

AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

AN INVESTIGATION ON CHRISTIAN STRATEGIES FOR PEACEFUL CO-
EXISTENCE WITH MUSLIMS IN EASTLEIGH, NAIROBI

BY
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of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
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July, 2017

Student's Declaration

AN INVESTIGATION ON CHRISTIAN STRATEGIES FOR PEACEFUL CO-
EXISTENCE WITH MUSLIMS IN EASTLEIGH, NAIROBI.

I declare that this is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other
College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Africa International
University or Examiners

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July, 2017

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the strategies utilized by Christians in Eastleigh with an aim of enhancing peaceful co-existence with the Muslims in Eastleigh, Nairobi. This study also sought to identify the challenges that Christians living in Eastleigh experience in their attempts to build bridges with the Muslims community there. After establishing those challenges the study further gave suggestions on what more could be done to foster Christian Muslim relationship. As the considerations for Christian Muslim relationship are done this study also gives suggestions on the missiological approaches that Christians in Eastleigh and those in other places can adopt for successful Christian Muslim relationship.

For what was proposed in this study to be made possible, the researcher adopted and made use of qualitative research method. The information needed for this study was collected using both open ended interview questions and participatory observations. The data collected was then analyzed and interpreted so that the researcher could come as close as possible to the realities concerning Christians-Muslim relationship in Eastleigh.

The findings of this study showed that Christians in Eastleigh whether pastors, missionaries or the general population have in some way attempted to come up with some strategies that have in some way succeeded in enhancing a harmonious relationship with the Muslim community in Eastleigh. One of the prominent strategies that the research found that has been commonly used by all the Christians that were interviewed is providing education for Muslim children. This has in some way brought the parents of these children into close contact with Christian in Eastleigh more than any other strategy. This strategy has also allowed Muslim and Christian's children to develop meaningful relationships as they go to school together.

In the final chapter, suggestions are provided in regard to how Christian-Muslim relationship can be enhanced and finally recommendations for further studies are given.

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all the missionaries who have over the years sacrificed the comfort of their lives not only to love and live among the Muslims but also to also share the gospel with them.

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My greatest and most profound gratitude goes to my beloved wife Monica and our Son Joshua who sacrificed their right to have a father and a husband around them all the time. My son specifically thought that my studies were important so he continuously wished me well whenever I left home for classes. At times when I felt tired and weak it was the presence, prayers, words of wisdom, and encouragement from my wife that always refreshed me during my time at AIU.

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say that he understands Islam; he must be willing to dig deeper into those deep level aspects of that particular expression of Islam before he could claim he knows it.

I am also grateful to a very seasoned scholar and theologian of our time, Professor Ngewa. One of the things that greatly challenged me was his humility. I have learnt from him that education should not puff one's head but should make him more helpful both to himself and to his society. His wife Dr. Ngewa has also been a true mother to me. I remember how she encouraged and prayed with me when things were tough with my work at School.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation for the Study

Over the past ten years, the Christian community in Kenya especially in Nairobi, Mombasa and some parts of Northern Kenya have undergone very difficult times due to terrorist attacks. These attacks have instilled a lot of fear in Christians. Kenya had boasted of freedom of worship and peace until people realized that it was dangerous for one to be a Christian in some parts of Kenya. Church services in some areas could no longer be held without being guarded by heavily armed security personnel. But with all these measures to protect people, there has been news of loss of life in big numbers. There was the mass killing of non-Muslim in the Mandera bound bus which was followed almost immediately by the Garissa University attack where about hundred and fifty students lost their lives. What has been common in most of these killings is that they all target Christians or at least the non-Muslims. This has caused people residing in these places to live under a cloud of terror and fear because they do not know when the terrorists will hit again.

As Christians living in these areas or any other part of the country, it is very easy to develop a negative attitude towards Muslims. Those who commit these atrocities are said to associate their evil works with Islam. This association of Islam with the killings and terrorism has a huge potential to cause all the people to hate Islam as a religion and Muslims as people. It has gotten to the point where any individual seen dressed like a Muslim is thought to be a potential terrorist and so must

be avoided at all cost. This reaction by Christians, especially to what has been happening, raises a concern with regard to the command to preach the gospel to all the people.

One of the major complains raised by the Muslim community in Eastleigh is that the government is not careful enough to differentiate between the illegal immigrants and those Muslims who are Kenyans. In most cases the entire Muslim community is harassed indiscriminately. There has even been a situation where a Kenyan Muslim is put in Police custody and even taken to Somalia only for the government to realize that s/he was actually a Kenyan. These situations have created a very volatile relationship space between Christians and Muslims in Kenya and more especially in Eastleigh. This study aims at examining those factors affecting the relationships between Muslims and Christians in Eastleigh for the purpose of challenging Christians on how they can intentionally make use of peace building with the Muslims as a bridge to communicating the gospel and fulfilling the great commission.

A Brief Description of Eastleigh

Eastleigh, is a settlement located to the East of Nairobi. Apart from being a settlement and a home to many Kenyans, Eastleigh is also known for its booming business. Eastleigh is also known as one of the settlement that has many Somalis living there. By 2011, Jones estimated there was about a hundred thousand Somalis living in Eastleigh; most having fled there after civil war ripped their country apart in the early 1990s (Jones 2011). Talking about Eastleigh, Peter and others agreeing with Jones observe that, “one of the places that is very popular in Eastleigh is the famous Garissa Lodge which has over the years grown to a booming business” (Peters et al 2013). From the small buildings that used to be recognized as Garissa Lodge,

Eastleigh business center has completely been transformed by the new and tall sparkling shopping malls that share space with old and new buildings amidst minarets and Madrasas (Muslim Schools), affirming that Eastleigh is not only a business hub but also a settlement that provides space not only for thriving business activities but also for practice of Islam as a religion (Peters et al 2013, 22).

The general division of Eastleigh is into three sections: Section I, the area around Juja Road; Section II, the middle section that encompasses the business center, the twelfth street and the surrounding estates; and section III, which is the residential region past the Moi air base located south of Eastleigh (Peters et al 2013). Talking about the inhabitants of Eastleigh Peter further observes that, “the residents of Eastleigh are from diverse backgrounds. Prominent among them being the Somalis from both Kenya and Somalia, Ethiopia immigrants, and other Cushitic speakers from northern Kenya.” (Peters et al 2013).

Apart from being popular because of being a business center, Eastleigh has also become popular because it serves as a place of arrival and departure for many people traveling to the Northern of Kenya towns such as Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Marsabit, Garissa, Moyale, Dadaab, and Kakuma among other towns. (Peters et al. 2013).

In regard to religion, Mutunga observes that there are numerous Mosques which offer places for prayer. Religion seems to be very important to the Muslims to extent that they can even be seen praying in other places including hotels and at times on the street (Mutunga 2016, 3). It is this possibility of Eastleigh having many Muslims that has pushed the researcher to want to find out what Christians having been doing to reach out to the Muslims. Having shown how the relationships between Christians and Muslims have been affected by the terrorism activities, it seems bridge

building with the Muslims is not only important for co-existence but also because it creates an opportunity for Christians to share the gospel with their Muslim neighbors.

One of the critical questions that Christians needs to ask themselves is whether their reactions to Muslims based on terrorists' attacks has any impact on their commitment to world evangelism. The great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ does not seem to allow Christians to only reach a section of the people who are kind to them but leave out the rest who are violent and intolerant.

Research Problem

There seems to be a possibility that Christians may be tempted to see all Muslims as their enemies, and this has potential to hinder peaceful co-existence between these two groups. Since it is almost impossible to reach out to a person who appears to pose a threat to your life, it seems the Christian perception of Muslims as enemies could completely close the door of evangelism to the Muslim community in Kenya and more particularly in Eastleigh. With this in mind, the main research question of this study therefore is: What are Christians in Eastleigh doing to cultivate peaceful co-existence with their Muslim neighbors?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate and understand what Christians have been doing to cultivate peaceful co-existence with their Muslim neighbors in Eastleigh area of Nairobi, in order to find out the effectiveness of these attempts and what more could be done to foster peaceful co-existence.

Significance of the Study

Since this study will explore the concept of Christians being intentional in promoting co-existence with Muslims, it will be of great importance to:

1. Missionary work to Muslims in Eastleigh and other parts of Kenya in general.
2. My home Church in Garissa which is situated within a Muslim context.
3. Pastors, Churches and evangelists who do their ministry within Eastleigh and other parts of Kenya.
4. Believers in general in learning how they can be peace-makers among the Muslims.
5. NGO's and government personnel working among the Muslims especially on how they can create meaningful relationships with the Muslims.
6. Scholars who are seeking to understand how peaceful co-existence with Muslims can be a reality among the Muslims.

The Main Research Questions

1. What activities are Christians involved in that can create space for Christian-Muslim co-existence in Eastleigh?
2. What can be said to be the purpose of these activities?
3. How effective are these activities in relation to cultivation of peaceful co-existence with the Muslims?

Limitations

One of the expected limitations to this study was related to the willingness of the institutions to provide the needed information. This challenge was dealt with through asking one of the missionaries working in Eastleigh who introduced me to the

places where the data collection was done. For the purpose of this study, interviews were specifically conducted in Christian organizations and Churches serving in Eastleigh. It was anticipated that the researcher would encounter barriers in accessing information from these places. Therefore this necessitated the use of contact persons who played a critical role of introducing me to these institutions and also helped me to deal with challenges that go with finding persons who are willing to help.

Another limitation was that this study was to be limited by how reliable is the information provided by the interviewees, which was outside the powers of the researcher to determine. This is critical because all the interpretations of this study depends fully on the information provided.

The other limitation was biasness. Since this is an interesting topic to the researcher, there might be challenges with being objective, which is critical to this study.

Finally, there was limited time. For sufficient data collection through participant observation, more time was needed which in most cases was not available. To deal with this challenge, the researcher decided to make use of the time he spent at Eastleigh during his practicum to do his data collection. Apart from that there was also extra time created after the practicum where more visits were made to Eastleigh to complete the exercise of data collection.

Delimitations

This study took place at the Eastleigh area of Nairobi. It is worth noting that there are Muslims in almost every corner of Kenya; hence, to attempt to do a study in all places where Christians are working among Muslims demanded time and money,

which the researcher was not able to acquire at that moment. In addition to this, this study did not focus on interviewing the Muslims because it was centered on what Christians are doing to reach out to the Muslims. Having said that, it is important to note that whenever possible the researcher may be interested in finding out through observation or friendly discussions whether Muslims appreciate the activities of Christians in Eastleigh.

Definition of Terms

Co-existence: Refers to the ability for two groups with possibly opposing views attempting to live together ignoring their differences and focusing on the factors that bring them together (McCurry 1997, 51).

Muslim: This term refers to a person in the religion of Islam who has submitted himself to God and believes in his messenger, the Prophet Muhammad (Taylor 1979, 3; Ayoub2008, 8-9).

