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## **Christian – Muslim Dialogue on Hospitality: A Case of Somali Refugees at the Dadaab Refugee Complex in Kenya**

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**CHRISTIAN – MUSLIM DIALOGUE ON HOSPITALITY:  
A CASE OF SOMALI REFUGEES AT THE DADAAB REFUGEE COMPLEX IN  
KENYA**

A Thesis by

**Oscar Angaga Nduri**

presented to

The Faculty of Theology

of Santa Clara University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Licentiate in Sacred Theology

Berkeley, California

April 2022

Committee Signatures

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Anh Q. Tran, S.J., Ph.D., Director

Date

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vi
ABBREVIATIONS .....	vii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
Definition of Key Terms .....	2
Research Limitations.....	2
Methodology and Chapter Summary .....	3
Chapter 1 .....	5
SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SOMALI REFUGEES IN THE DADAAB REFUGEE COMPLEX .....	5
Introduction .....	5
History's Role .....	5
Historical Background.....	9
The Somali Refugees' Socio-History .....	9
Life in Dadaab Refugee Complex .....	12
Issues Arising from Socio-History .....	17
The Kenya Government's Response to the Refugee Crisis.....	17
Muslim Response to the Refugee Crisis.....	21
Christian Response to the Refugee Crisis.....	24
Conclusion.....	27
Chapter 2.....	29
HOSPITALITY IN AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE .....	29
Introduction .....	29
Meaning of Hospitality.....	29
<i>Ubuntu</i> , Reconciliation and Hospitality.....	33
Christian Perspectives on Hospitality .....	38
Jesus: The Embodiment of Mercy .....	39
Jesus: Hospitality Beyond Boundaries and Divisions .....	42
Islamic Perspectives on Hospitality .....	44
Muhammad: The Immigrant and Teacher of Hospitality .....	44

Mohammad and the Islamic Community .....	47
Abraham: A Model of Hospitality .....	50
Conclusion.....	53
Chapter 3.....	56
FROM CRISIS TO KAIROS: RECLAIMING THE DIGNITY OF THE SOMALI REFUGEES .....	56
Introduction .....	56
The Kenyan Government’s Responses .....	56
Long-Term Plans for the Somali Refugees: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).....	57
The Kenyan Government and Humanitarian Agencies Collaborating to Diversify Refugee Incomes .....	60
Rethinking the Encampment Model .....	62
Integration of Interreligious Dialogue into the System of Education.....	62
Kenyan Muslims’ Responses .....	64
Supporting Somali Refugees through Zakat [Almsgiving] .....	64
Empowering Somali Refugees through Education.....	66
Protecting Women: Example from the Early Life of Prophet Muhammad and Women’s Advocacy .....	68
Kenyan Christians’ Responses .....	70
Re-appropriating the Spirit of Nostra Aetate.....	71
Learning from the Model of Church as a Family .....	73
Establishment of a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue.....	77
Conclusion.....	78
GENERAL CONCLUSION .....	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	88

## ABSTRACT

This thesis demonstrates how the theo-philosophical concept of hospitality from the perspectives of African spirituality, Christianity, and Islam, combined with narrative examples, offers practical resources for building bridges between Kenyan Christians and Muslims to alleviate the sufferings of the Somali refugees in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. The refugees' hardship includes poor shelter, inadequate food supply, poor educational and health standards, insecurity, recurring threats of deportation by the Kenyan government, sex and gender-based violence.

The African philosophical concept of *ubuntu* provides the framework for reconciling Somali refugees, the Kenyan government, and the Somalis who remain in Somalia to build lasting peace within the refugee camps. Similarly, a theological reflection on Jesus' miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish invites the Kenyan government and humanitarian agencies to avail resources for training Somali refugees to be self-reliant. Additionally, Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman inspires Kenyan Christians to break the barriers that separate them from the Muslims and collaborate with Kenyan Muslims to serve the Somali refugees, who are predominantly Muslims. In Islam, Prophet Muhammad's respect for women and care for vulnerable people in the city of Medina provides the framework for Kenyan Muslims' response to sex and gender-based violence in the refugee camps.

In this thesis, I use Cardinal Cardijn's "See, Judge, and Act" of Catholic Church social analysis to highlight the sufferings of the Somali refugees, reflect theologically on hospitality, and consider ways of remedying the plight of the Somali refugees. In short, under the "See" method, I highlight the socio-history of the Somali refugees and their

harsh living conditions in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. Then, using the “Judge” method, I examine the theological imports of *ubuntu* philosophy, the Christian and Islamic teachings—all against the background of and using the hermeneutical lens of hospitality. Lastly, employing the "Act" method, I demonstrate the response strategies by the Kenyan government, Muslims, and Christians towards the Somali refugees.

Through this thesis, I achieve the following goals. First, I highlight the dire living conditions of the Somali refugees, such as food scarcity, poor educational and health standards, insecurity, sex and gender-based violence. Second, I demonstrate that reconciliation among the Somalis in Somalia, the refugees, and the Kenyan government guarantees an enduring peace both inside and outside Dadaab Refugee Complex. Third, I discuss how Muhammad's respect for women and women's advocacy could curtail sex and gender-based violence cases in the refugee camps. Fourth, I assert that updated theological curricula equip theology students with the skills they require to serve vulnerable people like Somali refugees. Fifth, I use the model of church-as-family to defend the refugees' rights and provide for their basic needs. Finally, I propose that establishing a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue would provide a platform for harmonizing the work of Faith-Based Organizations, hence, quality services to Somali refugees.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Prof. Anh Q. Tran, S.J., Ph.D., for directing this thesis; his attention to detail, prompt feedback, and patience motivated me to keep writing even when I had doubts about my competence in Christian-Muslim Interreligious Dialogue.

I would like to express special gratitude to Prof. Leocadie Lushombo, IT, Ph.D., for serving as my reader. Her expertise in African theological ethics led me to appreciate the role *ubuntu* philosophy plays in hospitality. A hearty thank you, Prof. Leocadie.

Rev. Charissa Jaeger-Sanders read the thesis and corrected the grammar. Many thanks, Charissa, for being patient with me even when I was behind the schedule we set.

Finally, I would like to register my gratitude to my Jesuit brothers for supporting me emotionally and spiritually while I was writing this thesis. I sincerely appreciate your prayers and words of encouragement; they made a lot of difference in my life!

## ABBREVIATIONS

ATPU	Anti-Terror Police Unit
CPST	Community Peace and Safety Teams
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICK	Interreligious Council of Kenya
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IRD	Interreligious Dialogue
IRW	Islamic Relief Worldwide
JC: HEM	Jesuit Commons Higher Education at the Margins
KDF	Kenya Defence Force
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NCCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
PCANC	Parliamentary Committee on Administration and National Security
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores and highlights how the theological and philosophical concept of hospitality is a case study for Christian- Muslim interreligious dialogue on the Somali refugee issue. In particular, the guiding question for this study is: How do the Christian and Islamic theological teachings on hospitality and the African philosophical concept of *ubuntu* address the sufferings of the Somali refugees in the Dadaab Refugee Complex? I argue that Jesus' love and concern for the marginalized people and Prophet Muhammad's contribution to building the Islamic community (*ummah*) serve as the framework for caring for the Somali refugees. Similarly, I follow Emmanuel Katongole's insights on good storytelling to re-imagine a social ethic<sup>1</sup> that will respond to the plight of the Somali refugees.

The Somali refugees face many problems within the Dadaab Refugee Complex. These issues include poor shelter, inadequate food supply, poor educational and health standards, and sex and gender-based violence. While the problems are social, I believe that Muslim and Christian dialogue and cooperation have an important role in enhancing the dignity of the Somali refugees. Moreover, because of the African heritage of the Somali refugees, I examine how *ubuntu* philosophy links the Somali refugees to their Kenyan hosts.

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<sup>1</sup> Imagination makes people recreate better stories than the ones they have lived with. Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 61.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

Hospitality is the virtue that influences people to be kind, charitable, compassionate, and merciful to vulnerable people. This thesis focuses on offering hospitality to Somali refugees and the transformative role that can have.

Interreligious dialogue is a conversation among people who belong to different religious traditions, in which they mutually learn from one another and overcome prejudices. Church documents describe several forms of interreligious dialogue.<sup>2</sup> First is the dialogue of life, which encompasses how people manifest their faiths in daily activities, for example, being kind to a neighbor. Next is the dialogue of action, the coming together of different religions to address a particular problem like the refugee crisis, as discussed in this thesis. Then, there is the dialogue of theological exchange, a conversation among religious experts on selected themes. Lastly, there is the dialogue of religious experience, a conversation based on unique experiences of divine presence in different religions.

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) refer to humanitarian agencies affiliated with various religions like Islam (Islamic Relief Worldwide) and Christianity (Lutheran World Federation, National Council of Churches of Kenya, Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins).

## **Research Limitations**

This thesis has the following limitations. First, I did not visit the Dadaab Refugee Complex to gather primary data about the Somali refugees but relied on secondary data, mainly from online sources. Second, I have a rudimentary knowledge of Islamic studies;

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<sup>2</sup> Society of Jesus, *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees of the 31<sup>st</sup>-35<sup>th</sup> General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, ed. John W. Padberg (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009), 548.

as such, I have not done justice in comparing the Christian and Muslim perspectives on hospitality. Third, Kenya hosts refugees from several countries, yet I specifically focused on the Somali refugees in this study.

### **Methodology and Chapter Summary**

I use the three-fold method of “See, Judge, and Act” of Catholic Church social analysis<sup>3</sup> to study the plight of the refugees and recommend ways of reclaiming and enhancing their dignity. In the first chapter, I use the "See" method of Catholic social analysis to highlight the Somali refugees' social, political, and historical contexts. I discuss the role of history in responding to the problems of the Somali refugees. Then, I consider the poor living conditions of the refugees, such as malnutrition, poor shelter, under-developed health centers and schools. Lastly, I interrogate the responses of the Kenyan government, Muslims, and Christians to the refugee crisis.

In the second chapter, I apply the “Judge” method to reflect on the theological bases of African, Christian, and Islamic teachings on hospitality. I highlight and explain the link between *ubuntu* philosophy, reconciliation, and hospitality from the African perspective. For instance, through the faith journey of Angelina Atyam,<sup>4</sup> who forgave the rebels of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) who abducted her daughter at a girls’ boarding school, I demonstrate that *ubuntu* philosophy promotes restorative justice. In addition, I demonstrate how Jesus is an embodiment of mercy, using the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish in the Synoptic Gospels. Likewise, I explore Prophet

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<sup>3</sup> Justin Sands, “Introducing Cardinal Cardijn’s See-Judge-Act as an Interdisciplinary Method to Move Theory into Practice,” *Religion*, 129 (2018), 2-4.

<sup>4</sup> Angelina Atyam is a Ugandan woman whose daughter, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) captured at a girls' boarding school alongside other girls. Angelina reunited with her daughter after a couple of years. Despite the harm, the rebels caused her, she still dared to forgive the rebels. See Emmanuel Katongole, *The Journey of Reconciliation: Groaning for a New Creation in Africa* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 28-29.

Muhammad's teachings on hospitality based on his own experience of growing up as an orphan, the persecution of his followers, and his building of a cohesive Islamic community in Medina. Finally, I demonstrate that Abraham acts as a model of hospitality; he always anticipates the needs of fellow human beings.

In the third chapter, the "Act" method outlines solutions to the issues highlighted in the first chapter, in tandem with the theological bases developed in the second chapter. In this chapter, I explain the strategies the Kenyan government could adopt in responding to the security concerns of the refugees by promoting reconciliation among the people in Somalia, Somali refugees, and the Kenyan government. Furthermore, I consider how the Kenyan government could collaborate with humanitarian agencies to make Somali refugees more self-reliant. Moreover, I discuss how intentional interreligious dialogue in schools could help students become more hospitable to vulnerable people like refugees. Similarly, I examine Kenyan Muslims' responses to the refugee crisis through *zakat* [mandatory charity], formal education, and protection of women from sex and gender-based violence. Finally, I assess Kenyan Christian responses to the refugees' problems by updating theological training programs, the model of church-as-family, and establishing a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue.

## Chapter 1

# SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SOMALI REFUGEES IN THE DADAAB REFUGEE COMPLEX

### Introduction

This chapter uses the “See” method of Catholic social analysis to describe the social context of the Somali refugees; it analyzes the situation of the Somali refugees by first reviewing the historical context that led to the refugee crisis. Then, it highlights the problems Somali refugees face in the Dadaab Refugee Complex: poor shelter, inadequate food and water supply, poor educational and health standards, insecurity, and persistent threat of repatriation by the Kenyan government. Finally, it demonstrates how the Kenyan government, Muslims, and Christians respond to the refugee crisis.

### History’s Role

According to the philosopher Etienne Gilson<sup>5</sup> history is “the only laboratory [humanity] has in which to test the consequences of human thought.”<sup>6</sup> Gilson’s remarks highlight the important role of history in studying the challenges Somali refugees face. I argue that by constantly retelling the history of the Somali refugees, by the intentional use of narratives, the humanitarian agencies working with the Somali refugees would stop the cycle of misfortunes that befall the Somali refugees.

An integral approach to history and hospitality leads to greater commitment in the pursuit of justice for the refugees since it concretizes the dire living conditions of the refugees. In short, I consider history as the bridge between the experiences of the Somali

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<sup>5</sup> Etienne Gilson was a French Christian and philosopher of medieval thought.

<sup>6</sup> UCLA, “Significance of History for the Educated Citizen,” *Public History Initiative*, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://phi.history.ucla.edu/nchs/preface/significancehistoryeducatedcitizen/>.

refugees and “hospitality [as] first and foremost a duty towards the Somali refugees, and a way of living [and appreciating them].”<sup>7</sup> It is possible through intentionally narrating the history and purposefully reflecting on hospitality to think of a better future for the Somali refugees theologically, to envision a higher quality of life for the refugees.

History shows that the British colonial administration and post-independent governments were not hospitable to the Kenyan Somalis; these governments, economically and socially, neglected the northeastern and coastal regions of Kenya, causing despair among the residents. Moreover, the dire living conditions of the residents of Kenya's northeastern and coastal regions render them susceptible to the negative influences of militant Islamic groups. Also, it is important to note that the colonial administration promoted a patrimonial system of resource distribution, a factor that heightened inter-clan rivalries in Somalia. With the collapse of Siad Barre's<sup>8</sup> government in 1991, inter-clan rivalries led to the deterioration of security in Somalia. Given the dire security situation, many citizens of Somalia fled their country and sought refuge in Kenya.

Unfortunately, even in Kenya, the Somali refugees were not safe as Islamic extremists infiltrate the refugee camps from time to time, attack the refugees and perpetrate terrorist attacks in Kenya.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, the Islamic extremists peddle the

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<sup>7</sup> Mona Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam: Welcoming in God's Name* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> World Peace Foundation, “Somalia: Fall of Siad Barre and the Civil War,” *Mass Atrocity Endings*, accessed on February 23, 2022, <https://sites.tufts.edu/atrocityendings/2015/08/07/somaliafallosiadbarrecivilwar/>.

<sup>9</sup> I consider violent episodes within the refugee camps and other parts of Kenya because violence sows seeds of hatred and perpetuates fear among Kenyan Muslims and Christians. Moreover, whenever terror attacks happen in Kenya, the government becomes stricter on the refugees and often issues ultimatums for closing the refugee camps. The government directives for closing the refugee camps instill

narrative that Christianity threatens the existence and future of Islam; as such, they rally Muslims to fight in defense of their faith. On the other hand, the extremists exploit the historical injustices against Muslims in Kenya to recruit new members and then use them to attack churches and Kenyan government facilities, including universities, military barracks, and administrative offices.<sup>10</sup>

After terrorists attacked Garissa University in 2015 and killed 148 students, some Church leaders issued a statement denouncing systematic profiling, isolation, and killing of Christians in response to the tragic incident.<sup>11</sup> Despite making a clarion call for peace, the Church leaders also indicated that Christians would not always remain silent in the face of extreme provocation by the terrorists.<sup>12</sup> Such are the responses that terrorists anticipate in their activities. In other words, their main goal is to sow seeds of discord among Christians and Muslims.

Even amid the gloom, anger, and subtle desire for revenge, Muslim-Christian Dialogue played a key role in calming the situation of the Garissa University terrorist

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fear in the refugees because the security situation in Somalia has not improved. Against fear and threats of more violence, I consider hospitality a virtue that would reconcile the Somali refugees and the Kenyan government. When Somali refugees embrace hospitality, they would appreciate their duties and responsibilities to one another, the humanitarian agencies, Faith-Based Organizations, and the Kenyan government. Tutu opines, "anger, resentment, lust for revenge, even success through aggressive competitiveness, are corrosive of [social harmony]." Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 31.

<sup>10</sup> Demas Kiprono, "Address Historical Injustices to Win this War," *Nation*, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://nation.africa/kenya/blogsopinion/opinion/addresshistoricalinjusticestowinthiswar1087176?view=htmlamp>.

