

## Article

# Whiteness in Christianity and Decoloniality of the African Experience: Developing a Political Theology for ‘Shalom’ in Kenya

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**Abstract:** The decolonial discourse around Christianity must not avoid dealing with Whiteness if there is going to be any fruitful decolonization. Colonialism and the Western missionary enterprise were not necessarily two distinct and unrelated entries to precolonial Kenya. How then did Christianity, for decades, live side by side with colonialism? In this article, we contend that Colonialism in Kenya could not have been possible without the missionary enterprise activity. The impact of that unholy relationship is felt and sustained in contemporary forms of violence. Unfortunately, critics of such a discourse dismiss the decolonial efforts in African Christianity citing intellectual activism. Such voices of dissent may not be far from the truth as Jesus’ ministry involved elements of activism. Whenever he confronted oppressive institutional structures, he used activism tempered with a degree of pacifism. Looking at the history of historical injustices in Kenya, we see instances whereby missionary Christianity conveniently abetted injustices for colonial structures to sustain the oppression of the indigenous Africans. Such injustices have been unresolved to date because the oppressive structures are still in place in the shape of neocolonialism. Land, for example, is a present source of conflict in Kenya. In the precolonial African ontology, the land was in harmony with the people. For land to be taken away from its owners, a separation of the people from the land had to happen. This was facilitated by a Christian theology that created existential dualism, violently separating the African bodies from their souls and the person from the community. Hence, Christian doctrine that emphasized ‘saving souls’ and ‘personal salvation’ was entrenched. This separation and fragmentation are fundamental to Whiteness. Whiteness universalizes truth, even theology; it puts a face of neutrality that obscures specificity. Such has made the church uncritical of oppressive and unjust political structures. Whiteness realizes that it is hard to enter into something that is in harmony. Therefore, separation needs to happen for Whiteness to succeed. Unfortunately, much of our theological understanding today is tempered with a neocolonial mindset that separates the soul from the body for Christian triumphalism. It anesthetizes the pain of oppression with the eschatological promise of future deliverance. This paper will analyze the impact of Whiteness in Kenya during and after colonialism to demonstrate how the British explorer–settler–missionary alliance ‘oiled’ the religious and economic disenfranchising of African people. Secondly, it proposes a political theology that will restore ‘Shalom’ in a socially, economically, and spiritually broken country. It is such a theology undertaken in Africa that will confront oppressive structures and identify with the marginalized communities in Kenya.



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## 1. Introduction

In an attempt to define Whiteness, we premise that Whiteness refers to more than just the racial distinctness and divide. When talking about Whiteness, the implication is not a white versus Black or Latino or Asian racial identity. Whiteness does not necessarily carry

racial connotations, even though related. Rather, Whiteness is a way of life that finds wings to thrive in the world through politics, economics, and Christianity. For every Christian in the world to find their Christian story is to find themselves in Whiteness. Whiteness, as a way of life, positions itself as superior to other ways of life and is domineering over other cultures. When it comes into contact with other cultures, it almost always dominates over other cultures (Hill 2018). On the religious front, for example, Christian culture has, for many centuries, been shaped by Whiteness; Christian theology, culture, and ecclesial practice have been Eurocentric (Sanneh 2003).

According to Jennings in his seminal work, *The Christian Imagination* (Jennings 2010), there is a particular moment in history when Christianity became white. He argues that this happened during colonialism, where African people were subjugated (Jennings 2010). In agreement with Jennings, it is important to underscore that colonialism in Kenya was neither incidental nor adjacent to the Western missionary enterprise of the 19th and 20th centuries. Rather, the two were intricately linked. It is, therefore, incorrect to see the historical mainstream Christianity in Kenya as forcefully compelled by the external politicization of religion. Rather, mainstream Christianity did the bidding of the colonial project. In fact, during the colonial period in East Africa at large, the two were part and parcel of the same project. Christianity gave the colonial agenda spiritual wings to succeed, while colonialism energized Christianity's expansionist movement and mission to the unreached people groups. The missionaries' approach to sharing the gospel was to educate the Africans on how to read the scriptures and write, making it easy for the colonialists to introduce their governance and policies. To this effect, the missionary societies received considerable material support from governments. The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church (formerly the Church Province of Kenya) are the biggest beneficiaries of the material from the colonial government.