Islam: This term stands for a “strong commitment” to God (Allah) (Ayoub 2008, 8-9).

Peace: This term as used here in relation to Muslims and Christians refers to a possibility of the two groups living as good neighbors without fighting or accusing each other over wrongs done (Ahmed 1993, 207-211).

Hajj: This term refers to an event in the Muslim calendar where the faithful Muslims travel to Mecca with an aim of praying at the place where God is believed to have miraculously provided water to Ishmael. It is believed that Abraham, the father of Ishmael, raised an altar there and worshiped the only true God (Rippin 2001, 108).

Shirk: According to the Qur’an, this term stands for attempting to associate the only true God with any other object or person and worshiping the other thing or person as if it were God (Parrainder.1965.126, Wismer 2009, 11).

Islamophobia: This term stands for a description of intolerance to Muslims, their religion, and cultural belief (Esposito and Mogahed 2007, 136).

Dialogue: This term as used here talks about a possibility for two sides (Islam and Christians) to open up their lives to each other so that each side gets an opportunity to learn the other with an aim of respecting and appreciating each other's point of view (Ranzan and Ajus 2003,65).

Crusades: This term is used to refer to the invasion of Christians that was aimed and freeing Jerusalem (the Holy Land) from the occupation of Islam. This took place around the 11th to the 13thcenturies (Lenny1990, 5)

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Background Literature

Abraham: The Father of Faiths

The history of connectedness between Islam and Christianity seems to be a long one dating back to the days of Abraham. It is possible that understanding the link that exists between the two religions especially through Abraham will help Christians who see Muslims as enemies to begin to reflect on this common ancestry that exists between the two religions (Parrainder1965, 154-155). In both the Christian and Islamic scriptures, Abraham is portrayed as the biological father of the individuals through whom both Christianity and Islam can be traced back (Marsh1957, 14). According to the Judeo-Christian traditions, Isaac is the son of promise. The scripture in Genesis chapters 15, 16 and 17 are interpreted to mean that, although Abraham had other children, it was exclusively through Isaac that the promises and the blessings that God spoke to Abraham would come through. By this injunction, the Christian interpretation of the son through whom the promises would come through completely excludes Ishmael who was the other son of Abraham through Hagar, the maid of Sarah.

On the other hand, Islam takes a complete different perspective to the same story. According to Islam, it was not Isaac who was the son of the promise, but Ishmael. According to Surah37:100-113, Abraham is portrayed as praying to God for a child. He further states that he had seen in a vision sacrificing a child to Allah. The

passage goes on to say that God rewarded Abraham with a child because of his patience and constancy. The passage then shows Abraham laying his child (Ishmael and not Isaac according to the Judeo-Christian traditions) prostrated to sacrifice him to God, but God intervened and told him that by attempting to sacrifice Ishmael he had already fulfilled the vision that he had seen earlier sacrificing a child to God. The passage then goes on to say that the sparing of this child (Ishmael) was for generations to come (possibly Islam). The passage then seems to suggest that Isaac was later given as a reward to Abraham for his willingness to obey God in wanting to sacrifice Ishmael. Then Isaac is portrayed as a righteous prophet whose lineage had given birth to people who among them are 'those who obey God and those who disobey'. Although the passage does not tell who the children of Isaac were, the passage seems to be pointing the Jews.

A further perspective of the Islamic story of Ishmael is found in Surah 14, where Abraham is seen taking Ishmael and Hagar to Mecca. It was here that Hagar heard the voice of an angel who directed her to a place where she could find water for her son who was by this time both thirsty and hungry. This story of Abraham bringing Hagar and Ishmael to Mecca would later on be taken by Muslims to explain Hajj as a time when Prophet Muhammad went to Medina to stay away from the opposition to Islam in Mecca and also a time when Muslims travel to Mecca during Hajj. (Rippin 2001, 108).

A closer look at Surah, 37 and 14 shows efforts from the Islamic point of view to see Ishmael as the son of the promise and later on as the one who was the father of the people who became Muslims including Prophet Muhammad himself. If the Qur'anic passages on Ishmael are compared to the one in Genesis where Isaac is portrayed as the son of the promise and Ishmael who had to leave with his mother

because he was not of the promise, there immediately arises a contention between Islam and Christianity. This contention should never be taken lightly because any single attempt to disqualify Ishmael from the promise of God has insurmountable implications on the Islamic faith. One of those implications is that Islam is then not a credible faith because it is claimed to originate from a child who was borne out of an immoral act between Abraham and Hagar (making him illegitimate). This argument is enough to create rifts between Islam and Christianity. It is true that there are many other differences between Islam and Christianity as it will be observed later on but it is crucial to note that the argument about Ishmael and Isaac sits at the very core of Christian-Muslim differences. For a Christian who intends to create meaningful relationships with Muslims an understanding of these differences will be helpful in knowing what aspects of connections with Abraham can be helpful and which ones could be ignored for the sake of co-existence.

Historical Approaches

Another issue that has historical misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians, is the means or the methods that Christians have used traditionally to approach Muslims. Azumah highlights that Christian approach to Muslims has been that of controversy, debates and polemics. Although he does not necessarily see these approaches to have been wrong in themselves, he observes that, “most Muslims took them as assaults on their religion.” (Azuma 2006,) According to him, these approaches had the following effect on Christian Muslim relationships. The first one is that those who used this means did not see anything good in Islam hence they totally dismissed it. This total dismissal of Islam as a credible religion means that the possibility of building bridges becomes impossible. Secondly, their approach was that of attacking and breaking down the Islamic religious system. Azumah further

observes that, “the end result of this approach was total failure.” (Azuma2006,). What could be observed here is that any attempts to portray Islam as false religion do not in any way contribute to building the needed bridges. Probably approaching Islam with love and respect could bear more fruit in terms of Christians Muslim relationships than dismissing it.

Theological Differences

Having looked at the difference that exist between Islam and Christianity based on the claim both religions make about the two sons of Abraham, now attention will be turned to some theological and doctrinal differences that seem to raise crucial differences between the two religions. One of the theological differences that has been difficult to deal with is the issue of ‘God’. Based on the discussion on the person of God, Muslims in most cases tend to blame Christians for being both idolatrous and associating (shirik) God with Jesus which according to Islam is one of the greatest sin that any human being can commit (Parrainder 1965, 126; Wismer 2009,11). Muslims seem to have interpreted the Christian doctrine of Trinity (Father, Son, and Spirit) to mean that Christians worship three Gods. The possibility of worshipping other gods apart from God is highly detestable in Islam because that is exactly what Muhammad was against when he founded Islam in Mecca (Karsh 2007, 67).

Based on this observation, it clear that there is a misunderstanding between what Christians mean by Trinity and what Muslim mean by the same. On one hand, Christians insist that when they talk about Trinity they refer to the same God existing in three persons of (Father, Son, and Spirit) (Grudem 2000, 227-262). But on the other hand Muslims seems to conceive of three distinct person where even Mary (who the word was bestowed) the mother of Jesus is seen as the member of the Christian

Trinity (Surah5:73, 4:171). In these two passages, the Qur'an categorically warns Muslims from talking about Trinity because by doing so they put both Jesus and Mary in the same plane with God. From this discussion it can be seen clearly that doctrine of Trinity has been a major point of contention between Christians and Muslims. This reality is worth considering especially for Christians who want to build bridges with Muslims. What needs to be considered is the fact that while these differences exist, Christians living among Muslims need to try and move beyond them in an attempt to find common grounds between the two religions which might be utilized as paths towards meaningful Christian Muslim relationships.

The other point of contention which is closely related to the doctrine of Trinity is the Christian assertion that Jesus is God. The Bible in John 1:1ff clearly says that Jesus is God and that he exists eternally like God the Father. This is another Christian teaching that the Qur'an heavily condemns. Based on the argument on Shirik, Islam completely condemns any possibility of worshipping Jesus as God. To affirm this, the Qur'an has dedicated Surah 19 to denying the Christian doctrine that Jesus is either God or Son of God. The more specific verse are 35 and 36, where in 35 the Qur'an sees it as being against the majesty of God to have a child and then in verse 36, Jesus himself is presented as denying the claim that he is the Son of God and then urges Muslims to worship God only (Parrainder 1965,126).

The other critical difference between Christianity and Islam is also related to Jesus and Crucifixion and resurrection. While the Christian faith seems to entirely hung on the subject of Jesus crucifixion, death, and resurrection (1Cor, 15:1ff), Islam through the Quran denies the entire teaching (Zwemer 2002, 41-54). According to the Qur'an, Jesus did not actually die (Lawson 2009, 26-42). Instead, the Qur'an claims that God rescued him from the hands of his enemies and that although they thought to

have crucified him it was not actually him but another person (Quran 4:157, 3:52-52). What needs to be noted here is that apart from the differences observed in Abraham as the father of both religions, the other points of critical difference seems to arise from issues surrounding Jesus and how Christians view him. With these issues in mind it might seem impossible to ever have a common ground between the two religions. The question is whether there are opportunities possibly in the history of the two religions where their encounter has created opportunities for co-existence? Those possibilities will be explored but before we get there, there will be a need to look at one more historical aspect that has contributed to the differences between Christianity and Islam.

The Crusades

Apart from the differences that seem to spring from doctrinal and religious misunderstanding, there is one source of differences that could basically be said to be political but with religious inspirations. This source of differences that resulted to the death of many people from both faiths happened during the years of crusaders (Ranzan and Ajus 2003, 15). The crusades were basically the attempts of the Church to free Jerusalem from the occupation of what the Church called 'Infidels' referring to the Muslims (Ranzan and Ajus 2003,15). The Muslims fighters had captured Jerusalem and were claiming it to be their own land. This capture of Jerusalem triggered the reaction of the Church. The Church responded by sending Christian fighters to go and fight for the liberation of Jerusalem. Despite the fact that these crusades resulted in the death of many people, the Christians of the day felt justified because according to them, Jerusalem was not only the holy land but it also contained the grave of Christ and there was no way they could allow it to be defiled by people who disrespected Christianity (Martinson 1990, 148). The crusade movements made

the Muslims to forever associate the cross with Western-Christians aggressions and barbarism (Martinson 1990, 148). Martinson asserts that, “as Muslims were associating the cross with the West, on the other hand the West created propaganda to justify the crusades through which Islam was defamed and the person of Muhammad condemned as immoral.” (Martinson 1990, 150). Talking about this, Martinson concludes that, “these vilifying stereotypes still have an effect today.” (Martinson 1990, 150).

