

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS AND ITS EFFECT ON CHURCH GROWTH IN SOMALIA

Aweis A. Ali

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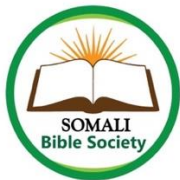
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DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research it describes, are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

Aweis Abukar Ali
16s01pre02



May 2021

This research was conducted under our supervision and is submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

Dr Patrick Mburu Kamau



May 2021

Dr Daniel E. Miller



May 2021

Africa Nazarene University
Nairobi, Kenya



DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to pastor Liibaan Ibraahim Hassan (12 December 1968 – 21 March 1994), a prominent Somali Church leader martyred in Mogadishu, Somalia, on 21st March 1994.




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I thank my academic supervisors, Dr. Patrick M. Kamau and Dr. Daniel E. Miller, for their efforts in supervising this thesis. They have made the success of this thesis possible. I am also grateful to Africa Nazarene University for its quality and contextualized education system. Also, I am thankful to my wife, Rev. LeCrecia, for aiding me in this academic endeavour.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	IV
DEDICATION	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VII
LIST OF FIGURES	X
LIST OF TABLES	XI
ABSTRACT	XIII
DEFINITION OF TERMS	XIV
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	XVIII
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	9
1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	10
1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	10
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	10
1.7 HYPOTHESIS	11
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	11
1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	11
1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....	12
1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	12
1.12 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY	13
1.13 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
1.14 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	14
CHAPTER TWO	17
LITERATURE REVIEW	17
2.1 INTRODUCTION	17
2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE	17
2.2.1 <i>Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and Their Impact on Church Growth</i>	17
2.2.2 <i>Challenges Persecution Poses to the Church in Somalia</i>	23
2.2.3 <i>Church and Locally Developed Distinctive Theology of Persecution</i>	24
2.2.4 <i>Role Church Ministers Play in this Church During Persecution</i>	27
2.3 SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND KNOWLEDGE GAPS	28
CHAPTER THREE	29
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 INTRODUCTION	29
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	29
3.3 RESEARCH SITE	29
3.4 TARGET POPULATION.....	30
3.5. STUDY SAMPLE.....	30
3.5.1 <i>Study Sample Size</i>	30
3.5.2 <i>Sampling Procedure</i>	30
3.6 DATA COLLECTION MEASURES	31
3.6.1 <i>Data Collection Instruments</i>	31
3.6.2 <i>Pilot Testing of Research Instruments</i>	31

3.6.3 Instrument Validity	32
3.6.4 Data Collection Procedure	32
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS	32
3.8 LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	34
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	34
4.1 INTRODUCTION	34
4.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS	34
4.2.1 Response Rate Per Strata in Cities	34
4.2.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.....	35
4.2.3 Gender of the Respondents.....	35
4.2.4 Level of Education.....	36
4.2.5 Church Affiliation.....	38
4.2.6 Length of Years Following Christ.....	38
4.2.7 Length of Years Engaged in the House Church.....	39
4.2.8 Non-Somalis in the House Churches.....	39
4.2.9 Position in the House Churches	40
4.2.10 Length of Service as a Leader in the House Churches.....	40
4.3 PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND INTERPRETATION	42
4.3.1 Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and its Influence on Church Growth.....	42
4.3.2 Challenges Persecution Poses to the Church in Somalia.....	44
4.3.3 An Appraisal to Establish if the Church in Somalia Has a Locally Developed Distinctive Theology of Persecution	76
4.3.4: The Role Somali Church Ministers Play During Periods of Severe Persecution	84
CHAPTER FIVE.....	96
DISCUSSION, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	96
5.1 INTRODUCTION	96
5.2 DISCUSSION.....	96
5.2.1 Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and its Effect on Church Growth.....	96
5.2.2 Challenges persecution poses to the Church in Somalia.....	107
5.2.3 Determination if the Church in Somalia has a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution	111
5.2.4 To assess the role ministers play in this church during severe persecution	113
5.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS.....	115
5.3.1 Persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth	115
5.3.2 Discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia	116
5.3.3 Somalia Church locally developed distinctive theology of persecution	116
5.3.4 Role ministers play during the persecution	116
5.4 CONCLUSION	116
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS	117
5.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119
APPENDICES	133
APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION.....	133
APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	134
APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHRISTIANS	135
APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE FOR MUSLIMS	139
APPENDIX 5: AL-AZHAR FATWA (RELIGIOUS DECREE).....	140
APPENDIX 6: SHARIA-BASED PERSECUTION MAP	141
APPENDIX 7: THE POPULATION OF SOMALIA AND ITS KEY CITIES.....	142



APPENDIX 8: MAP OF SOMALIA AND THE SOMALI PEOPLE	143
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	144
BOOK INDEX: A-Z.....	145



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Conceptual model for the numerical growth of the Church under persecution.....	15
Figure 4.1: Percentage of respondents in research sites of L1, L2, and L3	34
Figure 4. 1 Gender of the respondents.....	36
Figure 4. 2 Level of education of the respondents.....	37
Figure 4. 3 Showing the number of years the respondents have been following Christ	38
Figure 4.6 Bible verses the respondents felt teach on persecution	43

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Arrival and departure details of the most prominent mission organizations in Somalia.....	8
Table 2.1: The immortal God.....	25
Table 2. 2: Satan’s chamber.....	26
Table 2. 3: When we are weak.....	26
Table 3. 1: List of Respondents equally divided among the three regions.....	30
Table 4. 1: Response rate per strata and cities L1, L2, and L3.....	35
Table 4. 2: Distribution of gender in the L1, L2, and L3 cities.....	36
Table 4. 3: Level of education of respondents in the three study cities.....	37
Table 4. 4: Chi-Square analysis of the level of education as revealed in the three study regions.....	38
Table 4. 5: Skewness and kurtosis value on how long the Christians in L1, L2, and L3 have been followers of Jesus.....	39
Table 4. 6: Statistics of non-Somalis in L1, L2, and L3.....	39
Table 4. 7: Position of service in the house churches.....	40
Table 4. 8: Statistical positions in the house churches in L1, L2, and L3.....	40
Table 4. 9: Length of service as a leader in the house church.....	41
Table 4. 10: How long one has served in the house church.....	42
Table 4. 11: Respondents’ appreciation of how Scripture was helpful in their spiritual Life.....	43
Table 4. 12: Reasons the Church in Somalia is persecuted.....	45
Table 4. 13: Showing some of the persecution Christians suffer in Somalia.....	46
Table 4. 14: Respondents’ explanation on how Christians from dominant clans are treated.....	46
Table 4. 15: Who persecutes Christians in Somalia?.....	47
Table 4. 16: Madhab and tariqa affiliation of Muslim respondents.....	48
Table 4. 17: Things Somali Christians do right according to Somali Muslims.....	48
Table 4. 18: Things Somali Christians do wrong.....	49
Table 4. 19: What the respondents felt the Qur’an teaches on how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated.....	49
Table 4. 20: Hadith on how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated by Muslims.....	50
Table 4. 21: Would Somali Muslims harm Somali Christians if they had an opportunity?.....	50
Table 4. 22: Reasons the Muslim respondents would be happy if a Christian was harmed by a Muslim.....	51
Table 4. 23: Asks if Muslim respondents were aware of Christians who have been persecuted.....	52
Table 4. 24: Other things the Muslim respondents said on the persecution of Christians.....	52
Table 4. 25: Views on whether Somali Christians could ever live peacefully in Somalia.....	53
Table 4. 26: Outcomes Muslims expect when they persecute Christians.....	53
Table 4. 27: Views on whether outcomes of persecuting Somali Christians are achievable.....	54
Table 4. 28: Respondents opinion on Hadith that teaches on inter-religious tolerance.....	54
Table 4. 29: Somali Christian views on the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia.....	55
Table 4. 30: Period the Church in Somalia Experienced the Best Numerical Growth.....	56
Table 4. 31: Period the Church in Somalia experienced the worst persecution.....	56
Table 4. 32: Reasons the church is persecuted in Somalia.....	57
Table 4. 33: Biblical teaching on Christians’ response to persecution in Somalia.....	58
Table 4. 34: How Somali Christians ought to behave under persecution.....	59
Table 4. 35: Verses which people find most encouraging during persecution.....	60
Table 4. 36: Further reasons for the persecution of Christians in Somalia.....	61
Table 4. 37: Are you an active and respected member of your clan?.....	62
Table 4. 38: Somali Christians who pay the clan qaaraan.....	63
Table 4. 39: Clan protection extended to Somali Christians by their Muslim clan members.....	64
Table 4. 40: Explanation of 10 b: Protection offered to Somali Christians by the Somali Constitution.....	65
Table 4. 41: Legal protection offered to Somali Christians by Somali law enforcement officers.....	66
Table 4. 42: Respondents’ views on whether persecution made the church weaker or stronger.....	67
Table 4. 43: Respondents’ views on the persecution of the church and the numerical growth of the church.....	68
Table 4. 44: Respondents’ views on the health risks posed by persecution to Somali Christians.....	69
Table 4. 45: Economic problems posed by persecution to the church.....	70
Table 4. 46: Family problems posed by persecution to Somali Christians.....	71
Table 4. 47: Respondents’ views on consequences posed by persecution to the Church in Somalia.....	72
Table 4. 48: Respondents’ perceptions on self-inflicted persecution problems suffered by Christians in Somalia.....	73

Table 4. 49: Respondents' views on strategies to remedy the problem of persecution of Christians in Somalia.....	74
Table 4. 50: Respondents' views on ways Somali Christians could overcome persecution challenges.....	75
Table 4. 51: Respondents' views on benefits of persecution for the Somali Church.....	76
Table 4. 52: Development of a theology of persecution and its characteristics.....	77
Table 4. 53: Theology of persecution concepts respondents find helpful	78
Table 4. 54: Characteristics of the theology of persecution Somali Christians ascribe to support their faith	80
Table 4. 55: Reasons there cannot be a persecution free Church in Somalia	81
Table 4. 56: Benefits of a theology of persecution to the Church in Somalia	83
Table 4. 57: The role Somali Church ministers play during periods of persecution.....	84
Table 4. 58: What ministers could do better during the persecution	85
Table 4. 59: What ministers may be doing wrong during intense persecution	86
Table 4. 60: Explanation on why clergy are targeted for persecution.....	87
Table 4. 61: Reasons clergy are generally persecuted	88
Table 4. 62: Heroic acts of ministers during the persecution	89
Table 4. 63: Cowardly acts of the clergy during the persecution	90
Table 4. 64: Laity's expectations of clergy	91
Table 4. 65: Theological training of ministers	92
Table 4. 66: Cooperation of different house churches during the persecution	93
Table 4. 67: Further thoughts on the role of ministers in the church during periods of severe persecution .	94

ABSTRACT

Severe persecution has been an on-going phenomenon in Somalia since the disintegration of Somalia's central government in 1991. The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature of the persecution of Christians and its influence on the growth of the Church in Somalia. The objectives of the study were to: examine selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and their effect on church growth, discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia, determine if the Church in Somalia has a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution, assess the role ministers play in this church during severe persecution, and draw conclusions that could contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth in Somalia. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 220 respondents who included Christian clergy, Christian lay leaders, Christian elders, Christian lay members, and Muslims was selected using nonprobability sampling methods, namely purposive and convenience sampling methods. Data was collected using open-ended questionnaires. Content and construct validity were ascertained by incorporating the experts' opinions, consisting of university supervisors and examiners. The researcher, after pretesting the questionnaire in the pilot survey in a city code-named L0, conducted reliability testing using interrater reliability testing since the questionnaire had many open-ended questions. After carrying out the study in three cities code-named L1, L2, and L3, the results so obtained being predominantly qualitative were analysed using Microsoft Excel and Maxqda 2020. The quantitative results were analysed using SPSS 26. Based on the findings of the study, the null hypothesis of this research which states that persecution of Christians is not related to the numerical growth of the targeted Church in Somalia was rejected. On the contrary, the results of the study proved that persecution contributes to the numerical growth of the Church in Somalia. The findings of the study indicated that the church in Somali is a Creative Access Christian (CAC) model with no expatriate and non-Somali membership. The study further indicated that the period between 1994 and 1996 was the period when the church experienced the greatest persecution (65%); and there was evidence that this persecution led to a period of sustained growth, as reported by 6.7% of believers who reported coming to faith between 1900 and 2000; 26.3% between 2000 and 2010, and 67.5% of respondents who were believers for less than ten years. The data collected suggest that an understanding of extreme persecution, martyrdom, and how those events gave birth to their community of faith is a foundational part of the identity and the collective memory of the Somali CAC believing community. The research recommendations are that the Somali Church must live a Christ-like life, facilitate an effective interfaith dialogue, harness the provisions of the clan system, and have a good relationship with the government. The study recommends the use of interfaith dialogue (IFD) to create an IFD movement of all people in Somalia. This IFD incorporates active nonviolence with inclusivity which reduces exclusivity of the Muslim majority allowing religious pluralism in the context of IFD. This study will therefore contribute to the understanding of the relationship between persecution and church growth in the Somali context.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Bid'a:** Religious innovation, false teaching.
- Bedouin:** A combination of Arabic-speaking nomadic tribes who traditionally inhabited the desert regions of the Middle East and North Africa.
- Caliph:** An Islamic ruler for the Muslim community seen as the successor of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Christian persecution:** means all or any of the following: beating, jailing, denial of proper medical care, job discrimination, community ostracizing, and denial of common basic needs based on the virtue of being a Christian or murder.
- Church growth:** While church growth is multifaceted, growth is defined in this context only as an increase in measurable numerical terms.
- Clan protection:** Somali clans protect the general wellbeing of their members regardless of their social standing; “an attack on one is an attack on all” is a deeply held belief among Somali clans.
- Da'if:** Weak hadith of dubious origin or narration.
- Fard:** Something required.
- Fatwa:** A binding Islamic religious decree.
- Fitna:** Sedition, affliction, temptation, or civil strife.
- Fiqh:** Islamic jurisprudence.
- Fundamentalist Islamists:** Radical Muslim groups who believe reclaiming the fundamentals of Islam is imperative on all Muslims by any means necessary.
- Hadith:** Sayings, actions, and habits of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Hanafi:** One of the four Sunni religious schools of thought and jurisprudence, The Hanafi School is the one with the most adherents. This school of thought is named after the *tabi'i* scholar Abu Ḥanifa an-Nu'man ibn Thabit (d. AD 767).
- Hanbali:** One of the four Sunni religious schools of thought and jurisprudence. The Hanbali School is the one with the fewest adherents. This school of thought is named after Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855).
- Hasan:** Good hadith.
- House church:** Christians who regularly meet at a residential home for worship.
- Ijma:** Islamic jurists' consensus.