The white missionary enterprise of Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in foreign territories was an expansionist initiative of Whiteness. This expansionist attitude is Whiteness in nature. It sought to explore, conquer, and convert new lands for God without establishing if these lands knew God in their way. Regarding the expansionist attitude, colonialism was ideal for missionary activities in Africa. As various missionary associations expanded, they penetrated and separated human societies abroad to subdue, uproot indigenous religions and societies, and entrench a new faith. The missionaries taught that the African religion was satanic and should be discarded altogether. In other words, the missionaries made the African people feel less at home with their cultural values as they introduced a new faith, and they required the Africans to feel at home with the new Christian faith. The new faith is what has now been inherited through various mainstream Christian denominations in Kenya that have an attachment to their missionary patrons overseas. These have been called the missionary or mainstream churches. The mainstream churches in Kenya have thus inherited a white theology that is laced with colonial and capitalist baggage that is inextricably related or linked with the politics of the state. Therefore, even though mission churches in Kenya are independent of their Western counterpart in terms of leadership, Whiteness continues to drive their theology and missions. The theology that was propagated sought to separate individuals from their societal fabric through their teachings that proposed that all that is white is godly. This paper is not interested in invoking guilt on anyone or blame-shifting. Rather, the paper seeks to ask the question of 'what do we do with what we have inherited?' Christianity in Kenya, in and of itself, is not the vice we are trying to challenge here but rather its packaging, which was laced with foreign cultural innuendos which dominate over and against the recipient cultures. These have unintentionally shaped the current Christian theological discourse and consequently the Christian faith and practice in society today. Undoing what the church in Kenya has inherited as the true way of life, as far as theology is concerned, is not an easy task but is doable.

This calls for the body of Christ in Africa to address neocolonialism on various levels, suggestively starting with her theology. To do this, the church needs to decolonize

its theological identity. Decolonization is the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuates the subjugation and the exploitation of our minds, bodies, and land (White 2017). The ultimate intention of decolonization is to subvert the colonial structure that has shaped the thinking of the indigenous people. Therefore, the colonial control over the theological mindset of the Kenyan people needs to be confronted through a process of decoloniality. Daniel Hill notes that thinking and recognizing Western theology is like an idol in our minds that needs to be removed (Hill 2018). This process entails identifying Whiteness in the version of Christianity that is African, overturning its narratives, and situating an African theology within the African experience. The African ontology often had (and still has) no divide between the sacred and the secular (Heaney and Rowland 2015). The politics of the land was fundamentally derived from the religious aspirations of the people. In retrieving from what the African religious expression on political philosophy is (Mbiti 1990), the leveraging on power, allocation, and distribution of resources, and administration of justice will motivate scholars into discoursing political theology as a solution for Kenya. Then there will be hope to rethink a political theology for the Kenyan people that seeks to address historical injustices for sustainable peace and stability.

## 2. Whiteness and Theology

It has been mentioned earlier in this paper that whenever Whiteness comes into contact with any other culture, it always dominates over it. Whiteness interacts with other cultures, alters their DNA, yet it is left unscathed by the cultures it comes into contact with. This reality has huge implications on Christian theology. Willie Jennings traces the theological foundations of colonialism which was, at its core, a form of evangelization. When the missionaries came to Kenya, they placed themselves at the juncture of the known and the unknown. Kenyans, in their respective communities, had an idea of God albeit no concrete theology to describe what they believed in. A majority of the Kenyan communities at the time of colonization had their own spiritual beliefs about a supreme being who controlled their spiritual lives. Sacrificial systems were in place and operational, with a greater sense of reference to the supreme being they believed. The African religious reality was real and alive. However, Whiteness, by nature, does a few things. It not only dominates over the religious otherness but also universalizes and normalizes other religious cultures yet leaves itself cloaked in neutrality. Therefore, its theology is just theology. The rest are African, Black, Latino, Liberation, Feminist, etc. theologies. By implication, white theology which is not identified as White is the universal standard. Whiteness becomes the norm with which other cultural identities are evaluated (Hill 2018). It has become the yardstick that other theologies should emulate and assimilate. It has rendered the African people inferior and cannot formulate any theology and practice of their own, something that has, for a long time, made Kenyans slaves to the white mindset (White 2017).