If the Christian perceptions of Islam as being wicked and evil were sustained, one wonders what would be said about the Church sanctioning the killing of people in the name of protecting the holy land. Had the Church forgotten Jesus’ teaching in (Mathew 5:44) on how to deal with one’s enemy? What if the Church did not respond with the invasion of Jerusalem through the crusades? (These invasions took place around 11th to the 13th) What if love was shown instead? (Lenning 1980, 5). These questions are important because in most cases the discourse about Muslim Christian relationship seems to take the bias that Christians are the good people trying to reach out to the Muslims who are the bad people (Lenning 1980, 5). But based on what went on during the crusades and the kind of hatred (Islamophobia) against Islam that goes on in the world today, (Esposito and Mogahed 2007, 21-141) the realization is that the history of both religions is tainted with heinous acts against each other. This realization is critical because it will have a huge impact on the attitude of Christians who are engaged in the attempt to foster peaceful co-existence between the two religions. The attitude of Christians needs to be that of love for fellow man just as God loves and accepts every man.

The Place of Qur'an in Christian/Muslim Co-Existence

The differences discussed above seem to so radically put Muslims and Christians apart that one wonders whether it is possible to effectively build bridges between the two sides. While it is very true that the two religions differ in such a way, it is also important to note that the Qur'an seems to create crucial possibilities for the relationship between Christianity and Islam. While it is true that Islam is a 6th century religion and in most cases seen as an anti-Christian faith, observations seem to show that Muhammad himself who is the founder of Islam had very close connections with other religion and more especially Christianity (Esposito 1999, 1-10). Some historical background about Muhammad shows two Christians not only alluding to the fact that he would become a prophet but actually one of the Christians who was a relative to his wife Khadija confirming to him that he was indeed a prophet (Watt 1961, 15-55).

This possibility of Muhammad's closer ties with Christian can also be found in some Qur'anic verses. There are two of these Qur'anic verses that are worth considering not only because they suggest that Muslims and Christians have the same eternal destiny but in the sense that they seem to disregard any of the possible differences. These verses are 2:62 and 5:69. These verses are critical in that they pay attention to the commonalities rather than the differences between Islam and Christianity. These common uniting factors include faith in God; believe in the last day, and the fact that Christians work righteousness. Although there is always a confusion when in other verses, the same Christians who are recognized here by their faith in God seem to be condemned (Qur'an 2:120, 3:118, 9:5, 2:190-193, 5:51, 4:74-77). It is worth noting that Qur'an at least provides discussion points that could be used to foster the discourse on Christian Muslim relationships. With this in mind, the following questions merit asking: the first one is, how can people in these two

religions begin to appreciate both their differences and commonalities? And secondly how can these commonalities be harnessed to foster a peaceful-coexistence? These questions need to be considered carefully because how the differences and commonalities are approached might determine how effectively Christians can reach out to the Muslims.

The Role of Prophet Muhammad

After identifying some of the possible differences, the attention will now be turned towards looking at possible ways of peaceful co-existence between the two religions. To begin with, attention will be given to Prophet Muhammad. The main reason of looking at him is to find out whether he in any way had any contact or relationship with people from other religions and more especially those of the Christian faith. This will help to see what both Muslims and Christians can learn from Muhammad's dealing with Christians. Whenever Christians hear of Muhammad, there are few preconceived notions that cloud all the possible good things that the Muslims seem to praise him for. While Muslims praise him for not only being the founder of Islam (monotheism) but also the seal of all the prophets both in Quran and the Bible, Christians on other side seem to blame him for not only founding a false religion but also for his immoral character (Martinson 1990,157). Talking about immorality, what stands out in most cases is the fact that he did not only marry many wives and some of them in very tender ages but he is also blamed for keeping concubines and taking slaves to be his wives (Lings1983,37-42; Dagher 1995,7-20). According to Christians there is no way such an immoral person can be the prophet of God.

The other accusation that Christians level against Muslims is that they worship Muhammad. According to Muslims this is a false accusation because according to them they do not worship Muhammad but they only acknowledge him as the prophet of God. In responding to this, Christians have wondered why a negative word spoken about Muhammad in one corner of the world could spur such reactions from Muslims all over the world as compared to a negative word spoken about God. It is this kind of reactions in regard to something said about Muhammad that makes Christians think that Muhammad is even more elevated and respected than God (Moucarry 2001, 219-266).

But with all this in mind, it will be interesting to note that Muhammad actually had respect for Christians as it has been observed before. An example for this is in (Surah5:82) where the Qur'an indicates that Christians are closer to Muslims in faith. The possible implication of this verse would be that Christians should be treated kindly by their Muslim neighbors. Ahmed observes that, "the prophet of Islam would always display a special affection for Jesus" (Ahmed 1993, 31). Whether this display of affection to Jesus would translate to respect to his followers it is not clear but one must remember that it was actually Bahiraa Christian Monk who predicted that Muhammad would be a prophet and it was Waraqah, the Christian relative to Muhammad's wife Khadija who encouraged the prophet to believe in his call (Ahmed 1993, 31). One would expect that these kinds of interactions with Christianity would have led Muhammad to treat Christians better in the future when he would be the Muslim leader.

As if this is not enough, there are other examples in Muhammad's life where it seems to suggest that he provided protection to Christians who escaped to the Arabia Peninsula due to persecutions in their country, (Martinson1990,148) (it is interesting

to note that these Christians were being persecuted by their fellow Christians due to doctrinal differences). Although it could be argued that the intention for allowing Christians to live with Islam was so that they could be converted, but the very fact that Muhammad accepted them is worth a commendation. There is also an instance in the life of Muhammad where he had allowed some Christians from the present day Yemen to visit him and have prolonged discussions on the matters of faith. Although the story ends up in a disagreement, it is interesting that he could listen to them though he knew they had different religious opinion from him (Martinson 1990, 148). Again whether it could be said that he only listened to these Christians because he was hoping to convert them, there are clear signs that Prophet Muhammad showed some signs of tolerance for other faiths. Looking at Muhammad's treatment of Christians during that time could possibly help Christians to wonder whether there could be any positive aspects in Islam.

Christian's Role

Having looked at Muhammad and his contacts with Christianity, we now turn attention to what Christians have done historically to foster peace and co-existence between Islam and Christianity. Looking at the history of Christian's interactions with Islam, it could be justifiable to say that the era of the Crusades produced more hatred between the two religions than any other time before. The events of the crusades makes the situation of the co-existence of the two religions so hopeless that one wonders whether there could ever be possibilities of the two religions appreciating each other. But what could be observed is that at the heat of the moment, there seems to be Christians who had already begun to think about the possibilities of peaceful co-existence between the two religions.

Around the end of the middle ages, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa had started to think about possible ways to create bridges between these two religions (Martinson 1990, 151). His attempt to create space for better relations with Islam was especially manifested in his support for conferences between Christians and Muslims (Martinson 1990, 151). What was unique with him and what could possibly be the lesson for both Christians and Muslims today is the fact that he committed himself to studying and helping people see what was essential and good in both faiths (Martinson 1990, 151). Martinson observes that, “Cardinal Nicholas had himself studied the Qur’an for the purpose of understanding Islam and that he had found the ethical challenge of the Qur’an quiet exemplary” (Martinson 1990, 151). With possibilities of fear and hatred, it is challenging to see an individual overcoming these barriers and going for what is positive instead of the negatives. This appears to be the watersheds that could lead to meaningful relationships between Muslims and Christians.

Another example of individuals who attempted to restore the relationships between Muslims and Christians was Martin Luther, “the protestant reformer.” After hearing the threats of Turks attack, he did not pass a general judgment that Muslims were evil people to be avoided. He instead concentrated on what was good in Islam and according to him, “Islam had high ethical standards and a credible sense for justice.” (Martinson 1990, 152). The interesting part in Martin Luther interaction with Islam was when he offered to, “support the translation of the Qur’an and even wrote an introduction for it for the purpose of scholarly debate.” (Martinson 1990, 152). The efforts to foster co-existence between Christian and Muslims did not end with Martin Luther. After world war two, there seems to be continued efforts towards the same end. Martinson observes that in the recent past, “Christians and Muslims have been

seeing more clearly than before, that as neighbors they must work more closely in politics, economy, culture, and religion” (Martinson 1990, 157-158; Karsh 2007,70).

There has also been an attempt by World Council of Churches (WCC) to organize meetings between Christians and Muslims. “The goal of (WCC) has not been to mix the two religions but to discuss common questions with an aim to reach deeper understanding and respect” (Martinson 1990, 158).

As if these attempts are not enough, the Vatican II (a document by the Catholic Church) has the following to say in regard to Islam:

“The catholic Church has a high regard for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They 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 eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, Muslims worship Jesus as a prophet, his virgin mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further they await the Day of Judgment and the reward of God following resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem and upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deeds, and fasting” (Ranzan and Ajus 2003, 51)

It is worth acknowledging that the debate on whether Muslims and Christians worship the same God has been ongoing. Since this debate is not within the scope of this research, attention will be given to the aspects that can foster peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians. The very first one that seems to resonate with what has been said before is the commonality in Abraham. Without paying attention to who was the promised son, this council seemed to focus on what could bring the two religions together. The other significant aspect is the one on the worship of God. Since the two religions seems to be focusing on the same Judeo-Christian God, it seems the council ignored the issues of whether God has a son or not and concentrated on the worship of that God (Fry and King 1982, 156). Having made these two observations, it will be important for a question to be asked on the council’s

assertion that Muslim worship “Jesus and Mary”. Since Muslims insist on the fact that they worship one God, this comment on worship of Jesus and Mary will definitely be rejected because according to them not even Muhammad should be worshipped leave alone the rest of the prophets. The same case would apply to some Christians (Protestants) who do not think that Mary should be worshipped or invoked for blessings. But what is important here is the fact that there appears to be a good will from some Christian quarters to encourage acceptance, tolerance, and respect for Islam. Reflecting on this issue, Marsh introduces the concept of God’s sovereignty (Marsh 1979, 38). According to him, an appreciation of the fact that the entire world is under the control of God would help us to wonder why God would allow Islam to exist in the world. It is this reason for existence of Islam that should be of concern to Christians instead of focusing on hating or fearing them (Wilson, Jr. 1981, 100-123).

What the Two Religions can Offer to the World

So far what seems to be the way forward in cultivating Christian-Muslims relationship is an endeavor to ignore the factors that separate the two religions and to focus on those factors that bring the two together. Pope John Paul II saw the continued need for these two religions to understand each other as a dialogue of some kind (Ranzan and Ajus 2003, 65). He described this kind of dialogue as, “...an exchange of gifts” (Ranzan and Ajus 2003, 65). With this in mind, the question that should be asked by people from both sides as they engage each other is: What good thing does my friend from Christianity/Islam have to offer to the world? In other words what is it from Islam/Christianity can be of help to our world today? But this kind of dialogue cannot take place within a context of fear and exclusiveness.

Members from both sides need be willing to put aside their differences and be willing

to step out with an aim to reach out the other person and learn from each other. What needs to be understood is the fact that both Christians and Muslims are human beings with probably same ambitions and goals in life. This is important because in most cases the discussion on interfaith relationships seems to focus on the ideologies found in the respective religions while forgetting about the people. This means that as Christians seek to be intentional in reaching out to Muslims, they are not approaching the religion of Islam as an entity but people who are the members of that religion (Kim 2016).