<sup>11</sup> Tom Mboya, "Kenya's Top Church Leaders Declare After Al-Shabaab's Garissa Attack: 'Systematic Profiling, Isolation, and Massacre of Christians...Must Stop,'" *Christian Post*, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/kenyastopchurchleadersdeclareafteralshabaabsgarissaattacksystematicprofilingisolationandmassacreofchristiansmuststop.ht>.

<sup>12</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Kenya's Complex and Vibrant Religious Landscape: Features and Prospects," (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2017), 49-50.

attack. The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SCKM) condemned the terrorist attack and appealed for the spirit of solidarity among Christians and Muslims to eradicate religious violence. Similarly, the Vatican Secretary of State urged the Kenyan government to redouble its efforts to maintain peace and ushering a new era of brotherhood and justice.<sup>13</sup> The religious leaders reminded their followers of the common humanity that they all share and the need to be charitable and hospitable to one another.

The appeals the religious leaders made did not fall on deaf ears. A few months after the Garissa University attack, terrorists stopped a bus traveling to northeastern Kenya. They ordered the passengers to alight and separate themselves into two groups of Muslims and Christians, aiming to kill the latter. However, the Muslims did not comply with the terrorists' demands, insisting on their common humanity with the Christians.<sup>14</sup> Those Muslims who were willing to die to save Christians demonstrated that true faith in God manifests itself in the way people relate with one another, irrespective of their religious affiliations.<sup>15</sup>

Narrating the above incident shows that hospitality would be a point of convergence among Kenyan Christians and Kenyan Muslims in caring for the refugees, just like the Muslim passengers protected their Christian counterparts.

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<sup>13</sup> Fredrick Nzwili, "Kenya Religious Leaders Urge Unity after Garissa Attack," *Religion News Service*, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/04/03/religionnewsservicekenyagarissaattackreligiousleaders/25254935/>.

<sup>14</sup> Elahe Izadi and Sarah Kaplan, "Muslims Protect Christians from Extremists in Kenya Bus Attack," accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/12/22/muslimsprotectedchristiansfromextremistsinkenyaabusattackreportssay/>.

<sup>15</sup> Even though this story has no connection to hosting Somali refugees, I put it here to demonstrate that Interreligious Dialogue breaks barriers that separate members of different religions. Therefore, it would be possible for both religions to respond appropriately to the refugee crisis.



## **Historical Background**

This section demonstrates how the British colonial administration and the Somali and Kenyan governments contributed to the historical injustices that Islamic extremists exploit to conduct terrorist attacks inside and outside the refugee camps. Also, it discusses the problems the Somali refugees face at the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

### **The Somali Refugees' Socio-History**

The refugee crisis in Kenya results from the failures of both the colonial administration and the post-independence Kenyan governments. Historically, the Berlin Treaty of 1885, which partitioned Africa, did not consider the ethnic identities of the Africans but only served European interests. According to that arrangement, Britain ruled Kenya and northern Somalia, France colonized Djibouti, and Italy ruled southern Somalia. Later, the British colonial administration developed new administrative boundaries and created the Northern Frontier District (NFD), erecting a buffer zone with Ethiopia and Somalia in 1909. Subsequently, they passed laws that restricted Somali people's movement within NFD. Moreover, neither did the British colonial administration promote social and economic activities in the district nor integrate it politically with the rest of Kenya.<sup>16</sup> As this research would later demonstrate, the socio-economic neglect of NFD would fuel secessionist moves and serve as fodder for religious extremism.

The first post-colonial Kenyan government and the subsequent regimes made the same mistakes as the colonial administration did by neglecting the Somali people economically, socially, and politically. Kenya's 1965 economic blueprint outlined that the government would grow the economy faster by investing in areas endowed with

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<sup>16</sup> Fred Nyongesa Ikanda, "Deteriorating Conditions of Hosting Refugees: A Case Study of the Dadaab Complex in Kenya," *African Study Monographs* 29 (2008): 44.

abundant natural resources, arable land, and good rainfall to the detriment of arid and semi-arid lands.<sup>17</sup> Such a policy isolated the northeast and the coastal regions of Kenya, which Muslims predominantly occupied. The Kenyan Somalis responded to the discriminatory policies by fighting against the Kenyan government, aiming to join the greater Somalia. Furthermore, in the 1959 referendum, the Somali Kenyans overwhelmingly voted to secede from Kenya. However, the British colonial administration ignored their dissenting voices, leading to an armed group called *shiftas*,<sup>18</sup> which clashed with Kenyan security forces.

The war was short-lived (1963-1968), but its impact is still an event in Kenya's history with a lasting impact. A few years after the collapse of the armed rebellion, in 1984, the Kenyan security forces arrested five thousand men from the Degodia clan at Wagalla Airstrip for interrogation. In the process, nearly three hundred men were allegedly executed in cold blood. These harsh security containment measures further excluded the Kenyan Somali from the rest of the country. Subsequently, the government declared a state of emergency, silenced witnesses, and banned media coverage of the event.<sup>19</sup> The historical injustices enumerated above alienated the Somali Kenyans and made it easy for religious extremists disguising themselves as refugees to execute mayhem on Christians and the Kenyan government meticulously.

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<sup>17</sup> Ikanda, "Deteriorating Conditions of Hosting Refugees," 44.

<sup>18</sup> Shifta traces its roots in Ethiopia's Semitic languages and means bandits. <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/shifta>.

<sup>19</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya," Policy Brief, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2017, 41.

The first wave of widespread refugee displacements out of Somalia began in 1991 after the fall of Siad Barre's government. Henceforth, the Somali refugees rank at the top of the most displaced population in the Horn of Africa.<sup>20</sup> The three leading causes of displacement during the 1990s include conflict, state collapse, and drought.<sup>21</sup> These factors impacted the Somali population gradually in the preceding decades. Somali politicians exploited clan dynamics to acquire political power and vital resources and gradually weakened the governance structure.

At another level, clanism also played out during the colonial administration's demarcation of the Kenya-Somalia border. By strategically positioning themselves, many clans and sub-clans settled on both sides of the Kenya-Somalia border, thus, exploiting economic, social and citizenship benefits from both countries.<sup>22</sup> This factor remains problematic in fighting extremist Islamic groups because they identify with either Somali refugees or Kenyan Somalis as they find it convenient for their survival.

As the State of Somalia disintegrated following years of intense fighting, people retreated to their clans for security; these clans, in turn, formed alliances that kept falling apart, further exposing ordinary people to the vicissitudes of the entrenched conflict. Eventually, the protracted inter-clan clashes and the impact of prolonged droughts forced most Somalis to flee their country and settle in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. By the end

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<sup>20</sup> Laura Hammond, "History, Overview, Trend and Issues in Major Somali Refugee Displacement in the Near Region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Yemen)," *International Journal of Somali Studies*, Vol. 13, no. 7 (2014):56, accessed January 17, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Most of the Somali refugees fled their country. They sought refuge in Kenya because of protracted inter-clan clashes, the fall of Siad Barre's government, and the severe drought that affected the vast swathes of Somalia, especially in 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Hammond, "History, Overview, Trend and Issues in Major Somali Refugee Displacement in the Near Region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Yemen)" "57.

of 1991, Kenya was hosting approximately 300,000 refugees in various camps within the country. The government restricted refugee camps close to the border with Somalia, fearing that if they relocated them further inland, the refugees would compromise the country's security.<sup>23</sup>

I have shown that the Somali government did not accord its citizens their due rights and freedoms. Instead, it promoted clan interests over national interests, hence the war that led to the collapse of the State and the flight of the vulnerable citizens to Kenya as refugees. It is crucial in the healing and alleviating the suffering of the Somali refugees to remember and retell their stories. The following section names and elaborates on the specific challenges that the Somali refugees face in Dadaab Refugee Complex.

### **Life in Dadaab Refugee Complex**

The Dadaab Refugee Complex hosts the biggest number of refugees in the world. According to the original plan of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), it was meant to accommodate 90,000 people fleeing the civil war in Somalia. However, the ongoing war in Somalia, adverse environmental conditions in the horn of Africa, and political instability within the region led to an upsurge of refugees. Specifically, these refugees are from Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Burundi. However, this research focuses on the Somali refugees, who constitute 95 percent of the refugee population and are predominantly Muslims.

The exponential rise in the number of refugees hosted within the Dadaab Refugee Complex has been a worrying trend for the Kenyan authorities because they exceed the local population. According to UNHCR records, by January 2007, the Dadaab Refugee

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<sup>23</sup> Hammond, "History, Overview, Trend and Issues in Major Somali Refugee Displacement in the Near Region (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Yemen)" 60.

Complex had 171,957 refugees consisting of 70,965 refugees at Hagadera, 60,386 at Ifo, and 40,606 at Dagahaley. The ongoing war in Somalia continually leads to refugees moving to the Dadaab Refugee Complex. For instance, in 2006 alone, after a two-week battle between the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)<sup>24</sup> and Somalia's transitional Federal Government (TFG), backed by Ethiopian troops, 34,000 Somalis sought refuge in Kenya. An analysis of the above figures against the local population, which was 10,000, shows that the refugees were more than ten times larger than the population of the host community.<sup>25</sup> By July 2020, the Dadaab Refugee Complex had 218,873 refugees.<sup>26</sup> Given the size of the landmass and the number of refugees living there, it is clear that the available facilities are overstretched, compromising hygiene and making it easier for religious extremists to conceal their identities as they plan for one terrorist attack after another.

Given the common religious and cultural practices among the Somalis both in Kenya and Somalia, many a time, Somalia's problems easily overflow to Kenya. Somali refugees and host communities often bear the brunt of anarchy in Somalia. Kenyan fundamentalist Christians hold prejudices against Somalis (refugees and Kenyan citizens), discriminate against them on account of their ethnic heritage and consider them sympathizers of extremist groups such as Al Shabaab.<sup>27</sup> A 2021 Washington Post study

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<sup>24</sup> ICU was a loose group of both moderate and extremist Islamists.

<sup>25</sup> Ikanda, "Deteriorating Conditions of Hosting Refugees," 30-31.

<sup>26</sup> UNHCR, "Dadaab Refugee Complex," *The U.N. Refugee Agency*, accessed on January 7, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/dadaabrefugeecomplex>.

<sup>27</sup> Al Shabaab is a Somali extremist group that practices the Saudi-inspired Wahhabi version of Islam. It claims responsibility for several terrorist attacks in Kenya. BBC, "Who are Somalia's Al Shabaab?" accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/worldafrica15336689>.

showed that many Kenyans believed that Al Shabaab and other extremist groups recruit new members from the Somali refugees.<sup>28</sup> In light of the common cultural heritage between Somali refugees and Kenyan Somalis, it is easy to conflate the two entities and misinterpret their activities through the lens of religious violence.

Paradoxically, a 2009 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report noted that the Kenyan government recruited Somali refugees to fight against Al Shabaab in collaboration with the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia (TFGS). However, such a strategy that provided momentary reprieve proved catastrophic later, as some of these youths joined other extremist groups in Somalia and began fighting the Kenyan government.<sup>29</sup> Apart from the security concerns, the Somali refugees face innumerable social challenges, which further erode their human dignity and sense of direction in life. These include but are not limited to the following items.

Firstly, there is the negative impact of religious and cultural norms. In the Dadaab Refugee Complex, the enrollment rate of primary school has been a bare 42 percent. Even though the available schools cannot admit many pupils and have few teachers, the main impediment to school enrollment is a negative attitude towards formal education. A 2012 Norwegian Refugee Council report cited that many Muslim families do not register their children because the available schools do not offer religious education. At the same time, the report highlighted that children spend 20 to 30 percent of their free time learning Islam. As a result, the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) rolled out a pilot

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<sup>28</sup> Jeremy Horowitz and Kristin Michelitch, “Kenya might Expel Refugees to their Home Country,” *The Washington Post*, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/06/25/kenyamightexpelrefugeestheirhomecountries/>.

<sup>29</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith,” Policy Brief, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2015, 16-17.

program to integrate formal education into Dadaab Quranic schools.<sup>30</sup> To mitigate this situation, the Kenyan government, Faith-Based Organizations, and humanitarian agencies ought to collaborate in raising awareness of the importance of education among refugees who do not value formal education.

Secondly, Faith-Based Organizations must be cautious while providing medical services. Many a time, rigid interpretations of Islamic beliefs discourage the refugees from participating in blood transfusions and prevent expectant women with delivery complications from embracing caesarian section. Moreover, the refugee community is fond of discriminating against persons suffering from sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. USAID research showed that the Somali refugees did not trust healthcare workers who were neither Muslims nor Somalis.<sup>31</sup> Here is yet another place where interreligious dialogue would be vital to alleviating suffering. Christian-Muslim dialogue could influence the attitudes of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) because many FBOs have Christian roots. Thus, the officials of these FBOs would refrain from actions that offend the refugees, who are Muslims.

Thirdly, there are debilitating effects of sex and gender-based violence (SGBV) and inadequate response strategies. The religious and cultural norms of the Somalis forbid sexual relationships before and outside marriage. However, several years of war and the harsh living conditions within the refugee camps have eroded those traditional values, leading to many cases of rape. No matter the circumstances of rape, women usually suffer many stigmas and often choose to remain silent about such incidents than

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<sup>30</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith," 20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

report them to the relevant authority. Those who choose to report such cases do so within the confines of the traditional justice system [sharia ‘maslaha’ court system]. Traditional justice has the following demerits: it lacks trauma counseling and protection from further abuse, and in some instances, the unmarried SGBV survivors conditionally marry their perpetrators, especially when the woman conceives.<sup>32</sup> The refugees' sufferings cut across social, cultural, and religious norms. Developing a long-lasting solution to these abuses would entail integrating religious values with humanitarian principles. It is against such a framework that this research promotes interreligious dialogue based on the value of hospitality.

The Somali refugees formed Community Peace and Safety Teams (CPSTs) to reduce violence cases within Dadaab Refugee Complex. These teams gather information about people who assault the refugees and refer such cases to the elders to judge and punish the offenders. Community policing by the refugees worked until the time when Al Shabaab sympathizers interfered with their programs. Al Shabaab considered CPSTs as a security threat because of the information members of the refugee policing team gathered about the refugees. Members of Al Shabaab thwarted the efforts of members of CPSTs by killing them. Also, the Kenya Police often failed members of CPSTs because whenever terrorists attack some part of Kenya, the police would arrest youths, including members of the refugee policing team.<sup>33</sup> Against the background of civilian-led security

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<sup>32</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith,”21.

<sup>33</sup> William J. Garvelink, “The Dadaab Refugee Complex: A Power Keg and It’s Giving Off Sparks,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/dadaabrefugeecomplexpowderkegandit%E2%80%99sgiving-sparks>.



initiatives' demerits, I propose the African philosophical concept of *ubuntu* as a channel for reconciliation and peace-building in the refugee camps, Somalia and Kenya.

The following section examines the Kenya government's responses to the refugee crisis, especially the government's fight against terrorists, some of whom use refugee camps as safe-havens. In addition, the following section explores Muslim and Christian responses to the refugee crisis.

### **Issues Arising from Socio-History**

#### **The Kenya Government's Response to the Refugee Crisis**

Kenya finds itself in a tricky position complying with the United Nations Statutes on the protection of the refugees because of terrorist threats, some of which are allegedly planned in refugee camps. In 1998, terrorists bombed the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and killed many people. The government responded by closing five Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).<sup>34</sup> After the 1998 terrorist attack, terrorists continued to launch their operations from time to time, and between 2009 and 2010, the terrorists upped their game by abducting tourists. As a result, the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) launched an operation dubbed *Linda Nchi* [Protect the Nation] in Somalia to flush out Islamic extremists.<sup>35</sup>

In retrospect, Kenya's military operation in Somalia caused more problems than solutions to security concerns. The security situation of the Dadaab Refugee Complex

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<sup>34</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Kenya's Complex and Vibrant Religious Landscape: Features and Prospects," Policy Brief, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2017, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Dorothy Otieno, "How KDF's Somalia Incursion Changed Kenya," Nation, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://nation.africa/kenya/newsplex/howkdfssomaliaincursionchangedkenya1137122>.

deteriorated; Al Shabaab sympathizers continued to attack various parts of Kenya.<sup>36</sup> Within Dadaab Refugee Complex, cases of kidnapping and assault rose exponentially. The Islamic extremists set Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) along roads leading to and within Dadaab Refugee Complex.<sup>37</sup>

Separately, “in reaction to attacks and threats, Kenyan security tactics have targeted Somali Muslims—both Kenyan citizens and non-citizens. Profiling and security checks for Somali Kenyans and Somali refugees have resulted in frustration and resentment.”<sup>38</sup> Even though military interventions guarantee a semblance of peace, lasting peace would be attainable when the key stakeholders like the Kenyan government, Muslims, and Christians candidly speak with one another on issues that perpetuate terrorism in the country.