This tendency to normalize Whiteness has huge implications on both theology and global missions today. The mainstream churches have inherited a theology that is highly colonial and replete with Christian triumphalism. This means that the evangelical message, even though biblical, had to be fundamentally laced with Whiteness. How has Whiteness managed to be successful in doing this? For Whiteness' success to disenfranchise the Kenyan people, it had to be fragmental by nature. It is hard to enter something that is in harmony. Kenyan societies were collectivistic, communal, and closely attached to their land. There was an inseparable union between Kenyans and their land. For colonialism to divide and conquer to balkanize people in their ethnic identities, the evangelistic message had to precede colonialization and the establishment of British protectorates. The propagators of the gospel did harm to the cultural identities of the people by making them look inferior and that it should be replaced with the 'ideal' culture that they came with.

In obedience to The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16), the church is to go into the world and make disciples of all nations (ethnē). Hence, the relationship between witness and ethnicity is of the utmost importance when considering mission (Hill 2018). The white

missionaries had to approach Kenya's indigenous communities with a gospel theology that separates the body and soul, without which the subjugation of various ethnicities in the colonial enterprise could not have been possible. The theology that went with the Great Commission was that of confession of sins, call to repentance, and salvation of souls. The implication of this separation of the body and soul, and the body and the land, will be discussed later. For now, here is a look at the sin and salvation doctrines entrenched in Western theology and replicated by missionaries in Kenya.

### 2.1. *The Issue of Sin*

The African communities are usually collectivistic with a group-oriented view or approach to everything, including virtues. Being an honor–shame context, Kenyans view sin differently from the Western worldview. Despite the growing prominence of honor in social theories and the emergence of Christianity in honor–shame cultures, the notion of honor remains absent from theological discourse (Borges 2013). In the Western worldview, sin is breaking God's law (Wu 2016) and something that people do (Mischke 2015). However, sin in the Majority world, which is shame-based, is not a law that people break but who we are at the core of our being (Wu 2015). In fact, in some African societies, sin is not a sin until one is caught (Freeman 2015). Therefore, from the onset, the missionary's explanation about sin was completely misplaced in the African worldview and ontology. The description of sin as breaking the law was abstract and only appeals to one's guilt. From the African context, sin is a lack of social order and peace. Both social order and peace are regarded as sacred and should be honored by the community (Wethmar 2007). The disruption of social order and peace of an African community is a sin that is liable for punishment (Wethmar 2007).

For the missionaries to succeed in entrenching a legal-oriented doctrine, they had to normalize a gospel presentation that emphasized forgiveness of sin, the redemption of souls, and a heaven/hell destiny that appealed on guilt and not on the shame of sin. However, Kenyan societies are shame-based, and their understanding of sin is different. Shame-based societies, such as Kenya, are communal in terms of setup because of communal dynamics; sin not only besmirches Adam's reputation but also affronts God's honor. The most common expression of human sin is the construction of a pretentious spirituality via religion or social codes. Such social engineering degrades others, rejects the honor God graciously grants, and upstages God as a true arbiter of honor (Borges 2013). In the Kenyan context, sin is the integrated process by which our shameful behavior invokes shameful feelings, defaming one's character and status, hence dishonoring God who is the author of life. The Africans knew that God sustains their lives and, therefore, anyone who messes up their community's social order and peace is bringing shame to the community.

