The Aftermath of the 2007/08 Post-Election Violence in Kenya and the Role of Religion

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Abstract

War, violence and conflicts are the biggest hiccups to human development to date. In spite of the numerous calls for justice, reconciliation and peace as prerequisites for a stable society, political, religious and ethnic conflicts continue to hit many parts of the world. Africa is possibly the most affected continent by this anguish as some of her nations and people have not known peace for decades. In Kenya, for example, although there have been many conflicts since independence (1963), it was the 2007/2008 Post-election violence that proved rather challenging as its effects are felt to date. The disputed Presidential election results plunged the county into a serious crisis whose effects continue to wreck the country socially, politically and economically. For instance, memories of this conflict where many lives were lost, families displaced, women and girls suffered sexual violence and property destroyed reappear any time we have a national election, and this has seriously disintegrated the nation, thus affecting the development of the country as a whole. It is therefore an issue that must be seriously thought about by all stakeholders if at all any sustainable development has to be attained. In this regard, religion which still remains the most trusted institution in Kenya as in other parts of Africa must not stand at the periphery. Religion is the conscience of the society and as such the dominant religions in Kenya, namely Christianity (82.5%) and Islam (11%), have an indelible responsibility of bringing forth justice, peace and reconciliation among individuals and communities in Kenya so as to ensure that the country attains sustainable development.

Keywords: Kenya, Religion, Post-election Violence, Reconciliation

1. Introduction

Although peace has not been listed as a basic human need,[2]   it has become an essential necessity in human life. No sustainable human development can take place if there is no peace. The former Deputy General Sectary of United Nations, Jan Eliasson acknowledges this fact when he asserts that,

There is no peace without development, there is no development without peace, and there is no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect of human rights and the rule of law. … For the international system to work, and for even a nation to work, you have to have to have peace, development and respect for human rights and rule of law, and you have to deal with it at the same time (Eliasson, 2013).

Today the cry of the whole world is the need for sustainable development (See the 2030 Agenda, 2016). This is more so in developing nations particularly those of Africa which have lagged behind in development for years due to subjugation by their colonial powers and poor post- independence political leadership (Nthamburi, 1991). For example, Walter Rodney in his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* best explains the contribution of Europe to the current misery of Africa.

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[2] The fundamental human needs are viewed as food, shelter/sleep, water, clothing, novelty, air, (see Gravagna,2018). Even Abraham Maslow in his hierarchy of needs has not captured peace as a basic human need.

He avows that Africa was deliberately exploited and underdeveloped by European colonial regimes. The combination of power politics and economic exploitation of Africa by the Europeans led to the poor state of African political and economic development evident today (Rodney, 1972). Efforts by Africans to liberate themselves and bring peace and development in the continent have not produced much fruits as many African nations continue to encounter perpetual wars and conflicts (Mwiti & Dueck, 2007). This is unfortunately a malignancy that we have to continually deal with amid numerous hindrances. My argument in this paper is that although many factors can be attributed to the poor development of Africa today including poor governance, corruption, neo-colonialism among others (Njino, 2008), I see conflicts as the major contribution. Conflicts are the main nemesis of development not only in Africa but in the whole the world. As Stewart (2002), puts it, conflicts in developing countries have heavy human, social, economic and social costs and a major cause of poverty and underdevelopment. As nations all over strive to attain sustainable development, their efforts are thwarted by incessant conflicts. This fact is confirmed by Kunhiyop (2008), who avers that the world is full of conflicts, wars and violence. Some of these have been political, while others are sparked by ethnic and religious conflicts. According to Kagema (2015a), these have been the gigantic hiccups to the socio-economic and political development of humanity. Biblically, God created humanity in His own image and likeness (Gen 1:27), but the same humanity has destroyed this image by its failure to maintain a peaceful environment.