Based on the reports that indicate that terror networks recruit new members mainly from the refugee camps, the Kenyan government usually responds to terror attacks with the directive of lowering the number of Somali refugees. Such sentiments were common after terrorists attacked Westgate Shopping Mall on September 30, 2013.

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<sup>36</sup> Terrorists have political goals but do not think and act pragmatically: they often attack innocent people who play no role in perpetuating the problems they seek to solve. Governments that fight against religiously-motivated wars should respectfully relate with the leaders of the religion whose members rebel against the political system. Otherwise, such government interventions exacerbate the already precarious security situation. Amid wars and counter-accusations, peaceful protests appear to yield peace that endures. For instance, South Africa did not attain racial harmony because of the military success of the African National Congress (ANC). Instead, South Africa broke the shackles of apartheid courtesy of the peace initiatives of black South Africans under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu. In light of South Africa's success story, I argue that dialogue among Kenyan Muslims, Christians, the government, and the Somali refugees offers a possibility of promoting peace among these interlocutors. See David L. Clough and Brian Stiltner, *Faith and Force: A Christian Debate About War* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 151, 168, and 172.

<sup>37</sup> William J. Garvelink, “The Dadaab Refugee Complex: A Power Keg and It’s Giving Off Sparks,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/dadaabrefugeecomplexpowderkegandit%E2%80%99s-giving-sparks>.

<sup>38</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya,” 49.

For example, Asmam Kamama, a Member of Parliament and chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Administration and National Security (PCANC) suggested that the government could close down the Dadaab Refugee Complex because Al Shabaab recruit new members from the Complex. A year later, following Garissa University terrorist attack, Kenya's Deputy President, William Ruto instructed the U.N. to relocate the Dadaab Refugee Complex to another country, a failure to which the Kenyan government would do so.<sup>39</sup> Fortunately, the government retracted and instead developed the plan to construct a perimeter wall between Somalia and Kenya.

In 2014, the government developed another strategy of restricting the number of refugees the country could host at any one time to 150,000. At the same time, it drafted a Security Bill which sought to expand the powers of the Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU). Human Rights Watch groups staged demonstrations across Kenya's major cities in response. They challenged clauses of the Bill that allowed the police to detain terror suspects for a year and allowed intelligence agencies to tap phone lines of terror suspects without court orders. The government yielded to the demands of civil society but imposed restrictions on the movement of the refugees. After the tussle between the government and members of civil society, parliament passed the amended Bill in December 2014. The legal battle that ensued led the High Court to nullify the 150,000-refugee cap; however, it ratified the clause restricting the movement of refugees within Kenya.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Patrick Kingsley, "Kenya Tells U.K. to Resettle Somali Refugees Living in Dadaab," *The Guardian*, accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/globaldevelopment/2016/may/25/kenyawilliamrutotellsuktoresettlesomalirefugeeslivingindadaab>.

<sup>40</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith," 17.

In March 2021, the Kenyan government issued another 14-day ultimatum for UNHCR to close the country's refugee camps and relocate them to other countries. As it had happened before, the High Court came to the defense of the hapless refugees by nullifying the government decree.<sup>41</sup> The tussle between Human Rights activists and the government shows that the continued stay of the refugees is no longer tenable. Nevertheless, the question immediately follows, where would these people go? Somalia is still unsafe owing to the ongoing inter-clan wars.

The Kenyan government continues to upgrade the capacity of its security forces to fight terrorism. The government has developed several Special Forces Units within the military to fight against terror networks. Despite the success of the military intervention, the Kenyan government has realized that interreligious dialogue guarantees enduring peace in the country. This realization offers a way forward to help collaboratively alleviate the suffering of Somali refugees.

In that regard, the Kenyan government avails funds for rehabilitating youths who had joined terrorist groups like Al Shabaab. The Kenyan government collaborates with religious leaders from Christian and Muslim communities in the coastal region in this venture. Muslim clerics often invite Christian clerics to mosques to preach against religious radicalization. Also, religious leaders use their centers for vocational training to teach the youths skills on Communication and Information Technology (ICT) and entrepreneurship. They engage the youths and limit the chances of rejoining the terror networks. Due to the success of youth rehabilitation programs along Kenya's coast, the Kenyan government could explore intentionally collaborating with the international

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<sup>41</sup> The Sentinel Post, "Closing Kenya's Kakuma and Dadaab Refugee Camps: Thoughts from the Ground," *reliefweb*, accessed on January 15, 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/closingkenyaskakumaanddadaabrefugeecampsthoughtsground>.

community to replicate similar programs in the Dadaab Refugee Complex to reduce the influence Islamic extremists have on the young people. The following section uses Muslim humanitarian perspectives to respond to the refugee crisis in Dadaab Refugee Complex.

### **Muslim Response to the Refugee Crisis**

According to the 2009 census report, 11 percent of Kenya's population was Muslims. Most of Kenya's Muslims practice Sunni Islam and a few practice either Shia or Ahmadi Islam.<sup>42</sup> Generally, the Kenyan Muslim communities have a decentralized organizational structure. However, that is not the case for the Ismaili community, which has well-established institutions such as hospitals and universities.

Before highlighting the specific tasks of Muslim response to the refugee crisis in the Dadaab Complex, this research considers hospitality to strangers from the Islamic perspective. The care of vulnerable persons, especially those fleeing intolerable living conditions, fits well with one of the five pillars of Islam: compulsory charity (*zakat*). While commenting on the Quran, Zeki Saritoprak, an Islamic scholar on migration and refugees, opines that the holy book does not explicitly mention refugees. That aside, the Quran mentions a category of recipients of *zakat* called *ibn al-sabil* (Q. 9:60). These people travel from one place to another and depend on other people's generosity, irrespective of how wealthy they could be in their home country.<sup>43</sup> It is to this category that this research classifies the refugees per Islamic theology. Subsequently, this research

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<sup>42</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Kenya's Complex and Vibrant Religious Landscape: Features and Prospects," 1.

<sup>43</sup> Zeki Saritoprak, "An Islamic Approach to Migration and Refugees," *Cross Currents* 67, no. 3 (September 2017): 522.

highlights key moments in Islamic history when migration shaped Islam's survival and missionary endeavors.

Islam considers migration to include both mass migration and individual migrations. Two examples underscore mass migration in Islam: when seventy of Prophet Muhammad's followers sought refuge in Abyssinia, modern-day Ethiopia, following concerted efforts to persecute his followers. The Prophet and his community migrated from Mecca to Medina. The story of Moses best exemplifies individual migration in Islam. According to the Quran, Moses was told to flee to save his life (Q. 28:20). After escaping from Egypt, Moses prayed for God's protection to avoid being captured by his pursuers (Q. 28: 21-22). By divine providence, Moses met two shepherdesses in Medina and assisted them in watering their sheep; later, the father of one of the girls accommodated him in his home (Q. 28:23-25). The story of Moses shows the duties and responsibilities of both refugees and their hosts. First of all, it constantly prompts refugees to communicate with God through prayer. Second, it invites refugees to use their talents to serve the people they meet on the way. At the same time, it challenges host communities to provide for the basic needs of the refugees, mainly shelter. In short, Moses' life manifests the condition of being a refugee and an immigrant (*muhajir*).<sup>44</sup>

Because of the social, political, and economic changes that have taken place across the centuries, the way contemporary Muslim society takes care of refugees and migrants has drastically changed. Even though compulsory charity (*zakat*) still provides the basis for caring for the vulnerable members of the society, Muslims respond to this clarion call through FBOs such as the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW).

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<sup>44</sup> Saritoprak, "An Islamic Approach to Migration and Refugees," 522-523.

IRW works closely with Quranic teachers and the leaders of the Somali community to develop teaching and learning programs that serve the needs of the parties involved. Before IRW initiatives, it was common for children to enroll in Quranic preschool programs as early as three years and remain there until they could fully recite the Quran. According to that system, slow learners took a long time before joining primary school since doing so was predicated on completing the religious instruction classes. Interestingly, by integrating formal education into Quranic *duksi*<sup>45</sup> schools, students concurrently meet the religious and formal education requirements.<sup>46</sup> To keep building on the progress realized, there is an urgent need to document IRW's successful rollout of educational programs in the Dadaab Refugee Complex and replicate them elsewhere since such measures would drain the pool from which extremist groups recruit new members. Above all, by integrating formal and Quranic education, IRW has demonstrated that formal education is not opposed to Quranic learning; rather, it enhances the latter.

The IRW orphan sponsorship program ensures that orphaned refugees access food, shelter, and education. Furthermore, IRW runs a level-five district hospital that serves both refugees and the host community within the neighborhood of the Dadaab Refugee Complex. To ensure that the refugees can successfully run small businesses, IRW conducts workshops on entrepreneurship and collaborates with a local bank to provide shariah-compliant banking services for the refugees and the host community.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Duksi* means Islamic elementary institution that teaches children Quran and other related subjects. See “*Duksi* Definition,” Law Insider, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/duksi>.

<sup>46</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith,” 31.

<sup>47</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Refugees in Kenya: Roles of Faith,” 32.

The activities of Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) have transformed the lives of many refugees. IRW could perform better by collaborating with other Faith-Based Organizations. Thus, the following section complements Islamic humanitarian interventions with those of the Christian tradition.

### **Christian Response to the Refugee Crisis**

Approximately 80 percent of Kenya's population is Christians; the Christian population is diverse in terms of denominations. According to the census report of 2009, Protestants were 48 percent of the population, Roman Catholics were 23 percent, and other denominations were 11 percent. Furthermore, the report indicated that the Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Churches were the most established; other Christian groups that make significant contributions include the Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), African Inland Church (AIC), and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA).<sup>48</sup>

The following Faith-Based Organizations fall under the umbrella of Christian influence: Lutheran World Federation (LWF), National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (J.C.:HEM).

Just as the research briefly introduced the Islamic theology of migration before considering specific interventions by Muslim-based FBOs, it will follow a similar pattern in highlighting Christian interventions. This research uses Pope Francis' insights on good neighborliness in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* to underscore the need to treat the refugees well.

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<sup>48</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), "Kenya's Complex and Vibrant Religious Landscape: Features and Prospects," Policy Brief, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2017, 1.



In *Fratelli Tutti*, the pope speaks against the culture of isolation. He argues that when human beings choose solitary paths, they risk seeing mirages, and non-existent images, such as the ideologies peddled by extremist Islamic groups. Such ideologies set religious traditions against one another. On the contrary, he maintains that humanity builds dreams by working together, pointing to the importance of interreligious dialogue. Fortunately, there is no limit to the human capacity to dream about transformative initiatives, which ultimately guarantee better living conditions for the people living at the margins of society.<sup>49</sup>

Even within interreligious dialogue, there are still possibilities of seeing mirages when terrorists keep killing and displacing people in Kenya. Against this background, the virtue of hope becomes a critical element in sustaining a dialogue with the religious other. For Francis, "hope is bold: it [looks] beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it [opens] us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile."<sup>50</sup> Hope inspires the Faith-Based Organizations to persist in their work, even if their contributions transform the lives of a small percentage of the refugees.

Apart from the virtue of hope, love, which is an aspect of hospitality, is vital in effectively serving the refugees. According to Francis, love breaks the chains that separate people and builds bridges of friendship. In *Fratelli Tutti*, the pope underscores how love operates through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 25-37). He

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<sup>49</sup> Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* [Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship], accessed on January 15, 2022, [http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0141/_INDEX.HTM), # 8.

<sup>50</sup> I consider hope as a component of hospitality because, without hope, the Somali refugees would never think of a better future and would never heal from the traumas they have suffered. Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 55.

maintains that the parable invites humanity to embrace a healthy balance between global and local interests– the possibility of loving one’s country and being equally affected by the pains people in other countries bear.<sup>51</sup>

After briefly highlighting the reasons for Christian involvement in refugee activities, this research concretizes such actions through the following FBOs. Lutheran World Federation (LWF) operations are like the Islamic group (IRW). It has a center within the Dadaab Refugee Complex for receiving and registering new refugees. Also, it plays a leading role in providing water to the refugees and continually upgrades the sanitation standards of the camps. In addition, it equips the refugees with life skills training and monitors child protection services.<sup>52</sup>

The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK) facilitates peace-building workshops in the Dadaab Refugee Complex under the Peace Education Program (PEP) umbrella. NCCCK trains teachers in peace education and uses the teachers who have completed the programs as patrons of peace clubs in various schools.<sup>53</sup> NCCCK activities are commendable and need to reach the Kenyan people, especially schools, to impart peace-building skills to all learners.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) stands out as a key player in public health within refugee camps by building household restrooms and showers and erecting several handwashing stations. More importantly, it raises awareness of hygiene through activities such as the 'global handwashing day' celebration, whereby refugees perform various

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<sup>51</sup> Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 66.

<sup>52</sup> World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), “Faith and Development in Focus: Kenya,” 57.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

activities ranging from skits, dramas, and public speaking.<sup>54</sup> Such programs are influential because they enhance refugee resource-mobilization skills and serve as one of their sources of income.

Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (J.C.: HEM) has been a game-changer in refugee education, traditionally targeting primary education. Despite the low enrollment rate within the Dadaab Refugee Complex, it has enabled refugees to acquire diplomas and certificate courses in the following disciplines: entrepreneurship, community development, counseling, and teacher education. Regis University awards diplomas and certificates upon completion of the different programs. Several graduates of these programs serve as incentive workers for the humanitarian agencies working within the Dadaab Refugee Complex. Others start small businesses using the skills they acquired from J.C.: HEM. A few lucky students secure scholarships for further studies outside the Complex.<sup>55</sup> Closer scrutiny of J.C.: HEM activities demonstrates that it can potentially engage the youths constructively and lead them into productive activities instead of falling prey to the machinations of the extremist groups. Education offers a way to change the narrative and empower people.

### **Conclusion**

I have argued that the socio-history of the Somali refugees is important because it sheds light on the sufferings that these people have borne across decades. In addition, the historical accounts challenge humanitarian agencies to carefully consider how they relate

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 32.

to the Somali refugees to break the cycle of violence and suffering that the Somali refugees bear.

More importantly, I considered the hardships the Somali refugees face in the Dadaab Refugee Complex: inadequate food supplies, poor health and educational services, and sex and gender-based violence. Through this study, I explore how the value of hospitality influences people to be charitable to the Somali refugees and allow them to stay in Kenya as their political leadership in Somalia continues to lay the social, political, and economic frameworks for rebuilding the country.

I have discussed the Kenya government's responses to the refugee crisis. On two occasions, the government issued ultimatums for closing the refugee camps because Islamic extremists infiltrate refugee camps and use the camps as bases for clandestine activities. I examined the Muslim and Christian responses to the refugee crisis by offering food rations and building schools and health centers. Generally, the Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) have contributed to social change by offering opportunities to many people who would otherwise have nothing to do in life.

In chapter two, I will discuss the meaning of hospitality. Then, I will consider the theological import of *ubuntu* philosophy, reconciliation, and hospitality. Likewise, I will consider the Christian perspectives on hospitality based on Jesus' miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish and Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. Also, I examine how Prophet Muhammad's life as an orphan and leadership in Medina city influences Islamic perspectives on hospitality. Finally, I will discuss Abraham's hospitality as an invitation to anticipate the needs of vulnerable people.

## **Chapter 2**

# **HOSPITALITY IN AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the “Judge” method highlights the theological bases for hospitality towards the Somali refugees according to the perspectives of African spirituality (*ubuntu* philosophy), Christianity, and Islam. First, the chapter defines hospitality from the African perspective – unconditionally extending generosity to a person in need. Second, it describes the link between *ubuntu*, reconciliation, and hospitality to underscore human interconnectedness and the need to forgive past mistakes. Third, it discusses Jesus’ hospitality based on the miracle of the multiplication of loaves in the Synoptic Gospels and Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman. Fourth, it shows Prophet Muhammad’s hospitality based on his own childhood experiences as an orphan and his service to the people of the city of Medina. Lastly, it demonstrates how Abraham’s hospitality summons both Christians and Muslims to anticipate the needs of vulnerable people like refugees and work together through interreligious dialogue to alleviate suffering.

### **Meaning of Hospitality**

Before the Somali Civil War started, the Somalis had a robust social network that guaranteed the protection of those who were vulnerable. When drought struck a particular part of Somalia, persons who faced famine relied on their relatives in other parts of Somalia that received good rains. Also, because of the better educational facilities in

urban centers, people living in the countryside often send their children to their relatives in such urban centers to acquire quality education.<sup>56</sup>

Somali hospitality is typical of African hospitality, where the community always comes together to help people in need. Africans understand hospitality as a fundamental aspect of human relationships. Both the traditional and contemporary African societies consider hospitality a gesture of generosity that one voluntarily extends to the other without expecting anything in return. African hospitality arises from the premise that no one exists alone; instead, each person forms part of the larger human community.<sup>57</sup> All are interconnected.