Western missionaries coming from a heavily guilt-oriented background failed to understand the African worldview and imposed a truncated gospel that emphasized the guilt of sinners and forgiveness of sins. The tragedy of a truncated gospel is that sin is perceived as 'something that we do' (guilt-based) as opposed to 'who we are' (shame-based). Then that creates a discipleship deficiency on the new converts who come from shame-based cultures. Consequently, missionaries and their white settler counterparts could take Kenyan land and not be perceived as sinners. The white man's act of grabbing the Kenyan land from the native communities was the right thing. It also portrayed that being white is being superior and being African is inferior. The acts of the white missionaries, together with their colonizers, have had a negative influence on how the Kenyan communities view leadership and its privileges. It sent a false message that when someone is in power, he or she should disregard the laws of the land and that they should be applied selectively. The missionaries watched as the Africans were mistreated and robbed of their ancestral heritage, never to be returned to this day. The dichotomization of sin as not being who one is and reducing it to what one does consequently separated the soul from the body. This was even made worse in the articulation of the concept of salvation through the Western lens. It was a total disregard to the beliefs of the Kenyan

societies. The missionaries forgot that God placed the Kenya communities in this land so that they can seek God and find him because he was and is not far from them (Acts 17:26–27).

## 2.2. *The Issue of Salvation*

The Western missionary enterprise also articulated salvation in terms of foreign to the recipient Kenyan cultures. Christian evangelists, teachers, and missionaries have focused on law, sin, and guilt and proclaimed the need for repentance and forgiveness (Nicholls 2001). These are important Christian teachings and should be taught. However, Nicholls critiquing his fellow missionary enterprise lamented on the failure to ‘stress salvation as honoring God, exposure of sin as shame and the need for acceptance and the restoration of honor’ (Nicholls 2001). In honor–shame cultures, salvation is not necessarily understood through the legal, but rather a regal lens. Salvation is easily conceptualized as adhering to social expectations and respect for communally accepted standards, without which one is shamed and cast out until they are restored (saved) in the community. These social expectations of the community carry with it the life of the community which is regarded as sacred. So, when someone does not adhere to these expectations, he or she is deemed to have polluted the sacred life of the community which attracts punishment and, later, restoration to the life of his or her community.

However, the missionary’s insistence and focus on the salvation of souls led to the common rhetoric of counting of souls saved as a measure of mission success. This separation and fragmentation of bodies and souls is fundamental to Whiteness. Thus, white missionaries needed to separate the soul of Africans from their bodies, hence a gospel that ‘their souls will be saved.’ One needed to constantly separate their life, even when it did not make sense. Salvation in the missionary enterprise efforts pushed and continues to perpetuate the idea that all that matters is your salvation. When this idea is repeated and normalized, it alters one’s understanding of pain from oppressive structures by numbing the Christian oppressed with the promise of an eschatological utopian future as packaged in the Western missionary’s gospel message. Such a gospel did not address the here and now of human existence in the Kenyan context. The missionaries taught the Kenyan new converts who formed the black clergy that career development was not a priority for those who have become Christians and heeded the call of the gospel (Nicholls 2001). Christians were not only discouraged from engaging in developing trade but also were discouraged from taking part in ‘worldly’ affairs such as politics. However, being heavenly minded did not exonerate them from the common challenges facing them every day. What colonialism did was, in the words of Ramatswana, a supposition that ‘those they colonized could not use their minds or intellects, could not invent things, could not create institutions or history, could not produce anything of value, did not know how to use land and other natural resources, and could not practice the “arts” of civilization’. When the social responsibility of a people to construct their institutions is removed, then not only the aggressor begins to use what could have been a helpful conversion for good and, in contrast, begins to use their institutions to impose religion, culture and politics, and/or economic paradigms and knowledge into the indigenous people’s minds. Therefore, with that in mind, there is a need to begin to locate the African indigenous mind first, to understand his current perceptions about various political and economic paradigms and educate him again with the goal of decoloniality.