Although some areas are more affected by these conflicts than others, they are a global challenge affecting all nations and continents either directly or indirectly. No nation can claim to be secure. For example, the Middle East is racked by conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, in Iraq groups are fighting each other, in Europe there are conflicts between Protestants in Northern Ireland, between Serbs and ethnic Albanians in Kasovo, and between Russians and Chechens. In Asia, there are serious conflicts in Sri Lanka, and between Hindus and Muslims in India (Kunhiyop, 2008). Jean- Marie Guehenno points out that the world is entering its most dangerous chapter in decades due to the endless conflicts (Guehenno, 2017). For instance, Shinkman (2016) informs that United States has not been able to extract itself from Afghanistan, where Taliban continues to test the resolve of the shaky unity government in Kabul. The Islamic state group has continued to deliver death and destruction in Iraq as well as Syria where war ranges. Terror attacks have pervaded from Orlando, Florida to Nice, France. Russia has redoubled its effort to become a global superpower, supporting a separatist movement in Ukraine, testing the resolve of NATO powers and waging an electronic warfare campaign that has resulted in new sanctions from United States, and North Korea continues to test nuclear devices. It is apparent that the sharp uptick in war over recent years is outstripping our ability to cope with the consequences. From the global refugee crisis to the spread of terrorism, our collective failure to resolve conflict is giving birth to new threats and emergences. Even in peaceful societies, the politics of fear is leading to dangerous polarization and demagoguery (Guehenno, 2017).

As Kagema (2014), warns, the world faces the challenge of the 'third world war' if all stakeholders including governments, the public sector, developments partners, Para-religious organizations and the various religions do not hasten the process of bringing forth justice, peace and reconciliation in the troubled global village called 'the earth'.

Africa is possibly the most affected continent by this anguish (Kagema, 2015 b). This is because Africa is a home of conflicts where some African people have not known peace over the centuries (Kagema, 2016). According to Camara (1971), the continent of Africa is filled with ethnic and religious conflicts, wars over resources and failed states which have really destabilized the continent. Thompson (2003, p. 136) laments that, "From south to north, west to east, fighting burns or simmers in Africa". Notably, in Africa in recent years, there have been conflicts in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Angola, Nigeria, South Sudan, Liberia, Sudan, Egypt, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast and many others (Kunhiyop, 2008, p. 107). It is very sad that across Africa brother is killing brother (Chipenda, 1993, p. 23), and many people have lost their lives, property and families for very flimsy reasons. For example, in 2014 alone deaths from ethnic and political violence constituted 75.5% of continent-wide deaths (Transconflict, 2015). Mwiti and Dueck (2007,p.13) while assessing the African situation argue that Africa hobbled into the twenty-first covered with wounds from genocide in Rwanda, war in Sierra Leone, ethnic clashes in Darfur and other predicaments which have put the whole continent in a very devastating situation. Shah (2010) supports this view by saying that recent years have seen many regions of Africa involved in war and internal and external conflicts. Dorrie (2016) elucidates that with exception of Syria, African countries currently get worst representation when it comes to violence and conflicts. Virtually every story coming out of the continent seems to showcase one atrocity or another.

For instance, in 2014, Africa experienced more than half of world-wide conflict incidents despite having only about 16 percent of world's population. It is possibly this poignant African situation that makes Desmond Tutu, the former Anglican Archbishop of South Africa dirge in desperation,

The picture is bleak and the prospect one of seemingly unmitigated gloom. It is as if the entire continent was groaning under the curse of Ham and was indeed in all aspects of the Dark Continent of antiquity. Africans may well ask: "Are we God's step children? Why has disaster picked on us so conspicuously?" We appear to be tragically unique in this respect (Tutu, 2004).

Africa as a developing continent has on top of the problem of under-development faced other problems which have hindered sustainable development including political power struggles, nepotism, tribalism, poverty, hunger, pollution, diseases, crime, unemployment, corruption, environmental degradation, breakdown of traditional family life among others (Kagema, 2012, p. 229). Kunhiyop (2008) argues that these vices or 'evils' are the main cause of conflicts in Africa and threaten the very existence of the African people. Mugambi (1989), advices that if at all any meaningful sustainable development will be attained in Africa these are the issues which must first be tackled. Justice, reconciliation and peace are inevitable components of sustainable development (Eliasson, 2013).

Consequently, religion which is highly viewed as the conscience of the society (Adeyemo, 1990), the agent of justice, reconciliation and peace (Peachy, 1988), and the most trusted institution in many parts of the world, including Africa (Hendriks, 2006), has a role to play as far as resolving conflicts and the promotion of justice, reconciliation and peace is concerned. It is in this consideration that, Nthamburi (2000) calls the African religious leaders and theologians to lead the way of transforming Africa. Religion is an agent of peace, justice and reconciliation in any society (Shenk, 1983), but the sad thing is that as Wa Kasonga (1994) denotes, Africa has experienced perpetual conflicts and crises as religious leaders and their adherents watch. This is a situation that we cannot just ignore if at all we want to develop Africa. Borrowing from Kunhiyop (2008, p. 107), religions in Africa have to develop an understanding of the nature of these conflicts and how to religious leaders, theologians as well as adherents should respond to them.