This appears to be a possible way of learning from one another. It is possible that Muslim friend can teach his Christian friend more than can be learned from reading either the Qur'an or the Bible. The moment it is possible to make trusted friendship with Muslims (McCurry 1979, 49-51), then it becomes possible to learn the good things from each side and this way the appreciation that begins from a personal friendship level can lead to possible harmonization(not mixing but seeking to bring an understanding) of religious ideas which could eventually lead to peaceful co-existence not only among members of the religions but also the toleration of ideas from both sides (Katerega and Shenk 2004, xvi-xvii). Kim stresses the need to, "understand people and their culture." (Kim 2016, 193) as critical to learning them. This means that the first goal of a Christian worker should not be to learn Islam for the purpose of being better at debating with Muslims. On the contrary his goal should be to make friends with the individual Muslims. This way the Christian worker does not only find an opportunity to minister to the needs of the Muslim but he gets a credible friend who could possibly help him to understand the religion much better.

Befriending Muslims

It has been observed so far that there exist both similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity. It is also clear that for Christians who seek to create meaningful relationships with Muslims needs to be willing to overlook the differences and concentrate on commonalities. The purpose for this kind of approach to Islam is that Christians will then be able to see how they can use these commonalities to either enhance the relationships with Muslims or even find ways on how to narrow the gaps that already exists. One of the differences that seem to in many cases hinder relations as it has been observed is Muhammad. In most cases, Muslims would want to find out how their Christian friends perceive Muhammad. Any likelihood that the Christians do not acknowledge or respect Muhammad as the prophet of God will definitely affect the relationship that would have existed (Woodberry 1987, 110). To proceed with a debate based on the credibility of Muhammad prophet hood might not bear much fruit in this case. It might be better to center the discussion on the God (both Christians and Muslims agree on God) who sends the prophets and what he means to human beings than spending time on the differences.

Another possible consideration for Christians is God's love in Christ. The Bible clearly states that the only reason why God sent Jesus on Earth was love. God loved the World (John 3:16). Latter on Paul observes in (Romans 5:6-8) that Christ died for humanity while still in their sin. In Mathew 5:43-48, those who follow Jesus are to love and pray for their enemies. It might not be humanly possible to do this but God's power is always available to help. Talking about God's love to the Muslims, Parshall suggests that Christians should identify ways through which they can practically extend this love (Parshall 1980, 186). Whether this includes feeding the

hungry, clothing the poor, offering education to the needy Muslims or just being there when Muslims hurt, there seems to be opportunities that Christians could utilize to overcome their hatred for Muslims and spread the love of God even to those who appear to least deserve it. Perhaps one of the ways to motivate Christians towards this participation in the needs of others and more especially the Muslims is by remembering that this is partly getting involved in the Great Commission (Wyngaard 2011). One might argue that that Great Commission in Mathew 28:18ff has nothing to do with a public participation of this nature i.e. helping the needy *etc.* Challenging this view, Shenk argues that the faithful Church understands that missions includes the whole world (Shenk 1984, 64-70). If the call is to reach to the whole world it will not make sense to only preach the gospel while ignoring the needs of the people. Apart from the fact that there is an obligation to meet the needs of the people in the Great Commission (Ma and Woolnough 2010, 61-102), it might also help to know that through these means, bridges could be created that could help to bring Christians and Muslims together which eventually could provide an opportunity to sharing the love of God with the Muslims

As it has been observed before, there needs to be an appreciation that Muslims are human beings just like Christians are. This fact might create an avenue where even Christians can receive help from Muslims (Livingstone 1993, 118-119). But it will have to be the responsibility of Christian to be humble and willing to ask for help. This intentionality in reaching out to Muslims for help of any kind has a potential of opening doors that can be utilized by Christians in their attempt to love and befriend Muslims.

Muslim and Christians Listening to Each Other

Having looked at the aspects of humility and love which creates an environment for Christians to reach out to the Muslims, there seems to be a need to look at possible practical strategies that are being used by Christians to reach out to the Muslims. One of these strategies is dialogue which was alluded to before. The reason for bringing it up again is to possibly explore how it plays out and how it could be a useful means to reach out to the Muslims. In his attempt to define dialogue, Register sees it as, “an attempt to bridge the communication gap that exists between Christians and Muslims, a gap that hinders both sides from sharing their faith in God.” (Register 1997, Xi). From this definition, Register seems to concern himself with a communication gap. A gap possibly created by a failure by both sides to talk to each other. Since talking to each other is not supposed to be a monologue, it seems at least in this definition that dialogue creates a space within which both Muslims and Christian can engage each other in a meaningful discussion especially in issues to do with their faith in God.

According to Register and Parshall, dialogue may never make sense to Christians unless it is viewed through the lenses of the coming of Christ on earth to bring reconciliation between a sinful people and God (Register 1997, vi; Parshall 2003, 145). Viewed through the template of reconciliation, dialogue can then become an important tool in not only creating space for Christian Muslim relationships but also for Christian to share their faith. However as it has been said before, reconciliation cannot take place without love. Register observes that, “In a profound way, the willingness and ability to deal respectfully, honestly, lovingly, patiently, hopefully, with those whom history, or circumstances, or our own misunderstandings

have estranged from us is a fruit of our faith and faithfulness” (Register 1979, 6; Woodberry 2008, 316-317). Love is critical here because it seems to be the only way that hatred can be dealt with hence creating space for dialogue with a context of mutual respect and patience with each other.

Tied very closely to dialogue, is Christian life-style. In other words if dialogue is going to be a means of winning Muslims to Christ, our words must be accompanied by a way of life that reflects the truth that is communicated during the dialogue process. Talking about the role of Christian lifestyle in relation to Muslims, Register observes that, “Muslims will be impressed with your words only if he experiences your genuine friendship and sees you living a Christian life.” (Register 1979, 9).

Reading Both the Qur’an and the Bible with a Muslim

Another strategy that Christians have used in the past and which could also be used today is the possibility of creating time to read the two religious books with your Muslim friend (Parshall 2003, 146). Parshall sees the commonalities that exist between the Qur’an and the Bible to be possible ways through which the gaps between the two religions could be bridged. According to him, there have been two hindrances to this strategy. The first one he puts across is the issues of, “possible ignorance of Islam as a religion” (Parshall 2003, 145). In this point he argues that the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ has not been intentional in reaching out to the Muslims and especially trying to know what Islam teaches has been a huge hindrance to bridging the gap that exist between the two religions. The other hindrance according to him is where, “a simplistic approach has been utilized by which Islam is totally attributed to satanic inception.” (Parshall 2003, 145). With these two perspectives to Islam, it seems difficult to ever come to a point where a

Muslim and a Christian can even consider reading either the Qur'an or the Bible together. To deal with these barriers Parshal suggests, "Love and genuine friendships as crucial to building bridges and assisting in creating an environment within which either the reading of the Qur'an or the Bible can take place." (Parshall 2003, 145).

Parshall specifically encourages Christians to be willing to read the Qur'an with a Muslim friend. This reading of the Qur'an could play three possible roles. The first one is that your Muslim friend will be impressed to see that you respect his religious book, secondly, the Christian friend will learn some aspect of Islam which will be helpful when evangelizing to his friend and lastly both the Muslim and Christian will be able to identify those specific areas of the Qur'an which talk about Jesus (Parshall 2003, 145). This is crucial because the Christian friend can utilize what the Qur'an says about Jesus as a means to lead his Muslim friend to Christ (Parshall 2003, 166; Abdul-Hagg 1980, 68). Some of those passages where Jesus is mentioned in the Qur'an include (Sura 3:45-47, 19:16-36) where Muhammad affirms the virgin birth of Jesus, calls Jesus the Spirit of God, Muhammad also seems to have believed that Jesus raised people from the dead, and that he was a miracle worker. Since the reading of Qur'an goes on within a context of friendship, it is possible for the Christian friend to help the Muslim to ask some critical question in regard to what the Qur'an says about Jesus and continually pray that God will use these questions to guide the Muslim to the truth of the gospel.

Ministering to the Felt needs of Muslims

The other strategy that according to Greenlee seems to be bearing fruit is for Christians to reach out to Muslims through ministering to their felt needs. Greenlee observes that, "Christians need to be intentional in establishing contacts, building

friendships, instilling mutual trust, getting involved in people's lives, and having an open door and heart have a great potential to help people overcome barriers to relationships." (Greenlee 2006, 137). One of the advantages to opening up not only lives but home to Muslims is the fact that this act of kindness does not only draw them closer to us but it also gives them a sense of love and a feeling appreciation. As this happens they will probably open up their lives too and this way it becomes easy for a Christian to point the Muslim friend to the fact that his God has power to deal with the life challenges of humanity. Some of life challenges that Muslims go through include: fear of evil, fear of spirits, fear of death, fear of loneliness, fear of sickness, and fear of disasters and calamities (Parshall 2003, 166). Once friendship is established with a Muslim, it will now be the duty of the Christian friend to identify and empathize with the Muslim in the areas of his need, while holding forth a message of hope in the person of Jesus (Parshall 2003, 166). "That Jesus can exorcise, can deliver from death, from fear and loneliness, can heal or move miraculously in people's lives" (Parshall 2003, 169). It appears one of the possible way to do this is for a Christian friend to have courage to ask to pray for Muslims who have needs. In most cases Christians fear to pray for Muslims because they are not sure whether Muslims would agree to be prayed for. It might be important at this point to talk to the Muslims about the prayers of Jesus in the Bible and more specifically areas where Jesus is seen either praying or miraculously responding to the needs of people.

It seems there are diverse avenues through which Christians can reach out to Muslims. The moment Christians are able to move from focusing on hating the Muslims and the differences between the two religions, and begin to pay attention to building bridges with Muslims, the opportunities to reach out to Muslims seems to be available. But for this to happen there has to be intentionality on the side of Christians

to reach out to the Muslims more especially learning from the example of Jesus who through love reconciled a sinful world to God.

What Christians have been doing at Eastleigh

As considerations are made about Eastleigh, one of the questions that might need to be asked is whether Christians have attempted doing anything at Eastleigh that could enhance Christian Muslim relationships. A closer look at the situation of Christian Muslim relationship at Eastleigh shows that there are Christians who have attempted to bridge that gap between Christian and Muslims by trying to intentionally engage the Muslims. Those Christians who have attempted to reach out to the Muslim in Eastleigh include: Missionaries who engage Muslim in the market place. “This group consists of Christians who share the gospel with Muslims while working together as colleagues, employees or employers and in other social contexts (Mutunga 2016, 31). The other group of Christians who have tried to create bridges with Muslims is what Mutunga calls ‘Vocational Missionaries’; their, “main work is reaching out to Muslims with the aim of sharing the gospel with them.” (Mutunga 2016, 33). In his discussion on what these Christians have been doing at Eastleigh, Mutunga focuses on dialogue which according to him may take place in cases where either the Christian intentionally reaches out to a Muslim or in situations where a Muslim may reach out to a Christian with a question that is related with one’s religious believes (Mutunga 2016, 31-35).