Whiteness makes universal claims of what is needed, beautiful, normal, and accepted. This means that there is ‘the’ theology referenced under systematics, dogmatics, and historical theology. The rest referent to majority non-Western cultures is just theologies. Therefore, for one to theologize outside of ‘the’ mainstream white theology, they must intellectually step into another context. While we do not hold that there is a Christianity specifically for Africa, we do however believe that there is an African expression of Christianity in Kenya that risks being lost in a white-dominated culture. An authentic African spirituality must

be let loose to explore, process, and challenge to guide the current Kenyan struggle. This struggle could be helpful in African political thinking, hence a political theology for Kenya.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. Decolonial Hermeneutics

Thus far, this paper has made a compelling case for the missionary enterprise's presence in collaboration with the colonial project in Kenya. While the missionary enterprise had its benefits in terms of evangelization through education and Bible translation, its continued presence through current social institutions may not necessarily be helpful. Consequently, the missionary enterprise left its white-infused theology that has had its good parts in the formal years of the post-independence church but now needs to be rethought through the lens of the African experience.

Decolonizing African theology for a more authentic African experience is possible when consideration is made for an African hermeneutic, which is what the authors call decolonial hermeneutics. Given the historical context of imperialism and the missionary enterprise, and modernity, it is necessary to enquire about the epistemic location of knowledge of the biblical reader/interpreter in the African context (Ramantswana 2016). Understandably, most of the leading theological leaders in Africa, Bediako, Mbiti, Ela, Mugambi and Oduyoye, have had their theological training through the same Western education systems that this article has been criticizing. However, at some point in their discourse, they were aware of their own stories and paths as a hermeneutical process. Rather than relying heavily on the Euro-Western paradigms, African biblical scholars ought to take pride in their scholarship and reconfigure a biblical hermeneutical practice that draws from the African epistemology, philosophies, and frameworks.

Having made the point that colonialism might have disfranchised the African people, perhaps an African philosophy, such as the *Ubuntu*, can be leveraged upon to unite a people for sustainable peace (Shalom) in the African society. This is possible because, as Mbiti observed, religion and philosophy in Africa are intertwined (Mbiti 1990). The *Ubuntu* philosophy, as Gathogo puts it, is an African concept of understanding one's being in the community that declares that a person is a person through other persons (Gathogo 2008). This is not to suggest a total disregard for foreign decolonial models. While non-African models cannot substitute indigenous decolonial models, they can assist in understanding how postcolonial African contexts can leverage indigenous knowledge systems for social transformation (Kaunda and Kim 2021).

An African reading of the Bible will rarely miss seeing the *Ubuntu* version of the Judeo-Christian religion. As opposed to earlier Euro-centric decolonial models, *Ubuntu* is a passionate and absolute love for the community of life, which includes God, ancestors, humanity, yet-to-be-born, and non-human. John Mbiti emphasizes the *Ubuntu* philosophy that whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the group happens to the individual (Mbiti 1969). Everyone and everything in the community contributes to the force of life. This taps into the communal aspect of the African ontology that describes a human being as 'being with others'. When an African hermeneutic is premised upon the *Ubuntu* philosophy then one begins to read their location in the community as a story to be read. Therefore, reading the biblical text is not just a text, but only finds meaning when read together with the oral, physical and present text of the entire community in context.

With *Ubuntu* as a philosophy, the African reader can read back and forth from the biblical text to the contextual text, which is the community. This methodology is what Gerald West has called appropriation. About appropriation, in his chapter contribution in the book *African Theology on the Way*, West posits that 'For dialogue to take place between text and context, real flesh and blood African reader is required! This reader moves constantly back and forth between the biblical and African contexts, bringing them together in an ongoing conversation that we call appropriation' (Stinton 2010). In decolonizing the African hermeneutic, a tripolar approach is proposed. This approach

to reading and interpretation of the bible typically consists of three poles: the pole of the biblical text, the African context, and appropriation (Stinton 2010). Decolonizing the African hermeneutic does not suggest that the African reader entirely throws away the previous Western methodologies. Rather, the biblical text is approached from a perspective where 'African comparative material is the major dialogue partner and traditional exegetical methodology is subordinated to this perspective' (Stinton 2010).

Biblical interpretation is, however, not an end in and of itself. Rather, the reader, appropriately moving back and forth from text to context, must seek ways of transforming his context. That is what bible reading is all about anywhere. The already laid out methodologies foreign to the context denies the reader this interpretive compass to locate themselves in the story. However, re-reading the Bible in the African context empowers the reader to seek transformative ways that God could use for transforming Africa.