- Irtidad:** Apostasy.
- Jihad:** An Islamic holy war.
- Jizya:** An annual protection tax levied on non-Muslims living under the banner of Islam.
- L0:** A code name for a Somali regional capital; this historic city has over half a million residents.
- L1:** A code name for an ancient Somali cosmopolitan city of more than half a million residents.
- L2:** A code name for a historic Somali metropolitan city of about two million residents.
- L3:** A code name for a Somali agricultural city of about 70,000 residents.
- Leader:** A Christian church leader is defined as anyone who serves as a minister, elder, clergy, or lay leader: a minister is someone who is trained to perform religious services; an elder is someone who is valued for wisdom and holds a position of responsibility in the church, while a clergy is a body of persons who include pastors, elders, catechists, evangelists, etc; a lay leader is a member of the laity who was chosen as a leader; lay leaders serve under the guidance of the clergy.
- Madhab:** A Muslim school of thought within Islamic jurisprudence.
- Ma'udu':** Fabricated hadith.
- Makruh:** Something despised or discouraged.
- Maliki:** Of the four Sunni religious schools of thought and jurisprudence one whose adherents are comparable to the Shafi'i but fewer than the Hanafi; this school of thought is named after Malik ibn Anas (d.795).
- Mandub:** A good deed that is recommended but not required.
- Mubah:** A good deed that is permissible but neither recommended nor required.
- Murtad Fitri:** An apostatized Muslim born to Muslim parents.
- Murtad Milli:** A naturalized Muslim (born to non-Muslim parents) who apostatizes from Islam.
- Persecution:** That which is suffered from the perspective of the victim; those who inflict persecution think they are not persecuting but meting out punishments for the violation of divine or human customs or laws.

Qaaraan: A regular Somali financial contribution paid by all respected members of the clan to meet the extraordinary financial needs of clan members.

Qisas: The law of equality in punishment; the eye for an eye principle, for example.

Qiyas: Analogy based on legal reasoning

Qur'an: The Muslim Holy Book.

Qur'anist: Qur'an-alone Muslims who reject the religious authority of the hadith.

Red persecution: Persecution that results in the shedding of the blood or death of the persecuted; Martyrdom is always preceded by red persecution.

Riddah: Apostasy.

Sahih: Sound hadith of reliable source and narration.

Shafi'i: One of the four Sunni religious schools of thought and jurisprudence with adherents comparable to the Maliki but less than the Hanafi; this school of thought is named after Abu Abdullah al-Shafi'i (d. 820).

Shia: The second-largest branch of Islam, followed by less than 20% of Muslims worldwide.

Somalia: The Somali political state comprising former British Somaliland in the north and Italian Somaliland in the south that formed the Republic of Somalia in 1960.

Somalia church: This church is a separate entity from the ethnic Somali Churches in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and other Somali inhabited countries.

Somali Islamist groups: Somalia-based Muslim organizations that use violent means to achieve their goals like the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Shabab, the Islamic State, al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (the Muslim Brotherhood), al-Itihad al-Islamiya, and the now-defunct Hizbul Islam.

Sufi: An Islamic denomination known for its mysticism and tolerance;¹ Sufi Islam was previously known as folk Islam but has lately been defined as popular Islam.

Sunni: The largest-branch of Islam, followed by more than 80% of Muslims worldwide.

Tabi'i: Means a follower (Tabi'un, plural) refers to these men and women are the generations of Muslims who were born after the death of the Prophet Muhammad but were contemporaries of the companions of the Prophet; the

¹ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 47.



Tabi'un enjoys a coveted place in Islam next only to the contemporaries of Muhammed, the Prophet of Islam.

Tariqa: Way, road, or path, an order in Sufi Islam.

Ulama: Learned Muslim religious leaders.

Underground Christians: Disciples of Christ who worship in secret for fear of deadly persecution.

Violent militants: Radical Muslim individuals who are prone to using violence to achieve their goals.

White persecution: Holistic and systematic persecution that does not result in the death or shedding of the blood of the persecuted.



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAC	Creative Access Christians: local Christians of various denominational backgrounds in Somalia who worship in secret for fear of government and vigilante violence because of their Christian faith; CAC, therefore, lack the freedom to worship freely; Somalia, as a country is often referred to as a Creative Access Country (CAC)
ICC	International Christian Concern
KC	<i>Kulanka Culimada</i>
MC	<i>Majma'a Culimada</i>
MM	Mennonite Mission
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
PC	Protestant Church
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission (now known simply as SIM)
SOLC	The Swedish Overseas Lutheran Church

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents background on the study of the persecution of Christians and its effect on church growth in Somalia. It also contains the statement of the problem describing the issue that necessitates this study. The purpose, objectives, and research questions guide this study as shown. The chapter also indicates the hypothesis, significance of the study, limitations, and delimitation as well as assumptions. Finally, the scope of the study defines what the research could and could not cover. A theoretical framework and a conceptual framework are also presented.

1.2 Background of the Study

Religious persecution has been recorded to varying degrees throughout human history. Scholars have shown various records which demonstrate persecution of Christians globally. Notably, the biblical record, in the Book of Acts, shows the earliest form of persecution and the impact it had on the primitive church. The first three centuries after the formation of the church shows that the Roman Empire persecuted Christians.²

The Roman government accused Christians of having antisocial behaviour.-They kept to themselves and refused to worship pagan gods promoted by the Empire and its sympathizers. As a result, they were considered antisocial outcasts and enemies of the state.³ Christians were also accused of cannibalism and incest because of their terminologies of eating the body of Christ and drinking his blood at the Lord's Table, as well as the holy kiss that they practiced.⁴ Christians were misunderstood and thus considered dangerous to social harmony and a threat to the Empire.⁵ Their persecution elicited widespread support in the Roman Empire.⁶ Ferguson argues that "Persecution of the church in the Roman Empire was often localized and sporadic. There was no Empire-wide persecution until AD 249."⁷ Church historian, Philip Schaff, comments, "[t]heir Jewish origin, their indifference to politics and public affairs, and their abhorrence of heathen customs, were construed into an '*odium generis humani*' (hatred of the human race)."⁸

Some scholars have noted various forms of persecution of the early church. For instance, Tertullian, one of the Latin Church fathers, in AD 197 observes in his book *The Apology*, addressing the Roman governor of his North African province, "The oftener we are

² Antonia Leonora van der Meer, "Evangelism and Church Growth in a Culture of Persecution." Lausanne World Pulse Archives. Issue 11, 2008. <https://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/1046/11-2008> (accessed 29 March 2021).

³ Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1996), 86.

See also: Margaret Y. McDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of the Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1996), 129-126.

⁴ F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame: The Rise and Progress of Christianity from its First Beginnings to the Conversion of the English*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1973), 169.

⁵ F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, 169.

⁶ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume I: Apostolic Christianity. A.D. 1-100* (CCEL Publisher. First published 1882) 381.

⁷ Everett Ferguson, "Did You Know?" *Christian History*, Issue 27, Vol. XI, No. 3, inside cover, North American Patristics Society, 1987, 20.

⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 235.

mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is a seed.”⁹ Another apologetic letter Tertullian wrote earlier in AD 196 regarding the absurd accusations used to persecute the church says:

The Christians are to blame for every public disaster and every misfortune that befalls the people. If the Tiber rises to the walls, if the Nile fails to rise and flood the fields, if the sky withholds its rain, if there is earthquake or famine or plague, straightway the cry arises: “The Christians to the lions!”¹⁰

Philip Schaff stipulates well the following description of persecution:

It was in this hate and fear-filled atmosphere that saw the bloodbath of persecution. Multitudes of Christians were crucified; some dressed in fresh animal skins, were thrown to hungry beasts, and some were lit up on poles to be used as torches.¹¹

Rick Wade, concerning early Christian persecution, wrote:

However, history has shown that persecution ultimately strengthens the church. It removes the nominal Christians, and it emboldens others to both stand firm when persecuted and become more aggressive in the proclamation. If persecution comes to us, the church will remain, although church membership rolls will probably become shorter.¹²

Christian advocacy groups such as the *Voice of the Martyrs* have been reporting for years many instances in which the church is displaying a numerical growth amid persecution. The belief that persecution stimulates church growth finds its basis in the Acts of the Apostles where the church grew after the intense persecution in Jerusalem, the growth that started with Peter’s preaching at Pentecost in Acts 2. Jesus has also made clear in the Gospel of John (12:24) that martyrdom and church growth are related; using the example of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground dies to produce much fruit.

Perpetrators of Christian persecution often call for the death of Christians. During the Roman persecution, most Christians were condemned to death, though most survived the carnage; Christian persecution may not always end up in martyrdom. Sometimes, it may mean Christians who suffer state-sponsored persecution like beatings, jailing, and denial of proper medical care while in prison among other atrocities. In this thesis, Christian persecution may mean all or any of the following: beating, jailing, denial of proper medical care, job discrimination, community ostracizing, death, or denial of common basic needs based on the virtue of being a Christian.

Contemporary persecutions which have resulted in church growth include the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has the fastest-growing church in the world according to *Christianity Today*.¹³ An article by *Voice of the Martyrs*, “Iran: Persecution Causes Church Growth,”

⁹ Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Tertullian’s Apology, in The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3, (Oregon, Books for the Ages, 1997), 102.
http://media.sabda.org/alkitab-8/LIBRARY/ECF_0_03.PDF (accessed 10 April 2019).

¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, 165.

¹¹ Schaff. *History of the Christian Church, Volume I: Apostolic Christianity*, 381.

¹² Rick Wade, “Persecution in the Early Church.” *Compass Crusade for Christ*, Cru.org (2012).
<https://www.cru.org/content/dam/cru/legacy/2012/04/wadepersécutionintheearlychurch.pdf>
(accessed 14 August 2017).

¹³ Carey Lodge, “Which country has the fastest-growing church in the world?” *Christian Today* (2016).
<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/which.country.has.the.fastest.growing.church.in.the.world/95924.htm>,
(accessed 04 July 2017).

chronicles how the church in this conservative Muslim country is growing rapidly despite its intense maltreatment by the Islamic government.¹⁴ In 2016, Operation World reported Iran to have 19.6% growth annually in its Christian population, far more than any other country as confirmed by Mission Network News.¹⁵ One consulting organization chronicles how the church in Iran has been growing since the Islamic Revolution of the 1970s.¹⁶

Operation World also lists Afghanistan as having the second most significant church growth in the world and that it is primarily the persecuted Iranian Christians reaching Afghans.¹⁷ It is indeed remarkable that Iranian Christians who suffer state-sponsored persecution like beatings, jailing, and denial of proper medical care when in prison are witnessing to Afghani Muslims who are coming to the Lord in great multitudes;¹⁸ Operation World reported in 2010 that Christianity in Afghanistan was growing 16.7% annually, a significant feat in a highly repressive and violent country.¹⁹

Nigeria and Ethiopia have significant records of Christian persecution. The Protestant church in Ethiopia faced intense persecution under the communist regime (1974-1991).²⁰ Expatriate missionaries were expelled, church properties confiscated; worship meetings prohibited, and Christian holiness was considered a liability by the ruling military junta and their devotees.²¹ Protestant Christians went underground and found ways to be the church without traditional buildings and conventional leadership structures. One young denomination was officially shut down in 1982 with 5,000 members and re-emerged with 34,000 members in 1991 when the communist regime was overthrown.²² As of 2017, this denomination had a membership that exceeds over 500,000.²³

Somalia has an estimated population of about 14 million with the longest coastline on the African continent.²⁴ The country is predominantly Muslim, located in the Horn of Africa,

¹⁴ "Iran: Persecution Causes Church Growth," *Voice of the Martyrs*, (24 May 2017).
<https://vom.com.au/iran-persecution-causing-church-growth/> (accessed 26 April 2018).

¹⁵ "Iran: Persecution Causes Church Growth," *Voice of the Martyrs*, (24 May 2017).
<https://vom.com.au/iran-persecution-causing-church-growth/> (accessed 26 April 2018).

¹⁶ Gary D Foster Consulting, "Research and Trends," Mission America (November 2016).
<https://www.missionamerica.org/research/november-2016> (accessed 26 April 2018).

¹⁷ Gary D Foster Consulting, "Research and Trends." Ibid.

¹⁸ Joe Carter, "9 Things You Should Know About Global Persecution of Christians." *The Gospel Coalition* (20 October 2015).

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/9-things-you-should-know-about-global-persecution-of-christians-2015-edition/> (accessed 10 September 2018).

¹⁹ Jason Mandryk, Operation World 7th Edition (Biblical Publishing., 2010), 916. See also, Oprev.org.
<http://oprev.org/2011/07/persecution-does-it-help-or-hurt-church-growth/> (Accessed 01 May 2019).

²⁰ Geoff Stamp, "Revival and Persecution in Ethiopia," *Charisma Magazine* (2011).
<https://www.charismamag.com/site-archives/189-features/africa/530-revival-and-persecution-in-ethiopia> (accessed 14 August 2018).

²¹ Jay Ross, "Ethiopia Seizes Headquarters Of Major Protestant Church," *The Washington Post* (17 November 1981). https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1981/11/17/ethiopia-seizes-headquarters-of-major-protestant-church/c2fd5ac0-c74d-4d9d-ad2e-624ce89a7d82/?utm_term=.4f0daf5d146d (accessed 14 August 2018).

²² Dave Rogalsky, "Ethiopian Church Grows in Maturity: Meserete Kristos Church Follows the New Testament Pattern," *Canadian Mennonite* (10 October 2012).
<http://www.canadianmennonite.org/articles/ethiopian-church-grows-maturity> (accessed 26 April 2018).

²³ "Meserete Kristos Church," *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopaedia Online*, (1990).

https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Meserete_Kristos_Church (accessed 14 August 2018).

See also: Zena, Meserete Kristos College Newsletter, Addis Ababa, (December 2014), 3.

²⁴ "World Population Prospects 2017," *United Nations Population Division*, Esa.un.org, (nd).
<https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/> (accessed 14 August 2018).

and it borders Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. The northern part of Somalia is a former British colony known then as British Somaliland, which has a direct maritime border with the Red Sea. The southern part was a former Italian colony known then as Italian Somaliland, which has a maritime border with the Indian Ocean. Both territories united to form one country on 1st July 1960, the Republic of Somalia, which is simply known as Somalia.²⁵ While Somalia is a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union), it is also a member of the Arab League. Somalia thus straddles the African continent and the Arabian Peninsula.

Somalis first encountered Christianity significantly through the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in 1881.²⁶ The Mogadishu Cathedral, which was built in 1928, was reported to be the biggest in Africa in the 1920s-1930s.²⁷ Venanzio Francesco Filippini, the RCC Bishop of Mogadishu, reported in 1940 a membership of 40,000 Somali Catholics in the southern Bantu regions of Juba and Shebelle.²⁸ The Somali population was estimated in 1940 at 1,150,000 according to the Italian colonial authority at the time and 1,200,000 in 1950.²⁹ This would mean the population of Somali Christians in the 1940s was approximately 3.5% contrary to Somalia's traditional mantra, "to be a Somali is to be a Muslim."³⁰ However, other people like Bishop Giorgio Bertin, the RCC Bishop of Djibouti, and the Apostolic Administrator of Somalia doubt the 3.5% figure.³¹

The RCC declined in times of intolerance, but proliferated in times of religious tolerance. The composition of the RCC is traditionally expatriate, diaspora, and upper-middle-class; the RCC in Somalia derives much of its power and prestige from Italy.³² Other members of this denomination are the local Bantus, who are not among the dominant Somali clans. Thus, formal membership in the RCC in Somalia collapses in times of instability, as many non-Somali Catholics and dual-citizen Somali Catholics evacuate. By comparison, the Protestant churches often grow in times of adversity and plateau in times of stability.³³

Protestant churches in Somalia have a tiny expatriate community and even fewer upper-middle-class members. Thus, few would have the means to flee the country when they become the target of persecution. Most members of the Protestant church are from dominant

See also: "Turning the Tide for Africa's largest Coastline," *The Goldman Environmental Prize* (16 March 2016). <https://www.goldmanprize.org/blog/turning-the-tide-africas-largest-coastline/> (accessed 09 May 2018).

