues as the vital ingredients in bringing about a just and lasting peace in the world.

[219] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.

traditional parameters of the existing cultural norms entrenching ethnic consciousness so as to imagine other possible responses to others' rights in need of respect and recognition.

Inability to imagine other possibilities necessary to transcend narrow consciences may lead to violence and conflicts in society. Tarimo Aquiline attributes some African's inability to imagine other possibilities and deterioration of moral imagination to "the breakdown of value systems."[220] He argues that reconstruction of society experiencing deterioration of value systems must be supported by values communicated through various institutions committed to the construction of communities.[221] Part of the value systems that used to mold, to form, to raise up persons in all aspects of include the *ipvunda* process among the Chagga in Tanzania.[222] This process and many other across the continent used to provide education for life, which helped to mold the interior of the person for them to acquire positive human dispositions and education for living. The ipvunda process goes on throughout one's life in various forms, which include everyday interaction, teachable moments, and through specific rites. For Lederach, we can transcend such kinds of situations or consciences by forging "the capacity to generate, mobilize, and build the moral imagination."[223] Lederach argues that the moral imagination enables us "to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without

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[220] Aquiline Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2005), 61.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Raymond Sambili Mosha, The Heartbeat of Indegenous Africa: A Study of the Chagga Educational System (New York: Garland, 2000), 18.

[223] Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 5.

reliance on dualistic polarity."[224] The capacity to imagine the presence and value of other

human beings in society relates to the moral imagination's quality of transcendence. That

quality of transcendence should bring about possibilities that are unimaginable in the

current ethnically divided Kenya.

4.2.1 Expanding Moral Imagination through Stories

With time, the story and philosophy of "divide in order to rule" was inculturated

into a philosophy of "ethnic eating". As remarked by Koigi Wa Wamwere, in a country

such as Kenya where millions are starving, you do not hear leaders asking themselves,

"with what shall we feed all our people?" Instead, you hear ethnic leaders saying, "The

national cow is ours to eat alone."[225] In light of this historical consciousness, one must

examine the kind of existing stories continuing to construct and inspire African people.

With regard to the Kenyan situation, one may wonder, upon which story is Kenya and the

construction of Kenya imagined and imaged? Laurenti Magesa, asks, while referring to

the construction of Africa as a whole: "Are they stories of identity, transformation and

integration, or are they ones of imitation, greed, and factionalism?" [226]

What is being manifested by the problem of negative ethnicity in Kenya is the

symptom of a country's structure and institutions founded on stories of factionalism and

division. For Emmanuel Katongole, a Ugandan ethicist, a counter-story concerning "who

we are, and who we are capable of becoming, depends very much on the stories we tell,

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[224] Ibid.

[225] Wamwere, *Negative Ethnicity,* 63. See also Michela Wrong, *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010).

[226] Laurenti Magesa, "The Hague and Christian moral imagination: theological-ethical implications of the ICC," *Afer* 56, no. 1 (March 2014): 18, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed February 28, 2017).

the stories we listen to, and the stories we live."[227] Katongole suggests that for contexts such as Africa, stories qualify as perfect transformative strategies for expanding people's moral and social imagination because "they not only shape our values, aims, and goals; they define the range of what is desirable and what is possible."[228] As he emphasizes, "Stories, therefore, are not simply fictional narratives meant for our entertainment."[229] In essence, stories, especially in Africa, are used to communicate and reach the hidden reality.

Since time immemorial, stories in African cultures have been, and continue to be, means of teaching morals and values of the society, especially to children.[230] Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones avers accordingly that "Africans use stories to tell about the ancestors, guide morality, teach about the gods, and keep the whole African society open to the spirits; they use stories to welcome new possibilities and to be on guard against the evils of life."[231] Stories, argues Katongole, "are part of our social ecology. They are embedded in us and form the very heart of our cultural, economic, religious, and political worlds."[232] These stories, which can be in the form of parables, proverbs, idioms, or metaphors, are often told by grandparents. Traditional African societies relied on this power of storytelling to educate and regulate life in the villages.

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[227] Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa,* 2.

[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid.

[230] James Nkansah-Obrempong, *Foundations for African Theological Ethics* (Carlisle: Langham Preaching Resources, 2013), 24.

[231] Mark Francisco Bozzuti-Jones, *Informed by Faith: A Spiritual Handbook for Christian Educators and Parents* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, U.S., 2004), 11.

[232] Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa,* 2.

In contemporary Africa, however, some of these means of teaching, instructing, and eliciting proper conduct have been eroded by modernity and the breakdown of value systems. Rwiza observed that due to modernity, "the norms and values which traditionally used to safeguard the African family are no longer effective in the culture of modernity in which the focus has radically changed from the communitarian sphere of marriage to a more nuclear family of husband, wife and their children."[233] As a result, some African traditional values that enhance the quality of life for all have been subjected to a remarkable transformation and in some situations have even been washed away.