Another example of Christians who have attempted to create bridges with the Muslims at Eastleigh is Eastleigh Fellowship Center (EFC) (Kamau2005, 28). According to Kamau, one of the ways that (EFC) has been creating bridges with youths in Eastleigh is through sports. She observes that, “making young people busy

through participating in sports has helped to deal with social vices such as drug trafficking, prostitution, chewing Miraa and other crime related activities in Eastleigh.” (Kamau 2005, 28). These are just but examples of activities of Christians at Eastleigh that play a role of building bridges with the Muslims. The aim of this research will be to find what other activities Christians have been involved in and possibly make suggestions in regard to what more could be done by Christians to enhance co-existence with the Muslims

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to investigate the strategies that Christians are employing in Eastleigh that help in enhancing peaceful co-existence with Muslims. The researcher targeted to carry out this research among the Missionaries, Pastors, and other Christians who are directly involved in working and living among the Muslims in Eastleigh.

The researcher decided to use qualitative research method, and more specifically considered the use of participatory observation and interviews which helped to collect the needed data. Talking about qualitative research method, Creswell suggests that, “qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (homes, office) of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experience of the participants.” (Creswell 2003, 181). From Creswell’s point of view, the researcher needs to be able to connect with those to be interviewed in a very personal way for him to be able to get the needed information.

Talking about the use of interview for data collection, Creswell suggests that, “In interview, the researcher conducts face to face interviews with participants; these interviews involve open-ended questions that are intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.” (Creswell 2003, 188). According to Creswell, it seems that the researcher needs to

be as careful as possible to make sure that he does not hinder the crucial possibility of gathering data from listening carefully to the responses from those interviewed. In regard to observation as a means of collecting data, the researcher carefully, “took field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site.” (Creswell 2003, 185).

For the purpose of data collection, the researcher had identified at least four organizations that have been working in Eastleigh for a period not less than ten years. These organizations include: the Christ Church, The Panuel Education Center, the Catholic Church, and Eastleigh Fellowship Center. In these organizations, the researcher specifically targeted the Pastors, Missionaries, and Christians who have been serving in different capacities. Among those who were interviewed, the researcher was aiming at finding out what they have been particularly doing with an aim to foster peaceful coexistence with the Muslims in Eastleigh.

Entry

One of the advantages that the researcher had was the fact that he had served in Eastleigh for a period of one month during his practicum. During this time of practicum, he got an opportunity to create friendships with people at Eastleigh and more specifically the Christian organizations and groups working at Eastleigh. The researcher also hoped to get to know more other people during his time of research people that were helpful in the interview process.

Population Sampling

The researcher had planned to collect data in four key locations both through participatory observation and through interviews. The researcher plan was to interview ten people at Eastleigh Fellowship Center, other ten at ‘Panuel Primary

School’, about five from ‘Church of Christ and ten other people from both ‘St Teresa’s Catholic Church and School’. However, during the actual data collection process, the researcher managed a total of twenty interviewees. Those who were interviewed included eight missionaries, five pastors, and seven residential Christians. The interviewees were both male and female. The researcher progressively modified the interviews so that they fit within the contexts of the interviewees (Creswell 2003, 156).

Observation

As mentioned earlier the researcher made use of observation method in data collection. Talking about observation as a method of data collection Laws comments that, “by directly observing what happens, the researcher can check whether what people say they do or think is reflected in their actual behavior.” (Laws, *et all* 2013.215; Creswell 2003, 185-188). To make this possible the researcher visited different places in Eastleigh specifically with an aim of observing possibilities of Christian Muslim co-existence and especially what Christians are attempting to do to enhance it. It was possible for the researcher to visit Eastleigh because he lives nearby. It took the researcher about fifteen to twenty minutes daily to travel to the place where data was to be collected

Interviews

The researcher prepared interview questions that were used during the data collection process. The interviews were planned and included both, “Unstructured and generally open-ended questions whose intention was to elicit views and opinions from the participants.” (Creswell.2003.188). The reason for using questionnaire was that the researcher was hoping to identify the commonalities and the possible differences from the respondents(Laws, *et all* 2013, 200-204;Creswell 2003,188).This was very

important because it greatly helped in comparing and contrasting especially in instances where varied views may have risen from the same question.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher planned to carry out interviews with people who were willing to share their information. To achieve this, the researcher had planned for meetings with those willing to participate in the interviews. During these meetings, the researcher majorly obtained information from the interviewees through the interview questions directly. These interview questions were continuously revised to fit the different groups of people who were interviewed. Apart from this the researcher also made attempt to ask some random questions to people on the streets after finding out from them whether they are willing to answer some questions. The information gotten from these sources was then written down, recorded with a voice recorder if the interviewee agreed, then was transcribed for the purpose of making sure that the information gotten is preserved well for analysis (Creswell 2003,188-189).

Data Analysis

After the transcription process, the researcher made use of various themes coming out of the interviews to make sure that the information received was made more relevant for this research. To make this possible the information was placed under topics and sub topics for ease in the process of analysis. Talking about data analysis, Creswell sees it as, “an ongoing process involving a continual reflection about the data, asking analytical questions, and writing memos throughout the study.” (Creswell 2003, 190). According to Creswell, data collection seems to be a step further into handling the information acquired where you are not only asking questions but you are also trying to get the meaning of the data that was collected.

The hope of the researcher was that all the information gotten from the field was to be helpful to this research. This was part of the main work of analyzing the data where the researcher carefully sifted through and got to the information that was deemed useful and was utilized to aid his study.

CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS

A quick look at the history of Eastleigh shows that there has been some presence of Christians before the arrival of the Muslims. From some of the respondents, there seems to have been an established Christian Church in Eastleigh as early as late 60's. Although it was difficult to rule out whether there was no any single Muslim in Eastleigh, but it might be safe to say that if they were there they were probably very few and possibly without any influence whether in terms of religion or business. Observations made show that Muslims continued to trickle to Eastleigh in small numbers until 1991 when the Somali government collapsed and most of Somalis who are Muslims came to Eastleigh seeking refuge from the few who had by then settled in Eastleigh (Goldsmith, 2008). Reflecting on the history of Christian Muslim relationship in Eastleigh, one of the respondents who have lived in Eastleigh for many years could not recall of any attempt by the Christians to engage the few Muslims who were in Eastleigh with the gospel. He further observed that although there have been changes in that Christians are now thinking about Muslims, but he was not sure whether it was out of genuine need to bring Muslim to Christ or it was out of fear (RC001, 2017). When the researcher prompted this respondent to find out why he thought fear was the reason why Christians were thinking about Muslims, the respondent thought that this fear could be due to the following reasons: The fact that Islam seems to tolerate terrorism hence Christian fear for their lives, the fact that Muslims are aggressively taking over in the business arena, probably Christians fear

they may lose their businesses, and finally the fear that Muslims are aggressive in the propagation of their religion which may lead to Christians becoming Muslims (RC001, 2017). According to this respondent, he did not think these were genuine reasons why Christians should be engaging Muslims. According to him, it is love that should drive the need for Christian Muslim relationship and not the fears that he seemed to see in many Christians that he has interacted with (RC001, 2017).

This Chapter will basically provide an analysis of the data collected and the interpretations resulting from the data. Interpretation is critical to any research method because it helps the researcher to make sense of the data that has been collected. Creswell observes that, “Conducting analysis helps in moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, presenting the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.” (Creswell 2003, 190).

The first research question in the data collection process was investigating essentially the possible activities by Christians that have created or that could enhance Christian Muslim relationships. From the analysis of the data that came from this question, the researcher found out that different Christian organizations and Churches have come up with various activities whose aim was to bring Muslims closer to them. The informants or the respondents to the interview questions were categorized into three groups. The first group was that of Christians residing in Eastleigh (coded as RC), the second group of respondents were pastors (coded as P), and the third group was that of Christian Missionaries (coded as CM) working in Eastleigh.

Provision of Space for Community Events

One of the common thing that the researcher found out is that in all the places where the research was conducted, Christians had intentionally made available either open fields or halls that could be used for community events such as weddings,

cultural days, and other forms social meetings. One of the respondent at Eastleigh fellowship Center who deals specifically with Christian Muslim relationships observed that Muslims seems to enjoy conducting their weddings in the premises that they provide more than any other place. According to the few Muslims he has talked to, their Mosques do not have the space they need to conduct a wedding ceremony where many people can attend. Because most of them live in houses where there are no enough space to host many people, the space provided by the Christians here plays a critical role in providing the space that is needed (CM001, 2016). The respondent further observed that Muslims seems to have many weddings than Christians. For example, within one to two years, one Muslim man can have two weddings and since there are many Muslims in Eastleigh this means that the number of weddings conducted are many again raising the need for space that Christians provide. One of the respondent cited instances where they have helped some Muslims who could not afford the small fee that is charged for one to use the spaces. (CM001, 2016) He observed that this was done to show how Christians respect and honor marriages. Because of the kindness that was extended to that needy Muslim couple, the respondent observed that the couple has established a strong relationship with Christians to the point where their young children ended up enrolling in their school and this has created opportunities of sharing the gospel both with the couple and their young children(CM001, 2016).

Education

Another common activity that was observed in all the places where the research was conducted is of Education. The responses received from Panuel Education center showed that at the beginning the Church was not thinking about Muslims when they began the School. For them their concern was to provide quality

education to the children of their Church members. According to one of the missionary who is also a teacher, the school did not do well for a long time. One of the reasons was because their Church members were few which meant only few kids were coming to School (CM002, 2016). The other reason was because most parents preferred taking their children to government schools because they could not afford the small fees that the school was charging. During that time, the Church which owns the school was not thinking about Christian Muslims relationship so they did not even see the need of admitting Muslim kids in their School. Another respondent who is also a pastor further observed that it was not until the Church leaders attended a Christian Muslim seminar that they felt challenged to open their doors to Muslim parents who wanted to bring their children to School. When this happened, the school grew from just a handful of kids to hundreds. It seems at least from the respondent that Muslims parents seemed to prefer taking their kids to Christian's schools more than those managed by their fellow Muslims. Muslim parents argued that Christian schools offered better education standards than those managed by Muslims (P001, 2017)

In one of the Christian Schools, a conflict had risen from the fact that the Muslims kids were forced to take Christian Education. The policy of the School at that point insisted that all the kids who enrolled in that school had to study Christianity. It happened that one day Muslim parents threatened to remove their kids from that school if there were not going to be changes. The informant who at that point was the patron of the school said that the future of the school hinged on whether they were going to allow Muslims kids to be taught Islamic religion or not (P002, 2017). He observed that because they had begun to think about ways they could build bridges with Muslims, the leadership of the school resolved to allow Islamic religion

to be taught in the school with the aim of making sure that meaningful relationships could be maintained both with the parents and the kids (P002, 2017). The researcher observes that although this was a difficult choice that the leadership of the school had to make, this choice is an example of what sacrifices Christians may have to make in order to make it possible for bridge building with the Muslims. The leadership of the school was not under any obligation to allow the teaching of Islamic education but it was done specifically to create space for Christian Muslim relationships.

