

**THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE MAINTAINING OF  
SOCIETY NORMS AND VALUES; A CASE STUDY OF  
GACHOKA DIVISION IN MBEERE DISTRICT  
IN KENYA**

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### DECLARATION

I Emily .R. Kangi solemnly declare that this report has resulted from my own efforts and research, and has never been submitted to any institution whatsoever, for any award.

Signed   
EMILY .R. KANGI

Date 14 - 10 - 2008

## APPROVAL

This report which resulted from the researcher's effort, in the area of the "**role of religion in maintenance of society**" was carried out under my supervision and my approval is now ready to be submitted to the institute of open and distance learning for the award of a Bachelor of Education with Early childhood and primary education.

Signed 

NABUSETA .D. TALIGoola

Date 14/10/08

## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to my Mum Gladys Kangi, and my family members.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I wish to acknowledge the following, whom without their contribution this report would not have been possible. My supervisor Madam Debora Taligoola who guided me throughout all the stages and gave me confidence throughout the process

My mum Gladys Kangi and my brother for his financial and moral support; Head teachers of schools I visited and acquired the much needed information. May God bless you all.

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Religion.** A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things

**Social control.** A set of rules and understandings that control the behavior of individuals and groups in a particular culture

**Cult:** A religious group which practices and teaches outside the dominant cultural and religious traditions of a society.

**Conflict perspective.** A sociological perspective that emphasizes the role of conflict and power in the world economy

**Religious Beliefs.** Large, organized religions not officially linked with state or government.

## **ABSTRACT**

A descriptive and qualitative study was carried out about roles of religion in socializing the people. It sought to establish the roles played by religion in society. The study area was Gachoka Division in Mbeere district, Kenya. The following objectives guided the study, to establish the extent to which religion has provided psychological support to the individuals; to find out how religion has created peace and stability in society; to find out how religion has helped to maintain society norms and values, to find out if there was any form of fundamentalism among the religious groups, 40 respondents were selected in this study they included 20 teachers and 10 children from Kamurugu primary school and 10 religious leaders from different religious groups.

The instruments used were questionnaire which also acted as an interview guide for those who could not read or write. A focus group discussion had to be conducted to get more information about the study problem.

Findings revealed that much as religion was playing a vital role in creating peace and stability in society by making its members obey society rules and regulation; by offering psychological order, it was however a root cause of conflicts due to fundamental tendencies recommended; sensitization of the people to avoid joining cults. Government to try and discourage the spread of cults. Religious leaders were encouraged to form a joint religious council.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Background of the study**

Religion, a universal feature of human existence is one of the most dynamic fascinating, varied and complex of all human phenomena. Among the existing social institutions, religion has been ranked as a powerful deeply felt and influential force in the human society. Numerous sociologists have been compelled to study religion because of its importance to many people.

Religion has been found to consist of a variety of elements such as beliefs about the super natural being, rituals and social organization of believers drawn together by their common religious traditions (Kurtz, 1997).

Society and religion are said to have a close relationship, but this interrelationship can only be viewed if we examine both the functions and dysfunctions of religion, for individuals and the society. Many sociologists have now come to a consensus that most religions offers functions such as creating social order, promoting social cohesion, and offers meaning for human experience. Mac Guire (1997) added on by proposing that almost all religions share common experiences that rekindle the groups consciousness of its own unity.

Contemporary sociologists have also acknowledged both religion and as being powerful and influential forces in the contemporary societies. Both institutions are believed to impart values, beliefs and knowledge considered essential to the reproduction of individual personalities and entire cultures (Bondeau, 1990).

The dysfunction perspective of religion however asserts that religion is a source of problems and conflicts (Kendal, 2001) quoted a one Karl Max, who was a conflict theorist, who regarded religion as the "opiate of masses" let alone that, but it should also be noted that as societies diversity so are more religions born. This cultural diversity has consequently generated some other perspectives of religion particularly fundamentalism.

The world is tense about the birth of fundamental religious sects which have continued to create disability among societies. In other words religion is being blamed for inspiring strife among members of society (Kendal, 2001) was forced to ask a question that, "what kind of society are we going to have?".

Questions that are asked at this point are should we discourage diverse religions in our society? Is it possible for us to help one another understand and accommodate people who are different, what role is religion playing in our society?