From the perspective of dialogue among different religions, theologian Catherine Cornille considers hospitality as the capacity to recognize the actual truth in the religious other and integrate those truths into one's tradition. To a large extent, hospitality encompasses the other conditions for dialogue, such as humility, commitment, empathy, hope, love, and interconnection.<sup>58</sup>

For Cornille, hospitality implies that persons who are in dialogue with one another must accept the other as they are<sup>59</sup> and respect their value systems;<sup>60</sup> the

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<sup>56</sup> Cindy Horst, *Transnational Nomads* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), 63-65.

<sup>57</sup> Joyce W. Kiige, S. Selvan and Lucy Njiru, "Correlation between African Hospitality and Human Flourishing among Young Adults in Kenya," *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publication*, 9 (2018): 211. Orobator asserts that values like unity, solidarity, participation, and co-responsibility guide African society. He insists that these values are equally important for the Church because they make the Church dynamic, vibrant, and more responsive to the needs of vulnerable people. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 88.

<sup>58</sup> Catherine Cornille, "Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue," in *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Interreligious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (Malden, Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2013), 26.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

interlocutors must be ready to unlearn their prejudices and embrace positive values from the religious other.

The Muslim scholar Mona Siddiqui integrates philosophy and theology to outline the features of hospitality from the perspectives of Christians and Muslims. While doing so, she borrows some of Immanuel Kant's ideas, such as: "hospitality [is] the defining element bringing people of different cultures together in a political context. [Moreover] hospitality is a natural right possessed of all humans by virtue of their rights to communal possession of the earth's surface."<sup>61</sup> Hospitality makes humanity appreciate all forms of life on the earth's surface, particularly the right each person has to live a dignified life. Moreover, when forced by unavoidable circumstances such as war, hospitality is the virtue that defines the parameters for receiving refugees and supplying their basic needs by the hosting community.

It is imperative to note that hospitality is both a process and an event. As a process, it begins with providing physical needs, such as food and shelter. The Christian tradition considers the first step as table fellowship; eating together symbolizes partaking of all the benefits of life. Jesus revolutionized the table fellowship by dining with people considered sinners and socially marginal (Lk 7:36-50; Lk 19:1-10).<sup>62</sup> As an event, hospitality builds upon the benefits of physical nourishment by leading both host and

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<sup>61</sup> Mona Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam: Welcoming in God's Name* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), 2.

<sup>62</sup> Amy G. Oden, *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 14.

guest to the spiritual realm. Both host and guest acknowledge God as the source of all that nourishes them.<sup>63</sup>

Tanzanian theologian Laurenti Magesa argues that the antonym of hospitality is greed, the tendency to hoard things for oneself. For Magesa, hospitality implies one's willingness to form and participate actively in the community's activities.<sup>64</sup> This active participation is grounded in realizing that all are interconnected. Magesa's insights fit into the goal of this thesis: developing a community that celebrates and respects Somali refugees through the use of interreligious dialogue and intentional hospitality.

From the perspectives of Christianity and Islam, hospitality implies opening one's heart and mind to receive and welcome other people. Hospitality entails learning to forgive oneself in anticipation of forgiving others. Likewise, hospitality means being compassionate and overcoming the spirit of self-centeredness.<sup>65</sup> More importantly, "communities become more hospitable when they experience a de-centering of perspectives, too, they become more aware of the structural inequalities that exist in and around them."<sup>66</sup> In this research, de-centering of perspectives is important because it establishes the shared history of the Somali refugees and Kenyan Somalis; de-centering highlights the historical injustices the Somali refugees and Kenyan Somalis have suffered. Only then would it be possible to consider the crises the Somali refugees currently face and develop appropriate programs for remedying the situation.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>64</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 62.

<sup>65</sup> Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 18-19.

<sup>66</sup> Oden, *And You Welcomed Me*, 16.



To sum up, hospitality entails anticipating the needs of vulnerable people such as the Somali refugees and serving their physical, social, and spiritual needs by visiting and speaking with them and providing them with food. In the next section, I demonstrate how *ubuntu* philosophy influences African understanding and practice of hospitality.

### ***Ubuntu*, Reconciliation and Hospitality**

The term *ubuntu* [and its variant forms such as *utu* in Kiswahili] is of Bantu origin.<sup>67</sup> Linguists identify the common elements of Bantu and *ubuntu* by their common root of *ntu* (human). Accordingly, the prefix *ba* denotes the plural form of humanity. Etymologically, *ntu* implies the state of being, becoming human. At the same time, *ntu* connotes the direct relationship between human being and God's being. *Ubuntu* is an African concept by which a person develops his/her/their identity interdependently through the community. In other words, *ubuntu* is a symbiotic and cooperative relationship in which every member of society plays his/her/their role in building the community. As such, neither does *ubuntu* perpetuate dependency syndrome nor the cut-throat competition for a person to succeed in life while others fail and live in misery.<sup>68</sup>

The genius of *ubuntu* philosophy lies in its capacity to challenge human beings to consider diversity not as a threat, but as a source of strength for humanity. However, many a time, human beings fail to celebrate their diversity based on the wars they wage against one another and even indiscriminate exploitation of the natural resources. The spirit of conquest by human beings causes disharmony in the African worldview,

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<sup>67</sup> Aloo Osotsi Mojola, “*Ubuntu* in the Christian Theology and Praxis of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Its Implications for Global Justice and Human Rights,” in *Ubuntu and the Reconstitution of the Community*, ed. James Ogude (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019), 21.

<sup>68</sup> Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009), 1-2.

especially when ancestors withdraw their support from the surviving family members and punish their lousy conduct.<sup>69</sup> The dire consequences of breaking the harmonious relationship among human beings, the cosmos, and God often led human beings to gather and assess the cause of their miseries and identify possible solutions to their problems. Such meetings (palavers) were moments when human beings considered the impact of both their words and actions.

The traditional African society considered the words that human beings speak to be so important that they compared effective listening and action to how ruminants chew, eat, ruminate, and digest pasture. Similarly, the traditional African society emphasized good hearing and believed that only the persons who heard well could chew, eat, ruminate, and digest the spoken word. The Dagon in Mali compared the ear and teeth to the mouth and eardrum, respectively.<sup>70</sup>

As Bujo rightly noted, palaver does not aim to dazzle people or mislead people by empty rhetoric devoid of action. Instead, palaver serves as a forum for learning and re-examining the power of human speech to build the community of human beings.<sup>71</sup>

More importantly, palaver would not only highlight the sufferings of the Somali refugees, but palaver undertaken in the spirit of *ubuntu* would also facilitate reconciliation among the Somali refugees and the Kenyan hosting community. In the African traditional societies, people trusted the process of palavers. They complied with rules, a situation that encouraged even persons who had committed heinous crimes to lay

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<sup>69</sup> Nhanhla Mkhize, “*Ubuntu* and Harmony: An African Approach to Morality and Ethics,” in *Nicolson* (Scottsville, S. Afr: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 37.

<sup>70</sup> Benezet Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001), 151.

<sup>71</sup> Bujo, *Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, 152.

bare their dark history in public. In compliance with the demands of the traditional jurisprudence, palavers could allow Somali refugees to be remorseful over the harmful actions of the Islamic extremists who infiltrate their camps and later cause harm to Kenyans. A similar spirit would allow Kenyans to seek pardon for several occasions in which they have indiscriminately blamed the Somali refugees for terrorist attacks within the country. In essence, *ubuntu* jurisprudence is restorative and aims at reforming the way of life of the perpetrator of evil rather than meting out punishment against the offender.<sup>72</sup> The concept of *ubuntu* offers a solid basis for interreligious dialogue in the context of the Somali refugees.

Moreover, the traditional African jurisprudence becomes more apparent through Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart*. The novel's main protagonist, Okonkwo, inadvertently killed his relative and sought refuge in his maternal home for seven years as punishment for his offense. The maternal relatives received Okonkwo well and he spent seven years at his maternal village. Before Okonkwo returned to his paternal village, he organized a thanksgiving party for his hosts in which one of the elders noted, "A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their home. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together

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<sup>72</sup> Tutu narrates how the family of Amy Biehl, a human rights activist, forgave the people who stoned their daughter to death. Even though they nursed the pain of losing their daughter, they supported the process of amnesty and embraced the families of the murderers of their child. Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 153. Orobator, too, argues that life is a shared reality among human beings, nature, ancestors, and the unborn in the African worldview. Accordingly, sin implies any human activity that diminishes life. Whenever a person sins, he/she/they would be remorseful and involve the whole community and nature in the process of reconciliation. Ultimately reconciliation restores the original harmony with God, ancestors, self, fellow human beings, and nature. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*, 62-63. Based on these discussions, it is apparent that the African spirituality contains values that the Kenyan government, the Somali refugees, and Kenyan Muslims and Christians could use to rehabilitate Islamic extremists and finally accord the Somali refugees their rightful dignity in the camps.

because it is good for kinsmen to do so.”<sup>73</sup> Okonkwo reciprocated the kindness his mother's relatives had accorded him.

When I re-read Okonkwo's narrative in light of the Somali refugee crisis, I realized that home did not imply a single geographical location in the African worldview but included places to which a person fled during moments of crisis. In addition, a guest was responsible for maintaining good relationships with his/her/their hosts and explicitly expressing one's gratitude before returning to their original home.

Apart from Okonkwo's narrative, I use theologian and Ugandan Catholic priest Emmanuel Katongole's narratives of reconciliation to demonstrate how African restorative justice is a means to hospitality. Hospitality manifests itself in the journey to forgiveness and reconciliation found in the narrative about Angelina Atyam, whose daughter, alongside other girls, the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)<sup>74</sup> abducted in 1996. Angelina and the other girls' parents formed the Concerned Parents' Association (CPA), an organization through which they advocated for the girls' release. The LRA rebels realized the influential role Angelina played in the association and as a way of silencing Angelina, the rebels agreed to release Angelina's daughter. However, the latter refused, insisting that the minimum condition to which she would agree was the release of all the girls.

The *ubuntu* spirit within Angelina would not allow her to receive her daughter back while the other girls were still in bondage. Surprisingly, even after her daughter escaped from the rebels and returned home, Angelina did not hate the LRA rebels.

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<sup>73</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (England and Wales: Heinemann, 1958), 55.

<sup>74</sup> LRA was a rebel group that terrorized northern Uganda's people for several years.

Angelina opined, "Nothing will bring back the many people killed and the children lost. Only God can, and only God knows of 'justice.'"<sup>75</sup> Archbishop John Odama reiterated Angelina's remarks: "The question is not so much whether Kony should be brought to justice, but whether Kony can be saved." Odama understood the pain the rebels caused the people of northern Uganda but also realized that reconciliation was more important than punishing the rebels.<sup>76</sup> The narratives of Angelina and Odama demonstrate that reconciliation happens when true forgiveness takes place. Ultimately, reconciliation restores the human dignity that violence tore apart.

The two narratives of Angelina and Archbishop Odama are important in Kenya's Christian-Muslim dialogue because they demonstrate that people can always go beyond their pains, forgive their tormentors, and live again in peace. By Kenyan Christians and Muslims entering into a dialogue about the quality of care that Somali refugees should receive, they will acknowledge the harm Islamic extremists who infiltrate refugee camps have caused the Kenyan people and the economy. Through honest conversations, they will focus on the factors that fuel religious violence among them and how to mitigate such causes. At the same time, interlocutors would not focus on the negative impact of the presence of Somali refugees but consider the contributions they could make to the Kenyan economy. Forgiveness and authentic reconciliation are key steps in working toward hospitality and alleviating suffering.

Such reconciliation efforts mirror Magesa's remarks: *ubuntu* philosophy challenges xenophobia trends and inward-looking immigration policies. In addition,

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<sup>75</sup> Cited in Katongole, *Reconciling All Things*, 32.

<sup>76</sup> Cited in Katongole, *Reconciling All Things*, 32-33.

*ubuntu* philosophy invites people, and in this context, Kenya, to rethink and redefine its boundaries – " . . . [moving] from smaller nonviable ethnic structures to larger multi-ethnic, multinational units while preserving solidarity of the smaller units – in the sense of the principle of 'solidarity.'" In other words, *ubuntu* encompasses an ever-expanding scope of social relationships and supporting one another.<sup>77</sup> *Ubuntu* philosophy summons Kenya to protect its citizens alongside Somali refugees and all people within the country.

In summary, *ubuntu* philosophy demonstrates the tight bonds that bind humanity together despite their different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Because human beings are interconnected, they must always support those who are vulnerable, such as refugees. Due to the conflicts that perpetuate divisions among people, *ubuntu* [the spirit of being human and humane] enables human beings to reconcile their differences and begin a new chapter of their lives even after facing traumatic events.

Similarly, the Christian theological understanding of hospitality in dialogue with *ubuntu* offers grounds for interreligious dialogue and alleviating suffering for the Somali refugees. In the following section, I will consider the Christian perspectives on hospitality based on two episodes of Jesus' public ministry: feeding 5,000 people out of five loaves and two fish in the Synoptic Gospels and the story of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-42).

### **Christian Perspectives on Hospitality**

The miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish in the Synoptic Gospels and the story of the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42) provide the bases for Christian

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<sup>77</sup> Laurenti Magesa, *What is Not Sacred? African Spirituality* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2013), 143. Orobator borrows the image of the family to discuss the Church as an institution that welcomes people and fights against structures that perpetuate discrimination against others based on gender and church hierarchy. Within the context of refugees, the church-as-family is an institution that embraces all human beings irrespective of their religious affiliations. An African home always welcomes guests. See Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 89.

perspectives on hospitality. These gospel narratives demonstrate that hospitable people forgo personal interests and cross social and religious barriers to serve vulnerable people.

### **Jesus: The Embodiment of Mercy**

Politicians usually develop elaborate manifestos outlining their social, economic, and economic plans for the electorate. Similarly, Jesus crafted a plan for his ministry, the Nazareth manifesto: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4: 18-19). By feeding the hungry and mingling with sinners, Jesus remained faithful to his manifesto of establishing God's kingdom.

The Synoptic Gospels demonstrate that people appreciated Jesus' preaching. They would keep following him wherever he went: "Now many [people] saw [Jesus and his disciples] going [to a deserted place] and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all towns and arrived ahead of them" (Mt 14:14; Mk 6:33; Lk 9:11). Jesus' preaching consoled poor people, satisfied the people's desires, and instilled in the people a vision for a better world. No wonder the people kept following Jesus.<sup>78</sup>

Jesus often retreated to deserted places so that his disciples could rest after successfully performing the various tasks he had assigned. Rest and personal care notwithstanding, Jesus always availed himself to the people who sought him even in the deserted places: "...he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things" (Mt 14:14; Mk 6:34; Lk 9:11). Jesus'

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<sup>78</sup> Jesus' availability to serve needy people, even at odd hours and in a secluded place, demonstrates that he was ever kind and hospitable. Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 1997), 362.

mercy had no limits; whereas the disciples wanted him to dismiss the crowds, he instructed them to feed them.

A Somali-American human rights activist, Hamdia Ahmed,<sup>79</sup> narrates that she was born during the second wave of violence in Somalia when her family fled to Kenya. The nursing mother covered 370 miles to reach the Dadaab Refugee Complex.<sup>80</sup> The mother's journey to the refugee camp parallels the journey of the crowds to the desert where Jesus and his disciples had retreated.

After a prolonged session of preaching, Jesus' disciples noticed that the congregation was hungry and implored him: "This is a deserted place, and the hour is very late; send [the people] away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages to buy something for themselves to eat" (Mt 14:15; Mk 6:35; Lk 6:12). The disciples noticed that it was getting late, and they did not have food to offer the crowds. Therefore, they requested Jesus to dismiss the crowds. The conversation that Jesus had with his disciples contains vital lessons for the refugee crisis in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. The Kenyan government has issued several ultimatums of closing refugee camps, citing security concerns. From the Kenyan government's responses, the refugees appear a burden, people that the Kenyan government can dismiss easily.

In a manner typical of motherhood – a mother using all resources at her disposal to feed her children – Jesus ignores the worries of his disciples. Instead, he challenges

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<sup>79</sup> Hamdia Ahmed is a Somali-American, studying political science at the University of Southern Maine. She lived in the Ifo Refugee Camp, in Dadaab, Kenya, from 1997 to 2005. She has made a name for herself, advocating for the rights of refugees and migrants. Jessica Dineen, "Once a Refugee, Somali-American Hamdia Ahmed Speaks for Migrants," *Forbes*, accessed March 3, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/unicefusa/2018/09/05/oncearefugeesomaliamericanhamdiaahmedspeaksupformigrants/?sh=216143516522>.

<sup>80</sup> Like the gospel narrative of Jesus feeding 5,000 people in the desert, the location of the refugee camps is a desert. There is a parallel between the crowds following Jesus in the desert and the refugees settling in the camps.



them: "Give them something to eat" (Mt 14:16; Mk 6:37; Lk 9:13). The same command that Jesus issued to his disciples, then, is operative in this research for the current situation in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. Jesus is still challenging us. In this case, the challenge is issued to Kenyan Muslims and Christians to examine themselves and collectively identify practical ways of responding to the needs of the Somali refugees – through the provision of things like food, clothing, and counseling services.