Yet, it is undoubtedly true that stories are essential in imagining a new story and a new future. In the practical case of Kenya, the new story that can construct and inspire Kenya needs to focus on enhancing the fullness of life of every individual in society. This is the kind of a story that can expand the moral imagination of Kenyans. Stories are effective in this process because they are capable of penetrating into the heart and conscience of the people. Their educative power can infuse people with the moral sense to overcome evil through self-transformation. If incorporated as strategies of forming consciences, stories can enhance social relationships with substantive values of social interaction. They can shape social relationships because they can speak and penetrate the domain of the internal world, the perceptions and the inner understandings. That is how they are influential in constructing the story of fullness of life through empowering the mind with the capacity to interpret human relationships. From a liberative ecclesiology, telling stories as a means of participating in the process of overcoming factionalism,

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[233] Rwiza, *Formation of Christian Conscience,* 32.

negative ethnicity, and violence can refocus Christian social ethics in fostering the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating a just and peaceful Kenya.

To attend to the task of building a new Kenya, the focus of social ethics must be in developing the inner workings of a nation, myths and visions, and imagining new experiments in social life. Much has been done by the church and the civil society in the area of proposing technical strategies and best practices on how to fix broken institutions.

Now is the time to tell the story which reflects the new Kenya and helps the people to become the story itself. This story is not meant for experts, those perceived to be the only social agents, and professionals, but for "storytellers who are able to offer people better stories than the ones they live by."[234] Part of the problem Kenya is facing is caused by stories created by other people for their own selfish interests. Kenya needs a story that reflects its African identity and reality. Within the church, these stories must reflect the same elements and the Christian principle of love. The entire Bible is a collection of stories. These biblical stories should be expounded within the existential realities. For example, they can be Africanized by giving them African faces to bring them closer home. With the help of such stories and those borrowed from the African tradition, the church can engage the Kenyan community to rediscover the flaws in its founding story and then forge a sociopolitical framework on which to construct a new Kenyan community. Only then can the church challenge some Kenyans retrogressive imaginations shaped by ethnic consciences. A liberative ecclesiology should therefore help to create an alternative imagination by creating and telling stories of "epic

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[234] Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa,* 61.

dimensions, stories that invite their hearers to participate and become part of the drama that extends beyond one's small world." [235]

An alternative story will broaden people's "small worlds" to imagine and draw them into adventures beyond their ethnic communities, ethnicized politics, and political parties. But these stories must be about the common good. Only such stories can mediate transcendence and so offer hope and purpose for one's life.[236] In this whole project of telling an alternative story, the church is called to be the community and space through which a compelling story – a story about the why and what – is told. The church must channel such a story in a bid to nurture an inquisitive capacity that explores and interacts constructively with the complexity of the relationships and realities that face humanity in any sociopolitical setting.[237] It is in fact through this mode of formation "that the church in Africa is able to provide a compelling counter-narrative and interruption to the forms of modernity that readily sacrifice Africa."[238] That is the way in which the church can reinvent itself as a concrete social imagination. The church, as a story itself shaped by the story of God revealed in Scripture, should provide Kenyans with a way to interpret and engage negative ethnicity and ethnicized politics.

Stories and myths can be used to build intuition of the church from below. The possibility to nurture and build such a church, as observed in previous chapters, emerge from the view that moral imagination lies within us as a dormant seed of potential. As such, the church can exploit such potential by providing the space and structure upon

[235] Ibid., 79.

[236] Ibid.

[237] Lederach, *The Moral Imagination*, 29.

[238] Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa,* 131.

which this seed can be nurtured. A liberative ecclesiology can do so by searching, telling, and using stories capable of freeing the ethnicized conscience of some Kenyans responsible for perpetuating injustice and violence. This task is possible if the church avoids focusing only on making public and ecclesiastical pronouncements but invests in programs that can enable people to listen to the inner voice, recognizing and exploring a variety of ways of knowing, interpreting, and touching reality. Some of the existing structures that can be used by both the laity and the church hierarchy through collective efforts to tell stories include catechism to children, religious education in schools, parish Catholic Justice and Peace Commissions, and other educational programs for men and women. If well re-thought and re-imagined, storytelling can expand people's moral capacity to spark turning points and transcendence in settings of ethnic divisions. SCCs, as elaborated in the following section, can be very instrumental in realizing this transformative agenda.

4.3 SCCs as the Locus for a Liberative Ecclesiology

As we look at the experience of the early Church, what comes out is how the household church initiated by the disciples of Jesus, gave rise to the household (small or neighborhood) church that provided the basic structure of early Christian communities.[239] This model of Church continued until the fourth century when Christians under Constantine gained freedom of worship. In contemporary society, these SCCs continue to grow and spread in different cultural settings. SCCs have shown their unique ecclesiological reality based on a particular type of SCC bearing a special pastoral

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[239] Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century,* rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 11.

significance recognized in Latin American, Asian and African parish churches as a new way of being Church.[240]