²⁵ Greystone Press Staff, *The Illustrated Library of The World and Its Peoples: Africa, North and East* (Greystone Press, 1967), 338.

²⁶ Erwin Fahlbusch and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity, volume 1* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 1991) 120.

²⁷ "A Surprising History of Christianity in Somalia," *Alex of Esther Project* (16 April 2017). <http://theestherproject.com/surprising-history-christianity-somalia/> (accessed 30 September 2017).

²⁸ Paolo Tripodi, *The Colonial Legacy in Somalia, Rome and Mogadishu: From Colonial Administration to Operation Restore Hope*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 66. Tripodi refers to the Bishop as Franco Filippini. The Bishop's legal name is Venanzio Filippini.

²⁹ "Diocese of Mogadiscio," *Catholic Hierarchy*, (nd). <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dmgds.html> (accessed 26 April 2018).

³⁰ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 22.

³¹ Bishop Giorgio Bertin, "Re: The Draft Thesis Proposal." Message to Aweis A. Ali. 17 April 2019. Email.

³² Ray Cavanaugh, "Catholicism in Somalia: The Brave Few," *Catholic World Report*, (20 March 2016). <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2016/03/20/catholicism-in-somalia-the-brave-few/> (accessed 19 September 2018).

³³ M. M. M., Personal Communication, 24 November 2017.

Somali clans.³⁴ These Christians from major clans are often from a lower economic class than middle-class Catholics, and they can tap into Somalia's traditional clan and familial protection system.³⁵

Clan protection in Somali is common. Christian persecution occurring in Somali is mainly outside one's clan turf. For instance, the 1996 martyrdom of Professor Haji Mohamed Hussein Ahmed best illustrates this. While Haji is from a dominant clan, he was martyred outside his clan turf.³⁶ The most powerful Somali clans are of nomadic background and are known for their combative predispositions. Christians from non-nomadic clans (artisans, traders, fishers, and farmers) lack significant clan protection and may be killed with impunity by Muslim fanatics and clan-based militias.³⁷ These non-nomadic background Somalis are derogatively referred to as "loomaa ooyaan" which means "no one cries for them," and thus no one seeks revenge for them.³⁸ The Somali clan protection system with its documented revenge killings is extended to all clan members whether they are saints or sinners.³⁹

The Swedish Overseas Lutheran Church (SOLC) established its first mission in Kismayo, Somalia, in 1896 and expanded its ministry to Jilib, Jamaame, and Mugaambo establishing successful schools, clinics, and churches.⁴⁰ SOLC experienced early success in Somalia. Several Protestant para-church organizations established a presence in regions in Somalia, and in Djibouti, the Ogaden region in Ethiopia, and northeast Kenya long before 1896.⁴¹ The RCC has in the past responded to the humanitarian needs of the Somali people by opening high-quality schools, hospitals, and clinics.⁴² The RCC also pioneered orphanages, one of which was opened in 1891 in Daymoole, near Berbera, then British Somaliland, by the French Catholic Mission.⁴³

The Daymoole orphanage is best known for angering the famous Somali mullah and freedom fighter, Sayid Muhammed Abdulle Hassan, who waged a relentless jihad against the British colonizers of Somaliland.⁴⁴ One of the most significant triggers of Sayid's hatred of the British colonizers was when he met kids from the Daymoole Catholic orphanage whom

³⁴ Dominant Somali clans belong to the nomadic background and are often hawkish with violent tendencies when crossed. These powerful clans include the Daarood, Hawiye and Isaaq.

³⁵ "Clans in Somalia: Report on a Lecture" by Joakim Gundel, *Austrian Red Cross*, COI Workshop Vienna, Accord, Revised Edition, (15 May 2009), 21 – 23. See also: Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 42.

³⁶ "Shahiid Maxamed Xuseen Axmed," *Noloshu Cusub*, (nd).

<http://noloshacusub.org/Literature/History/XMX.aspx> (accessed 15 August 2018).

³⁷ "Country Policy and Information Note Somalia: Majority Clans and Minority Groups in the South and Central Somalia", Version 2.0, *Home Office*, Refworld.org, (June 2017), 8.

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/59422bdc4.html> (accessed 4 February 2019).

³⁸ "Looma Ooyaan – No One Cries for Them: The Situation Facing Somalia's Minority Women," *Minority Rights International*, (30 January 2015).

<https://minorityrights.org/publications/loomaa-ooyaan-no-one-cries-for-them-the-situation-facing-somalias-minority-women-january-2015/> (accessed 18 September 2018).

"Clans in Somalia: Report, 21." *Austrian Red Cross*. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4b29f5e82.pdf> (accessed 26 April 2018).

⁴⁰ Abdurahman M. Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia: A Study of the Islah Movement, 1950-2000*, (London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd. 2015), 122.

⁴¹ Abdurahman M. Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia*, 121.

⁴² Hassan Abukar, *Mogadishu Memoir*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Author House 2015), 71.

⁴³ Abdurahman M. Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia*, 121.

⁴⁴ Said S. Samatar (editor), *In the Shadow of Conquest: Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa*, (Red Sea Press, 1992), 39.

he considered misled and assimilated into the religion and the culture of the Christian occupiers of Somaliland.⁴⁵

The British had finally expelled the Catholics from Somaliland in the 1900s when the Sayid succeeded in enticing hatred against the British in part because of the missionary work of the Catholics.⁴⁶ The Catholics did not go very far; they moved to Jigjiga, a Somali city in the Ogaden region in Ethiopia.⁴⁷ Despite the Muslim opposition, many Somalis turned to Christ because they were touched by the compassion of the RCC. Even many of those who did not convert developed an RCC-friendly outlook on life, politics, and culture.⁴⁸ The RCC education system was so successful that the Italian colonial government in Somalia gave the church a subsidy by 1939 to manage 12 elementary schools with 1,776 students.⁴⁹

The RCC never had a monopoly on the education and health sectors in Somalia. The Mennonite Mission (MM) entered Somalia in 1953;⁵⁰ the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM), followed suit in 1954 and they both started high-quality schools, clinics, and hospitals.⁵¹ Unlike the low-profile evangelistic ministry of the RCC, the SIM and MM brimmed with the proverbial missionary zeal, thus incurring the wrath of some Somali Muslims.⁵² The MM quickly had their first martyr in 1962 when Merlin Grove, a 33-year-old Canadian missionary, was stabbed and killed by a Somali Muslim fanatic in Mogadishu.⁵³

The SIM and the Mennonite Mission (MM) had a formal agreement between them not to establish a denominationally based Somali Church.⁵⁴ This arrangement was also meant by default neither to support nor to allow such a denominational Somali Church. The SIM took this imprudent agreement more seriously than the more pragmatic MM.⁵⁵ The united front of these two mission organizations was briefly compromised in 1966 when different groups of Somali Christians in Mogadishu, Bulo Burde, and Belet Weyne decided to join the Mennonite Church.⁵⁶ This decision has immensely distressed the SIM.⁵⁷ The SIM Director at the time “required that all contacts between Mennonites and SIM missionaries terminate, even on the social level.”⁵⁸ The SIM-MM rift eventually healed, but the cost of this

⁴⁵ The Sayid is said to have met the orphans and inquired of their clan affiliation to see if he knew their families or clansmen; the kids could not recite their clan lineage (a taboo in the Somali culture) and said they belonged to the clan of the [Catholic] Fathers. In another encounter with the Daymoole orphans, the Sayid asked the boys their names; one said his name was “John Abdullah!” See also: Said S. Samatar, *In the Shadow of Conquest*, 39.

⁴⁶ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place: The Biography of Warren and Dorothy Modricker*, (Guardian Books, 2006), 76.

⁴⁷ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place*, 77.

⁴⁸ The British colonized northern Somalia (British Somaliland), the Italians colonized southern Somaliland.

⁴⁹ Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1st edition, 1963), 77.

⁵⁰ The Mennonite Mission registered in Somalia as Somalia Mennonite Mission (SMM). See: David W. Shenk, “A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970.” (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 3.

⁵¹ Abdurahman M. Abdullahi, *The Islamic Movement in Somalia*, 21.

⁵² Abdurahman Moallim Abdullahi, “The Islamic Movement in Somalia: A Historical Evolution with a Case Study of the Islah Movement (1950-2000).” (PhD. Thesis, McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 2011), 111.

⁵³ Abdurahman Moallim Abdullahi, “The Islamic Movement in Somalia, 129.

⁵⁴ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place*, 196.

⁵⁵ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place*, 195.

⁵⁶ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place*, 196.

⁵⁷ Helen Miller, *The Hardest Place*, 196-197.

⁵⁸ David W. Shenk, “A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970.” (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 281.

reconciliation was too high for the nascent Somali Mennonite Church which disintegrated within few years.⁵⁹ The SIM opposition to this new church was just too extreme.⁶⁰ After the untimely demise of the Somali Mennonite Church, some Somali Mennonites organized themselves into short-lived fellowships, but these fellowships could not replace the promising church they lost. Despite some occasional setbacks in their relationships, the SIM and MM are the finest examples of Christian mission organizations collaborating in bringing the Gospel to the Somalis.⁶¹ This Christian spirit of teamwork, even if imperfect, has aided the conversion of many Somalis in the Somali Peninsula. Other Christian mission groups have joined the ministry to the Somalis with no knowledge or regard for the SIM-MM model of ministry, thus adding new challenges to an already difficult ministry.⁶²

The RCC was pleased with the SIM-MM model of cooperation and was saddened when the Somali government moved to nationalize the property of these missions. The RCC saw the Somali government taking the properties of SIM and MM organizations as ill-advised and allowed the SIM and the Mennonite Mission (MM) to worship at the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) Cathedral in the Somali capital. This Christ-like gesture has positively contributed to the ministries of the SIM, MM, and RCC.⁶³

However, while the historic SIM-MM cooperation is commendable, it is also lamentable. The MM has become unequally yoked with an interdenominational para-church organization. In the SIM-MM partnership, the SIM almost always received what it wanted out of the relationship; the MM chose peace over confrontation. Nevertheless, the MM might have been more effective if it focused on planting Mennonite churches in Somalia and the Somali regions in the Horn of Africa. However, the existence of the term “Muslim Mennonites” suggests that the MM, and to a lesser extent the SIM, had some enviable success.⁶⁴ Many Muslims who were educated in the MM and the SIM schools or treated at their hospitals became ardent admirers of these two mission organizations.

Since the late 1990s, a denomination from the holiness tradition has mobilized its personnel and resources to take the Gospel to the Somalis in Somalia and other Somali enclaves in the Horn of Africa.⁶⁵ The missionary endeavour of this denomination has changed the landscape of the Somali ministry by providing theological training to its mainly Somali ministers, placing resources at their disposal, and believing in them. This Somali-led mission effort resulted in dozens of Somali house churches during the few years of its ministry to the Somalis; this denomination continues to minister to the Somalis in the Horn of Africa with

⁵⁹ Aweis A. Ali, “The Case for Denominationally Based Ministries Among Somalis.” EMQ, Volume 57, Issue 1. January – March, 2021.

https://www.academia.edu/45655680/The_Case_for_Denominationally_Based_Ministries_Among_Somalis

(accessed 28 March 2021). See also, Aweis A. Ali, “A Brief History of Christian Missions in Somalia.” Africa Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences. 7, (1), 2020

<https://www.somalibiblesociety.org/a-brief-history-of-christian-missions-in-somalia/> (accessed 27 March 2021)

⁶⁰ Aweis A. Ali, “The Case for Denominationally Based Ministries Among Somalis.”

⁶¹ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 114.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁴ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 99.

⁶⁵ This denomination prefers to remain anonymous.

remarkable success.⁶⁶ The arrival and departure details of the most prominent mission organizations in Somalia are shown in **Table 1.1**.⁶⁷

Table 1.1: Arrival and departure details of the most prominent mission organizations in Somalia

Name	Arrived in Somalia	Status
French Catholic Mission	1891-1910	Expelled
Swedish Overseas Lutheran Church ⁶⁸	1896-1935	Expelled
Roman Catholic Church	1904-1991	Closed
Mennonite Mission	1953-1976	Expelled
Sudan Interior Mission	1954-1976	Expelled

The most successful of these missions are the RCC, MM, and the SIM. The ministries of these three leading organizations have been hampered by the collapse of the Somali state in 1991; despite this setback, these three giants are still formidable forces in the Somali ministry.

The RCC and some Protestant churches and mission organizations are active in Somalia today. The RCC is mainly focused on the humanitarian needs of the Somali people, who are recovering from decades of brutal civil war. While very few Protestant denominations are also involved in the relief work in Somalia, most are just preaching and planting churches, thus focusing mainly on the spiritual side of the ministry. Even though many churches and para-church organizations are contributing to the humanitarian and developmental needs of Somalia, persecution against these organizations continues unabated.

In 2009, *Sharia law* was adopted nationwide by the Somali parliament.⁶⁹ Such a move has made the life of Christians more perilous. Several Western Christian leaders have been killed, including Bishop Pietro Salvatore Colombo,⁷⁰ Sister Leonella Sgorbati,⁷¹ and other

⁶⁶ While the Lord found the author of this thesis proposal through the SIM ministry in 1986, he joined this intrepid denomination from the holiness tradition in 1996.

⁶⁷ Abdurahman Moallim Abdullahi, "The Islamic Movement in Somalia: A Historical Evolution with a Case Study of the Islah Movement (1950-2000)." (Ph.D. Thesis, McGill University, Institute of Islamic Studies, 2011), 116.

⁶⁸ The Swedish name of this mission organization is Evangelisk Fosterlands-Stiftelsen (EF-S); the closest English translation is "Evangelical Homeland Foundation" better known today as "Swedish Evangelical Mission." See also: David W. Shenk, "A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 through 1970." (Ph.D Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 3.

⁶⁹ "Somalia," *The Voice of the Martyrs Canada*, (nd). <https://www.vomcanada.com/somalia.htm> (accessed 30 September 2017).

See also: "Somalia," *US Department of State*, (accessed 13 September 2011). https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168430.htm (accessed 18 September 2018).

⁷⁰ "Taking the Catholic Pulse: Somalia One of World's Great Danger Zones for Christians," *Crux*. (25 October 2016). <https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2016/10/25/somalia-one-worlds-great-danger-zones-christians/> (accessed 19 September 2018). See also: Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 71.

⁷¹ "Slain nun 'was willing to die,'" *News 24 Archives*, (21 September 2006). <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Slain-nun-was-willing-to-die-20060921> (accessed 15 August 2018).

religious workers.⁷² Marauding radical Islamists also kill Somali Church leaders with impunity according to the Washington DC-based *International Christian Concern*.⁷³ All these circumstances call for an urgency to investigate the persecution of Christians and its effect on church growth in Somalia.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Christians in Somalia have been facing various kinds of persecution since the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991. Somali Islamist groups targeted a Somali house church in Mogadishu in the mid-1990s, executing 12 of its 14 members.⁷⁴ Numerous Somali Christians had their homes and farms looted by the same violent militants.⁷⁵

The Somali governments in place since 1991 were often too feeble to protect Somali Christians; they were sometimes in collusion with the belligerent Islamists targeting the church.⁷⁶ Somali Islamists once used the government's official mouthpiece, Radio Mogadishu, to threaten the life of a prominent Somali Christian.⁷⁷ However, on at least one occasion, this vital government organ praised the peace and reconciliation efforts of the Somali Christian it once threatened. Maybe the two-hour positive coverage was to atone for the earlier threats it broadcast.⁷⁸ Fundamentalist Islamists have targeted Somali Christians, not only in Somalia but also, in neighbouring countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

Despite the unprecedented violence the Church in Somalia has been facing since 1991, it has also been experiencing steady growth according to some reports. However, one wonders how graphic persecution like shootings and beheadings affect those Christians who survive the carnage.