Jesus' command provoked his disciples to assess what they possessed – five loaves and two fish. At that juncture, Jesus directed his disciples to ensure that the people sat in groups of fifty (Lk 9:14). Then, Jesus relying on his disciples' generosity, took the five loaves and two fish, blessed them, broke, and gave them to his disciples to feed the people (Lk 9:16). Just as Jesus fed the five thousand people out of five loaves and two fish, so does he continue to feed humanity, especially vulnerable people.<sup>81</sup> Jesus continues to work through people of goodwill to meet vulnerable people where they are. For Kenyan Muslims and Christians to adequately care for the Somali refugees, the Kenyan Muslims and Christians must learn to be generous with their resources like Jesus' disciples did when they offered Jesus five loaves and two fish. Above all, Kenyan Muslims and Christians must appreciate the role of prayer and friendship with God – prayer would enable them to appreciate that the resources they own are gifts from God. These gifts nourish not only themselves but also vulnerable people.

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<sup>81</sup> Before Jesus performed the miracle of the multiplication of the five loaves and two fish, he instructed his disciples to organize the crowds into groups of fifty. Then, Jesus did what pious Jews always did before meals – “taking, blessing, breaking, and giving.” Here, Jesus offered a lesson that humanity makes good use of the gifts that God bequeaths them when they are orderly. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 365.

## **Jesus: Hospitality Beyond Boundaries and Divisions**

Jesus' ministry knew no boundaries but encompassed people of all cultures. Jesus taught his disciples the universality of his mission by traveling from Judea to Galilee through Samaria, where he met the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well at Sychar (Jn 4:16).

Usually, women would fetch water in the early morning hours when the weather was more relaxed. That the Samaritan woman came to draw water from the well at noon tacitly shows that she did not enjoy the company of fellow women, perhaps, on account of her failed five marriages. The meeting between Jesus and the woman was a scandal due to her troubled history.<sup>82</sup> Jesus deliberately met the woman at the well when she did not expect to meet anyone there. Likewise, Christian-Muslim dialogue must intentionally promote encountering the refugees and caring for them.

Jesus, even though aware of the ethnic divide between the Jews and the Samaritans, initiates the conversation with the Samaritan on a tricky note – "Give me a drink" (Jn 4: 7). Jesus broke the religious barriers that separated Jews from Samaritans by talking to the woman. Similarly, religious leaders and people of goodwill must never avoid tackling problematic issues, like: Why do Islamic extremists target innocent Somali refugees and Kenyans? Why have previous Kenyan governments neglected predominantly Muslim regions in Kenya? How could Kenyan Muslims and Christians take good care of the Somali refugees in Dadaab Refugee Complex?

The conversation began on a difficult note, became more straightforward, and finally, spiritual. A mutual exchange of gifts occurs – Jesus seeking to quench his thirst materially and the woman seeking spiritual nourishment.

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<sup>82</sup> Diane B. Stinton, "Encountering Jesus at the Well: Further Reflections on African Women's Christologies," *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 7 (2013): 268-9.

As the woman drank from the waters of the living spring, she became open about her troubling history, a factor that had excluded her from the company of other women. Gradually, she mustered the courage to speak out, "I have no husband" (Jn 4:17). She advanced to higher theological reflections from her dark history and understood that God transcends human categories anchored on ethnicity and places of worship. She learned that "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). The Samaritan woman underwent a gradual spiritual transformation, courtesy of her encounter with Jesus, a man who paid attention to her story and openly discussed how God manifests himself to humanity.

This narrative offers a helpful pattern for Christian-Muslim dialogue since it provides the framework for meeting the other despite religious/social/cultural differences. Moreover, it shows that encountering the other as they are leads to a better appreciation of that which is good and truthful - an appreciation of the vulnerable persons affected by the grandstanding and exclusivist religious positions.

After her religious transformation, the Samaritan woman could no longer hold the joy within her heart, but she returned to the village and testified about encountering the Messiah. Subsequently, the entire village sought Jesus and believed in him not just because of the woman's testimony but on account of what they saw and heard from Jesus (Jn 4: 42). Similarly, through dialogue and the sharing of narratives, Kenyan Muslims and Christians can become ambassadors of peace and advocates for the rights of the Somali refugees within the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

## **Islamic Perspectives on Hospitality**

This section studies migration in Islam and the Islamic teachings on hospitality. The conviction of this research is rooted in Brother Gioacchino Campese words that state: “The goal of theology is not simply to understand, but to understand in order to transform the reality of oppression, violence, and sin in which people live as they journey toward the realization of the reign of God.”<sup>83</sup> In the first chapter, I examined the problems of the Somali refugees, and in this chapter, I discuss the theological bases of Islamic teachings on hospitality against the background of the refugee crisis.

### **Muhammad: The Immigrant and Teacher of Hospitality**

The Prophet Muhammad was born in 570 C.E., and his clan was Banu Hashim of the Quraysh clan. Muhammad's father, Abdullah, died before his birth. A Bedouin family took care of Muhammad immediately after his birth for two years. After Muhammad's brief sojourn in the desert, he stayed with his mother until her death when Muhammad was six years old. Following his mother's death, Muhammad's paternal grandfather, Abd al-Muttalib, assumed the parental responsibilities until his death two years later. After a series of misfortunes, Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, assumed the responsibility of raising the Prophet.<sup>84</sup>

Prophet Muhammad lost his parents at an early age and grew up under the care of extended family members like his grandfather and uncle. It was clear that even before the Prophet received revelations from God, he already understood that welcoming and taking

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<sup>83</sup> Gioacchino Campese, “The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Theological Studies* 73 (2012): 6.

<sup>84</sup> Boundless, “Early Life of Muhammad,” World Civilization, accessed March 5, 2022, <https://www.boundless.com/worldhistory/textbooks/boundlessworldhistorytextbook/>.

good care of a person in need is an essential component of human relationships. The grace of God's revelation simply built upon the nature of hospitality that Prophet Muhammad had understood before God's revelation.

At the age of forty, and during the month of Ramadhan, Prophet Muhammad began receiving the revelations from God for twenty-two years (610-632 C.E.). As soon as the Prophet became aware of God's revelations, he preached in Mecca against polytheism and social injustice. On the one hand, Prophet Muhammad's preaching won him many young followers. On the other hand, the Prophets preaching won him several enemies, especially those making huge profits from exploitative businesses.<sup>85</sup>

After the death of the Prophet's wife Khadija<sup>86</sup> and his uncle, Abu Talib – who had been his protector from childhood, the Meccan opposition to Islamic teachings gradually increased from derision and verbal attacks to full-blown persecution. As Meccan persecution intensified, Muhammad sent some of his followers to a Christian country called Abyssinia. King Negus of Abyssinia was a just man and hated oppression. When the powerful Quraysh tribe learned that Muhammad had sent some of his followers to Abyssinia, it sent a delegation to King Negus, requesting him to repatriate Muhammad's followers on the charge of being heretics. As a prudent man, King Negus investigated all the issues that the delegation sent by Quraysh tribe raised. King Negus

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<sup>85</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8-9.

<sup>86</sup> Khadija was a wealthy widow, for whom Muhammad was a steward, and whom he later married. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 6.

found no fault in the faith of Muhammad's followers and refused to send them back to Mecca.<sup>87</sup>

The narrative above demonstrates how Islam faced persecution at its inception and how a Christian King hosted Muslims who fled persecution in Mecca. King Negus not only welcomed the strangers but also refused to send the Muslims who had sought refuge in his territory back to Mecca because he understood that sending them back would result in their deaths. Just as Muhammad's followers fled Mecca, so did the Somali refugees, who are currently staying in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. The ongoing war in Somalia has led to the destruction of properties of inestimable value and caused several deaths. The courage of King Negus is a virtue Kenyan Christians should embrace to welcome refugees in Kenya, specifically Somali refugees, who are overwhelmingly Muslims. In appreciation of King Negus' attitude, the Somali refugees are responsible for interrogating all the refugees who join them in the camps and preach hatred and religious violence. By Somali refugees embracing and promoting peace in compliance with the meaning of Islam [peace], it would be easier for both Christian and Muslim humanitarian agencies to serve the needs of the Somali refugees better. In addition, this research considers other instances of the King's generosity and kindness.

When conditions in Mecca improved a little bit, Muhammad's followers, who had fled to Abyssinia returned to Mecca. However, Muhammad's cousin, Hazrat Umm-e-Habiba remained in Abyssinia because her father, Abu Sufyan, vehemently opposed Islam. It would not have been safe for her to return home. During Hazrat's sojourn in

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<sup>87</sup> Reem Shraiky, "King Negus: The Holy Prophet's Representative and True Follower," *Al Hakam*, accessed March 6, 2022, <https://www.alhakam.org/kingnegustheholyprophetsrepresentativeandtruefollower/>.

Abyssinia, her husband died, and after observing the mourning period, the Prophet proposed to remarry Hazrat, to which the latter consented. Because Muhammad could not be there in person, he requested King Negus to serve as his representative during the wedding ceremony. Not only did King Negus agree to represent Muhammad, but he also preached a moving sermon during the ceremony; King Negus offered Hazrat 4,00 dirham as bride price and fed all the guests who attended the ceremony. When it was appropriate for Hazrat to join Muhammad, King Negus offered Hazrat, her maid Abraha, and her daughter many clothes, saffron, and perfumes.<sup>88</sup>

The relationship between Prophet Muhammad and King Negus shows that hospitality is not limited to providing for the material needs of the guests. Hospitality also entails establishing social relationships – getting to know the family members of the guests and participating in their social events such as mourning the loss of loved ones and wedding ceremonies. Furthermore, hospitality includes anticipating the guests' needs; while serving in Muhammad's place in the marriage to Hazrat, King Negus arranged for a meal after the ceremony, which guests came to know at the end of the wedding ceremony. Finally, hospitality thrives on trust – Muhammad trusted King Negus, and did not hesitate to have the King serve as his representative during Muhammad's wedding to Hazrat.

### **Mohammad and the Islamic Community**

In 622 C.E., Prophet Muhammad and two hundred of his followers relocated to Medina. The migration (*hijra*) to Medina became a turning in the history of Islam – it led

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<sup>88</sup> Shraiky, "King Negus: The Holy Prophet's Representative and True Follower."

to the creation of the first Islamic community (*umma*).<sup>89</sup> Through the Islamic community, Muhammad integrated the immigrants with the original inhabitants of Medina in a spirit of love and solidarity. The Quran praises the collaborative spirit among the immigrants and local people as follows:

Those who are already firmly established in their homes [in Medina], and firmly rooted in faith, show love for those who migrated to them for refuge and harbor no desire in their hearts for what has been given to them. They give them preference over themselves, even if they are too poor; for those who are saved from their own souls' greed are truly successful (Q. 59.9).

The Islamic community that Prophet Muhammad created in Medina brought peace and harmony among people whose religious worldviews were radically opposed to one another. Moreover, the Islamic community underscored the power of solidarity – members of Quraysh tribe who migrated to Medina left behind all their property in Mecca, and never lacked anything because of the generosity of the people of Yathrib. Perhaps, Christian – Muslim dialogue in Kenya could borrow a cue on solidarity from the Islamic community in Medina in view of sharing resources for helping vulnerable people like refugees.

The Islamic community accommodated both the rich and the poor (Q 4:29). The Islamic community parallels Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God, which welcomed people from all walks of life – blind beggars like Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52), the Samaritan woman with her baggage of five failed marriages (Jn 4:1-42), and the conversion of Zacchaeus, the tax collector (Lk 19:1-10), among others. These are essential values in this Christian-Muslim dialogue that examines hospitality towards refugees.

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<sup>89</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 9.



Prophet Muhammad introduced another nuance to the functioning of the Islamic faith by recommending that Muslims embrace the spirit of good neighborliness. Muhammad taught about good neighborliness following the question a man had asked him on how to merit eternal life. The Prophet answered the man to be good to his neighbors. Still eager to learn more, the man asked Muhammad how he would be certain of doing the right thing. The Prophet advised the man to listen to other people's stories about him – if the neighbors stated that he was a good man, such a response would be a favorable judgment of actions. On the other hand, if the neighbors considered him to be bad, then he would know that his actions were evil.<sup>90</sup> Within the context of interreligious dialogue, the teachings on good neighborliness imply listening attentively to the assessment from the people who depend on the services of Christian and Muslim humanitarian agencies, of really hearing.

Prophet Muhammad outlined the details for practicing hospitality – the period for caring for a guest is three days, and offering the best services is for a day and a night. He underscored that a guest's prolonged stay exhausts the host's resources, making them sin by failing to provide for their needs.<sup>91</sup> In the case of refugees domiciled in the Dadaab Camp, applying the above exhortation by the Prophet is problematic. When the refugees came to Kenya, they never anticipated staying for long in Kenya. Sadly, peace has been elusive in Somalia as various militant groups fight. As a result, the refugees have stayed longer in Kenya and perhaps exhausted the resources for providing for their needs. These

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<sup>90</sup> Muhammad B. Uthman al-Dhahabi, *The Major Sins*, trans. Mohammed M. Siddiqui (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 2007).

<sup>91</sup> Quoted from *Sahih Muslim* 18:4287 in Jayme R. Reaves, "Hospitality and the Abrahamic Traditions," in *Safeguarding the Stranger: An Abrahamic Theology and Ethic of Protective Hospitality*, (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 109-110, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1131g92.7>.

developments place the burden of going beyond the dictates of hospitality due to the common humanity the Kenyan hosting community shares with the refugees. As a result, the hosting community and other development partners must collaborate to provide the refugees' needs without relying on a particular timeframe.

### **Abraham: A Model of Hospitality**

Abraham is a foundational character in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. He exemplifies the value of hospitality to the extent that each of these traditions refers to him when handling refugees and strangers in general. He lived on earth simply and responded generously to God's call of leaving his family for an unknown land. Abraham's hospitality and trust in God underscore: "that no one, neither people nor individual, really has a home in world history, that no one is finally secure, that we are all pushed about, that we are all eternal strangers since it is only in God that we are finally at home and secure."<sup>92</sup> Since humanity's true abode is God, human beings must serve the needs of people exiled by wars and other natural catastrophes. The discussions above demonstrate that Abraham's faith in God influenced his actions of receiving guests and providing for their needs, as it appears in Gen 18:1-16; Quran 11:72; 15: 51; and 51:24.<sup>93</sup>

John Chrysostom elucidates Abraham's hospitality in his forty-first homily.<sup>94</sup> Abraham held hospitality in high esteem and always took full charge of receiving and hosting guests. Even though Abraham had three hundred and eighteen servants, he did

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<sup>92</sup> Quoted from Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/3, 224-25 in Reaves, "Hospitality and the Abrahamic Traditions," 75.

<sup>93</sup> Jayme R. Reaves, "Hospitality and the Abrahamic Traditions," in *Safeguarding the Stranger*, 75.

<sup>94</sup> John Chrysostom is one of the early Church Fathers who wrote a lot about Christianity and was an articulate preacher of the gospel.

not entrust the care of his guests to servants. In addition, Abraham always anticipated the needs of his guests. Abraham always sat strategically to see all passing by and invite them to his home.<sup>95</sup> Apart from the Old Testament accounts of Abraham's hospitality, the following texts of the New Testament also highlight Abraham's hospitality.

The Gospels present Abraham as a model of faith and hospitality. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus narrates the parable of Abraham welcoming the poor beggar, Lazarus, upon his death and allowing him to partake of heavenly joys (Lk 16:19-31). In the Gospel of John, Jesus challenges his interlocutors to imitate Abraham's hospitality; as such, Jesus invites them to be kind to him and listen to his teachings (Jn 8:39-40).<sup>96</sup>

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses the parable of the judgment of the nations to invite his listeners to perform acts of mercy to vulnerable persons. Such an exhortation fits into Abraham's hospitality that knew no boundaries among human beings. The author of the *Testament of Abraham*<sup>97</sup> demonstrates the impartiality of Abraham's hospitality as follows: "He welcomed everyone – rich and poor, kings and rulers, the crippled and the helpless, friends and strangers, neighbors and passersby – all on equal terms did the pious, entirely holy, righteous, and hospitable Abraham welcome."<sup>98</sup> Abraham always anticipated the needs of vulnerable people. Muslims, too, identify with Abraham and consider him the prototype of submitting to God.

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<sup>95</sup> Siddiqui, *Hospitality and Islam*, 26-27.

<sup>96</sup> Daniel Deforest London, "A Christian Perspective on Abraham's Hospitality," *Lishol*, accessed March 29, 2022, <https://deforestlondon.wordpress.com/2017/11/29/achristianperspectiveonabrahamshospitality/>.

<sup>97</sup> *New Testament* is an old Christian text from the first century.

<sup>98</sup> Andrew E. Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in Its Mediterranean Setting* (Phoenix: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 67.