Africa has an advantage in that religion is not a foreign phenomenon here. Religion has over the years remained part of the African cultural life influencing all aspects of life (Mbiti, 1969). It permeates into all department of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to isolate it (Mbiti, 1969,p.1). As Gehman (2005) points out, even with secularization, religion continues to shape the attitudes and actions of large numbers of the African people. In this regard, religion becomes the best tool in the reconstruction of Africa (Mugambi, 1995). This reconstruction definitely needs a peaceful environment, and as such the role of religion in the promotion of justice, reconciliation and peace cannot be over-emphasized (Kagema, 2015 a). This paper examines the situation in Kenya, especially after the noxious 2007/08 post election violence and what religions in Kenya can possibly do to bring forth justice and reconciliation, which the government has not been able to effectively offer.

2. The Situation in Kenya: The 2007/08 Post- Election Crisis

The situation in Kenya has not been different from what has been experienced in other parts of Africa. Although there have been many ethnic conflicts in Kenya since independence in 1963, it was the 2007/08 Post-election violence that proved rather challenging to the Kenyan people (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011). The announcement of the contested presidential election results on 30th December 2007, giving a second term to President Mwai Kibaki, plunked Kenya into a serious crisis from whose effect we have not recovered. It was the worst political crisis in Kenya since independence (Kenya in Crisis Africa Report, 2008). There were other conflicts before but they were not of the magnitude of the 2007/08 post poll crisis. For instance, during President Daniel Moi's administration of 24 years (1978-2002), there was always ethnic violence during electioneering period as he and his cronies strived to retain power. Notably, Gifford (2009), informs that with the beginning of multi-party politics in Kenya in 1992, there were numerous conflicts engineered by the ruling party KANU.[3] He opines that "Yet far from the violence being spontaneous, there is evidence that the government was involved in provoking death, displacement and terror among ethnic groups" (p.12). This irresponsible behaviour by the government continued to 1997 elections, where politically-motivated ethnic violence returned leading to the death of many innocent people mainly the Kikuyus, Luos and Luhyas (Githiga, 2001).

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[3] KANU stands for Kenya African National Union. It was the party that led the country to independence in 1963. By the time President Moi retired in 2002, it was a very unpopular party.

The 2007/08 violence was however so grave that about 1,133 Kenyans lost their lives, at least 350,000 were internally displaced, more than 2000 became refugees, there was unknown number of sexual violence victims, 117,216 private properties were destroyed and 491 government-owned property (offices, vehicles, health centers, schools) were annihilated (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2011). This violence was a serious setback to the realization of Kenya Vision 2030 which had just been inaugurated (Kagema, 2015b).
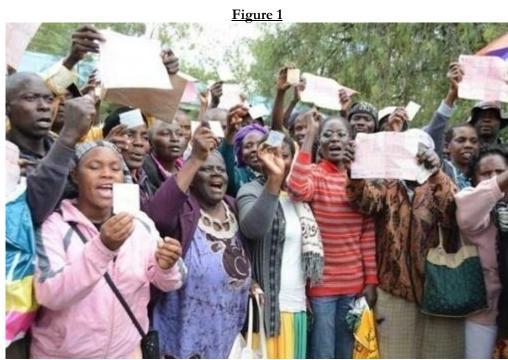
The International bodies led by the former United Nations General Secretary, Kofi Annan brokered a peace deal between Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) and Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), that led to the formation of a Coalition Government, where the former became the President and the latter the Prime Minister (BBC News, 2008). Many Kenyans, who were suffering in the midst of an unending war, got a sigh of relief. The Coalition government was characterized by unnecessary squabbles and antagonism (Amadi, 2009), but it brought peace in a country that was almost disintegrating.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) commonly known as the 'Waki Commission' since it was led by Justice Philip Waki was formed (CIPEV Report, 2008). This commission was to investigate facts and circumstances surrounding the violence, the conduct of state security agencies in their handling of the violence and make recommendations concerning these and other matters (CIPEV report, 2008). Among the many recommendations of the Commission was that,

> To break the cycle of impunity which is at the heart of the post-election violence,
> the report recommends the creation of a special tribunal with the mandate to
> prosecute crimes committed as a result of post-election violence. The tribunal
> will have an international component in the form of the presence of non-Kenyans
> on the senior investigations and prosecution staff (CIPEV Report, 2008).