The Church in Somalia was driven underground by extreme persecution. The exact number of affected Christians is, therefore, hard to know. Stakeholders of the persecuted Church in Somalia represent competing interests, with minimal consensus about the size and the suffering of the Somali Church. The first unifying view that these stakeholders share is that the Somali Christians are persecuted and are small in number; the second unifying opinion is that they are resilient. The estimated number of "underground" house churches, fellowships, and Bible study groups, in Somalia, range from a few dozens to several dozens. This does not take into account the numerous unchurched Somali Christians who may occasionally attend Christian fellowships. These stakeholders also agree that there are a

⁷² "Ten years since the murder of Annalena Tonelli," *L'Osservatore Romano*, (02 November 2013). <http://www.osservatoreromano.va/en/news/ten-years-since-the-murder-of-annalena-tonelli#.U7BrEMJeHIU> (accessed 15 August 2018).

⁷³ "Crossing the Bridge: Strengthening the Underground Church in Somalia," *International Christian Concern*, (2013). <http://info.persecution.org/blog/bid/266812/Strengthening-the-Underground-Church-in-Somalia> (accessed 30 September 2017).

⁷⁴ Somali Christian Ministries, "My Faith in Jesus Christ the Messiah," *Somali Christians*, (nd). <http://somalichristians.org/faith-in-jesus/> (accessed 15 March 2017). The names of the martyred believers are: Liibaan Ibraahim Hassan, Ahmed Ayntow Gobe, Saleban Mohamed Saleban, Isma'el Yusuf Mukhtar, Mohamed Aba Nur, Ali Kusow Mataan, Mohamed Abdullahi Yusuf, Nurani Madey Madka, Khalif Dayah Guled, Bashir Mo'alim Mohamud, Prof. Haji Mohamed Hussein, and Mohamed Sheikdon Jama.

⁷⁵ "Islamic Militants Confiscate Christian Farms," *Voice of the Martyrs Canada*, (10 February 2011). <https://www.vomcanada.com/so-2011-02-10.htm> (accessed 15 March 2017).

⁷⁶ "Somali National TV's Anti-Christian Message," *Youtube.com*, (nd). Intolerant Somali Muslim preachers are often given airtime on the official Somali government national TV and radio to announce murderous *fatwas* against Somali Christians.

<https://youtu.be/uDZLoEnRguE> (accessed 10 February 2017).

⁷⁷ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 112.

⁷⁸ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 113.

significant number of un-churched and un-fellowshipped Christians in Somalia. *International Christian Concern* estimates the Somali Christians in Somalia to be only 0.33% of the population.⁷⁹ This number probably includes the numerous unchurched Somali Christians mentioned above. One wonders, given the persecution directed against the Somali Christian, if they have a theology of persecution.

World Watch List 2017 puts the Church in Somalia as the 2nd most persecuted in the world.⁸⁰ This is not the first time Somalia appeared at the head of this infamous list; it often makes the top two slots.⁸¹ Somalia has been on this infamous list since 1992.⁸² According to *Open Doors*, “The mere suspicion of one having renounced Islam leads to a rushed public execution.”⁸³ This is of course a hyperbole to highlight the plight of the Christians. However, Operation World has recently described the Somali Church as the 7th fastest growing evangelical church in the world.⁸⁴ The topic of persecution and church growth in Somalia constitutes a research problem that requires scholarly investigation supported by research questions. This study aims to establish the effects of persecution on church growth in Somalia.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects persecution of Christians has on the growth of the Church in Somalia.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. Examine selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth
- ii. Discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia
- iii. Determine if the Church in Somalia has a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution
- iv. Assess the role ministers play in this church during severe persecution
- v. Draw conclusions that could contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth in Somalia

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed:

- i. What has been the causal relationship between the selected episodes of persecution of the church and the growth of the church throughout the history of the church?
- ii. What challenges does persecution pose to the Church in Somalia?

⁷⁹ “Somalia’s Infant Church Emerging Amid Great Tribulations,” *International Christian Concern*, (02 April 2019) <https://www.persecution.org/2019/04/02/somalias-infant-church-emerging-amid-great-tribulations/> (accessed 10 May 2019).

⁸⁰ “World Watch List,” *Open Doors USA*, (nd).

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/> (accessed 20 Feb 2017).

“World Watch List,” *Christianity Today*, (11 January 2017)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2017/january/top-50-countries-christian-persecution-world-watch-list.html> (accessed 03 July 2017).

⁸² “About Somalia,” *Open Doors USA*, (nd).

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/somalia/> (accessed 30 September 2017).

⁸³ “About Somalia,” *Open Doors USA*, (nd). <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/somalia/> (accessed 30 September 2017).

⁸⁴ Evangelical Growth, Operation World, 2021

<https://www.operationworld.org/hidden/evangelical-growth> (accessed 29 March 2021).

- iii. Does the Somalia church have a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution?
- iv. What role do ministers play in the Somali Church during persecution?
- v. What conclusions would contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth in Somalia?

1.7 Hypothesis

“A hypothesis is a formal statement that presents the expected relationship between an independent and dependent variable.”⁸⁵ The null hypothesis of this research is: persecution of Christians is not related to the numerical growth of the targeted Church in Somalia.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Justification of the study provides vital details to the reader such as what the study contributed and who may benefit from it; it also includes an explanation of the work’s importance as well as its potential benefits.⁸⁶ This study is necessary to decipher the relationship between the persecution of Christians and its effect on church growth in Somalia.

This research may also help the Somali Church whether in Somalia or the diaspora to grasp church growth in the context of persecution. Somali ministers may furthermore find more effective ways to aid the church during violent persecution. Missionaries to the Somali Church may likewise benefit from this study, as it shed some light on the most effective ways that they could serve this church without making matters worse for the local community of faith. This study may help peaceful Muslims understand the pain and suffering radical Islamists inflict on the persecuted Somali Church. Violent Islamists may realize from this research the need for religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

At the national level, this study may stimulate a healthy dialogue between the church and the Somali government regarding a constitutional right to religious freedom. The findings of this research may further benefit the global Church as a voice wherever Christians are persecuted. Subsequently, the findings of this research will contribute to academic studies in the field of persecution and church growth. This research may also help to put an end to the deniers of the Somali Persecution of the church and martyrdom.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study means all the things that are covered in the research project; it defines precisely the extent of content that was covered using the research to come to more logical conclusions and give conclusive and satisfactory answers to the research.⁸⁷

This research focuses on the Somali Church in Somalia that comprises northern Somalia (the former British colony) and southern Somalia (the former Italian colony). The clear majority of adult Somali Christian converts are from a Muslim background. While not all Christians do face martyrdom, they all face some form of persecution because of their Christian faith. This is the church that this research thesis studied.

⁸⁵ “Quality Scientific Publishing.” International Network for Natural Sciences, n.d. <https://innspub.net/hypothesestesting/#:~:text=Hypothesis%20is%20a%20formal%20statement,an%20independent%20and%20dependent%20variable.&text=Hypotheses%20are%20relational%20propositions.,be%20tested%20by%20further%20investigation>. (accessed 24 May 2021).

⁸⁶ Thesis Notes. “Writing Thesis Significance of the Study,” *Thesis Notes*, (19 September 2016). <http://thesisnotes.com/thesis-writing/writing-thesis-significance-of-the-study/> (accessed 14 August 2017).

⁸⁷ “Scope of the Study,” *PhD Thesis: A Unit of Five feed Learning Solutions Pvt Ltd*, (07 July 2014). <http://www.phdthesis.in/scope-of-the-study/> (accessed 14 August 2017).

1.10 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations are choices made by the researcher which should be mentioned. They describe the boundaries the researcher has set for himself.”⁸⁸ This study thus covers the relationship between the persecution of Christians and its effect on church growth in Somalia. This research does not cover self-inflicted “persecution” or Somali Christians targeted for political or tribal reasons; such cases do not fit the criteria for genuine persecution in which the church is targeted because of its faith in Jesus Christ.

The names of the three research sites in Somalia were not revealed or published to protect the local Christian communities in general, and, the brave informants whose contributions are essential to the thesis. The pilot survey site is code named L0; this is a city of about half a million people. The three research sites were given the code names of L1, L2, and L3. L1: A code name for an ancient Somali cosmopolitan city of more than half a million residents. L2: A code name for a historic Somali metropolitan city of more than two million residents. L3: A code name for a Somali agricultural city of more than 70,000 residents. Only members of the Protestant churches and the RCC were given the questionnaires. The persecution-related public views of some Muslim religious leaders were also evaluated for this study, and questionnaires were given to them when suitable.

1.11 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are influences, internal or external, that are outside the control of the researcher. Such influences could fail to meet the academic standard required for academic research. Such limitations place constraints on the researcher’s methodology and conclusions. “Any limitations that might influence the results should be mentioned.”⁸⁹ The limitations that can constrain this research include worsening insecurity in Somalia. The researcher was not able to visit some specific regions in Somalia where the church is most persecuted. Militant Islamists control such territories, and they would not allow this study to take place on their home turf.

The researcher would not accept any invitation from radical Islamists or their sympathizers to visit their territory. The effects of such limitations were addressed by meeting Christians from these Islamist-controlled territories in other areas where they feel relatively safe. Some Christians who were not able to travel had the option to be to receive the questionnaires using secure and encrypted social media platforms. Research assistants were trained to help gather information from some informants whom the researcher would not be able to reach due to insecurity and other infrastructural challenges.

The researcher is well-known as a minister of the Gospel in some areas in Somalia, including L2 and L3; the researcher’s work would have been complicated if malevolent entities found out the presence of such a Christian in their midst. The researcher wore necessary disguises and kept a very low profile during his time in L2 and L3.

Some informants, both Muslims, and Christians, were very concerned for their security; being a part of this research is not for the fainthearted. The researcher did his utmost to alleviate these fears, so the informants could be honest and cooperative.

⁸⁸ BCPS Independent Research Seminar. Online Research Framework. *Bcps.org*. https://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/researchcourse/develop_writing_methodology_limitations.html (accessed 14 August 2017).

⁸⁹ “Online Research Framework,” *BCPS*, (nd). https://www.bcps.org/offices/lis/researchcourse/develop_writing_methodology_limitations.html (accessed 14 August 2017).

1.12 Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions are things that the researcher assumed to be true. The researcher assumed:

1. That there is a persecution against Christians in Somalia
2. That the Church in Somalia is growing
3. That the informants will be cooperative to answer questions truthfully
4. That segments of Somali Muslim religious scholars and preachers incite violence against Somali Christians
5. That there are peaceful Muslims, both laity and clergy, who object to the persecution of Somali Christians.

1.13 Theoretical Framework

“A theoretical framework consists of concepts and, together with their definitions and reference to relevant scholarly literature, the existing theory that is used for your particular study.”⁹⁰ Similarly, a useful “theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of a research paper and that relate to the broader areas of knowledge being considered. This study is undergirded by Michael Green’s theory, which states that a small and struggling church is more likely to grow under persecution. The author cites the growth of the apostolic era church, The Acts of the Apostles being the example par excellence.”⁹¹ Michael Green highlights that persecution has the potential to stimulate church growth. He cites that Stephen’s martyrdom did not hinder church growth but ushered in a new era of emboldened disciples whose ministry led many to the Lord.

One weakness of Green’s theory is the fact that many churches died or are dying because of intense persecution. However, it would be a gross miscalculation to attribute disappearances of churches solely to persecution; other factors that can push churches out of existence, including complacency. One strength of Green’s theory is the fact that there is tangible evidence today of churches thriving under intense persecution. However, Green’s theory that persecution of the church can result in church growth is a motif very clearly seen in the Acts of the Apostles and was used in this study.

Another theory of persecution and church growth is poised by William H.C. Frend. He proposes the non-Christian community can persecute Christians when they perceive Christianity as a threat.⁹² The apparent reasoning is that the church is more likely to be tolerated when it is tiny, but intolerance arises with the growth of the church. One example is how the apostolic era church was tolerated by Jewish religious leaders and the Roman powers, since they considered the new faith as a minor Jewish sect. When the church grew because of its success in reaching out to more Jews and Gentiles, then the physical persecution started and was perpetrated by both the Jewish clergy and the Roman authorities as well.

Emperor Nero lashed out at the Christians in AD 64 accusing them of arson because of the great fire that consumed most of Rome. The emperor and his officials labeled Christianity as a dangerous Jewish superstitious cult and doubled down on the nascent faith after the Rome fire. This new persecution made it impossible for the new faith to be granted

⁹⁰ “Research Guides,” *USC Libraries*, (03 May 2019).

<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/theoreticalframework> (accessed 03 May 2019).

⁹¹ “Research Guides,” *USC Libraries*, Ibid.

⁹² William H.C. Frend, “Christian History: Persecution in the Early Church,” Issue 27, Vol. XI, No. 3, *Christianity Today International/Christian History Magazine*, (1990), 8.

Roman recognition as a “*religio licita*” - legal religion, and separate from Judaism.⁹³ However, the church did not face empire-wide persecution until 249.⁹⁴

A weakness of William H.C. Frend’s theory is that the author does not give examples of any tiny Christian communities persecuted for their faith, though they do not pose a numerical threat to the local non-Christian belief systems. The exact percentage of Christians who may trigger persecution because of their numbers is also hard to ascertain. The strength of Frend’s theory is that it is plausible that Christians escape persecution when they are very small in number; how tiny may differ from context to context. The common sense of this theory is that a small number of Christians can survive or even thrive if they do not grow big. However, Frend presents a valid theory that the numerical growth of the community of faith can result in persecution. His views were consulted in this study.

Philip Jenkins, in his thought-provoking book, *Lost History of Christianity*, systematically chronicles dead or dying once-powerful churches in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.⁹⁵ The most well-known of these dead churches are the once eminent church in North Africa that produced high-profile church leaders like Tertullian (160-220) and Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430). While Jenkins is right that the church often romanticized that the blood of Christians is the seed, he also admits instances where severe persecutions failed to diminish the church. However, Jenkins is also correct that there are world areas where the church was crushed out of existence.

Jenkins acknowledges that in the world areas he describes in his book, the church faced more than the traditional persecution inflicted on the church in the Book of Acts or by the Roman Empire. In other words, the dead or dying churches in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East faced genocide. While the church can thrive in persecution, it cannot survive under genocide. Jenkins cites Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Palestine, and opines, “The largest single factor for Christian decline [in these countries] was organized violence, whether in the form of massacre, expulsion, or forced migration.”⁹⁶

1.14 Conceptual Framework

The study developed a conceptual framework from the independent variables. The four independent variables that interact to form a dependent variable. The conceptual framework is depicted in figure 1.1.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia— and How It Died*. (HarperCollins Pub., 2008).

⁹⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia— and How It Died*. (HarperCollins Pub., 2008), 141.