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* spoke about the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions. Specifically, the Council Fathers noted, "[Muslims] strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims link their own."<sup>99</sup> As such, I argue that aspects of Abraham's hospitality like anticipating the needs of vulnerable persons in Christianity, equally apply to Muslims. Likewise, Abraham's hospitality shares many features with African spirituality, which promotes caring for vulnerable people in society and realizing how interconnected we all are.

Abraham serves as a model for African spirituality because he possessed the two clusters of *ubuntu* to the highest degree. Abraham had the moral quality of relating with other people as fellow human beings irrespective of their social standing – travelers, relatives, and servants. In addition, Abraham appreciated the bond that unites all humanity. Because Abraham understood that human beings were interconnected, he always anticipated the needs of people since he understood that what was good for him was equally good for other people.<sup>100</sup>

I consider Abraham's hospitality an essential aspect of this interreligious dialogue. It demonstrates that the Somali refugees deserve to live in a suitable environment because it is the right thing to do for fellow human beings. Secondly, Abraham's hospitality

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<sup>99</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, October 28 1965," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1975), sec 3.

<sup>100</sup> Christian B. N. Gade, "What is Ubuntu? Different Interpretations among South Africans of African Descent," *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 31 (2012): 494.

affirms that human beings are interconnected. As such, the sufferings of Somali refugees affect all human beings.

### **Conclusion**

I have demonstrated in this chapter that hospitality is an important value in African spirituality; hospitality leads people to recognize that they are interconnected and have a duty of care towards fellow human beings. In the African spirituality, hospitable people always anticipate the needs of vulnerable persons – inviting them for meals, visiting them when they are sick, and providing travelers with accommodation. Such attitudes of welcoming people into one's home or space are essential in serving refugees who flee their homes and relocate to relatively secure environments. Above all, African spirituality plays a critical role in this chapter because it is the foundation upon which Christian and Islamic hospitality develops while reflecting theologically on hospitality in the African context.

Apart from the African perspectives, I considered Cornille's insights on hospitality as love, empathy, interconnectedness, commitment, and humility. Also, I included Siddiqui's definition of hospitality – human beings come together and work towards eliminating practices that perpetuate social injustices in society.

The Somali refugees become anxious when the Kenyan government issues ultimatums to close the refugee camps and repatriate the refugees. Also, the Somali refugees suffer when they cannot access sufficient food and quality healthcare and education. On the other hand, Kenyans suffer when Islamic extremists infiltrate the refugee camps and later kill innocent Kenyans and destroy property. The Islamic extremists sow seeds of discord between the Kenyan citizens and the Somali refugees.

The sufferings and hatred notwithstanding, I have demonstrated that the *ubuntu* philosophy can reconcile Kenyans and Somali refugees. I cited ubuntu philosophy's success in reconciling victims of LRA atrocities with the rebels in Uganda. Likewise, I discussed Jesus' role in feeding and caring for vulnerable people in light of the Somali refugee crisis.

Kenya has hosted the Somali refugees for nearly three decades and feels fatigued. However, Jesus offers Kenyans a strategy for hosting the refugees by his miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish. The crowds for whom Jesus performed this miracle deliberately interrupted Jesus' session with the apostles. However, Jesus did not take offense at the crowds' intrusion.

Nevertheless, Jesus set aside his session with the apostles, preached to the crowds, healed the sick, and directed the apostles to feed the crowds when the latter wanted Jesus to dismiss the crowds. Jesus' attitude challenges people of goodwill to consider ways of serving the Somali refugees rather than repatriating them to Somalia, which is still insecure. At the same time, I have complemented Christian perspectives on hospitality with Islamic perspectives.

Islam teaches that Adam, the father of humanity, migrated from heaven to the earth, implying that all humans are migrants. There is nothing strange in people fleeing their homes and settling in an environment where they are safe. Moreover, Prophet Muhammad, as an infant, grew up under the care of a foster family until when he was two years old. When he began to preach about Islam, he faced much opposition from the influential members of his tribe and had to send his followers to Abyssinia, a Christian country. In response to the petition by the people of Medina to have Prophet Muhammad

as their leader, the Prophet left Mecca and settled in Medina, where he started an Islamic community. Based on the discussion above, it is clear that Islam challenges humanity to be hospitable and charitable, especially to refugees.

Subsequently, I considered Abraham's hospitality as a uniting formula for the Christian, Muslim, and African Spiritualities. Abraham welcomed all people to his home and provided his guests with the best meals. Abraham's hospitality demonstrated that faith in God must manifest in a person's love for fellow human beings.

Chapter three discusses how the Kenyan government, the international community, and religious leaders could collaborate to protect Somali refugees. Similarly, it highlights how Prophet Muhammad's life could promote peace and tranquility in Dadaab Refugee Complex. Subsequently, it proposes how familiarity with *Nosta Aetate* and the model of church-as-family could ignite the desire to serve the Somali refugees better. Finally, it explores how a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID) could promote collaboration among Kenyan Muslims and Christians in responding to the plight of the Somali refugees.

### **Chapter 3**

## **FROM CRISIS TO KAIROS: RECLAIMING THE DIGNITY OF THE SOMALI REFUGEES**

### **Introduction**

This chapter employs the “Act” method to outline practical solutions to the problems identified in the first chapter, and examined theologically in the second chapter. First, it shows that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission could reconcile the people in Somalia, Somali refugees, and Kenya, leading to peaceful co-existence. Second, it demonstrates how collaboration between the Kenyan government and humanitarian agencies could make Somali refugees more self-reliant. Third, it discusses how introducing interreligious dialogue in high schools could train students to be more hospitable to vulnerable people like refugees. Fourth, it highlights how the Kenyan government in collaboration with humanitarian agencies could rethink the encampment model for housing refugees. Fifth, it discusses how Kenyan Muslims could support Somali refugees by both mandatory and voluntary charity. Six, it enumerates how proper education could transform the lives of the Somali refugees; moreover, it explores how Prophet Muhammad’s respect for women could end sex and gender-based violence. Finally, it considers Kenyan Christians’ responses: updated theological training, the model of church-as-family, and establishing a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID).

### **The Kenyan Government’s Responses**

This section discusses how the Kenyan government could collaborate with the African Union to develop a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Somalia. Then, it highlights how Kenya and the international community could diversify the refugees'



incomes and rethink the encampment model. Finally, it assesses how interreligious dialogue could inspire high students to be more hospitable.

### **Long-Term Plans for the Somali Refugees: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

In 2011, Kenya Defence Forces launched a military operation dubbed Operation *Linda Nchi* [to Protect the Nation]. The military exercise aimed to stop Islamic extremists from establishing their training camps in Somalia and later targeting Kenyan interests.<sup>101</sup> In the beginning, Kenya Defense Forces executed their mandates independently of other regional military formations. Later, the Kenya Defense Forces joined the African Union Peace Keeping Forces, which has liberated several parts of Somalia from the control of the al Shabaab militant group.

The military successes notwithstanding, the AU peacekeepers must think of ways of sustaining the peace that is currently prevailing in certain parts of Somalia. It is against the background of sustainable peace that I propose that the Kenyan peacekeepers must explore ways of incorporating *ubuntu* philosophy to reconcile rival militia groups in the country. *Ubuntu* philosophy would be critical in creating an independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as it did in South Africa's TRC under Tutu's leadership.

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<sup>101</sup> Paradoxically, I focus on hospitality yet discuss Kenya's military operation in Somalia. Kenya waged this war to disrupt terrorist networks in Somalia. St. Thomas Aquinas justified waging war about promoting justice and the common good and not merely by punishing the aggressors. See Lisa S. Cahill, "A Church for Peace: Why Just-War Theory Isn't Enough," *Common Weal* 14, 143(2016). Pope Francis does not rule out military intervention to stop the activities of an aggressor who violates the rights of innocent people. However, he insists on using all possible non-violent conflict mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy efforts. See Lisa S. Cahill, "Catholic Tradition on Peace, War, and Just Peace," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 71.

Tutu constantly mentioned that a person imbued with the spirit of *ubuntu* is ever open to interacting with other people, ever attentive to learning about other people's worldviews, and, where necessary, embraces positive values that they learn from others.<sup>102</sup> With the open disposition to continually learn new aspects of life, a person never feels threatened by other people's accomplishments. Instead, they join others in celebrating their accomplishments because they realize that they form part of the larger picture encompassing all created reality. Ultimately, such persons seek to eliminate structures that dehumanize fellow human beings or those that cause environmental degradation.<sup>103</sup> John Mbiti, the father of modern African theology, concurs with Tutu,

Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbors and his relatives whether dead or living. When he is married, he is not alone; neither does the wife "belong" to him alone. So also the children belong to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear only their father's or mother's name. Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual.<sup>104</sup>

In the spirit of *ubuntu*, Somalia's perennial security challenges are as much issues of concern to Kenya as they are to Somalia. In appreciation of the common human concerns that bind both countries, the Kenyan Peace Keeping Forces allied to the African Union

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<sup>102</sup> According to Tutu, "A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are." Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 31.

<sup>103</sup> Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me*, 2

<sup>104</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1969), 106.

(AU) could work with civilian peace experts<sup>105</sup> to revamp peace and reconciliation initiatives at refugee camps and extend it to Somali politicians and the combatants.

Already, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could build upon the foundation for peace and reconciliation that local Somali leaders have laid. From time to time, the local leaders visit other villages and hold open meetings under a tree. More importantly, persons participating in these meetings share tea to get closer to one another. These meetings, which embody hospitality and sharing stories, often help people with emotional wounds heal.<sup>106</sup>

Reconciliation in the refugee camps and in Somalia would allow the Somali refugees to heal from the traumas of war and insecurity. A peaceful environment would allow the refugees to work and provide for the basic needs of their families. In addition, as reconciliation improves Somalia's security situation, the Somali refugees would voluntarily choose to return to their country. Ultimately, a Truth and Reconciliation in Somalia would restore the country's political stability, bring hope to Somali refugees, and improve Somalia's relationship with Kenya.

Also, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission spearheaded by Kenya would create a platform for the refugees to speak about the atrocities Kenyan security forces commit against the refugees in fighting terrorism. Similarly, reconciliation efforts would

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<sup>105</sup> Faith-Based Organizations should promote peace and reconciliation by applying the strategy of Unarmed Civilian Protection (UCP). The following norms guide the mission of civilian peace enforcers: nonviolence, nonpartisanship, and involvement of local actors. Mel Duncan and John Ashworth, "Living Just Peace in South Sudan: Protecting People Nonviolently in the Midst of War," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 217.

<sup>106</sup> Eli S. McCarthy, "Just Peace Ethic: A Virtue-Based Approach," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 92.

challenge Kenya to reconsider its economic policies in the northeastern part of the country, thus, curtailing the influence of Islamic extremists. Ultimately, reconciliation would result in a win-win situation for Somali refugees, people in Somalia, and Kenya.

### **The Kenyan Government and Humanitarian Agencies Collaborating to Diversify Refugee Incomes**

As a developing country, Kenya does not have adequate resources to provide for the needs of the Somali refugees. Over the past years, several donors have reduced their funding for the refugees.<sup>107</sup> Budget deficits disproportionately affect women, especially nursing mothers – malnourished children often die, compounding the emotional pains of these women.

International human rights groups always defend the refugees whenever the Kenyan government issues ultimatums of closing refugee camps and repatriating the Somali refugees for security concerns. When such organizations vehemently oppose any plans to close the refugee camps, they should also be aware that the refugee crisis is a humanitarian concern. It is one thing to blame the Kenyan government for the ultimatums it keeps issuing on closing the refugee camps and another thing to gloss over the inhuman conditions in which the refugees live in Dadaab Refugee Complex.

The humanitarian agencies must diversify the refugees' incomes to prevent the refugees from over-relying on donor funds. The story of the refugees in Adjumani Camp in Uganda is an inspiring one, especially for the refugees who have limited opportunities for entrepreneurship. The Adjumani refugees supplemented their agricultural incomes by learning and adopting cage fishing. Out of these activities, the refugees raised their

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<sup>107</sup> United Nations, "Funding Needed to Halt 'Life-Threatening Crisis' Facing Refugees in Kenya," UN News, accessed April 21, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080322>.

incomes by 50 percent. At the same time, the refugees increased protein uptake by 50 percent and became healthier than they were before the initiation of the projects.<sup>108</sup>

Kenya and the humanitarian agencies could be inspired by the narratives of the refugees in Adjumani Camp and replicate the Adjumani model of income diversification by training the Somali refugees on the skills for Sustainable Agriculture (including agroforestry in response to environmental concerns from wood fuel). In addition, Kenya and the humanitarian agencies could train the refugees on entrepreneurship and avail the resources they need: seeds, farm implements, and water. As such, the Somali refugees would not be mere recipients of donor aid but become self-supporting individuals who contribute to the growth of Kenya's economy.

Greater collaboration between Kenya and the humanitarian agencies would ensure that the refugees acquire entrepreneurship skills and manage their affairs without relying on donor hand-outs. Above all, empowered refugees would no longer be a burden to Kenya but persons building the Kenyan economy. Such efforts mirror Jesus' attitude of challenging his disciples to feed the crowds out the little food they had – five loaves and two fish. The disciples' generosity enabled them to feed a multitude. Similarly, availing resources and training refugees would allow them to meet their basic needs and possibly have surplus food to serve other needy causes. This empowerment would confer dignity and enable the refugees to solve their problems.

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<sup>108</sup> Rocco Nuri, "Fish Farming Nets Benefits for Congolese Refugees and Ugandan Hosts," *UNHCR*, accessed April 12, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/enus/news/stories/2017/6/593958e64/fishfarmnetsbenefitscongoleserefugeesugandanhosts.html>.

## **Rethinking the Encampment Model**

When Prophet Muhammad relocated to Medina, the city was in chaos. Muhammad relied on the generosity of wealthy people to set things right in the city. By meticulous planning and collaboration with Medina's residents, he succeeded in restoring order to the city and protecting the rights of vulnerable people.

Prophet Muhammad's Medina experience could be a solution to the plight of the Somali refugees who have lived in tents in the Dadaab Refugee Complex for more than three decades. These refugees have faced the following challenges. First, the tents are small; refugees live in congested spaces. Second, the tents are made of materials that retain heat, rendering them unfit for human habitation. Third, the tents are not strong enough to prevent wrong people from violating family spaces.<sup>109</sup>

In light of the harsh conditions in which the Somali refugees live, one might be tempted to despair. However, when one reflects on how Muhammad transformed Medina into an orderly city within a few years, one realizes that the poor living conditions of the refugees is redeemable through proper planning and prudent use of resources.

Ultimately, Kenya could collaborate with the humanitarian agencies to source funds for building simple but better houses for the Somali refugees. Rethinking the encampment model would reclaim the dignity of the Somali refugees since it would end their misery of living in tents under harsh weather and help alleviate security concerns.

## **Integration of Interreligious Dialogue into the System of Education**

According to Kenya's high school education curriculum, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Christian Religious Education (CRE) are separate subjects. Students

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<sup>109</sup> Daniel Wesangula, "Dadaab: The City You Cannot Leave," *The Guardian*, accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/feb/01/dadaab-somalia-home-cannot-leave-refugees>.

who like religious studies choose either Islamic Religious Education or Christian Religious Education based on which faith they practice. Such students graduate from the high school program with so much knowledge about their respective religious traditions yet with little or no knowledge of the other religion. Owing to the security challenges Kenya has faced from the religious extremists, it would be prudent to introduce mandatory sessions of Interreligious Dialogue to inform students about other faith traditions. As a result, students would respect people from other faith traditions and appreciate how hospitality manifests itself across different religious traditions.<sup>110</sup>

Furthermore, in appreciation of the role religion plays in the formation of the conscience of students, the Kenyan Ministry of Education introduced chaplaincy programs into high schools and colleges. However, there is a huge disparity in the deployment of chaplains. Most Kenyan high schools and colleges have Christian chaplains and few Muslim chaplains. In the spirit of affirmative action, the government could explore the possibility of hiring more Muslim chaplains. A close working relationship between the chaplains in various learning institutions would enable students to learn more about other faith traditions, especially on the care of vulnerable people such as refugees, through the intentional theological lens of hospitality.

Kenyan high schools and higher learning institutions have student-led vocational groups such as environmental and mathematics clubs. These groups allow students to pursue further their interests in a given field of study beyond the formal classroom requirements. Because of the influence of these vocational groups, the administrators of

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<sup>110</sup> Peggy Faw Gish noted that the Catholic Church could train people on peace by making just peace education part of the curriculum of parochial schools. Peggy F. Gish, "Isis and Ezidis: Using Just Peace Approaches," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 277.

these learning institutions could encourage students to form Interreligious Dialogue clubs, where students could dialogue on their respective faith traditions. Moreover, Interreligious Dialogue clubs would enable students to discuss topical issues, like the refugee crisis, and propose action points, like donating their extra stationery to the refugees. Likewise, Interreligious Dialogue clubs could arrange for students to visit refugee camps and listen to the stories of the refugees, which would foster connection and relationships with the people.