4.3.1 A Brief Historical Development of the SCCs

The development of these SCCs can be traced back to Brazil in the 1950s, where they emerged basically as a result of pastoral needs. At first, they were not gatherings necessarily for the celebration of the sacraments, rather Christians gathered on their own without a priest or deacon to pray, read and share the Bible together as a small community of believers.[241] Christians reflected on the Bible through the lens of their daily life experiences. The Bible was used to enlighten and guide the best faith-based response to human life. By the end of 1980, basic ecclesial communities had spread through much of Latin America. The emergence of basic ecclesial communities in the Latin American church happened in the period preceding Vatican II. The key push factor was the pastoral concern for a church, which is accessible and closer to the people of God. But while this was going on in Latin America, the church in African was engaged in similar, yet unique, ways of making "the Church more "African" and close to the people."[242] Evidence of this pastoral need and plan to concretize the church first appeared in 1961, when the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Bishops' Conference approved

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[240] John Paul Vandenakker, *Small Christian Communities and the Parish: an Ecclesiological Analysis of the North American Experience* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1994), xii.

[241] Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: a People Called and Sent (Theology in Global Perspectives)* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 122.

[242] Joseph G. Healey, "Small Christian Communities (SCCs) as Domestic Church in the Context of African Ecclesiology," in *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa*, ed. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), 93.

a pastoral plan to promote "Living Base Communities" (which came to be known as

Small Christian Communities)."[243]

African bishops saw SCCs as pastorally instrumental for the formation of a

genuine African church that would nonetheless maintain harmony with the Church's true

and authentic spirit. Some African Episcopal Conferences most notably the Association

of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA), encouraged and

supported the formation of SCCs as the most effective pastoral means to localize and

incarnate the Church.[244] Members of SCCs would gather at their parishes for the Sunday

Eucharist and then attend weekly meetings in homes or villages to study the Gospel and

to pray together. According to the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*,

the African Synod of Bishops affirmed the irreplaceable role of vital Christian

communities such as SCCs in realizing the church as the family of God. The Synod

Fathers "recognized that the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church

unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster human relationships."[245]

The African Synod of Bishops envisioned SCCs defined by engagement in:

> [E]vangelizing themselves, so that they can bring the Good News to others; they
> should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's Word,
> encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an
> ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel.
> Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for

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[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

[245] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* no. 89, (14 September, 1995), accessed December 10, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html

everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity of clans, tribes or other interest groups.[246]

This image of the church-as-family of God resonated perfectly well with African culture, especially the notion of familyhood founded on values such as care for others, relationship, community, communion, and trust. It equally resonated with the heritage of Scripture and Tradition presented in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. Concerning the challenge of peace, polarizing politics and negative ethnicity threatening peace in parts of the African continent, the African Synod of Bishops recommended this model as the best "to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different groups, favouring the particular Churches, without ethnic considerations."[247]

Some African theologians have continued to explore the riches of this model of the church-as-family of God. For Bénézet Bujo, the source of this basic ecclesiology is the "Negro-African sense of the large family which includes even cousins, distant cousins and can go as far as to integrate friends and acquaintances; yes even the dead are part of it."[248] Bujo places the essence of this model to the African sense of community and solidarity. The same communitarian ethic and spirit has been attributed to the emergence of social dimensions behind the development of the 1950s African socialism such as *Ujamaa* in Tanzania, *Humanism* in Zambia, negritude in Senegal, and *consciencism* in Ghana.[249] Embedded in these philosophies and ideologies are communitarian elements

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[246] Ibid., no. 89.

[247] Ibid., no. 63.

[248] Bénézet Bujo, *Christmas: God Becomes Man in Black Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1995), 52.

[249] *Ujamaa* was the vision of Tanzania's first president, Julius Nyerere. *Ujamaa* is a Swahili concept that stands for "familyhood" or "Socialism". For Nyerere, the notion means "familyhood and an attitude of the mind that is needed to ensure people care for each other's welfare". For more on this basis of

now defining the African model of Church-as-Family of God. Even Leopold Senghor located the genesis of these communitarian elements and family sense not within the "household but the sum of all persons, living and dead, who acknowledge a common ancestor."[250]

4.3.2 SCCs as the Locus for Promoting Peace and Justice in Kenya

SCCs, therefore, provide a social network where creative, real and liberative stories can be told and shared. Even though limited since they are existent only in the Catholic Church, SCCs offer opportunities and foundations for social change. As a domestic community of faith in the society, SCCs offer forums where the church can inspire a social consciousness necessary to establish "authentic justice and the condition for a durable peace."[251] Building this consciousness and moral imagination is possible through formation for the change of hearts and minds to embrace and promote peace, justice and reconciliation. The possibility for SCCs to spark moral imagination and so be agents of social change in Africa was acknowledged by the 2009 African Synod. The synod noted the ability of SCCs to build peace in each member of the "Body of Christ" within a particular Christian community. In *Instrumentum Laboris* of the 2009 Second African Synod, the bishops affirmed the potential of SCCs to take up initiatives for reconciliation within the Christian communities wounded and heartbroken by conflicts.