Independent Variables

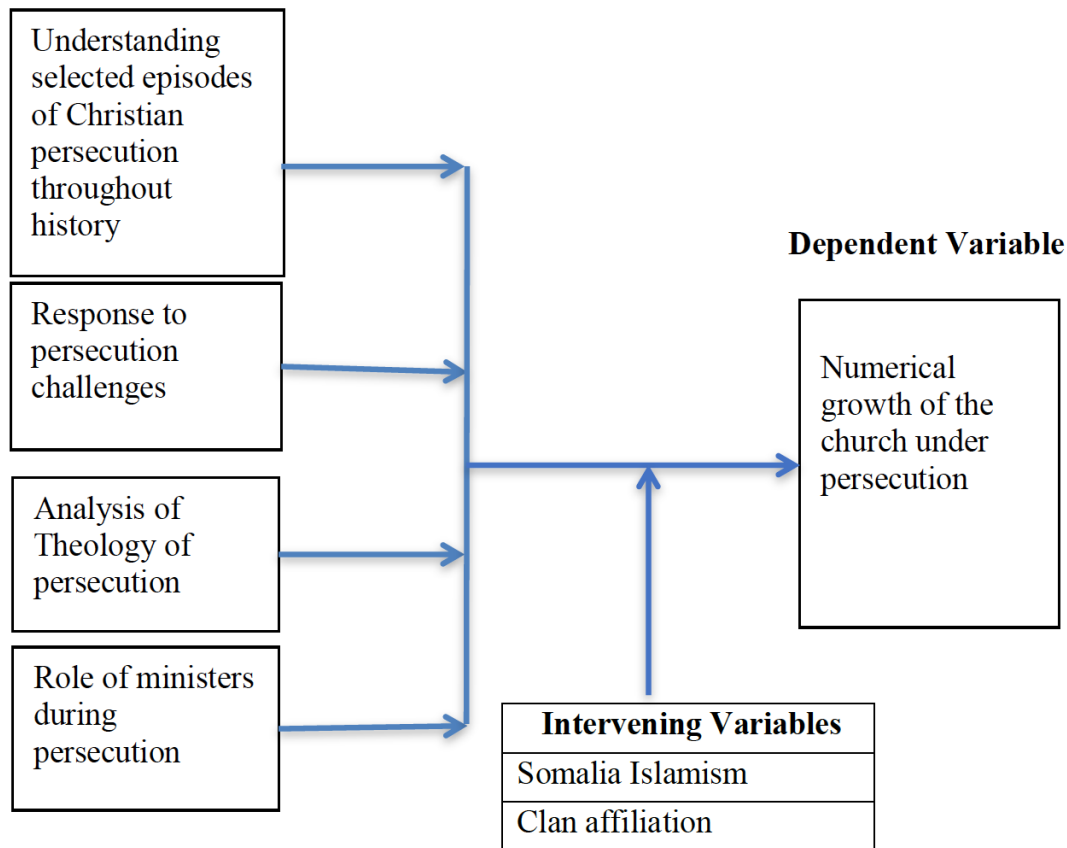



Figure 1.1 Conceptual model for the numerical growth of the Church under persecution

The first variable understood the selected episodes of persecution of Christians throughout history. Under this variable, the early Church had been birthed in a context of persecution and never ceased growing despite the hostilities it was facing. The persecution and Church growth went hand in hand until the 4th century. Therefore, an understanding of some selected persecution episodes would result in healthier, growing, and courageous churches. Second, a response to persecution challenges; in the context of persecution, the community of faith becomes resilient, resourceful, and prudent. Survival tactics persecuted Christians adopt include churches meeting in residential houses, developing a network of safe houses, and extensive use of technologies for communication, teaching, and studying. Persecuted Christians build extensive digital libraries, and teach, and train their members in the safest way possible. Such strategies help the church defy the adverse effects of persecution and continue growing with minimum discomfort.

A third independent variable was an analysis of a theology of persecution. An analysis of a biblical theology of persecution indicates that Christians throughout history have developed a persecution theology. This persecution theology is often expressed in written prose or poetry. Persecution theology enables the persecuted Christians not only to survive but thrive in the suffering. Persecution theology reminds the suffering community of faith that many heroes of the faith were also persecuted and that they praised God while suffering. Churches with a biblical theology of persecution can survive persecution and may even thrive in it.



The fourth variable was the study of the role of ministers during Christian persecution. Ministers of the gospel are often the initial target of the persecutors. The persecuted Christians look to ministers for life-saving guidance. Christians with resourceful ministers feel safer and are often protected from the brunt of the anti-Christian attacks. The church has an excellent opportunity to experience exponential growth when ministers play their leadership roles well. Finally, those four independent variables facilitate the numerical growth of the church under persecution.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature for this research has been reviewed under the following subheadings: selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and their impact on church growth; the challenges that persecution poses to the church; theologies of persecution; and roles ministers play in this church during severe persecution.

2.2 Empirical Review of Literature

This section of the study critically reviews relevant literature following the objectives of the study.

2.2.1 Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and Their Impact on Church Growth

2.2.1.1 The Early Church

This section highlights a survey of selected incidents of persecution against the church beginning with the earliest and moving forward. This section also examined the effect these selected episodes of persecution had on the church.

North African theologian, Tertullian, was a fervent believer that persecution helps church growth. He says, “The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is a seed.”⁹⁷ This is the conviction Tertullian asserts, and he was not alone in this rationale even as early as the middle of the 2nd century. Ippolito Romano, a contemporary of Tertullian, wrote during lethal persecution, “that large numbers of men, attracted to the faith by martyrs, also became God’s martyrs.”⁹⁸ A letter written by an anonymous 2nd-century Christian apologist affirms Tertullian’s conviction; the letter, addressed to “most excellent Diognetus”, apparently a well-connected pagan man, reasons, “Do you not see that [the Christians] thrown to the wild beasts - that they may recant the Lord - do not allow themselves to be beaten? Do you not see that the more they are punished, the more the others increase in numbers?”⁹⁹ Antonio Miralles writes, “The martyrs gain through losing their lives in bearing witness to Jesus – they gain eternal life. But this is also positive for the Church, that receives new believers, encouraged to convert thanks to the example set by the martyrs, and she also sees a renewal in existing believers.”¹⁰⁰ The above writers agree that Christian persecution and church growth are intertwined. The idea of persecution and church growth were discussed further in this study.

The second and third centuries’ persecution profoundly impacted the young faith. This resulted in theology that venerated martyrs.¹⁰¹ The exact number of martyrs in the early church it is impossible to know. Many of the persecution by the Roman Empire were local and sporadic, but some were Empire wide. Contemporary scholars estimate that of 54 of the

⁹⁷ *The Apology of Tertullian*, translation and annotation by WM. Reeve, A.M, 50, s. 13, initially printed in London in 1709 and Reprinted in a second edition in 1716/1717.
http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm (accessed 03 May 2018).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Antonio Miralles, “The blood of martyrs, the seed of Christians,” *Clerus.org*, (2004).
<http://www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2004-05/31-13/12MarIn.html> (accessed 03 May 2018).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ “The tradition of martyrdom has entered deep into the Christian consciousness.” Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, Volume I: *Beginnings to 1500*, rev. ed. (Prince Press, 2000), 81.

Roman emperors who ruled from 30-311, about 30 of them persistently targeted Christians.¹⁰² Several known scholars concur that from the first government-sanctioned persecution under Nero in 64 to the Edict of Milan in 313, which established a government-sanctioned Empire-wide religious toleration for Christianity, the Church faced 129 years of severe persecution and 120 years of peace or toleration.¹⁰³ While many Roman Empire persecutions against the Church were brutal, the persecutors often targeted the Scriptures, other Christian materials, clergy, church property, and influential sympathizers of Christians. The non-prominent lay Christians often escaped direct persecution.¹⁰⁴ The strength and significance of the works cited above are remarkable. Collectively, these severe incidents of persecution did not slow down or destroy the church.

After winning the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312, 313 Emperor Constantine I with his eastern counterpart, Licinius, issued the Edict of Milan, which officially -recognized Christianity as a legal religion as opposed to a harmful superstition, thus ending the official persecution of the church.¹⁰⁵ This decriminalization of Christianity proved to be a turning point for the church as the references below, the Constantinian shift, the triumph of the church, and the peace of the church, indicate. Christianity became the authorized and official religion of the Roman Empire on 27 February 380 AD when Emperor Theodosius I with Gratian, and Valentinian II issued the Edict of Thessalonica. The once brutally persecuted faith had become the state religion. Some scholars allege the church was healthier when the rulers considered it an enemy than an ally.¹⁰⁶ Regardless, materials on early persecution of the church and martyrdom are critical for this study.

2.2.1.2 Islamic Persecution of Christians

Sunni and Shia schools of jurisprudence have consensus that the punishment for apostasy is death by the sword.¹⁰⁷ Lewis affirms that both schools of thought consider abandoning Islam as treason, thus explaining the harsh verdict.¹⁰⁸ Apostates are sometimes given time to repent and return to Islam.¹⁰⁹ Apostates who decline to “repent” and return to

¹⁰² Mark Galli, “The Persecuting Emperors,” Issue 27, Vol. XI, No. 3, *Christian History*, (1990), 20. See also, “Persecution in the Early Church,” Religious Facts, nd. <http://www.religionfacts.com/persecution-early-church> (accessed 03 May 2018).

¹⁰³ Maurice M. Hassatt, “Martyr.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, Robert Appleton Company, (1910).

See also, “Persecution in the Early Church.” *Religious Fact*. <http://www.religionfacts.com/persecution-early-church> (accessed 03 May 2018).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. See also: Everett Ferguson, “Did You Know?” *Christian History*, Issue 27, Vol. XI, No. 3, inside cover, (North American Patristics Society, 1987), 20.

¹⁰⁵ W. H. C. Frend *The Early Church*, (SPCK 1965), 137.

¹⁰⁶ “Constantine’s Impact on Christianity,” Beyond Today, (05 June 2006). <https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/constantines-impact-on-christianity> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁰⁷ Prominent Somali Muslim preachers trash the faith and credibility of a popular Somali Muslim theologian, scholar and writer, Cabdisaciid Cabdi Ismaaciil, who penned the eye-opening book, *Xadka Riddada Maxaa Ka Run Ah [Is there a Punishment for Apostasy in Islam?]* The Muslim preachers who attacked the author and called him an apostate include Sheikhh Umal,

<https://youtu.be/y63aHwCub20>, Sheikhh Hussein Muhumed Omar, <https://youtu.be/i9sR396-EAo>, Sheikhh Mohamed Dirir, <https://youtu.be/KiCIm5KHP80> (all accessed 06 May 2018).

¹⁰⁸ Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East, a Brief History of the Last 2000 Years*, (Touchstone Books, 2017), 229.

¹⁰⁹ Abdul Rashied Omar, *The Right to religious conversion: Between apostasy and proselytization*, in Mohammed Abu-Nimer and David Augsburg, *Peace-Building by, between, and beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*, (Lexington Books, 2009), 179–94. Books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?id=HvrDWka4iRgC&pg=186> (accessed 06 July 2017).

the fold of Islam face the Muslim sword.¹¹⁰ The short “grace” period sometimes given to apostates is simply to entice them back to Islam to save their lives.¹¹¹ The number of Muslim majority countries criminalizing apostasy has been on the rise over the last few decades.¹¹² The prescribed punishments range from imprisonment to death.¹¹³ The countries that have a history of governments executing apostates include Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan.¹¹⁴

Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, is the oldest degree-granting university in the Muslim world; it is recognized as the most prestigious Islamic university in Sunni Islam; the *fatwas* (religious decrees) issued by this Islamic university are considered binding in Sunni Islam.¹¹⁵ The *Fatwa* Council of this university which is centered on al-Azhar Mosque issued a *fatwa* in 1978 against an Egyptian Muslim who converted to Christianity. The fatwa instructed that the man should be killed if he did not return to Islam.¹¹⁶ This *fatwa* was widely reported in Muslim and Christian annals.¹¹⁷ Many of these countries also use common law to dissolve the apostate’s marriage to their Muslim spouse, and they are also denied child custody rights and inheritance from Muslim family members.¹¹⁸ The four dominant Sunni schools of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) (Shafi’i, Maliki, Hanbali, and Hanafi) agree that any male apostate of sound mind who willingly abandons Islam must be put to death. The Hanafi and Shia scholars teach that a female apostate should not be executed, but only imprisoned in solitary confinement until she reverts to Islam. This jurisprudence also teaches the female apostate must be beaten every three days until she repents and returns to the fold of Islam.¹¹⁹ Shafi’i, Maliki, and Hanbali scholars disagree on this line of thought; they both teach that all apostates, regardless of their gender, should be put to death.¹²⁰ The study interrogated further

¹¹⁰ Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman. *Islam: The Key Concepts*, (Routledge, 2008), 10.

¹¹¹ John Bukhari, L. Esposito. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 22. <https://books.google.com/books?id=6VeCWQfVNjkC&pg=PA22#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed 06 July 2017).

¹¹² The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center, *Laws Criminalizing Apostasy*, (Library of Congress, 2014), 1. <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/apostasy/apostasy.pdf> (accessed 10 September 2018).

¹¹³ The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center. *Apostasy. Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2012). <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e174> (accessed 06 July 2017).

¹¹⁴ Andrea Elliott. “In Kabul, a Test for Shariah,” *New York Times*, (March 26, 2006). <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/26/weekinreview/in-kabul-a-test-for-shariah.html> (accessed 06 July 2017).

¹¹⁵ Al-Azhar University is centred on the historic al-Azhar Mosque. See also: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Al-Azhar University,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (nd). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Azhar-University> (accessed 18 September 2018).

¹¹⁶ Al-Azhar Council of Fatwa, “Mr Ahmed Darwish,” (1978). “Al-Azhar Fatwa,” Former Muslims United, (nd.) <http://formermuslimsunitied.org/apostasy-from-islam/al-azhar-fatwa/> (accessed 4 February 2019). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rechtsgutachten_betr_Apostasie_im_Islam.jpg (accessed 07 July 2017).

¹¹⁷ Edward Hendrie, *The Beast Revealed*, (Garrisonville, Virginia: Great Mountain Publishing, 2015), 242-243.

¹¹⁸ Samuel M. Zwemer, “The Law of Apostasy,” 14 (4): Chapter 2, *The Muslim World*, (Hartford, Connecticut, Hartford Seminary Foundation, First published in 1924), 41-43.

¹¹⁹ Rudolph Peters, *Crime and punishment in Islamic law*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 64–65.

¹²⁰ W. Heffening, “Murtadd,” in C.E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W.P. Heinrichs; et al. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 7. (Brill Academic Publishers, 1993), 635–636.

Duane Miller, “Your Swords do not Concern me at all: The Liberation Theology of Islamic Christianity,” *St Francis Magazine* Vol 7, No 2, Interserve and Arab Vision, Academia.edu, (April 2011). http://www.academia.edu/3870725/Your_Swords_do_not_Concern_me_at_all_The_Liberation_Theology_of_Islamic_Christianity, (accessed 07 July 2017).

the integrity of such schools of thought and whether their *fatwas* affect church growth in any way.