Although the tribunal was not formed, six political leaders from both Kibaki's PNU and Raila's ODM who were suspected of bearing the greatest responsibility for the violence were prosecuted at the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague (BBC News, 2010). These were Uhuru Kenyatta (The current President), Francis Muthaura, Hussein Ali, William Ruto (The current Deputy President), Joshua Arap Sang and Henry Kosgey. They were charged of crimes against humanity, a move that was seen as a major relief to the victims of the violence (CNN News, 2011). Many saw this as an ideal way of ending the culture of impunity in Kenya and also ensuring justice for the victims. Unfortunately, this never came to be as all the cases flopped due to what was seen as poor investigation of the cases by then ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo and lack of sufficient evidence (The Guardian, 2016).

The 2007/2008 conflict was a dark moment for Kenya (Kagema, 2017). It made us lose what we had built over the years since independence including brotherhood, economy, infrastructure, peace and stability. Although efforts were made to rejuvenate the country from the effects of this violence, for example, the passing of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and the formation of National Cohesion and Integration Commission (2011), not much has been achieved. While I acknowledge that there has been some effort by the government and other bodies to resettle and reconcile the people, there are still many Kenyans who are suffering as a result of this violence. For example, the victims are still crying for justice, some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) have never been resettled and rivalry still exists between many communities. On top of this, many of those who were responsible for this violence have never been punished and some of those who lost their relatives and property have never been compensated. See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

    The victims of 2007-08 post-election violence in Naivasha complain of being neglected by the government (The Standard Jan. 20, 2017)

    Evidently, reconciliation has not yet been achieved as there is still so much hatred between various Kenyan communities as confirmed by the 2017 Presidential elections where ethnic communities regrouped to support their own 'tribe-men' and this almost led country to another inter-tribal war (Deutsche Welle, 2018). Gitonga (2017) affirms that Kenya has never recovered from the effects of the 2007/2008 Post election violence. This is the reality that the country may grapple with for quite some time unless something is done.

    The government of Kenya has made strenuous effort to resettle the IDPs and also bring forth reconciliation between individuals and communities (Daily Nation, 2016, 20th Dec), but this has not gone without challenges which have made the initiative almost difficult. For example, lack of sufficient funds, failure to identify the real IDPs, lack of proper policy on IDPs, and corruption have been the major hiccups to the resettlement IDPs in Kenya (Mwiandi, 2008). As such many IDPs are still in the IDPs camps. As this happens, the cry of other victims whose injustices were perpetrated on, including sexual violence victims and those that lost their relatives and property has not been listened to. Gitonga (2017) opines that several years after the deadly post- election violence that hit the country leaving trail of death and destruction, many victims of the violence have not received any assistance from the state or any other body or individual. This is confirmed by Odhiambo (2017) who informs that more than two years ago, President Uhuru Kenyatta announced the establishment of a fund of 10 billion Kenya shillings to help the victims of the past injustices, including victims of the 2007/08 violence, but to date the government has not developed a plan of how the fund would be implemented. The victims have thus not received financial assistance, medical care, or any psycho-social support. Their suffering therefore continues.

    The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) that was established in 2013 to help heal historical injustices dating from well before 2007 post-election violence, proposed the reparation for the 2007/08 post-election violence victims as an ideal way of ensuring that justice, reconciliation and peace prevailed. Unfortunately this has never happened (Odhiambo, 2017). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission that had been formed in 2011 proposed the need for developing a Kenyan community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunities based on a sense of hope, trust, and reciprocity. But the challenge was how can this be possible where there is no justice? The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (2013) proposed the need for justice, reconciliation and peace so as to build a stable Kenyan community. Sadly, this has not been given much attention and victims of the 2007/08 post-election violence are still crying for justice. As denoted by Maliti (2014), no peace and reconciliation is possible in Kenya if the justice of the 2007/08 PEV victims has not been prioritized.