Sports for the Youths

Sports are another activity that Christians in Eastleigh have been using to build bridges with the Muslims. In both Panuel education center and the Christ Church, once in a while sports ministry is organized where different teams from the neighborhood who are mostly Muslims are invited to participate in some kind of a tournament where the best teams win a trophy. One of the respondent observed that there are two key ways that this could enhance Christian Muslim relationship. The first one is the fact that Muslims youths coming from poor background find themselves participating in sports sponsored by Christians. As they grow up and sharpen their talents through these sporting activities, they will always remember Christians who contributed in the developments of their talents (CM003, 2016). The second way that this enhances Christians Muslims relationship is that the tournaments are organized in such a way that in one team you have both Christian and Muslims players. The aim here is that as they work together as a team, each one of them stops to see the other person in terms of their religion but in terms of their contribution in the team and this way the young people can end up building meaningful friendship with those from either of the religion (CM003, 2016). One of the respondent commented on situations where the relationships between Muslims youths and

Christians have been strengthened based on the help the teams received from Churches. This help range from donations of sporting gears to Soccer balls and other sporting equipment (CM004, 2016). The researcher observed that at Eastleigh Fellowship Center, there are Christian coaches who come to serve in Kenya as Basket Ball Coaches. Because they are missionaries, they offer their services for free and in the process many Muslims youths have made genuine friendships with Christians that have resulted in the sharing of the gospel.

Inter-Faith Dialogue

Eastleigh Fellowship Center (EFC) has over the years been providing opportunities for Christian Muslim dialogues. According to one of the respondent, the most important reason why it has been easy for EFC to dialogue with the Muslims in Eastleigh is because of the trust which the Mennonite Church had developed more especially with Somali Muslims who came to Eastleigh after the war of 1991 in Somalia. Another aspect that has made it easy for Muslims to dialogue with Christians is the fact that dialogue is done within context of respect for the faith of the other person. One respondent who has been active participant in the dialogue process talked about what can be referred to as structured dialogues (CM005, 2016). In this kind of dialogues there are ground rules which governs the dialogue and which must be followed. For example one of them is that the person presenting the position of his faith must never use disrespectful language towards the other religion. His role should only be to lovingly articulate what he believes in and probably make comparisons where necessary but with all the respect to the other faith (CM005, 2016).

One of the respondents who have also been participating in the dialogue process for more than fifteen years explained how these dialogues have opened doors not only for Christian Muslim relationships but also for Christians to be able to share

the gospel with the Muslims (CM006, 2016). He gave an example of a Radio program on Radio Iqra (a Muslim Radio Station) which broad casts these dialogues weekly hence allowing the gospel to reach to as many Muslims as possible (CM006, 2016). He also talked of some dialogues sessions that have taken place in Mosques. According to him in most of these dialogues he has counted up to about two hundred Muslims in one sitting listening to a Christian talk about his faith (CM006, 2016). Dialogues have made it possible for EFC to build bridges even with Sheiks that were feared due to their fundamentalist tendencies.

Participation in Community Forums

There are also community initiated programs which the researcher deemed to be critical in the way they brought Christians and Muslims together. Although these activities were not necessarily the initiative of the Christians but the researcher identified them as being important in the way they were creating space for Christian Muslim relationships. One of these activities is the one that involves the entire business community of Eastleigh. In most instances it is not possible for a Christian to present the views of his religion but the forum plays an important role of bringing both Christians and Muslims together where they don't see each other as religious opponents but as equal members of the business community.

The other community forum is what one respondent identified as (Interfaith peace meetings). This forum brings together all the religious leaders living in Eastleigh with an aim of discussing how different communities can co-exist peacefully in Eastleigh. One respondent gave an example of how Muslim leaders have taken initiatives to even visit Christians either in Churches or in their different neighborhoods to show solidarity with them in times of attacks (RC002, 2017). There have also been times when interfaith prayer meetings have been organized to pray for

the situation of the security in Eastleigh and these prayers have also helped to bring Muslims and Christians together. One of the respondents also cited an incident where Muslim leaders contributed financially to help Christians with hospital bills after a terrorist attack (RC003, 2017).

Challenges Faced in Building Bridges with the Muslims

A number of the respondents that participated in the interviews were employees working for Christian organizations who were not necessarily missionaries. For them their main aim was either to teach in the school or work as office assistants without an intention of befriending Muslims. It was not easy for them to articulate their purpose for working with these organizations beyond earning a salary. But for those who were serving as missionaries with intentions of creating friendships with Muslims, a few challenges were identified:

Lack of Genuineness in Friendships

One of the respondents who sounded disappointed told a story of how some Muslims would pretend to be Christians with an aim of getting help from Christians. The respondent had at one point helped a certain Muslim friend who was a refugee living in Eastleigh to get recommendation to fly abroad (P002, 2017). When other friends of him heard about this, they began to come closer to the respondent not because they wanted to be his genuine friends but to benefit from his recommendations. He told a story of how some Muslims have pretended to be Christians and once they get documentations to live abroad they completely abandon their claims to be Christians (P002, 2017).

Another respondent who is also a pastor in one of the Churches similarly talked of a situation where a Muslim would pretend to be a Christian for the purpose

of getting help like money to begin a business or to have his rent paid (P003, 2017). The sad part about it is that the same person would share his stories with different organizations and all of them would be supporting him having convinced it was a genuine case only to find out later on that there were other Christians giving the same kind of support (P003, 2017). When this was discovered, it was decided that there was a need for all Christian groups working in Eastleigh to be in communication with each other so as to prevent a situation where their kindness was being misused (P003, 2017).

Being Spied on

Although there were some signs that Christians have developed some friendships with the Muslims in Eastleigh, there still seems to be some dangers posed to Christians by those who see them as agents to convert Muslims to Christianity. Number of respondents agreed that this problem of Christians being spied on has been reinforced by those Muslims who convert and fail to keep quiet about their new found faith in Christ (P001, 2017; CM004, 2016; P003, 2017; CM006, 2016). Whenever this happens these individuals are not only ostracized, but a follow up is done to find out who led them to Christ. In most cases those who led the person to Christ are put in the list among those Christians who should be attacked. One respondent told a story of how their organization was put in the 'hit list' of the terrorists because they were accused to have led a few Muslims to Christ. These threats forced them to minimize on their plans to preach to Muslims (P002, 2017). They later on found out that the individual who was feeding the terror groups with this information was actually their own neighbor. The fact that a neighbor was involved made relationships even more complicated. The Pastor told the researcher that he has been praying and thinking about how he could approach this neighbor and try to amend the relationship which

according to him is something worth doing for the sake of the love of Christ (P002, 2017).

Threats of Attacks

Another challenge that the attempts to build bridges with Muslims has faced has been that of threats coming from people who are supposedly Muslims. One of the respondents told a story of how some unknown people distributed some slips of papers that were asking a certain group of missionaries working at Eastleigh to leave immediately or they were going to be attacked (RC004, 2017). When the follow up was done to find out who had distributed those papers, it was found out that there was a Muslim who had come to them for help but when he realized the help was not going to come he decided to threaten all the missionaries working around Eastleigh. The respondent went further to observe that Christians and missionaries working especially among the Muslims need to be sure of the source of these threats because at times they can come from people who just want to scare them (RC004, 2017).

According to him the respondent, having credible and genuine friends who are Muslims is critical in dealing with this kinds of threats. The respondent further commented that having Muslim friends helps because they will always let you know when there is a genuine reason to take extra security measures (RC004, 2017). The respondent gave an example of how one of their Muslim friends had warned them to stop baptizing Muslims who convert to Christianity in the open because there were plans for an attack to be carried on during a baptismal service (RC004, 2017).

Another respondent who is also the patron of Panuel Education Center affirmed on the need to have genuine Muslim friends. According to him, one of the major hindrances to having Muslim friends is trying to preach to them whenever you meet them (P002, 2017). He observed that you don't need to convert a Muslim for him to

be your friend. He gave example how his Muslim friends have been instrumental in warning him whenever there was any need to be concerned about his security and that of other Christians (P002, 2017). He also told a story of how his Muslim friends have defended the School whenever there were any accusations from the community. According to him that School exists there courtesy of Muslims who have been supporting it (P002, 2017).

Lack of Support from the Church

Another challenge that missionary work in Eastleigh has been facing is the fact that the Church of Jesus Christ in Kenya and more specifically in Nairobi does not show solidarity with the Christians serving in Eastleigh. One respondent showed disappointment with the fact that whenever they request for the Church to partner with them, most of the Church only think about money (CM002, 2016). There are some who even send some money but for him the main need was for the Church to mobilize workers to serve in Eastleigh. He observed that in most cases it appears that, “the work of reaching to the Muslims is for the few missionaries.” (CM002, 2016). The challenge here is for the Church to realize that the call to reach to the unreached is for every believer. With this realization, the respondent foresaw a situation where in the future missionary work will not be for a chosen few but the work of the entire body of Christ (CM002, 2016).

Interpretation

From the findings of this research it seems that the Christians in Eastleigh have over the years made attempts at building bridges that could enhance their relationships with the Muslims. These attempts have been shown by the way intentional efforts have been employed in the creation of opportunities by Christians that have in some way succeeded in drawing Muslims near to Christians. Whenever

anything has come up that could hurt the relationship with the Muslims, Christians have proven to be careful not to allow anything to either destroy these relationships or hinder new ones from being created. A good example of this can be seen in the way the Panuel Education Center had to sacrifice their policy on not teaching Islamic Education to teaching it so that they would not lose on the Muslims parents who threatened to remove their kids from their School. It is very clear that the reason for wanting to retain Muslims kids in their school was so that friendship and coexistences could be fostered. This implies that the administration of the School has been willing to fore go some of it rights in order to give room for Christian Muslim co-existence.

Another aspect that came out clearly is the need for Christians to work in unity. This unity should not be based on the need to deal with hypocrisy depicted by those who want to take advantage of people's kindness but because unity in the ministry is a biblical value. Unity is not only a mark of true Disciples of Christ (John 17) and the fact that all Christians are members of one body working under the headship of Christ but because there is a promise of God's blessings for those who choose to work in unity (Psalms 133). There needs to be a critical acknowledgement that the great commission is not a responsibility of one group but the share responsibility of body of Christ, this means that when two or three Christians groups are serving in one area, they should not see each other as being in competition and as complementing each other for the work that God has called them to do.