By integrating Interreligious Dialogue into Kenya's education system, Kenya will train thousands of students who know other faith traditions well. Above all, such students would be good hospitality ambassadors to all people who flee violence in their countries and seek refuge in Kenya.<sup>111</sup>

### **Kenyan Muslims' Responses**

The life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad form the basis for Muslim responses to the problems Somali refugees face in Dadaab Refugee Complex. These range from *zakat*, to promoting education, to protecting women's rights in the refugee camps.

#### **Supporting Somali Refugees through Zakat [Almsgiving]**

*Zakat*<sup>112</sup> is one of the ways through which Kenyan Muslims could enhance their hospitality towards the Somali refugees. Muslims pay *zakat* to promote the welfare of vulnerable people in society. The Somali refugees in Dadaab Refugee Complex face the

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<sup>111</sup> Gish, "Isis and Ezidis: Using Just Peace Approaches," 277.

<sup>112</sup> *Zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam. The other pillars include profession of faith (*shahada*), prayer (*salat*), fasting (*sawm*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*). Elizabeth Macaulay-Lewis, "The Five Pillars of Islam," *Khan Academy*, accessed April 21, 2022, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/aparthistory/introductionculturesreligionsapah/islamapah/a/the-five-pillars-of-islam>.



problems of inadequate food and water supply and poor educational and health services. Because of these challenges, the Somali refugees fall within the bracket of vulnerable people eligible for *zakat*.

The Somali refugees have stayed in Dadaab Refugee Complex for more than three decades. Donor fatigue following the prolonged stay of the Somali refugees and other humanitarian concerns within the horn of Africa has led to substantial budget deficits among humanitarian agencies.<sup>113</sup> *Zakat* would seal part of the budget deficit and, ensure that vulnerable families access food, medical care, and enroll children in schools.

Given that *zakat* does not imply monetary contributions alone and allows for other forms of alms offering, it implies that even Muslims who do not have access to financial systems could as well support the Somali refugees with their assets.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, the Muslim community could increase the *zakat* funds by encouraging one another to embrace the spirit of *sadaqah* [voluntary charity].<sup>115</sup>

Based on the discussions above, it is clear that Muslims express their faith in God by serving the vulnerable through *zakat* (obligatory charity). Furthermore, Muslims support vulnerable people because they believe it is right to do so through *sadaqah* [voluntary charity]. The Kenyan Muslims could go beyond material support by maintaining close relationships with the Somali refugees. Close working relationships between Kenyan Muslims and the Somali refugees could influence the refugees to be charitable to one another, hence supporting the weakest among them.

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<sup>113</sup> Beatrice Gachenge, “Donor Fatigue Hits Horn of Africa Aid Efforts,” *Reuters*, accessed April 9, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/article/eastafricadroughtaididAFLDE7600DO20110701>.

<sup>114</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 109-110.

<sup>115</sup> UNHCR, “Refugees: The Most in Need of *Zakat* Funds,” *Refugee Zakat Fund*, 2019 Launch Report, 55.

## **Empowering Somali Refugees through Education**

Education transforms human life by shaping how people reflect on issues, respond to the challenges they face, and relate with one another. Accordingly, education has a significant role in enhancing the dignity of the Somali refugees and improving the relationship between the Somali refugees and the Kenyan hosting community. Despite the role formal education plays in transforming human life, many Somali refugees do not consider formal education necessary. Instead, many Somali refugee families prefer to enroll their children in Quranic schools.

A Muslim Faith-Based Organization, Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW), has done a commendable job integrating Quranic education with formal education. However, enrollment rates of children from Somali refugee families remain low. IRW has a duty and responsibility to undo narratives that separate education into Quranic and formal education by instructing the Somali refugees about Islam's contribution to formal education across the centuries.<sup>116</sup>

Alongside convincing Somali refugees to enroll their children in formal schools, Islamic Relief Worldwide could also engage the Kenyan government and the humanitarian agencies to build more classrooms, employ more teachers, and avail other learning resources. That way, learning centers would attract students and retain them.

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<sup>116</sup> Muslims established one of the oldest universities in the world, Al – Azhar University in 975 CE. The university has links with masjid in Cairo, a name which honors Fatma Az – Zahraa, the daughter of prophet Muhammad. This university (*jami'ah*) trained students in Islamic law and prudence, Arabic grammar, Islamic astronomy, Islamic philosophy and logic. See Abu Hazaifa, "Al – Azhar University," accessed April 10, 2022, <https://www.Islamiclandmarks.com/egypt/alazharuniversity>. Likewise, Muslim mathematicians learned from Indians the numbers (0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9) and brought these developments to Europe in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition, the Muslim mathematician, Muhammad Abu Musa Al-Kharizmi (780-850 CE), invented algebra, the Europeans translated Al-Kharizmi's ideas into Latin in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. See Tide, "Muslim Contributions to the Modern World," *Global Learning Toolkit*, accessed April 10, 2022, [www.tidegloballearning.net](http://www.tidegloballearning.net).

Moreover, Islamic Relief Worldwide could develop comprehensive Child Protection Policies in schools to mitigate all forms of abuse against minors. Such developments would encourage parents who fear sending girls to school because of the risks of sexual abuse. At the same time, Islamic Relief Worldwide could appeal to the humanitarian agencies to employ enough sociologists and psychologists to accompany traumatized minors.

I would like to demonstrate the power of education by narrating the story of Hamdia Ahmed that I described the previous chapter.<sup>117</sup> Hamdia's mother defended her daughters from sexual violence and supported her children's education. The courage and determination of Hamdia's mother endeared her to UNHCR and U.S. State Department officials. As a result, Hamdia's family relocated to the U.S., where Hamdia has excelled in studies and champions the rights of immigrants and refugees. I appreciate that not all Somali refugees will be as lucky as Hamdia. However, still, I contend that good education anywhere transforms people and makes the world safer and more hospitable.

A properly-endowed education system could transform the lives of the Somali refugees because it would equip the younger generation with critical thinking skills – the ability to reflect on their status as refugees and what they could do to remedy the situation. Robust programs of learning and psycho-spiritual support would enable learners to break the cycle of violence they have experienced; hence, learners will be ambassadors of peace in the refugee camps.

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<sup>117</sup> See footnote # 79.

## **Protecting Women: Example from the Early Life of Prophet Muhammad and Women's Advocacy**

The Somali refugees could reduce the incidents of sex and gender-based violence.<sup>118</sup> by referring to the life of Prophet Muhammad, especially the Prophet's profound respect for women as entrepreneurs and wives. As a young man, Muhammad served as the business manager of the caravans of a wealthy widow, Khadija. The two worked well and later married. Muhammad was twenty-five years old at their marriage, and Khadija was forty. The relationship between the two blossomed; they bore three sons (who died as infants) and four daughters.<sup>119</sup> Khadija's presence and wisdom guided Muhammad when the latter received God's revelation; he doubted God's revelation and, at some point, contemplated killing himself. However, Khadija encouraged Muhammad to remain steadfast in his faith. Moreover, she introduced Muhammad to her Christian cousin, Waraqa bin Qusayy, who affirmed that God had called Muhammad.<sup>120</sup> Apart from Khadija, Prophet Muhammad maintained respectful relationships with other women.

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<sup>118</sup> According to Teresia Wachira, women's participation in peacebuilding breaks the cycle of violence linked to structures of exclusion. Teresia Wamuyu Wachira, "Making Just Peace a Reality in Kenya: A New "Flavor" to Peacebuilding," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 297. Leocadie Lushombo argues that another way of protecting women from sexual harassment is the strategy of unarmed civilian protection, which entails providing basic human needs, a transparent legal system, democratic governance, and regional political commitments to safeguarding women. For more information, see Leocadie Lushombo, "Virtue-Based Just Peace Approach and Challenges of Rape as a Weapon of War: The Case of Democratic Republic of Congo," in *A Just Peace Ethic Primer: Building Sustainable Peace and Breaking Cycles of Violence*, ed. Eli S. McCarthy (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2020), 321.

<sup>119</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 6.

<sup>120</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 8.

After Hazrat Umm-e-Habiba lost her husband, Muhammad proposed to marry her and waited for Hazrat's consent before planning the details of the marriage.<sup>121</sup> He asked the King of Abyssinia, Negus, to broker his marriage when Hazrat stayed in Abyssinia after fleeing persecution in Mecca.<sup>122</sup> Later, Muslims gathered reports about Prophet Muhammad's life into *hadith* literature, which portrayed him as the perfect religiopolitical leader, ideal husband, and father.<sup>123</sup> As a Faith-Based Organization, Islamic Relief Worldwide could spearhead religious discussions on how Prophet Muhammad's respect for women could reform the refugee camps, where cases of sex and gender-based violence are rampant.

Similarly, Islamic Relief Worldwide could forge better working relationships with Kenyan Muslim women parliamentarians to raise awareness about sex and gender-based violence in the refugee camps. Likewise, Muslim women parliamentarians could collaborate with fellow women parliamentarians to influence the Kenyan government to make policies that protect the rights of female refugees. Furthermore, during the celebration of World Refugee Day, the caucus of women parliamentarians and human rights activists could organize peaceful demonstrations against sex and gender-based violence within the refugee camps.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Reem Shraiky, "King Negus: The Holy Prophet's Representative and True Follower," *Al-Hakam*, accessed March 6, 2022, <https://www.alhakam.org/kingnegustheholyprophetsrepresentativeandtruefollower/>.

<sup>122</sup> Shraiky, "King Negus: The Holy Prophet's Representative and True Follower."

<sup>123</sup> Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*, 13.

<sup>124</sup> The women of Liberia, under the leadership of Leymah Gbowee staged a protest at a central market for a week. Also, they marched to government offices and met President Charles Taylor. Later, they had a sit-in at one of the rebel meetings, forcing the rebels to attend peace talks. The Somali women could play a leading role against sex and gender-based violence by condemning such acts and ensuring that those who abuse women face the full force of the law. McCarthy, "Just Peace Ethic: A Virtue-Based Approach," 94.

In short, Prophet Muhammad's respect for women and advocacy could curtail sex and gender-based violence in the refugee camps because many Somali refugees are Muslims and revere Prophet Muhammad. Muhammad's good moral life could challenge the refugees to imitate how Muhammad related to women. Besides, women's advocacy would raise greater awareness and influence the Kenyan government to collaborate with other humanitarian agencies to enhance women's safety.

### **Kenyan Christians' Responses**

Vatican II document on relations with non-Christians, *Nostra Aetate*, provides the reasons for the Church's involvement in interreligious dialogue and my interest in Christian –Muslim dialogue on hospitality.<sup>125</sup> The Church dialogues with Islam because of the common beliefs the two religions share: both communities believe that God created both heaven and earth; both revere Abraham, and believe in the resurrection of the dead. Despite the shared heritage, Christians and Muslims have fought one another across the centuries. In light of the atrocities the two groups had committed in the past,

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<sup>125</sup> *Nostra Aetate* is an important document in this study because it provides the basis for me, as a Catholic, to consider the Church's relationship with Non-Christian Religions. Moreover, it developed under circumstances that mirror the plight of the Somali refugees. Pope John XXIII's experience while serving as the apostolic delegate to Turkey of saving the lives of Jews who were fleeing Nazi persecution enabled him to understand the concerns the Jewish historian, Dr. Jules Isaac, raised to John XXIII about the Church's teachings that promoted anti-Semitism. John XXIII implored the Fathers of the Council to correct the Church's teaching on Jews. Bishops from Africa and Asia introduced other religions into the debate, leading to the Declaration of the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*. See Elena Procario-Foley, "Heir or Orphan? Theological Evolution and Devolution before and after *Nostra Aetate*," in *Vatican II: Forty Years Later*, ed. William Madges (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 309. John Borelli, "*Nostra Aetate*: Origins, History, and Vatican II Context," in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, ed. Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 23. Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, "The Church and Other Religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*, ed. R. R. Gaillardetz (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 307.

the Second Vatican Council appealed to Christians and Muslims to forgive one another and collaborate in promoting peace, social justice, and moral values in the world.<sup>126</sup>

Against this background, I argue that re-reading the document offers many lessons on how to care for the Somali refugees. Separately, I use the model of church-as-family to demonstrate that owing to the broad scope of the African family, Kenyan Christians could expand the horizons of their missions by caring for Somali refugees. Finally, I propose the establishment of a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue and Refugees to coordinate the responses to the problems the Somali refugees face in the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

### **Re-appropriating the Spirit of *Nostra Aetate***

Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council against a background of a world that had witnessed catastrophic wars, displacement of people, and uncertainties about the future. Likewise, the contemporary Church serves a world that bears the scars of wars and displacement of people, especially the refugees. Despite the hurdles the Church had to cross, John XXIII believed that the time was ripe for the Church's rebirth through an Ecumenical Council.

Moreover, Pope John XXIII's previous experience of serving as the apostolic delegate in Turkey and witnessing the persecution of Jews enabled him to implore the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council to correct the Church's relationship with the Jews. The delegates at the Council read the signs of the time correctly by recognizing other religions and specifically how Muslims and Christians can work together to promote

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<sup>126</sup> Second Vatican Council, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, October 28, 1965," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*," ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1975), # 3.

“peace, liberty, social justice, and moral values.”<sup>127</sup> The contemporary world is not that different from the world that the Second Vatican Council addressed. For instance, Somali refugees sought refuge in Kenya because of protracted conflicts in Somalia. As such, hospitality towards the Somali refugees must promote peace, freedom and empower the refugees socially and economically.

In light of the discussions above, theological institutes and seminaries in Kenya, need to train students on the Second Vatican documents, more so on the historical background of *Nostra Aetate* – how the Church's previous teachings promoted anti-Semitism and denigrated other cultures. Such awareness would compel students to reflect on the categories of people who suffer because of religious or political violence. In Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, he demonstrated that those who worship God in spirit and truth (Jn 4:3) must break religious boundaries to interact with the other. In their ministries, Jesus' attitude is the model that theology students should emulate.

Apart from raising awareness, theological institutes in Kenya could empower students pastorally by sending them to refugee camps as part of theological immersion into the lives of vulnerable people and intentionally connecting with the refugees through the sharing of stories. As such, students would be able to match the knowledge they possess with the lived reality of vulnerable people such as refugees. For example, a Jesuit-run Hekima University College sends some students to refugee camps for two months of Pastoral Fieldwork. During the Pastoral Fieldwork, the Jesuits sent to the refugee camps teach, counsel the refugees, and join the refugees in cleaning the refugee

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



camps. Such a program inspires many Jesuits to develop a strong sense of pastoral service towards the refugees.<sup>128</sup>

*Nostra Aetate* challenges the contemporary Church to be aware of how the Church's teachings affect people who belong to other faith traditions. Above all, it provides the basis for responding to the plight of vulnerable people like the Somali refugees by being charitable and hospitable to the refugees.

### **Learning from the Model of Church as a Family**

According to Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator, the African family is the safest environment for creating, nurturing, propagating, and allowing life to bloom. Church-as-family symbolizes that the Church brings forth new life, nurtures, propagates, and protects life from forces of destruction and violence.<sup>129</sup>

In the African setting, a family encompasses members of a nuclear family, extended family members, and the ancestors. The African family consists of a complex web of social relations. Because of the family's ever-expanding horizon, I consider it an appropriate model for serving the Somali refugees. Based on the definition of the African family, Christians would fall into the category of the nuclear family members. In contrast, persons belonging to other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism would fall within extended family members. Despite the distinction between the nuclear and extended family, all the persons within the social set-up still form part of the family.

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<sup>128</sup> Francis Njuguna, SJ., is a Jesuit priest from Kenya who studied theology at Hekima University College. Francis works with Jesuit Refugees Service (JRS) in Maban, South Sudan. See the following update by Francis about his mission, Francis Njuguna, "Update from Maban, South Sudan," *Jesuit Missions*, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/updatefrommabansouthsudan/>.

<sup>129</sup> Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *The Church as Family: African Ecclesiology in Its Social Context* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000), 151.

A typical traditional African family prepared food by placing a cooking pot on three stones. Orobator borrows the image of the three stones to metaphorically<sup>130</sup> argue that the church-as-family rests on the three stones of life,<sup>131</sup> solidarity,<sup>132</sup> and service.<sup>133</sup> Through the faith journeys of Sister Felicite Niyigeteka, Bishop Willybard Lagho, and Bishop John Odama, I demonstrate how the three pillars – life, solidarity, and service fit into the world of the Somali refugees.

The African spirituality celebrates life in all its dimensions. Sister Felicite Niyitegeka was a Hutu who headed an orphanage with many Tutsi orphans. Felicite's brother, a Colonel in the army, informed her to flee the orphanage because the army had planned to attack it during the 1994 Rwanda genocide. However, Felicite refused to flee and cared for the orphans until she died; she cared for the orphans and "died while shielding the orphans from the bullets of the assassins." Felicite demonstrated the African spirit of protecting life even at the cost of one's life.<sup>134</sup> In short, the African worldview of propagating and protecting life is a powerful tool for serving the Somali refugees and works in tandem with a theological emphasis on hospitality.