African socialism, see Julius Kambarage Nyerere, ed., "Ujamaa: The Basis of Africa Socialism," *Freedom and Unity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

[250] Leopold S. Senghor, *Prose and Poetry*, trans. J. Reed & C. Wake (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 43.

[251] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 62.

By using the model of family, the document presents the church as a place where lay animators can offer servant-leadership that can assist members of the SCCs to grow in their faith and so get involved in initiatives for reconciliation and building a much more just and peaceful society.[252] The African Synod of Bishops noted how a new and profound evangelization is capable of building a human family bonded by the love of Jesus Christ. Part of the reason this document of *Instrumentum Laboris* is emphatic on using SCCs to promote peace and justice is really because even by mid 1990s, SCCs were still focused on devotional and sacramental life. The stress on such life rendered it less transformative. Yet, there are few examples, as demonstrated at the end of this chapter, which show how SCCs have not only provided leadership in times of crisis but have also proved to be effective agents of peace and justice in unstable sociopolitical situations.

SCCs are an ideal starting point in creating a peace-loving human family in Kenya. In this vein, John Dear argues that "nonviolence thrives in the soil of community as we come together to pray, study and reflect so that we can live and practice nonviolence in the world of violence."[253] By coming together as a collective bound by the Gospel values, the SCC expresses Christ ministering in and through a small community with a potential of radiating the peace, unity and love of Christ to the world.[254] Regular

[252] Second Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris:* The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, no. 93, accessed April 19, 2016, htt://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents.

[253] John Dear, *The God of Peace: Toward a Theology of Nonviolence* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2005), 173.

[254] Gerald K. Tanye, *The Church-as-family and Ethnocentrism in Sub-Saharan Africa* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 383. See also Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21st Century*, Rev. ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2003), 267.

meetings and praying together build a community conscious of human dignity. Meeting to share daily life struggles and hurts provides members of the community a sense of accompaniment in their suffering. For countries like Kenya, a liberative ecclesiology can help SCCs to provide social capital and accompaniment "in a field hospital after battle", to use Pope Francis words. As "a field hospital" in itself, the SCC should be the first, in Pope Francis words, "to reach out to needy families, broken homes, to the homeless, and to the marginalized and those on the periphery of society."[255] Pope Francis alludes further to this type of a liberative ecclesiology when he said "the thing the Church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful" by accompanying those at the margins of society.[256]

A liberative ecclesiology can enhance an awareness to help SCCs to see the mission to promote peace, justice, and reconciliation as God-given. Many Christians continue to perceive the mission of promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation as a responsibility of the bishops and priests. To some extent, the church bears responsibility for making people, especially the poor who are suffering, to perceive that the work of fighting against injustice is the duty of those in the church hierarchy. For these kinds of situations, a liberative ecclesiology can help the poor by emphasizing their duty and mobilizing them to work for justice and to change unjust structures. Therefore, a liberative ecclesiology should help the poor, the "crucified people," participate

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[255] See Pope Francis, Interview with *America Magazine*, September 19, 2013

[256] Francis, Interview with *America Magazine.*

collectively in social justice.[257] Involving the "crucified people" – the poor, "the have-nots" and the destitute – bearing the brunt of marginalization, ethnicized politics and negative ethnicity will enable them recognize their potential to transform society. Like "the haves", "the have-nots" also embody genuinely humanizing values, which present an invitation to renounce the dehumanizing distortions of an unjust world. As such, it is illogical to subject them to a state of waiting "in the hope of hearing words of deliverance" from bishops and priests.[258]

Thus, although church leaders, such as bishops and priests, have a duty, as a modern day St. Athanasius, St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom, to speak against injustice, their initiatives should always involve the whole Church. In other words, the whole Christian community should be involved in the formulation and implementation of pastoral letters and other ecclesiastical pronouncements. This calls the church in Africa to change its old and exclusive pastoral strategies as Elias Omondi Opongo argues. Opongo urges that the new trend of conflict and social injustices in Africa demands that the church takes a more proactive approach to addressing the challenges the continent faces.[259] He observes that the current pastoral strategy that aims to raise awareness of specific issues of social concern, calling on the people to act in response to the message of the pastoral letters, dissemination of the pastoral letters, and engagement with

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[257] Ignacio Ellacuría, "The Crucified People," in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, eds. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, trans. Philip Berryman and Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 580-603.

[258] Ela, *African Cry*, 77.

[259] See Elias Omondi Opongo, "An Ecclesiology for Africa in Distress: Time to Change Our Pastoral Strategy," in *The Church We Want: Foundations, Theology and Mission of the Church in Africa*, ed. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015), 271-282.

governments, is ineffective.[260] His suggestion is that a pastoral strategy that integrates

social science methods and includes the people of God in discourses related to social

change is necessary.