A notable thing is that as this happens, religion which is the most trusted institution in Kenya (Kagema, 2012), the conscience of the society (Capital News, 2010, Adeyemo, 1990) and the institution followed by the majority of Kenyans (Kenya Population Census, 2010) has been silent.[4] In Kenya, religion still remains a crucial force with Christianity being followed by 83% Kenyans, Islam 11.2%, Traditionalists 1.7 % and other religions 1.6%. Only 2.4% of the Kenyan people do not subscribe to any religion (Kenya Population Census Results, 2010).   In the midst of the 2007/08 post- election conflict, religious leaders had emerged to apologize to Kenyans for taking sides in the tribal and political divide and for doing little to stop the violence (Mue, 2008). Since then religions have done little to address the devastating state of the abandoned victims or even bring about the much needed justice, reconciliation and peace after this violence. As OKure (2011) says, religions as reconciling agents of God's reconciliation, justice and peace must not stand at the periphery as people suffer from the effects of violence. If religions hope to be relevant in the society, they should address injustices and bring hope. Theologians also need to develop a relevant theology that will bring forth justice, reconciliation and peace in a country that has experienced political turmoil since independence.

3. The Role of Religion

Therefore the question we are asking is that 'Is there any role that religion as one of the stakeholders can play in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post-poll crisis in Kenya?' This is in consideration that Kenya is still predominantly a religious country with 98% of its citizens proclaiming one religion or another (Kenya Population Census, 2010, Kenya Religion Demographics, 2018). I am cognizant of the challenges facing religion all over the world due to secularization, but religion still commands considerable influence in many parts of Africa. In Kenya for example, Mugambi (1996, p. 25) refers to religion as social phenomenon fully blended with the way of life and communities. In other words, it influences people's art, culture and philosophy. A good example of how religion in Kenya has influenced all aspects of life is evidenced by the way in which even the major cities are designed. Mugambi (1996, pp. 25-28) avows that in and around the cities of Mombasa and Nairobi are significant religious landmarks. What is questionable is the magnitude of this influence as noted in an article in *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* dated 13June 2018. It is noted in the article that,

Most Kenyans are religious. The country would be about 95 to 97 percent religious, 70 to 80 percent of that being from one of the Christian traditions. Another sizable percentage, perhaps 15 to 20, being from the Islamic community, and maybe 2 to 3 percent being Hindu and others. So Kenya is generally a religious community. But how this religion works out in economics, how it works out in politics, how it works out in ethnicity, how it works out in aesthetics, how it works out in defining ethical values, how it works as a true worship, as a religion itself — those are the critical questions that we are now being called upon to engage. We have assumed we are a peaceful country. We have assumed that our religion is deep enough. The truth is that it is not deep enough.

The last four lines best describe the nature of religion in Kenya. It is an institution that is followed by the majority of the Kenyans, yet it has not been able to convince many of them to follow it with absolute stanchness. The reasons for this may be many, but the stark fact is that unlike before when religious leaders were the most educated people in the society with high skills and knowledge, religion in Kenya as in other parts of Africa has failed to attract the best educated Africans into its leadership. This is affirmed by Roland Oliver in his study of Christianity, which is the dominant religion in East Africa. While assessing the general situation of the Church in Oliver (1952) was astonished to find that the post- colonial Church was growing at a tremendous rate with a huge population, but it had failed to allure even a handful of the elite Africans into its leadership. Although at the initial decades of colonialism in East Africa the elite Africans became either chiefs or church leaders, with the development of secondary education and the widening of secular opportunities, the churches begun to be out-spaced in the competition for the best educated people. The situation became even more serious with the beginnings of higher education whereby most of the best educated Africans opted for secular jobs. The African Church only attracted those with low academic standards. This led Oliver (1952: 291-2)to conclude that "A Church led by peasant priests risks disintegrating at the centre while expanding at the circumference". The observation of Oliver is not exceptional to Christianity. Other religions experience the same problem. For instance, when I was the Chaplain of Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi a few years ago, we searched for an Imam with a degree in Islamic Studies from a recognized University and with a C(+) plus and above grade at the Ordinary Level and we could not get any.

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[4] This supports the earlier argument that religion still commands considerable influence in many parts of Africa

I thus concur with Oliver because as far as religions continue to be led by leaders of very low academic standards, then we should not expect much influence from them. The subject of discussion in this paper, that is, the 2007/08 post-election violence can justify our argument. Mue (2008) informs that as Kenyans went through a period of anguish during this post-election turbulence, religious leaders took sides and supported their kinsmen. Sadly, after the end of violence, religions have done little to support the victims or bring forth the much needed reconciliation. I agree with Kipkemboi (2014) that if religions in Kenya had taken their God-given responsibility of being the conscience of the society, the 2007/08 post-election violence would not have escalated to the level it did and by now the plight of the victims could have been addressed.