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<sup>130</sup> Orobator, *The Church as Family*, 164-5.

<sup>131</sup> A Tanzanian theologian, Laurenti Magesa argues that the African worldview considers all human actions that promote life as ethically good. On the contrary, he defines all human actions which diminish life as ethically bad. Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: Moral Traditions of Abundant Life* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 128.

<sup>132</sup> Solidarity presupposes a more just world, where humanity takes care of poor and vulnerable people. In addition, it implies human willingness to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than force of arms. Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2011), sec. 1940.

<sup>133</sup> The church-as-family relates with the Lord's poor from the position of powerlessness. Orobator, *The Church as Family*, 165.

<sup>134</sup> Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 144-145.

Additionally, reverence for life would imply improving health standards within the refugee camps. The Church in Kenya trains healthcare providers and controls hospitals. Owing to the poor health standards within the refugee camps, the Church could revamp the refugees' healthcare services.

The principle of solidarity binds people together, both in good and bad times. Bishop Willybard Lagho, through his broad social network of friends drawn from different religions, demonstrates the meaning of solidarity. Soon after the consecration of Willybard as the bishop of Malindi Catholic diocese, he invited Muslim leaders to celebrate *iftar*<sup>135</sup> at his residence. The religious leaders used the occasion to review the progress of Christian-Muslim dialogue along Kenya's coastal regions. Similarly, the religious leaders discussed how they could respond to topical issues such as drug abuse, among others.<sup>136</sup> Willybard's hospitality could serve as a framework for Kenyan Christians and Muslims to discuss how to alleviate the sufferings of the Somali refugees, more so by collecting food to feed the Somali refugees.

Serving vulnerable people is a core mission of the Church. Archbishop John Odama of Gulu exemplifies the meaning of the Church as a servant. During the war in northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the security forces of the Ugandan government, many families fled their homes because of the threats of rebel attacks. The situation was dire, especially for children who spent nights in the streets of Gulu. Odama joined the children and spent nights on the streets of Gulu. Odama's gesture

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<sup>135</sup> *Iftar* is the evening meal with which Muslims mark the end of Ramadhan fast at sunset.

<sup>136</sup> Emmanuel Masha, "Bishop Hosts Muslims for *Iftar*, Pledges Inter-Faith Cooperation," Kenya News Agency, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/bishophosts-muslimsforiftarpledgesinterfaithcooperation/>.

of spending nights in the streets won the international community's attention about the people's sufferings.<sup>137</sup> Based on the experience of Odama, the more Kenyan Christians and Muslims identify with the Somali refugees and write about their experiences of staying in the refugee camps, the more the world would know about the poor living conditions in the refugee camps. Through narrating the stories of their experiences and connecting with the refugees, transformation begins to happen, and awareness arises. Consequently, the international community would understand the need to develop enduring solutions to the refugee crisis.

Separately, church-as-family promotes the participation of Catholic Christians in Small Christian Communities (SCC).<sup>138</sup> The genius of SCC is that it disseminates the Church's teachings to as many people as possible within a setting in which Christians know one another and meet regularly for worship. Also, the SCC could serve as the locus for discussing and linking Christian families with refugee families. That way, Christian families would be able to share resources with refugee families to which they are linked. Thus, SCC serves as a suitable channel for promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue and encouraging Christians to support refugees.

The model of the church-as-family is suitable for addressing the problems of the Somali refugees because the African family encompasses both persons related by blood and circumstances. This model serves Christians and other vulnerable people who are not Christians, like the Somali refugees, who are Muslims.

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<sup>137</sup> Emmanuel Katongole, *The Journey of Reconciliation: Groaning for a New Creation in Africa* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017), 67.

<sup>138</sup> According to Orobator, Small Christian Community (SCC) is the Church at the grassroots level, which helps to promote communion and shared responsibility, and everyone feels at home. Orobator, *Theology Brewed in an African Pot*, 91.

## **Establishment of a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue**

The comparative theologian Paul Knitter compares interreligious dialogue to a person observing distant objects using a telescope; a telescope allows a person to see the distant objects, but not everything. However, when a person sees through different telescopes, their vision becomes better. Likewise, each religion offers a glimpse of reality; nevertheless, dialogue among different religions offers a better understanding of reality.<sup>139</sup> Because of the limitations of considering hospitality from Christian tradition alone, I studied Muslim and African worldviews on hospitality.

I emphasized Tutu's remarks that *ubuntu* philosophy<sup>140</sup> compels humanity to support marginalized people like refugees. Similarly, I showed how Jesus' miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish in the Synoptic Gospels and Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman demonstrate the power of sharing limited resources and crossing religious boundaries. At the same time, I explained how Prophet Muhammad's care for vulnerable people in the first Islamic Community in Medina sparked the desire to serve the refugees.

In light of the contributions of African spirituality, Islam, and Christianity to hospitality, I propose that the Society of Jesus should establish a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID) in Kenya. This Center would bring various faith traditions together to respond to topical issues like the refugee crisis.

Furthermore, a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID) would provide an avenue for documenting the Kenyan government's responses to the refugee crisis. In

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<sup>139</sup> Paul F. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016), 11.

<sup>140</sup> Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 31.

addition, JCID would appeal to the Kenyan government and the humanitarian agencies to fund projects that empower refugees to be self-reliant.

Also, the Center would examine Muslim and Christian responses to the refugee crisis and establish a mechanism by which Faith-Based Organizations linked to Christians and Muslims respectively could share resources. Moreover, the Center could coordinate joint advocacy programs. For instance, the Center could bring Christian and Muslim women parliamentarians together to fight against the cases of sex and gender-based violence in the refugee camps.

In summary, a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue would continually raise awareness about the sufferings of the Somali refugees. Above all, such a Center would ensure sharing of best practices among institutions working with the refugees.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have applied the "Act" method of Catholic social analysis to demonstrate how to solve the Somali refugee crisis through a series of actions. I explained how a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Somalia could offer a lasting solution to the problems that Somali refugees face in refugee camps. A TRC could lead to peace in Somalia, a situation which would drastically reduce the number of refugees fleeing Somalia to Kenya.

A TRC would allow the Somali refugees to face persons who harmed them and facilitate forgiveness and peaceful co-existence among the Somali refugees. Above all, a TRC would allow the Somali refugees to face the Kenyan government and demonstrate how the Kenyan government's indiscriminate military responses have hurt them. Also, a TRC would allow the Kenyan government to inform the refugees about the harm Islamic

extremists who infiltrate refugee camps have caused Kenyans. Above all, a TRC would guarantee a win-win situation for everybody and open a new era of peace.

In all of the responses to the refugee crisis, it was evident that no one institution could adequately respond to the problems the Somali refugees face. The institutions described above must collaborate with other institutions. Such collaborations underscore the essence of *ubuntu* – “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore, I am.”<sup>141</sup> Human beings do good to one another because of the common dignity they share and because nobody can attend to all their needs alone.

Similarly, I have discussed that Kenyan Muslims could serve the pressing needs of the Somali refugees using *zakat* (almsgiving), an act that manifests love for God in love for neighbor. Again, I highlighted that when Kenyan Muslims understand their faith well, they would not simply serve Somali refugees as an obligation. However, they would do so in appreciation that it is right to help a neighbor through *sadaqah* (voluntary charity). Furthermore, I demonstrated that the Somali refugees ought to embrace the values of obligatory and voluntary charity to serve their fellow refugees. As a result, every person would contribute to the well-being of human society.

Jesus involved his disciples while performing the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish. Thus, I have argued that collaboration between the Kenyan government and the humanitarian agencies in training the refugees would make the latter successful entrepreneurs.

Then, I argued that Catholic seminaries and theological institutes should prioritize and teach the documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially *Nostra Aetate*. In

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<sup>141</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1990), 106.

addition, these Catholic centers of learning should send students to refugee camps for pastoral fieldwork to gain first-hand experience of the dire living conditions and hear the stories of the refugees in preparation for the students' future ministries. Also, I demonstrated that the model of church-as-family offers lessons for promoting the lives of the Somali refugees, empathizing, and serving the Somali refugees.

Finally, I asserted that the Society of Jesus in Kenya could establish a Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID) to promote closer working relationships among Kenyan Christians and Muslims in responding to the sufferings of the refugees. Above all, JCID would provide the platform for enhancing awareness about the influence of *ubuntu* philosophy.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This thesis demonstrates that intentional theological reflection on Christian and Muslim teachings on hospitality, anchored in *ubuntu* philosophy, offers a way forward to respond to the problems of the Somali refugees, including high illiteracy levels, malnutrition, early marriages, and poor shelter. *Ubuntu* philosophy provides the basis for hosting Somali refugees because of the common dignity that all human beings share. Examples from Jesus' ministry, particularly the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish and his encounter with the Samaritan woman, inspire Christians to share their resources with Somali refugees and break the wall separating Christians from Muslims. Likewise, Prophet Muhammad's care for vulnerable people in the first Islamic community in Medina provides the framework for Muslims' responses to the plight of the Somali refugees. Lastly, Abraham's hospitality harmonizes Christian and Muslim perspectives because as *Nostra Aetate* states, both Christians and Muslims revere Abraham. Above all, Abraham did not wait for people to request him to host them. Instead, he always anticipated other people's needs. Thus, Abraham's hospitality inspires Christians and Muslims to be proactive in their service to vulnerable people.

In the first chapter, I argued that history is important in interreligious dialogue because it reveals past mistakes and challenges people to refrain from making similar mistakes in the future. Interreligious dialogue takes place at different levels: between Faith-Based Organizations and the refugees; among the Faith-Based Organizations, and between Kenyan Christians and Muslims. History is communicated through remembering and retelling refugees' stories. Similarly, after presenting a brief socio-history of the Somalis, I recounted how Islamic extremists exploit the historical injustices against Muslims in the northeastern and coastal regions of Kenya as one of the reasons for their

violence. Moreover, I noted that inter-clan clashes in Somalia displaced thousands of people, some of whom migrated to Kenya and currently stay in the Dadaab Refugee Complex. The number of refugees within the camps exceeds internationally approved standards, which leads to an inadequate supply of food and other basic human needs.

Looking for a solution to the sufferings the Somali refugees face in the camps, in the second chapter, I proposed that hospitality towards the Somali refugees can be an adequate response. Hospitality in this situation implies acknowledging the suffering of the refugees in the camps and rallying the Kenyan government, humanitarian agencies, Kenyan Christians, and Muslims to re-create mitigation measures. Specifically, I enumerated that the *ubuntu* philosophy contains the attributes Somalis need to reconcile with one another and chart a new path for a prosperous future.

When a large crowd gathered around Jesus in the desert to listen to his preaching, at the end of the day, Jesus did not send them home hungry when his disciples had asked him to do so. Instead, Jesus challenged his disciples to offer the crowds something to eat. When the disciples shared their limited resources, five loaves and two fish, Jesus took those meager portions and performed the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fish to feed the crowd. This gospel narrative challenges the Kenyan government not to give up on the refugees by closing the Dadaab Refugee Complex. Instead, the gospel story urges the Kenyan government, UNHCR, and other humanitarian agencies to commit more finances and human resources to train Somali refugees to be self-reliant.

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman provided a basis for collaboration between Kenyan Muslims and Christians to care for the Somali refugees. People who worship God in truth and spirit must always cross the boundaries that

ostracize and discriminate against the religious others. Jesus liberated the Samaritan woman by intentionally meeting her at the well and speaking with her. The woman became a disciple to the people in her village, who came to Jesus and testified that he was the long-awaited Messiah. Similarly, intentional Christian-Muslim dialogue should transform the interlocutors into ambassadors of hospitality and reconciliation.

Also, Prophet Muhammad protected human dignity by experiencing and practicing hospitality. As an orphan, Muhammad was raised by his grandfather and uncle; these relatives instructed him on hospitality by their way of life. When Muhammad and his followers suffered persecution by the people from the Quraysh tribe, he received help from King Negus of Abyssinia. The latter offered Muslims asylum and protection until it was safe to return to Mecca. Later on, Muhammad restored order in Medina and made laws that protected the rights of vulnerable people. Thus, I considered Muhammad a hospitality model and urged Kenyan Christians and Muslims to care for the Somali refugees just like Muhammad cared for vulnerable people in Medina.

Abraham's hospitality harmonized the Christian, Muslim, and African perspectives by always anticipating other people's needs, inviting them into his home, and personally following every activity of serving his guests. In essence, Abraham's hospitality invites Kenyan Christians and Muslims to assist the refugees even before the media highlight their sufferings in the Dadaab Refugee Complex.

Subsequently, I noted that Kenya should encourage the Somali politicians to resolve their conflicts by creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). As a result, it would be possible for the Somali refugees to voluntarily return home and avoid the harsh living conditions in the refugee camps.

More importantly, Islamic teachings responded to the immediate concerns of the refugees as follows. First, Kenyan Muslim leaders need to remind the Muslim faithful to observe Islamic teachings on *zakat* in light of supporting the Somali refugees. Second, the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) should remind the refugees of the value of education and teach them about Islam's contribution to education across the centuries. Third, IRW should instruct people on Prophet Muhammad's respect for women as a strategy for curbing sex gender-based violence in the refugee camps.

Lastly, I argued that by re-appropriating *Nostra Aetate*, Kenyan Christians would draw closer to Kenyan Muslims and, by extension, the Somali refugees. Thus, Kenyan Christians would appreciate the need to care for the refugees. Above all, I considered the model of the church-as-family as a strategy for incorporating the Somali refugees into the Christian family by defending the refugees' rights and providing for their basic needs.

Before writing this thesis, I presumed that Islamic extremists infiltrate refugee camps only to attack Kenyan interests. However, Islamic extremists also attack fellow Muslims in the refugee camps. I learned that hospitality towards Somali refugees entails reconciling their past traumatic experiences in Somalia and the security threats they face in the refugee camps. As such, reconciliation serves two purposes. First, reconciliation in Somalia would reduce cases of Somalis fleeing their country and settling in Kenya – thus, a reduction in the number of refugees and the attendant consequences. Second, reconciliation promotes peace within refugee camps and a better relationship between Somali refugees and the Kenyan government.

Previously, I saw photos of refugees living in tents and was never bothered about it. As I researched the living conditions of the refugees inside the tents, I learned about

the pathetic conditions of living in a tent for a couple of years: high temperatures, easily flooded when it rains, and poor ventilation. As such, in the third chapter, I argued that the Kenyan government and humanitarian agencies should rethink the encampment model and replace it with simple but good houses.

Similarly, I learned that interreligious education is a good channel for promoting hospitality since it exposes students to other cultures and faith traditions and trains them in listening skills. Apart from the importance of interreligious education, generally, education shapes learners' critical thinking skills and offers them opportunities to pursue various careers. In short, I learned that hospitality towards Somali refugees encompasses offering their children quality education.

Likewise, while writing this thesis, I realized that the Somali refugees are not mere recipients of donor aid; instead, they are people who can take charge of their affairs if allowed to do so. Accordingly, I discussed how the Kenyan government, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies, could avail funds and resources for training the refugees to be self-reliant – training refugees on sustainable agriculture skills and entrepreneurship. As a result, the Somali refugees would play critical roles in developing Kenya's economy.

The cases of sex and gender-based violence (SGBV) were troubling. As I researched how to prevent these heinous acts, I learned about the power of women's advocacy. In appreciation of the religious context in which Somali women refugees live, I argued that Kenyan Muslim women parliamentarians could lead advocacy for the women staying in the refugee camps. In a nutshell, hospitality towards Somali refugees implies protecting their women against SGBV.

After considering the lessons I learned while writing this thesis, I propose the following recommendations to enhance hospitality towards Somali refugees. First, Kenya could collaborate with the international community, especially the African Union (AU), to enact a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Somalia as a long-term solution to the protracted conflicts. Kenya already has Peace-Keepers in Somalia, therefore it would be easy to convince other African countries to support a TRC. The TRC mandate could extend to the refugee camps to promote reconciliation among the refugees and foster reconciliation between the refugees and the Kenyan government. In addition, Kenya as a leading player in the reconciliation process in Somalia could examine the reasons that made South Africa's TRC successful and the failures of TRCs in other African countries.

Georgetown University has a well-established Berkley Center for Interreligious Dialogue, and I used much of the material on the social context of the Somali refugees from the Center. The Berkely Center could serve as a model for developing the Jesuit Center for Interreligious Dialogue (JCID) in Kenya.

Finally, I recommend that the Catholic Church in Kenya explore how Small Christian Communities (SCCs) could be the centers for highlighting social, political, and religious issues in the country and developing appropriate response strategies. Such an approach would guarantee the sustainability of the Church's response to vulnerable people like Somali refugees.

In summary, the "See, Judge, and Act" methodology provides the framework for reflecting theologically on the role of hospitality towards the Somali refugees. Using hospitality as a foundational virtue and engaging in interreligious dialogue acts as a

means to help restore peace among the Somali refugees and foster trust and reconciliation with the Kenyan government.

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