For Kenya, a liberative ecclesiology should promote a pastoral strategy needed to

nurture a peace-loving generation through building a culture of peace, justice, and

reconciliation. This strategy should use a distinctively African model of SCCs, which is

scattered like African villages across the country. It ought to be an all-inclusive church,

where both the hierarchy and the laity collaborate in the mission to build the Kingdom of

God. One way of building that kingdom is by developing a manual with alternative

stories capable of expanding the people's moral imagination. These stories must give

witness to the theology of embrace, which is rooted in the early Church which modeled

the community-life of God because of its peace-loving martyrs.[261]

As the locus of a liberative ecclesiology, the SCCs can foster a unified force,

collaboration and peace building environment that could influence diverse members

united by a common belief to break free from tribalism and walls of separation

threatening peace and harmony in Kenya. If rooted in their shared faith, these

communities have the potential to make peace and so fight against any form of injustice

without resorting to violence.[262] When conflicts and disputes arise, argues Joseph Healey,

SCC members can "use a palaver style of conversation, discussion and dialogue to

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[260] Ibid., 272-274.

[261] Dear, *The God of Peace,* 174.

[262] Ibid., 175.

resolve the problems."[263] This palaver style of conversation is unique because of its use of African symbols and signs and songs, stories, myths, role plays and skits.

In the African setting and literature on ethics, palaver is used to refer to dialogue or conversation. During the conversation, members of the community would exercise an active voice in examining and determining the viability of particular issues. The aim of this conversation is to "search for a community-forming word."[264] According to Gabriel Mmassi, the "word" is the concept that enjoys a prominent place in the African setting of palaver.[265] Africans see the "word" as something dynamic that has power to give life and so re-create community. Since this is what word can do, then there is an immense challenge to the Kenyan church in rediscovering this metaphor. Given the way in which the ethnicized conscience has emasculated the power of word by excluding or mistreating people from other ethnic groups, SCCs can re-create, reinvent or replace palavers by mirroring fairness, peace, justice and life-giving communication. By so doing, the church will be able to use the power of word, through life-giving stories and narratives imagined by the Christian community as a whole, to build peace loving communities.

4.3.3 SCCs as Agents of Social Change: The Case of St. Joseph the Worker Parish

When the 2007/8 post-election violence erupted, thousands of SCCs in urban and rural areas were affected. People who have been living together, praying as a community,

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[263] Joseph G. Healey, *Building the Church as Family of God: Evaluation of Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa,* 1st ed. (Nairobi, Kenya: CUEA Press, 2012), 191. The idea of palaver style of conversation constitutes a community gathering or meeting for decision-making and problem solving through conversation and discussion. Its approach or process for moral discernment is communitarian.

[264] Gabriel Mmassi, "Palaver: Church Leadership in Africa," *AFER* 52, no. 2-3 (June – September 2010), 180.

[265] Ibid.

and sharing food now found themselves either fighting against their neighbors or running away from being targeted by their neighbors. However, some communities and people in places like Kangemi in Nairobi, argues Healey, rose above the crisis. Healey observes that:

> Some SCCs in Kenya became effective local tribunals to mediate tribal and ethnic conflicts. A three member mediation team was formed in St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi in Nairobi Archdiocese. First, a member of St. Augustine SCC visited all 28 SCCs in the parish during a three month period to learn where the conflicts existed. The team itself came from three different SCCs and was a mixed group consisting of two men and one woman – one Kamba, one Kikuyu and one Luyia. They visited the specific SCCs that had the conflicts to promote the healing of their ethnic tensions and promote reconciliation and peace. The team especially encouraged the SCC members to talk about their problems and feelings. Later members of five SCCs participated in a mass in the parish hall to offer thanksgiving for the reconciliation and peace that had taken place. Up until today peace and harmony continue among the SCC members.[266]

These communities managed to rise above the crisis by refusing to be divided along ethnic lines. Christian communities mobilized their members to resist being pitted against one another over issues of tribes and ethnicized political parties. SCCs in St. Joseph the Worker parish used their meetings before and after violence to share their struggles, fears, feelings and how they can remain united as a Christian community. As a result, the parish formed the aforementioned team of three representing the Christian community. A few of the members of the SCCs that were affected received spiritual and material support. Members of the SCCs discussed together the evils of negative ethnicity and exclusiveness and how they could resolve their differences together. This example of unity and collective consciousness witnessed in Kangemi reflects the sense of being

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[266] Ibid., 188. This account narrated by Joseph Healey is based on Simon Rurinjah's conversation with him in Nairobi, Kenya on August 28, 2012 and various presentations in the SCCs Class at Tangaza University College.

church. Furthermore, there exist across the continent such inspiring and positive stories about SCCs which are undocumented. How these kinds of stories can be documented and used as mechanisms for formation of conscience is the concern of this ecclesiology.

4.4 Strategies for a Liberative Ecclesiology

How then can we enhance the formation of conscience given its significance in expanding individuals' moral imagination to free themselves from the chains of negative ethnicity of which Kenya is in dire need? How can a liberative ecclesiology form people to know how to discern constructive action and the common good? For Christians, this discernment must be guided by Gospel values. The People of God will be better able to apply a moral conscience to their citizenship responsibilities if they are adequately taught, formed and trained in the love of God. The following are some strategies that a liberative ecclesiology will use to form and inform the conscience of the Kenyans, so that they may become more faithful witnesses to peace and justice.