Another aspect of unity that might play a critical role in ensuring the work of building bridges with Muslims is continued especially through the missionaries is the whole issue of Church partnering with the missionaries. One of the respondents who is a missionary had concerns that at times the missionaries seem to be on their own and the Church on its own (CM003, 2016). He gave an example where even the

Church in Eastleigh does not seem to have any meaningful relationship with the missionaries. According to him it could be better if there was more partnership existing between Church and the missionaries. One of his suggestions on the area of this partnership was for the Churches especially around Nairobi to allow missionaries to come to their Churches to do awareness for missionary work among the Muslims. According to him if this was allowed to happen, it would not only solve both the problem of lack of support but also the problem of Christians who fear Muslims and do not want to have anything to do with them (CM003, 2016).

One of the issues that could lead to disunity is the fact that not all missionary groups come from the same doctrinal background. Some of these doctrinal differences if not managed well can lead to misunderstandings that can result to disunity. An observation on the places where the interviews were conducted shows such differences. For examples if the Catholics in Eastleigh majored on the doctrinal differences they have with the Protestants, it will be difficult to do any meaningful work for the Lord in Eastleigh. This then calls for humility and a focus on the need to build bridges with the Muslims which could open space for the communication of the gospel.

Observations were also made to the fact that Muslims seem to know their religion more than Christians. This may have two major implications. The first one is that Christians fear to engage Muslims because they feel inadequate to respond to the issues that Muslims may bring up in a discussion. Secondly, there is the fear that some Christians may end up being converted if they open themselves to discussion with Muslims.

Apart from the intentional activities by Christians that make for co-existence with the Muslims, there are other aspects that stood out during the interviews that the respondents deemed important in the journey of bridge building with the Muslims.

These crucial aspects include:

The Problem of Unfounded Fear

The researcher found out that unfounded fear has been one of the hindrances to Christian Muslim relationships. Whenever Muslims are mentioned they have always been associated with unfriendliness and violence (Mallouhi 2000, 185-186). These notions have hindered Christians from attempting to build bridges with the Muslims. From the interviews that were done, this research found out that Muslims can be as friendly as any other person. The only concern that Muslims have when relating to Christians is that Christians always want to convert them. This means that there is no genuine friendship because everything is geared towards converting them. With this in mind, the researcher found out that those Christians who hope to have meaningful relationships with Muslims could possibly consider friendship evangelism. This is where an individual lives his life in a way that portrays his faith in the gospel. In this form of evangelism, the Muslim friend is given an opportunity to observe the Christian life style hoping that will challenge him to reconsider his own life (Mallouhi 2000, 185). The observation here is that Christians should now allow their sharing of the gospel with the Muslims become the very reason they cannot build credible friendships with the Muslims. When the above approach is put into consideration, Christians might find that most of the preconceived notion of Muslims being violent could be dealt with by trying to deal with every Muslim as fellow human being who needs to have friends just like all other people.

Prayer

Most of the respondents agreed that prayer was necessary if Christians were to see any fruits in their efforts to build bridges with the Muslims (CM001, 2016; CM005, 2016; CM006, 2016; P003, 2017). Other respondent highlighted the danger of being too busy to an extent where Christians forget to pray for the strength from God to do the work (P001, 2017; CM002, 2016). Another respondent commented that one of the reasons why Christians get discouraged in their efforts to reach to the Muslims is because they want to base it on their knowledge either of the Bible or the Quran (RC005, 2017). This means that instead of spending time to pray for God's guidance people are always thinking on what answer to give in order to win a discussion or a debate. There were two main reasons given for prayer. The first one was that prayer equips a Christian with the power that he needs to engage Muslims without fear. The second reason that was observed for prayer is the need for protection (RC005, 2017). The point here is that to engage Islam is to engage spiritual powers hence those who do so need to be protected and this can happen as their prayer for themselves or as they have other Christians who pray for them. One respondent gave an example where Muslims come to him asking for prayers for healing from sicknesses that according to him were caused by demons. Talking about how power ministry can be a critical avenue for Christians to make inroads into the Muslim world, Livingstone observes that, "Muslims cannot continue to be indifferent to the gospel if they discover that their struggles with spiritual forces can be dealt with by the power of the gospel." (Livingstone 1993, 25-34). In situations like this, the respondent agreeing on the need to minister to Muslims through prayer observed that, "It is difficult to deal with spiritual forces unless one has been praying and depending on God for help (P001, 2017; Love 2000, 111-142).

Love

Some of the observations that were made showed that Muslims are not easy people to live with. For those who had suffered in the hands of the terrorist who claim to be Muslims, it may take time for them to be able to see Muslims as friends and neighbors. The fact that only the love of God can help Christians to forgive and love Muslims cut across most of the discussions. For example one of the respondents wondered why her Church continues to work among the Muslims despite the fact that Muslims have not been good to the Church. This kind of question and others cannot be answered properly unless Muslims are seen through the eyes of Love that Christ showed to the world on the cross. Zwemer observes that the attitude of Christians who engage Muslims should always be that of humility, meekness and love (Zwemer 2002, 55-65). This means that Muslims are no longer seen as enemies and terrorists but as people bound in sin who needs the redeeming grace of God just like all other humanities. Love observes that the Islam world is controlled by forces of darkness that take advantage of the fact that Muslims have not known the light of the gospel. This means that instead of hating Muslims for all the wrong things they do, the role of a Christian should be that of showing love and praying that the light of the gospel will free them from the powers of darkness (Love 2000, 89-98).

More Christian Workers

The researcher also discovered unavailability of Christian workers. In one of the Schools the respondent who is one of the teachers at the School lamented the lack of committed Christians willing to serve in Eastleigh as missionaries (CM003, 2016). At some point because the admissions in the school are too high, they are forced to hire teachers who are not Christians. This according to him does not contribute to the vision and the goal of the school because a teacher who is not a born again Christian

cannot contribute effectively to the overall goal of helping Muslim kids to see Christ in the character of their teacher (CM003, 2016). This lack of Christian workers willing to serve in Eastleigh has also forced the school to at times even hire Muslim teachers. The respondent narrated a story where one of the Muslim teachers working for them collaborated with the community with the intention of painting the image of the School wrongly. The teacher succeeded to convince some of the parents and managed to pull some of the kids from the School whom he used to begin his own school (CM003, 2016). The respondent was convinced that had they gotten willing Christians willing to work for them, this problem would not have occurred (CM003, 2016).

Another issue that is closely related to the lack of Christian workers is the whole issue of funding. The researcher discovered that although the Christians have done their best to begin schools that help Muslims, these schools have a problem of under staffing because in most cases they cannot pay the salaries that most of the teachers are asking for. In some cases the schools have lost very dependable teachers because there were other private schools willing to pay better. In other cases the trained teachers preferred to work for the government so whenever government opportunities came up, some teachers would go leaving the school in great need.

Further the researcher found out there are opportunities for Christian Muslim relationships in Eastleigh that could be utilized. These opportunities include the need for the Church to participate in business opportunities in Eastleigh. While it is true that Muslims seems to have taken over the business space, but the researcher saw possibilities of Christians starting business that can create opportunities for relationships with the Muslims. A Christian involved in business could have an opportunity to befriend Muslim customers in a way that is not possible without the

business opportunity. The researcher also found out that the Church can also explore the possibility of initiating Community Based Organizations (CBO's) that could intentionally target the Muslims. Some of the issues that these organizations could target include rehabilitation of the youth caught up in drug abuse, the whole problem of HIV and AIDS, there could also be an opportunity for the Church to minister to the poor refugees who come to Eastleigh and have no friends or relatives to help them.

CHAPTER FIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of this study was to investigate the strategies that Christians are using in Eastleigh to foster peaceful coexistence with the Muslims. The research targeted missionaries and pastors but it was also protracted to include findings from other Christians who live and work in Eastleigh as either professionals or business people. This study used interviews and participatory observations to find out what activities are Christians involved in that target the whole concept of bridge building with the Muslims. The study also hoped to find out the general attitude of Christians towards Muslims in general but more specifically their Muslims neighbors, colleagues and acquaintances.

Summary and Conclusions

After a closer look at the data collected the researcher has the basis to conclude that Christians in Eastleigh and more specifically missionaries and pastors are actively and intentionally involved in activities that aim at creating space for Christian Muslim relationships. Most of the respondents who participated in this study clearly indicated that they were aware that what they were doing was aimed at befriending Muslims.

While it is true from the findings to conclude that there are attempts by Christians to reach to the Muslims in Eastleigh, it is also worth noting that there is a great need for the Christians who work and live among the Muslims to have some kind of inter religious training that helps them not only to appreciate Muslims as people but one

that helps them to understand Islam as a religion. This training should further help Christians with an understanding of the Great Commission. A closer look at the Great Commission shows that Christ had a vision of all the people of the world hearing the gospel through the disciples. This would mean that if the Christians in Eastleigh would become the true followers of Christ then they should take the gospel to the whole world which does not exclude the Muslims. A further suggestion on training should consider skills that can help Christians to relate in a more meaningful way with the Muslims. This training could include some knowledge on Islam especially on the forms and meanings of their religion and culture

Thinking about who stands the best opportunity to train on understanding Islam, the researcher concluded that converts from Islam to Christianity can play an important role in this kind of training. The problem is in most cases these believers from a Muslims background have to run for their lives in that case it means they are not available to help in training of this nature. The researcher also found that one of the reasons why these Muslim background believers have to leave their families is because Christians fail to help them on how to live with their own people wisely. If it was possible for these believers to remain within their communities, they could help a lot in providing reliable information on how Christians could relate with Muslims in a more meaningful way.

This study also found out that there is a great need for the Church both within and without Eastleigh to offer support to those Christians who have committed themselves to work among the Muslims in Eastleigh. From the findings it was very clear that lack of support from the Church whether through prayers or financially had in some way affected negatively the attempts to reach out to the Muslims. From the

data collected it was clearly evident that even the Churches that are within Eastleigh, have very little involvement if any with the attempts to reach to the Muslims.

This lack of support from the Church especially in financial terms has led some of the missionaries serving in Eastleigh to not only get discouraged in their work but also to compromise their own faith in order to get money. There was an example at Eastleigh fellowship center where the sporting facility that was being used to reach out to the youths was hired to a private investor who is actually a Muslim. While this may appear like a positive way of doing business with the Muslim but the finding showed that the facility was hired out so that it could bring in some income. By extension this hinders the ministry that was being done to the Muslim youths because although they will continue to come, the opportunity of sharing the gospel with them would have been lost because the facility is now for business and not for the gospel. The researcher also came across a story which was alluding to the fact that Christian leaders are even selling Church plots to Muslims who offer a lot of money (RC004, 2017). All these challenges stem from the fact that the body of Christ is not participating fully in supporting the work of building bridges with the Muslims.

Another issue that is worth consideration has to do with finding a way of empowering converts from Muslim background. This study discovered that discipleship in the word of God has to be accompanied with empowering them such that they are able to support themselves. One way that was thought to be helpful was the whole issue of helping them to start small businesses. This would make sure that even when they are chased from home, they are able to take care of their own needs.