### 3.2. *Reconstructive Theology*

Numerous efforts have been made by earlier African theologians on what has been known as liberation. However, the recent conversation seems to be departing from liberation to more of reconstruction. Jesse Mugambi, one of the earlier proponents of theological reconstruction, explains that reconstruction is performed when an existing complex becomes dysfunctional, for whatever reason, and the user is still required to use it. Mugambi situates his theology of social reconstruction in the context of the dramatic changes in Africa's political landscape in recent history: from decolonization in the 1960s through disillusionment with independence in the 1970s and 1980s to the "New World Order" of the 1990s with the demise of the Cold War and the colonial era (Stinton 2004).

In reconstruction theology, new specifications may be made in the new designs while some aspects of the old complex are retained in the new (Mugambi 1995). In other words, such efforts are an acknowledgment of the fact that a lot of time has been spent liberating ourselves from postcolonial theological models. To date, Africa turns out to be one of the most religious continents in the Global South. Jesse Mugambi, as quoted by Stinton in her book *Jesus of Africa*, laments that despite the enormous religious—and specifically Christian—growth in the continent by the end of the 20th Century, its people remain to be the most abused in all history (Stinton 2004). This is a paradox. Now that Africans are 'free', so to speak, it is time to reconstruct our social, economic, and political structures. Reconstruction of the current theological discourses is the foundational point for any constructive theology that helps the African church find itself in the current political milieu.

Reconstructing the political structures, for instance, for an African Christian requires that the reader can see the advent of Jesus into a political scene. 'Jesus of Nazareth enters history at a time when Judea was rife with the Messianic hope that some deliverer would come to liberate the people from the yoke of Roman imperialism' (Mugambi 1995). Jesus' work was not without some form of resistance from his contemporary critics, some of whom accused him of trying to dismantle the Jewish religious and social institution. However, in a stark reminder, Jesus emphasized that his mission was neither reactive nor destructive but reconstructive.

The African reader ought to be able to see his political scene being replayed in the early ministry context of Jesus' earthly ministry. The Bible text succinctly captures the contextual political happening of Jesus' era. The Scripture is teeming with names of political leaders who were contemporaries of Jesus, John the Baptist, and so forth. For example, during Jesus' birth, not only are mentions of Herod the king and Archelaus made (Matt. 2:1) but also their way of rulership, characterized by fear in threat of the birth of another 'king', is highlighted. During the ministry of John the Baptist, several politicians are mentioned: Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, his brother Philip, and even the contemporary religious leadership of Annas and Caiaphas (Lk. 3:1–2). The style of political leadership espoused by these leaders and their relationship with the religious leaders of the time had an impact on Jesus' and John the Baptist's early ministries. A reader needs to situate this in

their context to generate a response to the current happenings around our world given the political leadership experienced in the context of African Christianity.

A sound political theology that seeks to decolonize earlier models will be developed amid the struggle for finding the relevance of Christianity amidst competing powers of our continent that do a disservice to the people. There is, therefore, a need to investigate the role of Kenya's religious leaders in the public and political space. A lot of it has been characterized by confusion as to whether religious leaders in the Kenyan church will engage the political scene. For others, rather than challenge the status quo, they are comfortable collaborating with the leaders. However, for the most part, leaders are ill-equipped to constructively engage politically with the leaders for the reconstruction of the country. There is a need for the development of indigenous theological resources, for the theologians and clergy to hold conversations with the political leadership and the public for radical social, economic, and political transformation.

### 3.3. Redefining the Church–State Relationship

The relationship between the Church and the state is another space in the contemporary world that requires decolonization concerning the politics of a nation. The Church has, for centuries since Constantine, been accused of having sinister relations with the state. In this strange bedfellow relationship, the Church has been suspected for being a motivation for violence in several conflicts (Safari 2010). In Kenya, some have advocated for the separation of the Church and state, while others have argued that it is unnecessary to separate the two.