Integrating social justice into the SCCs weekly meetings and activities: The bottom-up approach of a liberative ecclesiology teaches SCCs to integrate devotional life with social activism. To neglect social activism in favor of sacramental and devotional life is ignoring the Christian prophetic duty. The SCCs weekly meetings need to be integrated with a deep social analysis of the social, political and economic issues affecting the community. The best presentation of the meaning and practice of social analysis is contained in the book by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. Henriot and Holland observe that social analysis is "simply an extension of the principle of discernment, moving from the personal realm to the social

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realm."[267] The social analysis offers individuals with abilities to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its structural and historical relations. Through social analysis, members of SCCs will acquire the tools to create a better world or community for the glory of God. These tools will enable them to discern all the factors involved in a social problem so that right responses may be chosen. Resources for this kind of formation include wisdom and stories from the Scripture, African tradition, Catholic Social Teachings, and the catechism. However, the success of this type of formation must take into account collaboration with different actors in society. Furthermore, it should insist on the conversion and expansion of human imagination as necessary conditions for the transformation of the world. Prayers and *lectio divina* (Latin for divine reading) should begin with prayer and end with a catechesis that leads to concrete action.

The Role of the bishops and Priests: To ensure that SCCs engage in politics, the national Bishops' Conference should ensure the following: first, to help and accompany SCCs to go beyond strict-pastoral and spiritually-centered parish meetings to bold initiatives that are outward looking. In collaboration with the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Peace and Justice Commissions (CPJC) in Kenya, leaders of SCCs and their pastors should help parishioners to use, as discussed above, social analysis; the "See", "Judge" and "Act" process in their weekly gatherings. Second, the Conference of Bishops should engage all Christians in the formulation and implementation of pastoral letters. Thirdly, pastoral letters should be written in a language which is accessible to all in the society. Writing pastoral letters using

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[267] Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*, Revised edition (Washington, DC: Centre of Concern, 1980), 13.

convoluted grammar that is inaccessible to the masses will automatically lock out crucial

agents of peace. Pastoral letters and campaigns for peace and justice must reach the

uneducated members of the SCCs bearing the brunt of injustice and political instability.

Lastly, if necessary, bishops, priests, religious men and women, and the laity should

actively participate in political affairs such as protesting and picketing. These

recommendations are crucial in the process to expand the moral imagination of the

Christian community, awakening their consciousness and ultimately become "a sign of

hope for those who live in hopelessness."[268]

 Educational and formational programs: In order to expand peoples' human

imaginations, the church should design educational programs that can cultivate the kind

of Christian citizenship which will help secure Christian values and ideals for the future.

These values and ideals can be instilled through seminars and study groups organized for

different groups of the parish or diocese. Catholic Women Associations, Catholic Men

Associations and children's groups provide ready-made structures which can profitably

make use of such seminars or workshops. These forums should be designed to enhance

social cohesion at the grassroots level so that ethnic identities and cultural diversities can

be appreciated. Pope Benedict XVI emphasized this kind of formation when he noted that

for the lay people to effectively play their role in the church and in society, "it is fitting

that centers of biblical, liturgical and pastoral formation be organized in the dioceses."[269]

He, however, added that in order for lay men and women with responsibility in the

political, economic and social fields to be effective in transforming the world, they

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[268] Ela, *African Cry*, 77.

[269] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, 128.

should be "equipped with a solid knowledge of the Church's social doctrine, which can provide them with principles for acting in conformity with the Gospel."[270] As such, stories shaped by the Church's social doctrine can be used to express fundamental insights about life.

Parental Formation of Conscience: Parents, guardians, teachers, politicians, Christians, members of SCCs and parish communities serve as stewards and designers of a just and peaceful society. In particular, parents and the significant others play a crucial role in the formation of conscience. This happens when children are formed to internalize their parent's expectations for them and when such expectations become embedded in the children's inner life. Formation is about guiding the child's initiatives and energies towards some sense of purpose and direction. For this reason, parental formation must be guided to ensure that children are also equipped with a solid knowledge of the church's social doctrine and a greater sense of the common good. Involving parents in this process of formation of conscience is important because parental formation tends to stay with us throughout our lifetime. Inculcating in the Kenyan's inner life the value of cultural diversity and inclusivity requires parents to emphasize in early formation a rich heritage of both moral and formative directives. Parents and guardians can achieve this by using stories about the common good and respect for human dignity. This is how a child can internalize the parental restrictions which mark the beginning of the formation of conscience.

Even within a Christian context, parents have a duty to educate their children and choose the formative tools that respond to their convictions. The role of parents in the

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[270] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, 128.

development of the Christian conscience or moral persons is irreplaceable, non-delegable and inalienable. The family is the first school of conscience formation. Pope Benedict XVI, in *Africae Munus*, observed that the family is the "sanctuary of life" and a vital cell of society and of the church. It is here that "the features of a people take shape; it is here that its members acquire basic teachings."[271] According to the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, parents have a right to choose the "means that will help them best to fulfill their duty as educators, in the spiritual and religious sphere also."[272] Thus, parents are the primary and original educators of their children. For places like Kenya facing the challenge of negative ethnicity, the church should provide leadership and accompaniment to parents and children. In collaboration with other persons or institutions, the church should create learning moments and spaces for parents to teach their children the importance of respecting human dignity.