A further recommendation is that Christians especially those living among the Muslims need to be encouraged to consider reading Islamic scriptures and other text

books written by Muslims. This will not only help them to understand what the Qur'an says on different issues about Muslim faith but it will also help Christians to know how to respond lovingly to Muslim concerns. This reading of Islamic text books will also help to change the negative attitude that some Christians have towards Muslims. In addition to this there are other books written by Christians who have had an experience with Islam. These books can also help Christians to have an understanding on how to relate with Muslims. One such book is "*Ishmael My Brother*" by Anne Cooper. This book is helpful in that it provides guidelines for Christians who are considering building bridges with Muslims (Cooper 1986, 20-30). One of the warnings that Cooper gives to Christians is that they should avoid approaching Muslims with an attempt to show them that they are wrong; on the contrary Christians should always see Muslims as people who can be befriended just like all other people. In this case building friendship with Muslims is more important to Cooper than winning an argument.

Another book that could be very helpful to Christians interested in building bridges with the Muslim is the book, '*The Great Commission: You and the Muslims*' by Gerhard Nehls. In this book, Nehls provides a few tips to Christians who engage the Muslims could make use of.

Firstly, is the need for preparation, this preparation should include the knowledge on some of the accusations that Islam levels against Christians and their scriptures. These accusations include the worship of three gods, that the bible has been corrupted among others.

Secondly, Nehls suggests the need for intentional contact making with the Muslims. He gives an example of the way Muslims are everywhere among us today.

They come to us to buy items, we sit with them in the bus, and we even teach their kids at school. The suggestion here is to always and carefully find a way of making meaningful contact with Muslims that we meet on our day today life.

Thirdly, Nehls proposes the need to always be positive when dealing with the Muslims. That the Christians endeavor should never be that of winning a debate or a discussion but that of humility, love, care and concern for Muslims needs and how they can be of help to them.

The fourth point that Nehls mentions that could be very helpful in Christians Muslim relationship is Friendship Evangelism. He suggests this to be a very authentic way of communicating the gospel because what the Christian says is backed up by the kind of life he/she exemplifies every day.

Fifthly, Nehls suggests the need for the Christians to lovingly correct the notions that Muslims have held against Christians that are in most cases based on propaganda. For example when a Muslim accuses a Christian of worshipping many gods, the way forward is not to protest or to ignore them but to find a way of having them have an objective discussion with you on that subject and helping them with patience to see you really believe in. (Nehls 1988, 35-52)

Recommendations for those Involved in Muslim Ministry

There is a great need to find out why the Church especially in Kenya has not been vocal on giving direction in regard to Christians Muslim relationships. It is true that there are attempts to engage with Muslims as per the findings of this research but it seems this is only happening from the missionaries and Christians who are living and working among the Muslims. Listening to the Christians in Eastleigh it was clear that the Church is not actively involved in building bridges with Muslims. There

needs to be a study that will uncover the possible reasons why discussions on Christian Muslim relationships are only limited to seminars and class rooms. Why are the lessons learnt in classes not practically taken to the field to help enhance Christian Muslim relationships? This question was actually triggered in my mind by one of my informant. He raised a concern that there seems to be a lot of study that goes on around Muslim evangelism that is never applied on real mission field. He lamented that some missionaries claiming to have a calling to serve among the Muslims spend more than a half of their lives in School. By the time they earn a doctorate or a master's degree, they are already nearing retirement. This means that all the knowledge gathered in class ends up being of no help in the mission field. He gave an example of the many students who he has helped in data collection both for thesis and doctoral studies. Most of these students according to him claim to have a calling to work among the Muslims. In his estimation he could not remember any of those he helped who he could say they are doing anything substantial in reaching to the Muslims. There needs to be a research done as to why those who take higher education in Islamic studies do not utilize that knowledge in the field. Together with this there is also the need for the Church itself to study and understand its context. For example if a certain Church or Churches are existing among the Muslims, they need to intentionally study their environment and upon understanding take relevant steps to reach out in a way that bridges can be built with Muslims.

Recommendations for Further Studies

Findings from this study has revealed that Christians in Eastleigh have been doing the best they can to engage the Muslims. Some of these attempts by Christians to build bridges with Muslims include interfaith dialogues, provision of education among others. These attempts have created an atmosphere within which Christians

and Muslims have lived together as neighbors. However this has not come without challenges. One of the challenges to coexistence between Christians and Muslims has been that of terrorists' attacks. Whenever there is an attack, all Muslims get to be blamed and this has in one way created a room for suspicion even among friends. In light of these findings the researcher recommends a study to be done on how schools can provide an atmosphere within which true friendship can exist between Christian and Muslim kids.

The researcher found that in schools both Muslim and Christian kids participate together in activities like games, clubs among others. In these aspects, relationships are not based on religion but on pure friendship and team work. A study that investigates how this growing together can create strong bridges between Christians and Muslims is critical because the researcher thinks it can be more effective than waiting until adulthood to begin to think about building bridges with the Muslims.

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APPENDIX I

General Interview Guiding Questions

RQ 1: What activities are you involved in that create space for Christian Muslim Co-existence in Eastleigh?

- I. What informed the decision to begin this particular work/ministry in Eastleigh?
- II. What can you say is the situation of Christian Muslim relationship in Eastleigh both now and when you first started working here?
- III. What are some of the activities that you are involved in?
- IV. What could possibly have informed the choices of these activities?
- V. How easy is it for a Muslim to access your services here?

RQ 2: What can be said to be the purpose of these activities?

- I. How often do you get Muslims coming to you for help?
- II. How relevant have you found your activities of reaching to Muslims to be effective in this context?
- III. How do you think the activities you are involved in are helping in reaching the goal of Christian/Muslims co-existence in Eastleigh?
- IV. Can you remember any story that could adequately tell of your role in cultivating Christian Muslim co-existence in Eastleigh?
- V. What can you say is the contribution of your work here in relation to peaceful co-existence with Muslims?

RQ 3: How effective are these activities in relation to cultivation of peaceful co-existence with the Muslims

I. What can you say is the nature of your relationships with the Muslim community around here? Has it been that of acceptance and toleration or that of hatred and intolerance?

II. Are there specific examples you can give especially in connection to improved relationship between Christian and Muslims as a result of your work here?

III. What can you say is the contributions of other Christian ministries at Eatleigh in regard to creating a room for peaceful Co-existence with Muslims?

IV. Can you briefly describe some of the Challenges you have encountered in your attempt to enhance co-existence between Muslims and Christians in Eatleigh?

V. How have you been able to handle these challenges and remain focused to your goal?

Appendix II

Interview Questions for Christians Living in Eastleigh

For how long have you been a resident of Eastleigh?

Had you in any way interacted with Muslims in any way before you came to Eastleigh?

How can you describe the situation of Christian Muslim relationships when you first came to Eastleigh?

Can you say there has been any changes between now and when you first came?

Do you have any Muslim neighbors where you live?

Are there some Muslims who you can say are your friends?

Have you in any way encountered Muslims who wanted you to become one of them?

How did you as a Christians handle that challenge?

What are some of the ways that you think can make it easier for Christians and Muslims to have peaceful relationships?

How have you managed to remain in Eastleigh despite all the challenges with terrorist attacks?

Have you or any your friends or family members been affected by terrorist attacks?

How did you handle that situation?

Do you know of any steps that were taken or are being taken to deal with the problem of these attacks?

In a general way what can you say is the attitude of Christians here in Eastleigh towards Muslims?

Appendix III

Interview Questions used for Career Missionaries and Pastors

1. Can you remember how you received the call to serve among the Muslims?
2. Was it easy for you to accept to serve among the Muslims?
3. For how long have you been serving among the Muslims here in Eastleigh?
4. What was the nature of Muslim Christian relationship when you first came to Eastleigh?
5. What can you say has been done by Christians here in Eastleigh to enhance Muslim Christian relationship?
6. What are the specific strategies used by Christians that you could say have been successful in fostering Christian Muslim relationships here in Eastleigh?
7. What are some of the challenges that you have faced in your attempts to build bridges with the Muslims
8. How have you managed to deal with those challenges and still remained focused?
9. What can you say is the relationship between the Church and the Missionaries here in Eastleigh?
10. Can you give any example of what you think is a pointer to the nature of Christian Muslim relationships here in Eastleigh?
11. If you were to evaluate the work of the pastors and missionaries here in Eastleigh what can you say?
12. Can you say your efforts to build bridges among the Muslims have been successful in any way?
13. If you compare between when you first came to Eastleigh and now, do you think the situation of Christian Muslim relationship has gotten any better? Please explain.
14. If you were to give suggestion on approaches to bridge building between Christians and Muslims what would those suggestions be?

Appendix IV

Where The Research was be conducted

1. **Eastleigh Fellowship Center**- This center which is a ministry of the Mennonite Church in Kenya was started in 1980. Their vision was to develop human capacity and community services specifically targeting the Muslim community. The means through which they reach out to the Muslim community include: Sports, Discipleship, Library services, Language School, and provision of space for community functions.

2. **Panuel Education Center**- Panuel Education Center is an Initiative of the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK). The pastor, who is currently in charge, did not seem to be very sure as to when the Church was planted in Eastleigh but he estimated it to be in the early Eighties. According to him, the Church was planted by Norwegian Missionaries who in their initial plan did not seem to have targeted Muslims specifically. But as from 1990, the Church started the Panuel Education Center whose main aim was to educate the Muslim Kids with hopes that this initiative would bridge the gap between Christian and Muslims for the purpose of evangelism. Among the programs offered in this center include: Computer College, Primary School which includes Nursery and Pre-unit, and a tailoring School. The pastor estimated that close to 95% of the people they minister to are Muslims.

3. **Nairobi Church of Christ Eastleigh**- This Church was begun at Eastleigh by Missionaries of the 'Church of Christ' in 1992. Their main aim was to reach out to the Muslim Community in Eastleigh. To be able to achieve this goal, the Church opened an Institute which offers training in Industrial skills. These skills include: Electrical Works, Automotive Engineering, Building and Civil Engineering among others.

4. **St. Teresa Catholic Parish, Eastleigh**- the Church opened its doors for the first time in 1974. Although initially there were no specific plans to reach to the Muslims, over the years they have found themselves ministering to more needy Muslims than Christians. Their main means of reaching to the community include a School and a Clinic among others.

VITA

PERSONAL DATA

Name: Moses Munywoki Mutisya
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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2015-2017 Master of Arts in Missions-Islamic Emphasis, AIU
2011-2013 Bachelor of Theology, Scott Christian University
2008-2010 Diploma in Theology, Scott Christian University
1998-2001 KCSE, Madogo Secondary School

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2013-2017 Pastor, Africa Inland Church
2011-2012 Church Planting with Christian Chapels Kenya
2003-2007 Missionary with Peace Proclamation Ministry