Those who support a separation of the Church and state argue that when the Church is in cahoots with the state it renders the Church powerless to confront political powers. As such, the Bible reading, interpretation, and application have seemed to favor the emperor more than the polity. Therefore, a separation of the two needs to be undertaken with a lot of carefulness because the Scripture teaches that the government is God's authority on people and a servant to instill law and order, especially for the lawless (Romans 13:1–3). However, since it has already been argued that colonial attitudes still linger and do affect the undesirable relations between the state and the people, theology needs to redefine the Church–state relationship to reconcile the people with their state in Kenya.

Julius Githinji, in his article *Reconciliation as Separation*, holds that the postcolonial approaches to Bible can indeed yield fruitful insights that will contribute to the health of the interpretive enterprise within evangelicalism while, at the same time, not destroying the way the evangelical church has embraced the authority of Scripture (Kithinji 2020). In agreement, this is recommended as, comparatively, the earlier interpretive methods have completely departed from the missionary models. The idea is to develop interpretive models on the Church and state that frees the Bible from imperial entanglements that prevent the Kenyan Church from finding its place of objectively critiquing the state. Decolonial models of political thinking ought to deal with issues of power, and allocation of resources, in ways that are devoid of the power trappings of the national leaders. Eventually, this re-definition will protect the Church from being suspected of uncritically supporting the state even when the state is against its citizens.

## 4. Conclusions

It has taken many years for Whiteness to impact the Kenyan religious scene and politics. Therefore, trying to decolonize theology and politics overnight is being overambitious. However, as argued in this paper, decolonization of political theology is necessary for sustainable peace in Kenya. The good thing is that Kenya is a religious nation, especially Christianity. Therefore, there is room for intentional engagement within the political space for sustainable peace in Kenya. It is time for the church in Kenya to develop a political theology that is steeped in decolonial hermeneutics and re-constructivist models.

In the paper, the missionary enterprise has been mentioned as having enabled the colonial project in Kenya. Yet at the same time, one cannot think of missions in contempo-

rary Kenya without learning from the missionary church models. How will the church pick the kernel of truth in mission learning and throw away the husk of colonial baggage? To reimagine Christian missions, there is a need for missionaries to be impacted by the spaces that they seek to evangelize without necessarily needing to dominate them. The attitude on current mission engagement in Kenya should be that of humility: acknowledging that no one knows everything and that it is okay not to have an answer for every cross-cultural encounter. There is room for vulnerability in missions, otherwise there is the danger for a relapse of the mistakes made by the Western missionary enterprise. The reimagination of a mission theology will perhaps nurture the Kenyan mainstream Church, especially in ways that free her from the colonial baggage and position her well to objectively engage politics, having dealt with all the neutralities drawn by Whiteness.

Finally, the goal of the gospel is to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28: 19). A careful contextualization of the gospel in Kenya is needed; a gospel that can speak to the hearts of all Kenyans of all cultures, socioeconomic classes, and a gospel that can bring a lasting solution to the corrupt nature of man. Jesus was able to speak to every situation he met without fear or favor. He stood for what was just, right, and per the will of the Father in heaven. The gospel that Kenya needs today is one that advocates for the restitution of the stolen heritage of the Kenyan communities, unites the country, and does not divide the citizens along ethnic lines. If Whiteness disenfranchised the people, the gospel through the Church ought to heal and restore the nation. This is the kind of theology that evokes the spirit of Shalom from amidst the communities. Shalom is realized when people are in harmony with one another with the social and political support structures in place. For Kenya, this needs to be restored.

To above will only be realized when Kenyan theologians take up the challenge to re-write an African theology that presents Jesus Christ, who can solve the challenges that Kenya is currently facing. For deliverance to happen, reconstruction of the broken social and political structures is the responsibility of all Kenyans, with the support of the religious institutions in place. However, the Christian religious institutions that have initially been impacted by Whiteness need to be liberated first. Only then will the Church be able to rightfully and objectively engage the ruling state so that leaders will always be subjected to reason and not emotions as they lead. In communicating the gospel, the soul needs to be returned to the body, then humanness will be recovered in our political theology and lived experiences of every citizen.

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