I want to emphasize that religions have a role to play in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post-election violence in Kenya. Emile Durkheim has told us that religion is the 'conscience of the society' (Christiano, et. al, 2008), a definition which I have found no reliable grounds to refute. My concern is why religions have sometimes not taken this indelible role seriously especially here in Africa. Religion is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein (Bahai International Community, 1994), but as Wa Kasonga (1994) denotes, Africa has experienced perpetual conflicts and crises as religious leaders and their adherents watch. This lackadaisical approach of religions is what possibly makes Kagema (2015a) and some other scholars including Mue (2008) and Kipkemboi (2014) conclude that the 2007/08 post-poll crisis that rocked Kenya was in part exacerbated by the religious leaders. When in their guilt they tried the calm the situation after the violence broke out, it became a difficult venture as they were regarded as 'traitors' by their followers (Kagema, 2015 a).

That notwithstanding, I want to emphasize that the dominant religions namely Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion and others have a role to play in the aftermath of the 2007/08 violence. By its very nature, religion is an agent justice, reconciliation and peace. Mubangizi (2011) avows that justice, peace and reconciliation are to be considered not as some specialized functions suited to only to those specially trained, but as part of deeper process of evangelization. Mubangizi is talking from a Christian point of view but his assertion is important to all religions, especially the new religions in Africa if we adopt the term evangelization to imply 'spreading a religion'. Thus the promotion of justice, reconciliation and peace is the core business of all religions. It is possibly due to this that all religions give ingrained prominence to peace as shown in the section below.

3.1 Religion and Peace, Justice and Reconciliation

In this section I want to give a few examples to illustrate that all religions are founded on the principles of justice, peace and reconciliation.

In Judaism and Christianity, God is first and foremost God of peace, Justice and reconciliation. He is a peaceful creator who creates a peaceful universe. The plants, birds, animals and humanity lived together creating a serene environment (Gen. 1: 11- 31). In the Jewish culture (Judaism), the salutation is 'Shalom' which means 'Peace'. There are about 296 verses in the Jewish Bible on peace (Art & Bible, 2015). In Judaism and Christianity God is basically regarded as the giver of peace. 'The Lord gives strength to his people and blesses them with peace (Ps. 29:11). The promised Messiah will be called 'The Prince of peace' (Is.9:6). The words of Prophet Isaiah can help us understand how the Jews take their God: 'You Lord give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you' (Is.26:3). The New Testament is regarded as peace book (Grimsrud, 2013).   It has more than twenty verses on peace which implies that even in Christianity peace is highly regarded (Eyck, 2017). Jesus Christ taught peace and nonviolence (Jones, 2014). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed the *Lex Tallionis*[5] by saying that,

You have heard that it was said 'Eye for an eye, and tooth for tooth'. But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go a mile, go with him two miles (Mtt. 5:38-41).

When Peter drew out his sword and cut off the ear of one of the high priest's servant who had come to arrest Jesus, Jesus' response was ' Put your sword back in its place for all who draw the sword will die by the sword' (Mtt.26:52).

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[5] The Jewish law which demanded that if someone kills, he also be killed, if someone plucked out another's eye, his is also plucked off and so on. It is a called ' eye for an eye, tooth for tooth' law.

When it comes to justice, the Christian and Judaic scriptures show that God is just and loves justice. " He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just he is . . ." (Deut. 32:4). Pertaining reconciliation, Okure (2011), says that it is God's work. God justifies us, declares us righteous, and gives us divine peace. Humanity and the entire creation benefit from this reconciliation (Col.1:20; Rom.8:19-21). Saint Paul sees the ministry of Jesus Christ as that of reconciling humanity with God. He says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor.5: 19). "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor.5:18) and "through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven" (Col.1:20). " Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor.5:20), "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom.5:10). "And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11). These and more biblical texts indicate that Christianity is based on the fundamentals of peace, justice and reconciliation, and there is no way in which the Church can stand at the periphery in the absence of these in the society or nation. Thus, the Church must strive to bring justice, peace and reconciliation in Kenya after the fatal 2007/08 post election violence whose effects have continued to irk some Kenyans.

The other religion we need to look at is Islam which is followed by 11 percent of Kenyans according to the 2009 Population Census Results. Islam is a religion of peace. The root word for Islam, that is, 'Silm' refers to making peace, being a mutually peaceful environment, being secure, finding peace and so on (Algul, 2015). In the Quran,God is associated with peace. Islam is submission to God, accepting his authority as well as obeying his orders. A Muslim is one who is under the peaceful and safe shade of Islam (Berkeley Center, 2017). All Muslims must thus promote peace at all costs. Although Prophet Muhammed waged war, he always sought a just peace- sometimes over protests of his companions (Berkeley Center, 2017).