Knowledge has to be followed by action: Empowering people to foster the kind of social agents capable of envisioning and creating a just and peaceful society requires two things: the provision of abundant literature and taking social action. First, the church should raise awareness about the situation and call on all to do something within their powers to make the situation better. But this information must be accessible, available, understandable and realistic. In addition to ecclesiastical pronouncements and issuance of pastoral letters, the church leadership in collaboration with the laity should provide and make accessible more tools of advocacy and social change. These tools should be made available on a website that is maintained by or on behalf of the parish, diocese, Catholic

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[271] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, no. 42.

[272] Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), 109, #240.

Justice and Peace Commission, and the Bishop's Conference. Access to the information such as pastoral letters on the website and the ability to obtain hard copies of the information from the website must not be conditional or restricted. Presently in Kenya, it is difficult to access soft copies of past pastoral letters on the Bishops' Conference website or even hard copies at the Paulines Publications Africa, which promotes African authors and church publications in order to foster the inculturation of the Gospel.[273] The only collection of past pastoral letters from 1960 to 1995 edited by Rodrigo Mejia is not even available at the Paulines bookshops in Kenya. Thus, information ought to be available and accessible. But apart from information raising awareness of specific issues of social concern, it should prick the conscience to take social action. Action is necessary because people are given information in order to act on that information – to make improvements.

"The Church needs to be increasingly present in the media": For Pope Benedict XVI, the media can be a force for authentic humanization.[274] The media has the potential to spread the Gospel as well as educating the African peoples to learn reconciliation and promotion of justice and peace. The call for the church to be present comes from the fact that while the media has heralded new opportunities for political engagement, it also has been abused and used to spread hate speech and inciting violence. Evidence from the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya shows that "social media were used by politicians

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[273] Paulines Africa publication is a work of the Daughters of St Paul which is committed to the service of evangelization through the means of social communication: books, posters, DVDs, CDs, bookshops and book fairs. The Daughters of St Paul are currently present in twelve countries of the African continent.

[274] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, no. 145.

and individuals to incite violence."[275] This abuse of the media is not only unique to

Kenya. The same happened in Rwanda in 1994 when politicians used the media to incite

hatred and violence against specific ethnic groups and communities. Thus,

communication tools can be used to foster strife or social cohesion.

Part of the reason why a solid formation in media ethics and truthfulness will help

Kenyans to stand at the service of an authentic communication is because Kenya is the

most connected country in Eastern Africa. More than half of the Kenyan population

subscribes to the internet, with 99 percent of subscriptions based on mobile devices.[276]

Additionally, 76 percent of internet users are active on social media. A large population

of Kenya is connected on social media partly because over sixty percent of the population

is under the age of twenty-four.[277] For this reason, the media presents a platform that can

make a contribution towards the growth in social cohesion and promotion of universal

participation in the common search for peace and justice.

Therefore, these strategies form key aspects of the approach that a liberative

ecclesiology will use to form the conscience of the masses to actively participate in their

own emancipation from an ethnicized conscience. These strategies are pillars of a new re-

imagination and evangelization, which takes the name of peace, justice and

reconciliation. What a liberative ecclesiology aims to achieve is a reconciled Kenyan

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[275] Martin Nkosi Ndlela, "Social Media and Elections in Kenya," in *The Routledge Companion to Social Media and Politics*, eds. Axel Bruns, et al. (New York: Routledge the Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 468.

[276] Mark Kaigwa and Yu-Shan Wu, "#MadeinAfrica: How China-Africa Relations Take on New Meaning Thanks to Digital Communication," in *Africa and China: How Africans and their Governments are Shaping Relations with China*, ed. Aleksandra W. Gadzala (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2015), 155.

[277] Ibid.

family. Reconciliation, as discussed in *Africae Munus*, stands out as "an indispensable condition for instilling in Africa justice among men and women, and building a fair and lasting peace that respects each individual and all peoples; a peace that […] is open to the contribution of all people of good will irrespective of their religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social backgrounds."[278] Key agents of this liberative ecclesiology are the laity bearing the brunt of violence and injustice. The above strategies must aim to renew the laity's sense of co-responsibility for the shared *koinonia* and mission of the church at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace.

4.5 Conclusion

A liberative ecclesiology, as a path towards being church in Kenya, aims at integrating both the top-down and bottom-up approaches for enhancing human agency and ability to promote peace and justice. This chapter shows how more efforts needs to be employed by both the church as a whole – hierarchy, laity and religious – in reconstructing people's conscience and moral imaginations of what is right and wrong. This chapter proposes expanding moral imagination through telling stories which are life-giving as a means of offering alternative narratives needed to bring about possibilities that are unimaginable in the current divided Kenya. The locus and place for telling such stories, imagined and told by the church as a people of God, is the SCCs. These communities represent a familiar African setting of palaver where the "word" through dialogue is used to recreate and rebuild the community. Guided by the aforementioned strategies, a liberative ecclesiology should aim to encourage formation of social collaboration across ethnic groups, political parties and religious affiliations.