Abu Dawud declares, it is the *ijma* (consensus) of the classical Muslim jurists that an apostate must be executed if they refuse to return to Islam.¹²¹ According to this school of thought, enslaved males and females and freed slaves of both sexes receive the same punishment if they apostatize and refuse to re-embrace Islam;¹²² this is one difference between Abu Hanifa and Abu Dawud. Proponents of executing apostates cite the first Caliph of Muslims and a successor of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr, (d. 634) who put apostates to death with the consent of other companions of the Prophet.¹²³ The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

Abdullah narrated that Allah's Apostle said, "The blood of a Muslim, who confesses that there is no God but Allah and that I am His Apostle, cannot be shed except in three cases: In *Qisas* for murder, a married person who commits adultery and the one who reverts from Islam (apostates) and leaves the [Muslim] community."¹²⁴

A Sahih Bukhari hadith describes how Ali ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), Islam's 4th rightly-guided Caliph, dealt with some former Muslims who abandoned the faith: Ali burnt some people and this news reached Ibn 'Abbas, who said, "Had I been in his place I would not have burnt them, as the Prophet said, 'Don't punish (anybody) with Allah's Punishment.' No doubt, I would have killed them, for the Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.'¹²⁵

Another Sahih Bukhari hadith describes another former Muslim's fate:

A man embraced Islam and then reverted to Judaism. Mu'adh bin Jabal came and saw the man with Abu Musa. Mu'adh asked, "What is wrong with this (man)?" Abu Musa replied, "He embraced Islam and then reverted to Judaism." Mu'adh said, "I will not sit down unless you kill him (as it is) the verdict of Allah and His Apostle."¹²⁶

¹²¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2. (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000), 726.

¹²² Al-Husayn al-Baghawi, *Al-Tahdhib fi fiqh al-Imam al-Shafi'i*, vol. 7, (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1997), 288; *Muwaffaq al-Din*, Abū Muḥammad Abdullah Ibn Qudama, Al-Mughni, vol.12, (Cairo, Hijr, 1990), 264.

¹²³ Wael Hallaq, *Apostasy*, Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an, vol. 1, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 119.

¹²⁴ Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalaani, *Fat-h Al-Bari Bisharh Sahih Al-Bukhari*, edited by M. Abdul Baaqi and M. Al-Khateeb, 2nd Printing, (Dar Al-Rayyan Lilturaath, Cairo, 1987), 2019; Baab Al-Diyaat, Hadeeth # 6878, Vol.12, translated by Dr Jamal Badawi.

¹²⁵ Abdallah ibn Abbas (d. 687), also known simply as Ibn Abbas, was a cousin of the Prophet considered by early Islamic tradition as one of the first *mufassir* (masters of Qur'anic interpretation.) He was the son of Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, an uncle of the Prophet and a nephew of Maymunah bin al-Harith, who was later married by the Prophet. In this hadith, Ibn Abbas derides the Caliph Ali for his failure to correctly follow the model of the Prophet Muhammed in his treatment of an apostate because Ali burned the apostates instead of executing them by other means.

Sahih al-Bukhari, translated by M. Muhsin Khan 4:52:260, (Kazi Pubns Inc1995).

<http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/052-sbt.php#004.052.260> (accessed 09 May 2018).

¹²⁶ Mu'adh bin Jabal (d. 639) was one of the five companions of the Prophet Muhammed who compiled the Qur'an. He was known as a man of great knowledge. Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (d. 662 or 672) was a companion of the Prophet who was at various times governor of both Basra and Kufa. Abu Musa was also a key figure in the early Muslim conquest of Persia.

Sahih al-Bukhari, 9:89:27. <http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/089-sbt.php#009.089.271> (accessed 09 May 2018).

Muslim scholars who hold the view of persecuting apostates to the degree of execution make up the vast majority of the *ulama*. These scholars can trace back their teaching to the era when the Prophet Muhammad was the head of the Muslim community or shortly after that. The four caliphs who succeeded the Prophet also taught that those who apostatized from Islam should be punished. The literature mentioned above assumes that persecuting ex-Muslim Christians could suppress the growth of such Christians. This thesis examined what is true of this postulation.

Modernist Muslim scholars consider punishing apostates as an innovation that came to light after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.¹²⁷ These reformers reject what they consider post-Qur'an invention; their position relies on the Qur'an's lack of a clear stand on the punishment that apostates should receive in this life.¹²⁸ These modernists are bothered by the fact that apostasy law is often used by totalitarian Islamic political leaders to silence Muslim dissenters. The most well-known verse in the Qur'an moderates usually quote reads: "There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error." Qur'an 2:256a.¹²⁹ Another moderate Muslim author is Khaled Abou El Fadl who believes that the Qur'an accommodates non-Muslims including apostates.¹³⁰ The following is one of the most powerful hadiths that indicate apostates could leave Islam during the Prophet Muhammad's time without any reprisals from him:

Jabir Bin Abdullah narrated that a *bedouin* pledged allegiance to the Apostle of Allah for Islam [i.e. accepted Islam] and then the *bedouin* got fever whereupon he said to the Prophet [P] "cancel my pledge."¹³¹ But the Prophet [P] refused. He [the bedouin came to him [again] saying, "Cancel my pledge." But the Prophet [P] refused. Then he [the Bedouin] left [Medina]. Allah's Apostle said, "Madinah is like a pair of bellows [furnace]: it expels its impurities...."¹³²

The request to be relieved from the pledge can be understood to be a request to apostatize. Others disagree and say the request was merely to leave Medina, a Muslim city-state, for Mecca, a city administered by polytheistic Arabs.¹³³ The understanding of this hadith depends on one's position on apostasy.

¹²⁷ Arab Law Quarterly, vol. 13. No. 3, Brill, (1998), 213-4.

<https://www.jstor.org/sTable/i276475> (accessed 11 May 2019)

¹²⁸ Mohamed S. El-Awa, *Punishment in Islamic Law: A Comparative Study*, (Indianapolis, American Trust Publication, 1982), 56. See also: Mohammad Kamali, "Punishment in Islamic Law: A Critique of the Hudud Bill of Kelantan, Malaysia," *Arab Law Quarterly*, vol. 13. No. 3 (1998), 213-4; *Critical Reason: The Essential Muhammad Shahrour*, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Andreas Christmann, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 337-8.

¹²⁹ A commentary on this verse in the Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur'an states: "To all the nonsense which is being talked about the Prophet offering Islam or the sword as alternatives to the pagan Arabs, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, the Muslims are told that when they hold power in their hand, their guiding principle should be that there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion. The presumption that this passage was directed to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless." *Muslim.org*. <http://www.muslim.org/english-quran/quran.htm> (accessed 12 July 2017).

¹³⁰ Abou El Fadl Khaled, 'The Place of Tolerance in Islam' in *The Place of Tolerance in Islam*. Joshua Cohen and Ian Lague, eds., (Boston, Beacon, 2002), 3-26.

¹³¹ Jabir bin Abdullah (d.691) was a companion of the Prophet who became an early Hadith specialist. Jabir is said to have narrated 1,547 hadiths according to some historians.

¹³² *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Vol.9, Hadeeth # 316, (Maktabat Al-Riyadh Al-Hadeethah, Riyadh, 1982), 241. Similar hadiths by different narrators see: # 318, page. 242; #323, page. 246.

¹³³ Jamal Badawi, Is Apostasy a Capital Crime in Islam? Islamic City, 01 June 2015. <https://www.islamicity.org/8307/is-apostasy-a-capital-crime-in-islam/> (accessed 29 March 2021)

Taha Jabir Al-Alwani takes a minority view in Islam about the punishment for apostasy.¹³⁴ In traditional Islam, the price of apostasy is death, but the Muslim scholar Al-Alwani, argues that merely leaving Islam is not a crime deserving of the death penalty unless the apostate wages war on Muslims. Al-Alwani heavily depends on the Qur'an to justify his moderate understanding of Islam and Apostasy. However, the hadiths, the sayings, and deeds of Muhammad, which are an authoritative source of Islamic jurisprudence, overwhelmingly favour capital punishment for apostasy. Al-Alwani belongs to a small but growing number of Muslim religious scholars who believe that no ex-Muslim deserves the death penalty for only deserting Islam. Any orthodox Muslim who rejects that the punishment for apostasy is the death penalty is himself accused of apostasy.¹³⁵ In religious debates, the religious scholars who claim they want to preserve or return to the orthodox faith often beat the scholars who advocate for religious modernization. The latter are frequently accused of *bid'a*, a religious innovation. The cited modernist Muslim scholars are determined to present Islam as a peaceful religion that respects freedom of religion or no religion at all. This aspect of religious tolerance was revisited in this study. These tolerant Muslim entrepreneurs face the full weight of Islamic Orthodoxy which favours harsh treatments of apostates.

2.2.1.3 Christian Persecution in Somalia

Persecution starts once a Somali Muslim becomes a seeker and begins to study the Christian faith. The Somali military regime (1969-1991), only a little less tolerant than the preceding civilian government (1960-1969), instituted in 1970 a law that prohibited teaching any Somali religion other than Islam.¹³⁶ Local Christians and expatriate missionaries incurred the Somali government's wrath each time they handed out Bible study materials or verbally witnessed to a Muslim seeker. The Somali military government also targeted Somali Christian elders' meetings and threw some of them in jail in a cruel extrajudicial manner.¹³⁷ The past Somali civilian government adopted a constitution in 1961 which declared Somalia to be an Islamic State which respected a limited degree of religious freedom.¹³⁸ Nine years later, in 1970, General Mohamed Siad Barre, the president of the Republic announced to the nation that he became aware of the existence of Somali Christians and threatened that they would be shot if they took their Christian faith too seriously!¹³⁹ The Somali Christians were delighted that their government finally acknowledged their existence even in the context of a criminal threat.¹⁴⁰

Somali tribal elders also use the powerful clan system to isolate and humiliate those who dare to leave the fold of Islam and embrace Christianity, a faith Muslims see as an alien

¹³⁴ Taha Jabir Al-Alwani. *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural Analysis*, 1st Edition, (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011), 5.

¹³⁵ Prominent Somali Muslim preachers trash the faith and credibility of a popular Somali Muslim theologian, scholar and writer; Cabdisaciid Cabdi Ismaaciil who penned the eye-opening book, *Xadka Riddada Maxaa Ka Run Ah [Is there a Punishment for Apostasy in Islam?]* The Muslim preachers who attacked the author include Sheikhh Umal, <https://youtu.be/y63aHwCub20>, Sheikhh Hussein Muhumed Omar, <https://youtu.be/i9sR396-EAo>, Sheikhh Mohamed Dirir, <https://youtu.be/KiClm5KHP80> (all accessed 06 May 2018).

¹³⁶ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 32.

¹³⁷ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 80-81.

¹³⁸ Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 120-121.

¹³⁹ David W. Shenk, "A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970." (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 323.

¹⁴⁰ David W. Shenk, "A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970." (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 323.

threat.¹⁴¹ The Somali clan system grants its members multifaceted protection that may include a financial safety net when needed; when one feels that both their government and their clan are against them for simply following Christ, the disciples of Christ can face immense pain and suffering. Frank-Ole Thoresen, a competent Norwegian scholar whose Ph.D. thesis is on the Somali Church, describes the “persistent oppression and persecution” the Somali Church has been facing for decades in the hands of the Somali Muslims.¹⁴² Some of these persecutions lead to martyrdom, especially in Southern Somalia.¹⁴³ Thoresen provides multiple verifiable accounts of Muslim intolerance towards the tiny Somali Christian community; his scholarly work informed this research since it is arguably the most comprehensive modern academic study on the Somali Church.

Persecutors of the Somali Church do not only target local Christians but also expatriate missionaries. When a prominent expatriate missionary was getting ready to deploy to Somalia in the 1990s, one veteran missionary in Kenya counselled him, “Be careful, Nik, those Somalis are 99.9 per cent Muslim, and they eat little Christians like you for lunch!”¹⁴⁴ Nik witnessed very quickly the brutality of the persecution the Somali Church was facing when four Somali Christians he was associated with were martyred.¹⁴⁵ Several expatriate career and short-term mission workers have been martyred for their faith in Somalia since 1991. Such martyrs include Verena Karer, Annalena Tonelli (d. 2003), Dick and Enid Eyeington (d.2003), Martin Jutzi, Leonella Sgorbita, Gilford Koech, and Andrew Kibet.¹⁴⁶ No wonder that Ruth Myers, a veteran missionary to the Somalis states, “Currently for Christians, Somalia is considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world, second only to North Korea.”¹⁴⁷ Despite Myers’ ominous statement, the Somali Church remains resilient.

2.2.2 Challenges Persecution Poses to the Church in Somalia

Somalia is known for its relentless persecution of Somali Christians.¹⁴⁸ Frank-Ole Thoresen says, “...Somalis who have turned to the church have often been subjected to stark persecution from the Muslim majority.”¹⁴⁹ Meeting in a traditional church building is impossible for Somali Christians in Somalia. In his thesis, he notes that in some areas of Somalia, even the suspicion of being Disciples of Christ can trigger persecution. Therefore, believers meet secretly in different residential homes for worship.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 77.

¹⁴² Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, 1st edition, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 132.

¹⁴³ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, 1st edition, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 146.

¹⁴⁴ Nik Ripken and Gregg Lewis, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), *Why Didn't I Just Keep My Mouth Shut?*, Kindle Edition, 78.

¹⁴⁵ Nik Ripken and Gregg Lewis, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), *Why Didn't I Just Keep My Mouth Shut?*, Kindle Edition, 118-119.

¹⁴⁶ *Somalis For Jesus: the Martyrs' Corner*, October 2012.
<https://somalisforjesus.blogspot.com/2008/11/martyrs-corner.html> (accessed 08 June 2019).

¹⁴⁷ Ruth Myers, Ruth. *When the Lights Go Out: Memoir of a Missionary to Somalia*. (Moreland City, Victoria, Australia: Acorn Press, 2016), Author's Note, Kindle Edition, 171.

¹⁴⁸ 'Somalia', *The Voice of the Martyrs Canada*, nd.

<https://www.vomcanada.com/somalia.htm> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁴⁹ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, 1st edition, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 1.

¹⁵⁰ “Persecution in Somalia,” *Open Doors USA*, nd.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/countries/somalia/> (accessed 06 September 2018).

Al-Shabaab Islamist group has in the past declared that it wants “Somalia free of all Christians.”¹⁵¹ This al-Qaeda affiliate group confiscated farms owned by Somali Christians in 2011; also in that same year, prominent “moderate” Somali Muslim scholars and preachers publicly advocated for the killing of Somali Christians in press releases.¹⁵² Shania and Shino quote a *fatwa* press release by a prominent Somali Muslim scholar, Sheikh Nur Barud.¹⁵³ The Somali government’s official National Television Network broadcast the *fatwa* press release showing beyond reasonable doubt its complicity in the anti-Christian *fatwa*. Similarly, in an earlier *fatwa* release of 2003, Sheikh Nur Barud and members of the *Kulanka Culimada* (now *Majma’a Culimada*) said, “All Somali Christians must be killed according to Islamic law.”¹⁵⁴ The role of this Muslim organization in the persecution and martyrdom against the Somali Church was further studied in this research.

2.2.3 Church and Locally Developed Distinctive Theology of Persecution

Burton, a 19th-century British explorer, argues, “...the country [Somalia] teems with poets.”¹⁵⁵ Contemporary scholars, like Margaret Laurence, describe Somalis as a “nation of poets” and a “nation of bards.”¹⁵⁶ Like the broader Somali community, the Church in Somalia is known for its rich poetry. The church’s theology of persecution is often expressed in hymns and songs as shown in Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 which are sung to help the community of faith not only survive but also thrive amid persecution whether the persecution is real or perceived.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² “Islamic militants confiscate Christian farms,” *The Voice of the Martyrs* Canada, (10 February 2011). <https://www.vomcanada.com/so-2011-02-10.htm> (accessed 06 September 2018).

Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert and Nina Shea, *Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians*, (Thomas Nelson, 2013), 253.