During the early centuries of Islam, scholars set ethical limits on war-making. Intentions had to be pure, and not just self-interested, and the use of force had to be absolutely necessary, for example, to protect the religious community, preserve justice, or defend territory. Therefore, Jihad to extend the abode of Islam was driven more by imperial than by religious considerations. The Qur'an forbids coercion in religious affairs: "There is no compulsion in religion." (Qur'an 2:256) and killing a life without cause is equivalent to "killing the whole human race" (Qur'an 5:32). Modern calls for holy war against the infidels, articulated by Islamic fundamentalists are at odds with the Islamic tradition and roundly denounced by leading Muslim scholars (Berkeley Center, 2017). The following Islamic texts possibly enables us understand the approach of Islam towards peace and reconciliation,

And if two parties of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; indeed Allah loves those who act equitably. (al-Hujurat**,** 49/9)

No good is there in much of their private conversation, except for those who enjoin charity or that which is right or conciliation between people. And whoever does that seeking means to the approval of Allah – then We are going to give him a great reward**.** [Quran 4: 114]

Thus Islam urges the believers to regard 'reconciling people' as one of his most important aims in their worldly life, as it is through reconciliation that the Ummah becomes a coherent unit where one part thereof seeks to amend the other part. Thus, it becomes like a single body; if one organ of it complains, the rest of the body suffers sleeplessness and fever. Neglecting this matter leads to the disintegration of the Ummah and the severance of its ties (Islamweb.net, 2016).

Pertaining justice in Islam, it is the central theme in the Koran as shown the following texts,
 (Asad) O YOU who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of any-one lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. ... And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do (Quran 5:8).

"God commands justice and fair dealing..." (Quran 16:90)

"O you who believe, be upright for God, and (be) bearers of witness with justice!..." (Quran 5:8)

"O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if it be against yourselves, your parents, and your relatives, or whether it is against the rich or the poor..." (Quran 4:135)

"Let not the hatred of a people swerve you away from justice. Be just, for this is closest to righteousness…" (Quran 5:8)

And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can change His Words." (Quran 6:115)

"…When you speak, speak with justice, even if it is against someone close to you…" (Quran 6:152)

These and more Islamic texts clearly indicate that Islam is a religion which advocates peace, justice and reconciliation. As such, Muslims have an obligation of promoting these virtues in the society. Thus Muslims have a role to play in Kenya in bringing forth the much needed justice, peace and reconciliation after the 2007/08 post election violence.

Similarly, African Religions are religions of peace. Kagema (2015 a) regards African Traditional Religion as a religion of peace which is friendly to all other religions. The African Conception of God shows that God is the author of peace. We can learn a lot concerning how Africans associate God with peace by looking at the following two prayers by the African communities extracted from Kagema (2015a). These are,

i) **The Kikuyu prayer:** *Thaii! Thathaiya Ngai! Thai!* (Peace we beseech you God, Peace!)
ii) **The Tharaka prayer**: *Murungu wa thiiri, ii, Tue ukiri, ii, Turetere mbura, ii* (God of peace, give us grace, give us rain)

These two prayers are examples of how Africans take God. In Africa God is believed to be the creator of all life and peace (Shenk, 1983, p.6). Since God in Africa is known to be the God of peace, justice and reconciliation, the African people have always endeavored to ensure that these principles prevail in every family and community (Kagema, 2014). Therefore, the promotion of justice, peace and reconciliation becomes a key aspect in the African life.

From the underlying arguments, it is clear that all religions in Kenya should be involved in the promotion of justice, reconciliation and peace so as to reconstruct the country after the grave 2007/08 post election violence that rocked this country and whose effects continue to be felt to date. As to what religions should exactly do, I propose the following actions as essential in building a stable country after the 2007/08 post election violence:

i) Religions should urge the government to ensure that the justice of the victims is attained. There are many people who lost their property and lives, yet those responsible have never been punished. Many of those who lost their property have never been compensated. Punishment of the offenders and compensation of the victims should be encouraged as an ideal way of helping the victims recover what they lost and bringing forth justice. The resettlement of all the victims will be a milestone in bringing forth reconciliation and peace.