Kenya being a culturally diverse nation, with a number of global migrants, many religious denominations are being practiced by its citizens. In the Kenya constitution, freedom of religion has been one of its amended. One may wonder whether indeed all the religious denominations are genuine without an form of fundamentalist, it is in the light of this background that this study was undertaken to examine the role of religion in maintaining the society. Gachoka Division in Mbeere district was used as the study area because a number of religions were being practiced there.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

The year 2007 was a painful one for all the Kenyans. As per the Kenyan constitution, the citizens were free to democratically go to the polling stations,

and elect a leader. The results of the 2007 elections however proved very disastrous and up 10,000 Kenyan citizens lost their lives. If it had been hypothesized by many that religion creates social order, cohesion and imparts values, why then would the Kenyans just act in such an inhumane way? Is it really true that religion is positively socializing the members or is it instead creating disharmony in society. This study set out therefore to examine the role of religion in maintaining societal norms and values.

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

This study was intended to examine the role of religion in maintaining societal norms and values. Focus was put on how it has helped to create order, cohesion and how it has made people have a meaning in life.

### **1.3 Specific objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To find out how religion has created peace in the society by binding people together.
- ii. To establish the extent to which religion has provided psychological support for individuals
- iii. To find out how religion has helped to maintain society norms and values.
- iv. To find out if there is any other form of fundamentalism among the religious denominations.

### **1.4 Research questions**

The following research questions helped to focus on the topic under investigation;

1. How has religion help to keep order and maintain social order

2. To what extent has religion provided psychological support for the society members?
3. How has religion helped to maintain unity among believers?
4. To what extent are the diverse religious denominations willing to tolerate one another?

### **1.5 Scope**

This study was conducted in Mbeere district but particularly in Gachoka Division. It examined the role of religion in socializing the members in society. The following variables were investigated; social control, fundamentalism, social cohesion, societal norms and values, psychological support. The population that was used were teachers from different religious denominations, religious leaders from the following groups Moslems, Orthodox, Catholics, Pentecostal churches, Seventh day Adventists, primary school children from Kamurugu were also interviewed. The research was undertaken from January 2008 and ended in October 2008.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The following categories of people are to benefit from this research.

The government of Kenya is to benefit most especially when formulating policies regarding freedom of religion.

The ministry of education of Kenya needs such information when establishing the extent to which the teaching of religion will have to be emphasized in the curriculum, and in formulating the study material and content for each age group.

The diverse religious groups would also use this content to realize the collective numerous functions of religion, to appreciate the diverse religious practices and

accept them; to realize and identify fundamental practices tha are fuelling disharmony in the society.

### **1.7 Limitation**

This research was to be carried out in the shortest time possible to enable the student to graduate in time.

The topic was a bit sensitive so getting some responses almost failed as some people could not open up.

A focus group interview had to be carried out on teachers to try and brainstorm for some information which could not be got from the religious leaders and yet was crucial in analyzing this research.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter has various views of social theorists have been examined with a purpose getting a clear picture of the research problem. From the citations below made it was possible to formulate hypothesis and test some theories.

#### **The meaning of Religion**

Kendal (2001) quoted Durkheim (1995/1912) definition of religion as a system of beliefs and practices based on some sacred or supernatural realm that guides human behaviour, gives meaning and unite believers into a single moral community.

According to sociologist Lester Kurz (1995) it was observed that religious beliefs are typically woven into a series of narratives including how ancestors and other significant figures had meaningful experiences with supernatural powers. He went on that religious beliefs are linked to practices that bind people together and to rites of passage such as births, marriage and death. Kurts also highlighted that people who shared similar beliefs were bound together in a moral community. Such communities are quite common in Kenya for example churches, mosques, synagogues, temples. Where these people they can engage in religious in beliefs and practices with similar minded people.

Some sociologists investigated and established that among the diverse religions some beliefs and values were common, for example belief in supreme beings; most religions attempt to answer fundamental questions such as those regarding the meaning of life and how the world was created,. Most of them provide comfort to persons facing emotional traumas such as illness, suffering grief and death.



(MC Guire 1997; Kendal 2001; Kornblum 2003 and Fellmann, Getis 20003). If some of these religions share common beliefs practices and values as commonly suggested by some scholars then cant the collectively create people in the society? In relation to the post election violence what could have gone wrong with the moral convictions of people of Kenya? Then what about the socialization of the new generation? Are they really being prepared adequately to co-exist in society with other children from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds?