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[278] Pope Benedict XVI, *Africae Munus*, no. 174.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored how tribalism, negative ethnicity, injustice, and political violence in Kenya are reflections of a collapsed system of ethical values and deformed consciences, and how this crisis of moral values demands a renewed moral imagination grounded in the reawakening of the moral endowment inherent to every human being. There is ample evidence throughout Kenya's sociopolitical history and ecclesial context depicting how conscience has been weakened and corrupted.

In chapter 1, some of this evidence concerns the extent to which Kenya's sociopolitical history is thus one of ethnic political competition and violence. Political competition along ethnic lines has strengthened negative ethnicity, ethno-political competition, and political violence. The use of ethnic demonization, discrimination, and ethnic violence by ethnic elites has recreated an ethnicized form of conscience that sees what is right from an ethnic perspective. Emergence of philosophies such as "our turn to eat" and hatred against other ethnic groups has corrupted the conscience of some Kenyans. This reality has raised insurmountable obstacles to the possibilities of building a peace-loving Kenya.

In the ecclesial context, discussed in chapter 2, the thesis shows the church's failure and successes in acting as a "repository of ethical principles for sociopolitical transformation" in Kenya.[279] The greatest failures especially experienced during the 2007 post-election violence concerns Christians retreat into their ethnic groups for protection and survival. This situation shows the extent to which the church as a people of God has demonstrated an acute inability to transcend ethnicized conscience that shapes negative

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[279] Orobator, "Church, State, and Catholic Ethics," 184.

ethnicity. The exposition of the ecclesial context and its inability to transcend negative ethnicity goes further to expose what might weaken, undermine, or influence negatively the conscience of society. Another concern raised in the chapter on the ecclesial context is the ineffectiveness of a top-down approach to social justice. Such an approach used by the church hierarchy has been criticized for excluding Christians and the poor at large in the formulation and implementation of ecclesiastical pronouncements.

In order to respond to the reality of negative ethnicity in Kenya's sociopolitical and ecclesial context, this thesis suggests a focus on the formation of conscience. A well-formed conscience is presented as a resource that can expand Kenyan's agency to make right, reasonable and responsible choices. As discussed in chapter 3, this formation is greatly needed for those whose conscience has been corrupted by ethnicized conscience. The purpose of this formation is to empower people to participate fully in the life of the public sphere and the church. That process is essential in developing a moral life that necessitates promotion of the common good, the fullness of life across ethnic lines.

The primary task of this thesis is to suggest a liberative ecclesiological approach based on the formation of conscience as a reasonable way of being church in Kenya which is in need of peacebuilding and justice. For a population that has been corrupted by ethnicized conscience, this ecclesiological approach will form and inform them how to liberate themselves from enslavement to negative ethnicity and ethnicized politics. The function of a liberative ecclesiology is that of necessitating the maximization of the church's facilities and methodologies, which "if used well, can have a great impact on the conscience of men and women in society."[280]

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[280] Ngala, "The Christian Church as a Peacemaker in Africa," 167.

As a path towards being church in Kenya, a liberative ecclesiological approach aims at integrating both the top-down and bottom-up approaches for enhancing human agency and ability to promote peace and justice. It depicts ways in which the church as a whole – hierarchy, laity and religious – can collaborate in reconstructing people's consciences and moral imaginations for the common good. In chapter 4, the thesis specifies practical methodologies and "palavers" that can be used in the formation of conscience. One of the methodologies proposed includes telling life-giving stories rooted in African culture, Christianity, and modern culture. SCCs are suggested as a perfect locus on which to historicize the formation of conscience through educational and formational programs.

As an outgrowth of this thesis an ecclesiological approach from which people can be empowered to liberate themselves has been developed. This approach is not a rigid way of being church but is imagined as an emerging and dynamic construct that can help form and inform people to live their lives fully. As such, it can be used to expand people's moral imagination to face other realities of life beyond the scope of this thesis.

Suffice it to say at this point that there are different ways the problem of negative ethnicity and ethnicized conscience can be addressed. This thesis makes major contributions to the knowledge of the nexus between negative ethnicity and conscience and church. At the same time, this thesis has only begun to scratch the surface of the interrelatedness between negative ethnicity and corrupted or weak conscience. As an exploratory study, this thesis presents some interesting insights about what a liberative ecclesiology based on the formation of conscience can achieve in reconstructing the consciences of some Kenyans held captive by negative ethnicity. The hope is that these

insights will contribute to the already ongoing conversation about negative ethnicity and

the contribution of SCCs in the search for peace and justice in Kenya. Besides, this

ecclesiological approach also offers the tools to aid with and guide this conversation.

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