See also: Stephen Mbogo, “Somalia’s Tiny Christian Community Reportedly Under Fire,” *CNSN*, (07 July 2008). <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/somalias-tiny-christian-community-reportedly-under-fire> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁵³ Shania-Shino Gabo, “Fatwa against Somali Christians in Europe,” *YouTube*, 2017 <https://youtu.be/yglcwlW9qz4> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁵⁴ Sheikh Nur Barud was at the time the vice chairman of the powerful Somali Islamist group, Kulanka Culimada. “*Kulanka*” is Somali and “*Majma’a*” is Arabic and they both mean “council.” “Somali Christians and Missionaries Murdered,” *Worthy News*, 19 January 2003. <https://www.worthynews.com/378-somali-christians-and-missionaries-murdered> (accessed 13 January 2019).

¹⁵⁵ Burton, Richard, *First Footsteps in Somalia*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1854, 91.

¹⁵⁶ Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 75.

Table 2.1: The immortal God

BAAQIGA EEBBOW ¹⁵⁷	THE IMMORTAL GOD
<i>Baaqiga Eebbow, Dunida beeray Ballan ku sheegay Ka baaqan maayo</i>	The immortal God, who created the world, gave you a covenant that will never fail.
<i>Buuraha korkooda Haddaan bil joogo Barafku i garaacana Beenbeenin maayo Badbaadshahayga</i>	On top of the mountains, if I am confined for a month with snow assailing me, I will not deny my Saviour.
<i>Baaqiga Eebbo...</i>	The immortal God ...
<i>Boqol sano Haddaan ban joogo Beer iyo xooliyo Bilcanba waayana Beenbeenin maayo Badbaadshahayga</i>	For a hundred years, if I am held in the desert, without a farm, livestock, and spouse, I will not deny my Saviour.
<i>Baaqiga Eebbow ...</i>	The immortal God ...
<i>Haddii lay bireeyo Badna laygu tuuro Budh layla dhacana Beenbeenin maayo Badbaadshahayga</i>	If I am decapitated, thrown into the sea and beaten with a club, I will not deny my Saviour.
<i>Baaqiga Eebbow ...</i>	The immortal God ...
<i>Haddii an baahdo Beeso aan waayana Beenbeenin maayo Badbaadshahayga</i>	If I am starving and I have no money, I will never deny my Saviour.
<i>Baaqiga Eebbow ...</i>	The immortal God ...
<i>Bugta i haysa Beerka i xanuunjin Isaga i baanto Iga bogsiiya Beenbeenin maayo Badbaadshahayga</i>	When I am sick and have pain in my liver, He treats me and heals me from it. I will never deny my Saviour.
<i>Baaqiga Eebbow ... (2x)</i>	The immortal God ... (2x)

A stanza from the hymn, *Gacmahaaga Noo Fidi*, (Stretch Out Your Helping Hands to us)¹⁵⁸ declares:

¹⁵⁷ *Qasiidooyin Ilaah Ammaan Ah*. (Codka Nolosha Cusub, 1993), 18. English translation by Aweis A. Ali.

¹⁵⁸ *Qasiidooyin Ilaah Ammaan Ah*, (Codadka Iftiinka, nd). English translation by Aweis A. Ali.

Table 2. 2: Satan’s chamber

<i>Golihii Iblayskiyo</i>	Satan’s chamber
<i>Gudcurkii inaan</i>	And darkness - we won’t
<i>Ugu noqon gadaalbuu</i>	Go back into them,
<i>Naga yahay go’aanki</i>	This is our decision.

Somali Christians recite this hymn when Muslims attempt to pressure them to deny Christ and return to the fold of Islam.

Nuurkii Adduunkow (The Light of the World),¹⁵⁹ is another favourite hymn often recited during pain and suffering caused by the persecution:

Table 2. 3: When we are weak

<i>Markii aan nuglaannee</i>	When we are weak
<i>Niyadda naga xumaatee</i>	And discouraged
<i>Qalbigu naafo gaadho</i>	Our hearts are wounded
<i>Naxariistihiiyow</i>	You are the One who has mercy upon us
<i>Ciise nuurkii dunidow</i>	Jesus, the light of the world
<i>Naruuradaada qaaliga ah</i>	from your precious blessings
<i>Nimcadaada wax naga sii</i>	and your grace, provide for us.

Somali Christian hymns often express deep theological convictions; hymns that address persecution and martyrdom are cherished in the community of faith.

There is a humorous oral tradition in the Somali Church that Somali Church leaders do not need a retirement plan, since persecutors often target church leaders. The clear majority of Somali Christians martyred since 1991 were house church leaders; many of the fallen leaders are recorded by *Somalis for Jesus* blog.¹⁶⁰

The light-hearted way Somali Christians talk about persecution illustrates the confidence they have in their Lord as well as their mental vigour. To maintain a sense of humour during persecution helps the community of faith to remain optimistic and maintain a sense of normalcy. Nik Ripken describes humour as “a powerful indicator of psychological health.”¹⁶¹

Jurgen Moltmann popularized a theology of hope with an eschatological bent, highlighting the hope that the resurrection brings.¹⁶² This Christ-centred eschatology is also described as an eschatology of hope. Eschatology tends to be “otherworldly” and eschatology in times of persecution instills a divine hope in the hearts of maligned Christians. At the heart of the locally-developed Somali theology of persecution is an eschatology of hope; while this divine hope sustains the community of faith, it is also a defiant posture toward the oppressors of the church. In this regard, eschatology is not an end but a new beginning that comes with glad tidings for the community of faith. Kelly describes eschatology of hope as an “incalculable fulfillment in terms of what can never be fully expressed.”¹⁶³ Kelly affirms that

¹⁵⁹ *Qasiidooyin Ilaah Ammaan Ah*, (Codadka Iftiinka, nd). English translation by Aweis A. Ali.

¹⁶⁰ Somalis For Jesus: The Martyrs’ Corner, October 2012.
<https://somalisforjesus.blogspot.com/2008/11/martyrs-corner.html> (accessed 08 June 2019).

¹⁶¹ Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected*, (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, Kindle, 2014), 224.

¹⁶² Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology Of Hope: On The Ground And The Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. (SCM Press: London. First American edition, 1967).

¹⁶³ Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 13.

an eschatology of hope wins against the fear, pain, and uncertainty, and suffering in general that persecution inflicts on the Disciples of Christ.¹⁶⁴ O'Reill addressing a theology of hope notes that at the appointed time "...creation will emerge from its sorrow into the bliss of God's manifest presence."¹⁶⁵

2.2.4 Role Church Ministers Play in this Church During Persecution

Somali Church ministers and lay leaders often become the initial target of the persecution. There is a long history of different Somali governments denying passports to church leaders to prevent them from attending ecclesiastical related gatherings outside of Somalia where the Somali government has no control.¹⁶⁶ At least one Somali Church leader had his passport confiscated after returning to Mogadishu from a church conference in Tanzania in 1967.¹⁶⁷ Decades later, secret service agents from the military government visited a house in Mogadishu where Somali ministers of the Gospel were meeting. The agents detained the most high-profile Somali Church leader in the meeting to intimidate the community of faith. He was eventually released without any charges.¹⁶⁸

The enemy often targets the shepherd since the sheep are too many to be persecuted in any lethal way; persecutors think that the community of faith will scatter if their ministers are stricken down thus the Somali proverb, "if you want to kill a snake, hit it on the head."¹⁶⁹ *International Christian Concern* (ICC) reported in 2009 the martyrdom in Mogadishu of a Somali Church leader, Pastor Ali Hussein Weheliye.¹⁷⁰ The martyrdom of this minister is not an isolated incident but a pattern of persecution in Islamic Somalia. Since ministers of the Gospel are more visible than lay members, it is very common for Somali Muslims to question the patriotism and even the Somali-ness of these church leaders.¹⁷¹ While this discrimination is shared by all Somali Christians, ministers are more susceptible to it due to their prominent role in the church.

Ministers of the Gospel employ three time-tested strategies to continue leading the church during harsh persecution which often claims the lives of some members of the community. First, ministers delegate emerging (but less known to the persecutors) leaders and place them in strategic locations in the country where there are clusters of house churches and report back to ministers. Second, ministers go incognito and thus becomes hard for the persecutors to find them. Third, ministers send updates of the persecution the church is facing to overseas Christian advocacy groups like the *Voice of the Martyrs* (VOM) and *International Christian Concern* (ICC). When these organizations publish the persecution stories of the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁵ Matthew P. O'Reill, "Towards an Eschatology of Hope: The Disappearance of the Sea in Revelation 21:1 and its Significance for the Church." *The Princeton Theological Review*. Volume XVII, No. 1. Issue 55. (Fall 2011), 52.

¹⁶⁶ David W. Shenk, "A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970." (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 203.

¹⁶⁷ David W. Shenk, "A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970." (PhD Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 344-345.

¹⁶⁸ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 80-81.

¹⁶⁹ "Mas madaxaa laga dilaa" strategy was widely used by the repressive Somali military government (1969-1991) by largely ignoring members of the opposition parties and protest movements and targeting only the leaders of these two entities.

¹⁷⁰ Islamic Militants Kill Somali Church Leader, Worthy News, (16 November 2019). <https://www.worthynews.com/6898-islamic-militants-kill-somali-church-leader> (accessed 08 June 2019).

¹⁷¹ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 135.

Somali Church, the persecutors often feel exposed and embarrassed. Persecution stories also generate much-needed prayers for the persecuted Christians. When the gruesome martyrdom of a Somali evangelist, David Abdulwahab Mohamed Ali, transpired in 2008, ICC published a detailed article about the grisly murder within a week. The report also notes that David was the “fourth Christian martyred in Somalia in the last six months.”¹⁷² Somali ministers within Somalia made this timely reporting possible.

2.3 Summary of Review of Literature and Knowledge Gaps

There is a glaring knowledge gap in the works cited throughout this research thesis. Microscopic formal study, academic or otherwise, has been conducted on the Church in Somalia and the Somali Church in the diaspora; Christian advocacy groups like the *Voice of the Martyrs* have produced plenty of reports on this church and the persecution it faces. Relevant academic works on this church include one Master of Arts thesis by a Somali Church leader.¹⁷³ There is also one doctoral thesis by an eminent Norwegian scholar with Somali ministry experience.¹⁷⁴ Similarly, there are also numerous books and other works about missionary biographies, memoirs of expatriate mission workers, and mission histories of some mission organizations about their work among Somali people. These cited resources are helpful in this study. Nonetheless, some scholarly work cited lacks the aspect of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth. This church needs a systematic, coherent, and scholarly work on its history, the challenges it faces, and the opportunities which are available to it.

The relationship between persecution and church growth in the Somali Church has not been studied academically. The scholarly works on this church are very limited. There are some *ad hoc* articles and news bulletins describing specific persecution or martyrdom about the Somali Church. This illustrates the research gap this study hopes to fill. Other than these articles and news reports, there are hymns and spiritual songs the church has produced. These are the central knowledge gaps that this research thesis intended to satisfy.

¹⁷² “Islamic Extremists Kill another Christian in Somalia: Fourth Christian Martyred in Somalia in the Last Six Months,” *International Christian Concern*, (29 April 2008).
<https://www.persecution.org/2008/04/29/islamic-extremists-kill-another-christian-in-somalia/> (accessed 08 June 2019).

¹⁷³ Mahad Hillow Birik, *The Challenges Facing Somali Muslim Background Believers and their Role in Fostering Christian-Muslim Relations in Eastleigh, Nairobi Country*, (Saint Pauls, Limuru, University, 2018).

¹⁷⁴ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was employed in the study. The following are the categories involved: Research design, research site, and target population. Other items considered include sampling techniques and sample size, data collection methods, data processing and analysis, instrument validity and reliability, legal and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Kothari defines research design as the arrangement, evaluation, collection, and scrutiny of data in a method that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose.¹⁷⁵ This is descriptive survey research conducted in Somalia. Descriptive research addresses facts on the ground as they are and the characteristics of individuals and groups.¹⁷⁶ This descriptive research collected primary data acquired through oral or written communication. Any sample used for this research was representative of the target population. Representatives of the target population were carefully selected.

3.3 Research Site

This research was carried out in Somalia; the three different sites in Somalia are code-named L1, L2, and L3. L1 is a major Somali metropolitan city. L2 is another major Somali cosmopolitan city. Both L1 and L2 are among the biggest cities in Somalia. L3, the smallest of the research sites, is a historic Somali city that is one of the critical breadbaskets of Somalia. While L1 has a population of more than half a million people and L2 has about 2 million inhabitants, L3 city has about 70,000 inhabitants.¹⁷⁷ The reason these three research sites were selected includes the fact that all have vibrant and resilient Christian communities. Both L2 and L3 are known for their red persecution, while L1 Christians face white persecution. A pilot survey was also carried out in a city code named L0 with a population of about half a million residents. The reason these cities have been code named is to avoid bringing unnecessary censure to the community of faith in general and the informants.

Both expatriate and local Christians have been martyred for their faith in L2 and L3. There is no record of a local Christian being killed in L1, though a few expatriate Christians were martyred for their faith and ministry in this ancient city since 1991. L1, L2, and L3 are a microcosm of the Somali Church. The number of Christians living in the L0 pilot survey site is very limited compared to the three research sites. The Christian communities in these three geographical research areas can be considered to encapsulate in miniature form the characteristics, challenges, opportunities, resilience, and qualities of the Church in Somalia in general. These three research sites helped reveal the interplay between persecution and church growth in Somalia. The sites were chosen for being a microcosm for the Somali Church.

¹⁷⁵ C.R. Kothari, *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques, second revised edition,* (New Age International Publishers, 2011), 31.

<http://www.modares.ac.ir/uploads/Agr.Oth.Lib.17.pdf> (accessed 09 May 2018).

¹⁷⁶ Kombo Donald Kisilu and Delno L. A. Tromph, *Proposal and Thesis Writing, An Introduction,* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 2006), 77.

¹⁷⁷ See appendix # 6

3.4 Target Population

Somalia is predominantly a Muslim country with a small Christian population. L1, L2, and L3 have a significant number of house churches. The local Christian communities and the expatriate missionaries in these three locations have experienced both red (when blood is shed) and white (when blood is not shed) persecution. Local Christian communities also report varying degrees of growth. There are initial reports that some house churches survive, and sometimes even thrive in the persecution, while others disintegrate. The house churches in L1, L2, and L3 were selected. The publicly available views on apostasy by prominent Somali Muslim clerics were examined. Some of these Muslim clerics were furnished with the questionnaires for this research.

3.5. Study Sample

3.5.1 Study Sample Size

A sample is a subgroup of the population being studied. Christian participants were selected from the house churches in L1, L2, and L3 in a non-probability technique. It is hard to ascertain how many Christians exist in Somalia, but it was hoped there are enough viable house churches from which the researcher could select respondents. While a non-probability sampling process does not give all members of a population an equal chance to participate, it is still the most viable system of sampling. Representative numbers of leaders, both lay and clergy, elders, lay members, and Muslims were sampled (see Table 3.1). The fieldwork dictated the exact number of informants, but the initial estimate is about 220 informants divided equally among the L1, L2, and L3 regions participated.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedure

This thesis research utilized a non-probability sampling method and selected participants for this study through purposive and convenient sampling. Participants included house church leaders and lay members. The published viewpoints on apostasy by Somali Muslim clerics were also studied, and some Muslim clerics were also given the questionnaires for this thesis.

Table 3. 1: List of Respondents equally divided among the three regions

Informants	L1	L2	L3	Grand Total
Clergy	20	20	20	60
Lay leaders	10	10	10	30
Elders	10	10	8	28
Lay members	30	30	30	90
Muslims	4	4	4	12
Total	74	74	72	220

3.6 Data Collection Measures

Kombo and Tromp state that data collection refers to the gathering of information to prove or disprove some facts.¹⁷⁸ The primary data was gathered from the field through questionnaires, while secondary data was collected from print and electronic sources.