Fellmann, Getis and Getis (2003) described religion, like a language as a symbol of group identity and cultural rallying point. That it was a composite distinguishing. Feature of ethnic or folk cultural communities. Religion is part of our people we cannot live with it and may be even to avoid, that is why this social institution of great interest to sociologists such as Max, Weber, Durkheim and Simmel

## **Role of Religion in Society**

### **Conceptual Framework**

Emile Durkheim, one of the first sociologists emphasized that religion was essential for the maintenance of society. He suggested that religion was a cultural universal found in all societies because it met basic human needs and served social perspectives. From the functional perspective MC Guire cited three important functions in any society. Promotes social cohesion and a sense of belonging. By emphasizing share symbolism, religious teachings and practices.

He gave an example of a Christian ritual of communion which not only commemorates a historical event but also allows followers to participate in the unity of themselves with other believers.

### **Religion and social control**

Coertz (1966) in Kandal 2001 highlighted the function of social control and support for the government. Kandal highlighted sighted how societies went on to promote social control through systems of rewards and punishments and that sacred symbols and beliefs establish powerful pervasive long lasting motivation based on the concept of general order of existence. In other words religion can be viewed from the above citation as one which maintains social control in the community by conferring super natural legitimacy on the norms and laws of society. In Kenya various religions talk about obedience, and in particular Islam and Christianity preach about God's commandments that when members obey them they will avoid crime like murder, adultery among others. But one wonders how the society went violent if at all they strictly observed the teachings from their religious convictions.

### **Religion and meaning of life**

Kammeyer, Ritzer and Yetman (1997) also expressed concern about the problem of society of keeping order and maintaining social control. According to the trio the society must deal with deviance and prevent those who have deviated to become fully alienated and thereby disrupting society.

Kammeyer Ritzer and Yetman (1997) also cited the function of religion in providing social stability and often providing inspirations that have been a dynamic source of social change. They advised that if one is to comprehend fully the nature of human life he/she had to understand the intimate relationship between religion and the functioning of human society.

### **Religion and psychological support**

Religion was said to be a source of personal comfort and consolation. According to a number of sociologists, religion systems offered emotional support for the people and this enabled them to endure very difficult circumstances. Kammeyer,

Ritzer and yet man 1997, (Mac Guire 1997, Kendal 2001, Kornblum 2003). Human existence was noted to be precarious and uncertain . Religion was cited to help people accept the unacceptable and the inevitable, the disappointments, frustrations, sufferings and inevitable deaths that inherent in human existence. It provided a source of strength and meaning in the face of the ever present possibility of the unanticipated unexpected and unanswerable.

Fellman, Getts and Gets (2003) also contributed religion is responsible for providing relief for the poor and the disposed, but it prevents them from acting to change the structure of the society and thus dealing with the basic source of problems. That it made people to reject the earthly rewards which they cant achieve as valueless compared to the rewards promised by religion.

### **The conflict perspective of religion**

Although many functionalist theorists viewed religion as the sustaner of peace in society, some conflict theorists view religion negatively. Kendal (200) revealed that the capitalist class used religious ideology as a tool of domination to mislead the workers about their, true interests. In the same citation she quoted Karl Max's criticism of the role of religion in society that people become complacent because they have been taught to believe in an after life in which they will receive rewards for their suffering and misery in life. Kendal went on to warn that although these religious teachings are soothing to the masses distress, this relief is illusionary. This statement agrees with what Fellman, Getitis Getis (2003) also cited.

Kendall (2001) further cited (Roberts 1995). Observation that religions united people irig false consciousness that they shared common interests with members of the dominant class.

From a conflict perspective religion promotes conflicts may be between religious groups or within religious groups. This is what is happening in Kenya today.

Fellman et al (2003) also quoted religions enmity which forced the partition of the Indian sub continent between Muslims and Hindus after the departure of the British in 1942. He further cited that religion continues to be the root cause of many local and regional conflicts throughout the world during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But what could be the reason behind this?

### **Religious Pluralism and the Society**

Korblum (2003) contributed that differences in the distribution of religious beliefs are also important because they show how religion accounts for cultural differences among populations with the society. He went on to explain that as societies become more culturally diverse as a result of global behaviours that seem to violate widely held norms and values became more common. Debates and conflicts over some behaviour become more frequent.

### **Religious Fundamentalists and society**

In the conflict perspect it is vital that religious fundamentalism be addressed. Brym and Lie (2003) observed that since 1960 fundamentalist religious organizations have rapidly increased their membership, especially among Christians. According to the duo, the fundamentalist interpret their scriptures literally, seek to establish a direct personal relationships with the higher beings, they worship and are relatively intolerant of non fundamentalists. The two cited an example of America where the fundamentalists often supported conservative social and political issues.