ii) Religions should urge the government to implement some of the recommendations of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) as a way of promoting justice, peace and reconciliation after the 2007/08 post election conflict. Some of the main recommendations of the TJRC (2013) included,

a) The Government should immediately carry out counselling services, especially to those who lost their entire families to avoid mental breakdown. It is not too late to counsel the victims because they have not undergone any counselling at all.

b) The Government should address the question of equality in this country. We do not want to feel as if we do not belong to this country. We demand to be treated the same just like any other Kenyan in any part of this country. We demand for equal treatment.

c) Anybody who has been involved in the killing of Kenyans, no matter what position he holds, should not be given any responsibility.

d) The Government should offer apology to the people of Kenya, the reason being that it was supposed to protect its citizens yet it allowed its security forces to violently attack them and, therefore, perpetrated gross violation of their rights.

These are recommendations which religions should support so that justice for all Kenyans is ensured.

iii) Mwamba (2019) suggests that religions can set an example by offering pastoral care and peace building programmes aimed at bringing the Kenyan communities and individuals together. He gives an example of the Presbyterian Church

of East Africa (PCEA) which after the 2007/08 post election violence came up with a programme designated "Operation Timothy" for the people affected by the violence. This theme was derived from 1Timothy 6:18 where Paul instructs Timothy to be generous and ready to share with others. Although Mwamba argues that the programme has not succeeded due to lack of support from the PCEA's leadership, it was a recommendable endeavor which should be emulated by all religions and religious organizations.

iv) Kariuki (2016) suggests that as a process of peace and reconciliation, religious leaders and religions in general should offer training seminars and workshops, community outreach, awareness raising events, and the rehabilitation of war-torn structures including provision of humanitarian assistance, shelter, food, healthcare and education. This is especially important for the 2007/08 post election victims who are still groaning in desperation.

v) Inter-ethnic Scriptural Study and Peace building lessons- Scripture includes the Bible, Koran and other sacred books. Studying the word of God together is an ideal way of bringing individuals and communities together. Gawere (2006) avows that peace building can be attained through inter-ethnic study of the Bible or any other religious books. Kariuki (2016) advices that when conflicting communities hold relatively low perceptions of each other, it is of essence that interventions such as Bible study be employed to bring them closer. Thus, the promoting favourable relation through the study of the scriptures is one of the crucial steps towards the building of a harmonious world of long lasting peace and common prosperity (Mwamba, 2019). It is therefore a strategy that the religious leaders cannot underestimate as they aim to reconcile the Kenyan communities and individuals after the 2007/08 post election violence.

vi) Prayer meetings and Peace building fellowships- Prayer is the commonest act of worship in all religions. Robbins (2001) regards prayer as one of the most important things that a religious person can do. In Christianity there are prayers specifically meant for peace. For example, prayer for peace as contained in Anglican Church of Kenya's Modern Services Prayer Book (1991) forms an integral part of Anglicans' morning and evening worship. Such prayers are meant to alert Christians on their personal call to foster peace and maintain tranquility in the society (Kariuki, 2016). The interreligious prayers and fellowships geared towards peace and reconciliation would pray a significant role in bringing communities and individuals together after the tension that the country went through in 2007 and 2008. As we do this, the following texts from the Koran and the Bible give us the much needed assurance from God Himself.

"When my servants ask thee concerning me, I am indeed close to them: I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on me: Let them also, with a will, listen to my call, and believe in me: that they may walk in the right way" (Sura 2:186).

" If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

4. Conclusion

The 2007/08 post election violence is a scar that that will take a long time to be erased from the minds of many Kenyans. It unexpectedly hit the country and destroyed our social, political, economic, moral and religious fiber. Although effort has been made by various stakeholders including the government, international bodies and Non-governmental organizations to address the effects of this violence, not much have been achieved as some victims continue to suffer in Internally Displaced People's camps. What is daunting is that as the victims of the violence suffer and the communities antagonize each other, religion which is supposed to be the conscience of the society is silent. One can as well ask, 'What is the need of religion if it is not helping people in their desperation?' In this regard, this paper argues that religion has a role to play in the aftermath of the 2007/08 post election violence. By it its very nature religion is an agent of justice, peace and reconciliation. Because of this, the various religions operating in Kenya namely Christianity, Islam, African Religion and others should seen it as their indelible responsibility to promote justice, peace and reconciliation in the country after the grave 2007/08 post election violence that almost disintegrated the whole nation.

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