Could this be similar to what is occurring in Kenya with the Mungiki?

Schacfer (2003) mentioned of growing conflict in society, where the population is facing hostility due to religious extremists.

## **Conclusion**

The above citations highlight the roles that religion play in society and at the end talk about the conflicting roles of religion society. When compared to religious roles in the Gachoka Society there is almost no difference with what has been cited by the different researchers where religion has failed the people of Gachoka, it is because of secularism that has been mentioned by a number of scholars such as Brym and Lie (2003); Diana Kendall (2001) and T Schaeffer 2003.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This topic describes the research methods and techniques used to investigate the role of religion in the socialization of the people. The study area, population, methods used to collect data and to analyze it.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study used qualitative and descriptive methods to examine the role of religion in society, although at the end, quantitative techniques had to be employed to analyze the data. Observation had to be applied in order to establish if some of the respondents were lying. At the end a focus group discussion responses from the teachers.

#### **3.2 Study area**

This research was conducted in Gachoka division which is Mbeere district of Kenya. It was specifically conducted in Kamurugu primary school and the surrounding places.

#### **3.3 Study population**

The study population included teachers from Kamurugu primary school and the pupils of the same school. Religious leaders from the surrounding mosques and churches as well as Hindu and Bahai temples had to be interviewed too.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

All the people residing in Gachoka division were potential respondents, but because of limited time; 10 teachers and 10 pupils from Kamurugu had to be selected. 2 Imams from the neighboring mosques, 2 pastors from two born again churches, 2 priests from the traditional catholic and Anglican churches, 2 orthodox priests, 2 from the seventh day Adventist had to be the representatives for the above mentioned denominations of religion.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

It was to the interest of this study that all categories of people from diverse religious backgrounds be represented, that a random stratified sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size.

### **3.6 Types of Data Gathered**

Both primary and secondary data was gathered in order to examine the role of religion in socializing the people in society.

Primary data was solicited from the respondents used in this research.

Meanwhile the literature which was reviewed, contributed the secondary data which guided the study.

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

In order to gather relevant data, instruments had to be constructed. One questionnaire was designed and it had to be filled in by the respondents. For those who were not able to read or write had to be helped to answer the questionnaire be helped to answer the questionnaire in form of an interview. A focus group schedule was also designed to guide the teachers on the information needed.

### **3.7.1 Reliability of instruments**

It was vital that research instrument be tested to establish if its items will effectively obtain relevant responses from the study population. A pilot exercise had to be carried out on 10 pilot respondent. Those questions that were ambiguous had either to be modified or eliminated.

### **3.8 Procedure of Data Collection**

Permission had to be sought from the institute of open and distance learning to release the researcher to conduct this study back in Kenya. An introductory letter was granted by the director and was taken to the administrators in Gachoka division, where permission had to be granted.

The research instruments had to be distributed single handedly, by the researcher, to the teachers, children and those religious leaders who could read or write. For those who found difficulty in reading or writing the researcher had to carry out an interview with them, but using the questionnaire.

After the respondents had returned the questionnaires a focus group interview had to be conducted on teachers.

### **3.9 Analysis of Data**

The data gathered had to be tabulated, coded and frequency counts and percentages had to be used in order to carry out an analysis of the responses. The responses were later interpreted, findings reported and lastly recommendations were made basing on the findings.



## CHAPTER FOUR:

### PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, data is presented and then analyzed using frequency tables and bar graphs. Findings were interpreted and discussed against the citations made in when reviewed in literature review.

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of religion in maintaining societal norms and values.

#### 4.1 Religion and Cohesion, Peace and Stability

The functional perspective of religion in society asserts that it promotes social cohesiveness and a sense of belonging.

**Table 1: shows the responses of teachers, children and religious leaders about the extent to which religion binds people together.**

Religion binds people together	Frequency	Percentage
Very much	18	60
Not very much	7	23.3
It does not	3	10
I am not sure	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: field data**

Findings above show that out of the 30 respondents 60% of them agreed that religion bond people together. 23% of these respondents believed it does not bind the people that much, 10% of them refused that it did not, 7% were not sure.

The interpretation of the above analysis is that according to them respondents religion is supposed to bind people together. However the majority of respondents who agreed were 10 religious leaders, 5 of them were teachers and only 3 out of the ten children agreed. This showed that it was just a belief but which was not being put into practice.

**Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents according to whether religion binds people of different denominations together**

<b>Even the different denominations are bound together as a group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	-	-
On average	5	16
Not possible	11	37
Not sure	14	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: field data**

When asked if it was possible for the diverse religion, none of the respondents thought it was possible for the religions to be one. 37% of them said it was not possible. 47% of them did not know and were not sure this could happen.

The above findings reveal that much as religion binds people within the same denomination, there is still a problem in religion achieving social cohesion of diverse religion. This could be because of the different beliefs, values and norms that each diverse religions uphold. This finding agrees with what Kurt (1995) cited that Religion is a source of both stability and conflict. One group may cherish some religious practices while to another it is a source of irritation.

The researcher sought to establish how peace has been achieved in the society with the help of religion.

**Table 3: shows the percentage distribution of respondents according to their responses on the role of religion in achieving peace in society**

<b>Religion maintains peace in society</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	5	17
On average	13	43
It is not possible	10	33
Not sure	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: field data**

43% of the respondents believed that on average, religion could help maintain peace in the society, 33% refused it was possible for religion to achieve peace in society and 17% of them however very much agreed that indeed religion could help maintain peace in the society. 7% were not sure.

Findings above show that religion is playing a luke warm role in helping to promote peace as indicated in the higher percentage of respondents on the low levels of average and not possible. This reveals that people are aware that religions will not do much in achieving peace in Kenya. This links with what Fellmann, Getis and Getis (2003) cited that religion has continued to be a source many local and regional conflicts and what Kendal 2001 and Schaefer 2000 warned about fundamental tendencies.

#### **4.2 Religion and psychological support**

Kammeyer Ritzer and Yetmann (1997), MacGuve (1997) and Kornblum (2003), hypothesized that religion offered personal comfort for those who were

experiencing grief, pain and other different circumstances thereby offering hope to the hopeless. Kornblum (2003) however said religion provided temporary hope but all in all it prevented those who were affected to act to destabilised the society.

**Table 4: shows the percentage distribution of respondents according to their views how religion has provided psychological support to the sufferers.**

<b>Religion gives hope to sufferers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	20	67
On average	7	23
Not at all	2	7
Not sure	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: field data**

Findings show that 67% agreed that religion offered psychological help to people, 23% believed it was no average, 7% however believed it was not possible and 3% of them were not sure.

The above interpretation is that the people realized the benefits of religious because it helps suffering people to cope as cited before. Some however did not see much about religion providing psychological support. This should however be linked to religious pluralism which also embraces even the fundamentalist tendencies.

When asked to name how religion has contributed towards psychological support of society members the following were the responses.

The responses of people about religion's contributions towards psychological support of society

It preaches worlds of comfort to those who have lost loved ones

It promises life after death

It teaches people about perseverance

It teaches forgiveness because God forgives

The suggestions that respondents gave agree with what was cited before by Kendall(2001). However 3 respondents gave their own negative view that religion instead abuses people psychologically. One gave an example of the Mungiki in Kenya and brought in Islam. This clearly links to fundamentalism that is perpetuating some religious denominations.

#### **4.3 Religion and social norms and values**

According Kammeyer Ritzer and Yetman (1997), religion maintains the existing order. Religion tends to justify a society's norms and values and to maintain the established and dominant groups in society.

Kendal (2001) suggested that through rewards and punishments that religion offers the followers are forced to strictly avoid crimes such as robbery, disobedience, adultery, murder and descent.

**Table 5: shows the percentage distribution of respondents according to their views about the role of religion in maintaining order in society.**

<b>Religion inspires it followers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	18	60
On average	10	33
Not at all	2	7
Not sure		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: field data**

Out of the 30 respondents 60 of them strongly agreed that religion taught its followers to observe the law. This agreed with what was cited in literature. 33% thought that religion on average forced its people to obey the law and 7% did not agree with the role of religion in teaching its people to observe the law. This however highlights the fundamental part of religion.

#### 4.4 Religious fundamentalism

Schaeffer (2003) and Bryme (2003) described religious fundamentalism as that which preaches the opposite of what the original religious groups preach. It was sought to establish whether this is what was actually being done in Gachoka such that we establish if there are some religious cults existing.

**Table 6: shows the distribution of respondents about fundamental practices that are affecting the functioning of some religious denominations**

<b>Fundamental practices</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Preaching about revenge	19	63
Violation of women's rights	27	90
Hatred among religious denominations	20	60
Involvement in politics	18	50
Born again churches with witch craft	15	
Secularism in churches/Mosques	21	70
Lax in churches	14	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>56</b>

**Source: field data**

Respondents contributed some common fundamental practices that were creeping in religious denomination. When asked why these were coming up in churches.

<b>Why there were fundamental practices in religion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Influence from the Western world	25	83
People reading the scriptures wrongly	20	67
Technology	27	90
Secularism	25	83
The end is near	15	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>75</b>

75% of all the respondents were aware of the factors responsible for fundamentalism it is therefore that government uses what the people know to try and sensitize them about the dangers of fundamental practices and negative effects.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

The proceeding chapters examined the role of religion in socializing the people in the society. The investigation focused on the following roles; maintaining social order, binding people together, offering psychological support, perpetuating fundamentalism.

The following objectives guided the study;

- i. To find out how religion has created peace and stability by binding people together.
- ii. To establish the extent to which religion has provided psychological support for individuals
- iii. To find out how religion has helped to maintain society norms and values
- iv. To find out if there is any form of fundamentalism among religious groups.

The following questions were asked;

- i. How has religion helped to keep law and order in the society?
- ii. To what extent has religion provided psychological support to its members?
- iii. How has religion helped to maintain unity among believers?
- iv. To what extent are the diverse religious denominations were willing to intolerance?

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The interpretation of the above responses has been summarizes as follows;

Religion was found to promote unity among the people; but this was only applicable to members of a single religion. It was however discovered that unity



among the diverse religious denominations was almost impossible due to the divergent religious beliefs, norms and values.

From the findings religion was proved to maintain social order in the society. The diverse values and norms of religious denominations had a common element of discouraging people to commit crime. Almost all of them had sacred rewards and punishments.

Findings also revealed the significant role of religion to offer psychological support to members who were suffering physically and emotionally. This was common in almost all religions except those with fundamentalism.

It was also discovered that due to religious pluralism some fundamental beliefs, values and practices were perpetuating religion and thereby distorting its otherwise desirable role to the society, hence the intolerance.

Findings lastly showed that religion offered only temporary psychological support but this prevented the members to destabilize the peace of the people.

Finally the above findings clearly relate the functional theory by Emile Durkham, but to another extent the negative roles of religion relate to Karl Max's conflict theory.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Religion has indeed played important roles in positively socializing the people. In Kenya people commonly obey the laws of government due to their religious convictions. The peace and stability that the citizens of this country enjoy all has been created by religion. Disasters like suicide, homicide, Arson would be rampant because of what people have experienced, instead religion has given hopeless some hope to continue living. However it should be remembered that there are other things that religion can not do. For example general unity of all religions to achieve more peace and social stability. The hope that is given to the

hopeless can not last for long and people will again begin to hurt, who knows whether these are the very people who resort to fundamentalism. As long as fundamentalism continues to perpetuate in people's religious lives it will be possible to achieve peace through religion.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Government should encourage the diverse religious denominations to form a joint religious council. This will encourage the religious leaders to come together, iron out their differences and identify the common elements they share. It is these elements they will utilize to achieve lasting peace and stability.

Government must carry out intense research on fundamentalism, identify fundamental groups and strictly deal with them before it becomes too late.

Sensitization of the masses must be effected to help the people to identify and shun joining cults as these distort the role of religion, Genuine religious leaders must live as role models and in most cases avoid being used as puppets by politicians to falsely influence the people.

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## APPENDICES

Please tick the appropriate answer

1. Religion binds people together

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Sometimes ☐
- d) It does not ☐
- e) Not sure ☐

2. How has religion helped to bring people together?

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3. Religion brings the people together whether from other religions as one people

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Sometimes ☐
- d) Not possible ☐
- e) Not sure ☐

4. Religion has helped to maintain peace and stability

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Not possible ☐
- d) Not sure ☐

5. How has your religion contributed towards peace in the society?

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6. Has religion instead brought about instability?

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Not at all ☐
- d) Not sure ☐

### Religion and psychological support

7. Religion offers hope to the hopeless

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Not at all ☐
- d) Not sure ☐

8. Give ways how religion has contributed towards psychological support of people in our society.

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9. Religion and social norms and values, religion helps to create order in society by inspiring its follower to observe the laws

- a) Very much ☐
- b) On average ☐
- c) Not at all ☐
- d) Not sure ☐