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

Every research is dependent on the instruments used to collect data, since no substandard instruments produce good data.¹⁷⁹ The study made use of a well-composed questionnaire for all the research sites. The questionnaire was ideal in addressing the study objectives accurately and conveniently, especially considering the security risk in the area of study. It was also ideal for capturing the respondents' attitudes and feelings on the research problem. Two sets of questionnaires were developed, one for Christians and another for Muslims.

3.6.1.1 Questionnaire for Christians in Somalia

Section one of the questionnaire for Christians focused on background information, with a specific emphasis on gender, level of education, church affiliation, etc., as shown in appendix I. Section two delved into biblical teachings on the persecuted church, section three addressed challenges persecution poses to the Church in Somalia, while section three dealt with challenges persecution poses to the Church in Somalia. Section four dealt with the Somali Church and its understanding of the theology of persecution. Section five sought to determine the role ministers play in the Somali Church during severe persecution, and section six addressed conclusions that could contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth in Somalia.

3.6.1.2 Questionnaire for Muslims

The questionnaire for Muslims was organized into two sections. Section one helped the researcher collect background information of the Muslim respondents. Section two comprised of fifteen open-ended questions that solicited Muslims' perspectives on the persecution of Christians in Somalia.

3.6.2 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

A pilot survey was conducted in LO city to ensure that the language used in the data gathering instruments was clear and understandable, the layout, the length of the tool, and the time taken to answer the questions were convenient for the study. Orodho stated that for pilot testing, 10% of the sample size is adequate.¹⁸⁰ As such, the pilot study utilized purposive sampling to select twenty-five respondents comprising twenty Christians and ten Muslims, which was more than 10% of the study sample size.

Respondents of different ages, genders, and educational backgrounds were involved in the pilot study. All groups and subgroups partaking in the research were able to understand the research instruments and the data collection system. Questionnaires were given to the selected respondents. The pilot testing discovered areas of improvement for the survey, the selected informants, and the system of data collection work in the field.

3.6.3 Instrument Reliability

¹⁷⁸ Donald Kisilu Kombo and Delno L. A. Tromp, *Proposal and Thesis Writing*, 77.

¹⁷⁹ Katrina A. Korb, "Conducting Educational Research: Step 9: Develop Instruments," (2012) <http://korbedpsych.com/R09DevelopInstruments.html> (accessed 15 December 2018).

¹⁸⁰ Orodho, *Techniques of Writing Research Proposals and Reports in Education and Social Sciences*, 142.

Instrument reliability is the degree to which an instrument consistently measures whatever it is measuring reliably without any variance.¹⁸¹ Since the questionnaires were open-ended and gathered qualitative data, the researcher used inter-rater reliability to measure the agreement between the ratings of two different raters of the findings of the pilot study. Thus, two experts were asked to code the findings of the pilot study. It was established that the coding or ratings of aspects of open-ended data by the experts were in close agreement. This was evidence to suggest that the data gathering instruments were reliable. The pilot survey also helped in noting that the questionnaires were well understood. Where there was a non-response error, the questionnaires were improved. The supervisors further made sure the instruments were reliable through their advisory work.

3.6.3 Instrument Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures accurately what it is supposed to measure and consequently allows proper interpretation of results in a reliable manner.¹⁸² The validity of the data gathering instrument was ensured by seeking expert opinion. Content and construct validity were attained by incorporating the opinions of experts, consisting of supervisors and examiners from Africa Nazarene University. The advice given was used as the basis to modify the items in the questionnaire and make them more appropriate for the study.

3.6.4 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher gathered, measured, and evaluated relevant data of interest in a systematic method. The informants had questionnaires to guide them. The researcher tested the hypothesis and examined the outcome. The researcher digitally recorded all relevant information. There were a few cases when some participants did not consent to be digitally documented because of concerns for their safety; detailed handwritten and word-processed notes were taken in situations like this.

3.7 Data Analysis


The data yielded by the principal and the secondary sources were integrated, and the outcome was catalogued in conformity with the objectives of the research. Qualitative procedures were employed, and the data deciphered to deduce a conclusion. Because of the non-statistical nature of qualitative data analysis, its analysis was directed by tangible materials at hand. The data so obtained, being predominantly qualitative, were also analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Maxqda 2020. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. The preferred method for quantitative data presentation was statistical tabulations in the form of frequencies and percentiles.

3.8 Legal and Ethical Considerations

Somalia is a Muslim country with a deeply rooted and intolerant Islam. This research is a very sensitive one, but the Somali government neither issues nor requires research permits to conduct academic research in Somalia. The researcher stayed in touch with the relevant government authorities in case the rules changed during the research period. The researcher conducted his research in Somalia while respecting the government rules, regulations, and culture of the Somali people. Finally, the confidentiality of participating

¹⁸¹ Geoffrey E. Mills et al, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications*, 9th edition, (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 2009), 333.
<https://kinasevych.ca/2015/10/08/gay-mills-airasian-2009-educational-research-competencies-for-analysis-and-applications-9th-edition/> (accessed 06 May 2018).

¹⁸² Ibid.



informants was protected, and their rights were respected. Informants gave their consent and that assent was duly recorded. No academic research is worth the lives and the limbs of the informants. The researcher had devised a data collection system that protects the safety of the informants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The study aimed at exploring the extent of persecution of Christians in Somalia and its ramifications on church growth. This study focused on the house churches in the regions of L1, L2, and L3.¹⁸³ The specific objectives were as follows. First, to examine selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth. The second objective was to discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia. Thirdly, the study sought to determine if the Church in Somalia had a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution. Fourthly, the study assessed the role ministers played in this church during severe persecution. From the findings, the researcher hopes to draw conclusions that could contribute to understanding the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia. This chapter presents the results and findings of the study.

4.2 Characteristics of the Respondents

This section provides a profile of the respondents. This information is presented based upon several basic characteristics. These include response rate, gender, years of service, level of education, and designation. This information gives a general understanding of the population under study.

4.2.1 Response Rate Per Strata in Cities

A total of 220 respondents participated in the study from three major cities of Somalia, cities code-named L1, L2, and L3. One questionnaire was administered per participant and the results were as shown in figure 4.1.

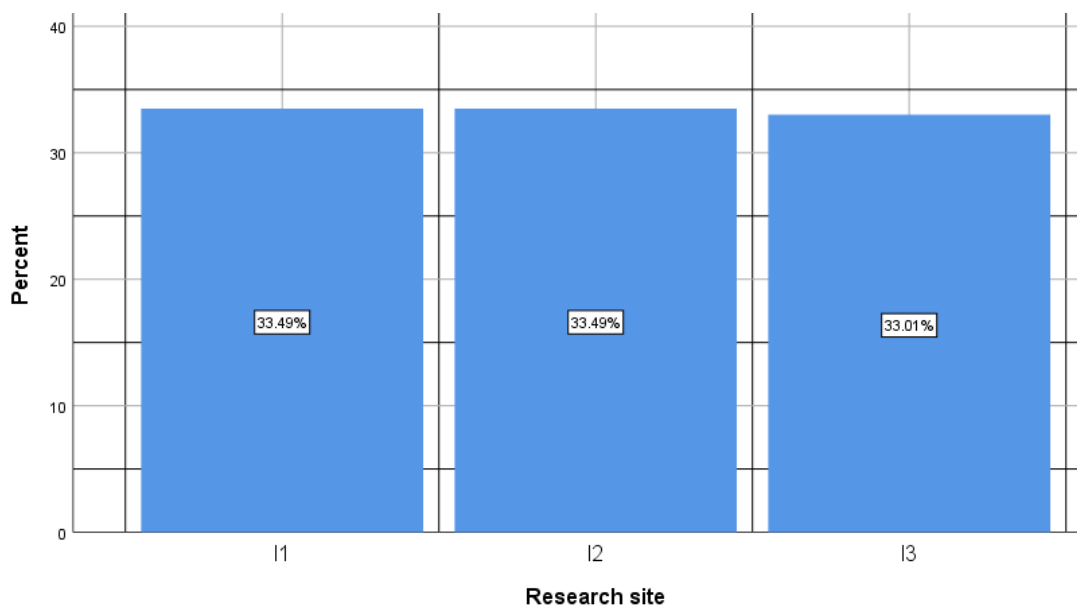


Figure 4.1: Percentage of respondents in research sites of L1, L2, and L3

Out of 220 questionnaires distributed, 95% were filled and returned. The results showed that there were 33.5%, 33.5%, and 33.01% assenters in each study location L1, L2, and L3 respectively (See Figure 4. 1.).

¹⁸³ Location; L1, L2 and L3 are cities in Somalia Republic.

The study registered an excellent response rate because, at each stratum, a response rate of 95% was obtained as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: Response rate per strata and cities L1, L2, and L3

Informants	L1		L2		L3		Total	Grand %
	Actual Frequency	Percentage response per strata	Actual Frequency	Percentage response per strata	Actual Frequency	Percentage response per strata		
Clergy	19	95	18	90	19	95	56	93.3
Lay leaders	9	90	9	90	10	100	28	93.3
Elders	9	90	10	100	8	100	27	96.4
Lay members	29	96.7	29	96.7	28	93.3	86	95.6
Muslims	4	100	4	100	4	100	12	100
Total	70	94.6	70	94.6	69	93.2	209	95

4.2.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This study sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age, educational qualifications, and current position. Summary results of respondents' demographics are presented below.

4.2.3 Gender of the Respondents

The study established the respective gender of the respondents. The findings are as shown in Figure 4.3.

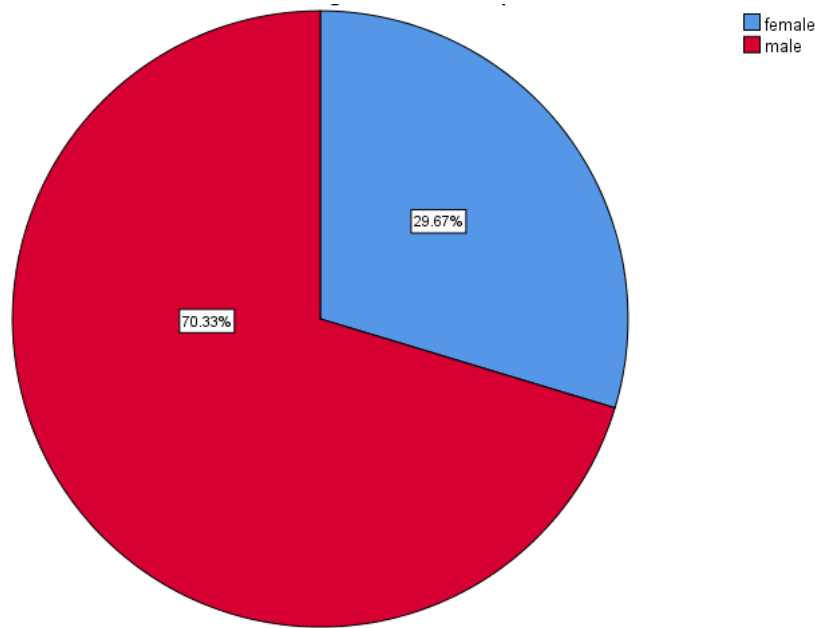


Figure 4. 1 Gender of the respondents

The results revealed that 70.3% of respondents were male, whereas their female counterparts were 29.7% of the total. This implies that the Christian informants responding in this study in L1, L2, and L3 cities were predominantly male as compared to their female counterparts.

This distribution of males to females was approximately 5:2. The ratio was observed in cities L1 and L2. However, L3 had a slightly lower ratio of males to the female of approximately 1.8:1 as indicated in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Distribution of gender in the L1, L2, and L3 cities

		Gender of respondents		Total	Percentage
		female	male		
Research site	L1	18	52	70	33.49
	L2	19	51	70	33.49
	L3	25	44	69	33.02
Total		62	147	209	100

4.2.4 Level of Education

The study sought to establish the academic qualifications of the respondents to ascertain if the respondents were of the right aptitude to respond to the questionnaire. The results are shown in figure 4.3.

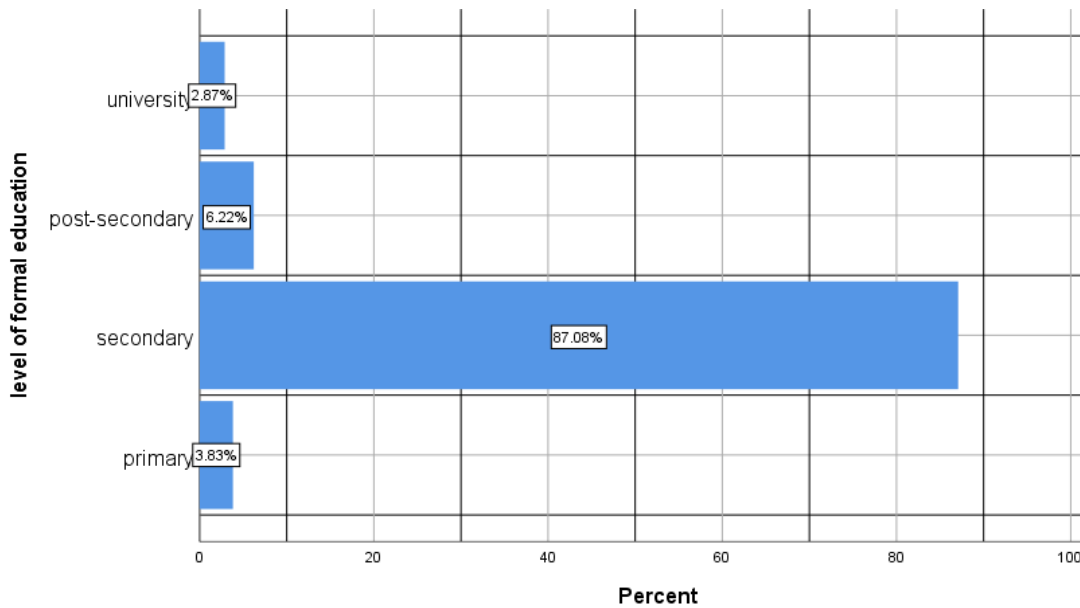


Figure 4. 2 Level of education of the respondents

The study established that in cities L1, L2, and L3; 3.8% had completed primary education, 87.1% a secondary training, followed by 6.2% with post-secondary school, and lastly, 2.9% had achieved a university education. Moreover, the study sought to establish whether there were differentials in the respondents' level of education in the three cities. To achieve this, the number of respondents from each city was cross-tabulated against their levels of education, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Level of education of respondents in the three study cities

		Level of formal education				Total
		primary	secondary	post-secondary	university	
Research site	L1	6	53	8	3	70
	L2	2	62	4	2	70
	L3	0	67	1	1	69
Total		8	182	13	6	209

As evident from Table 4.3, site L3 had the highest number of people at the secondary level of education, but had the least number in all the other levels. However, the number of respondents in each category appeared comparable in the three cities. To establish whether the noted differentials were significant or not, chi-square analysis was carried out. Table 4.4 shows the resulting output.

Table 4. 4: Chi-Square analysis of the level of education as revealed in the three study regions

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.361	6	.018
Likelihood Ratio	17.535	6	.008
N of Valid Cases	209		

Table 4.4 shows that there was no significant difference in the distribution of respondent’s level of education in the three cities, $\chi^2(6) = 15.361, p = 0.018$. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the researcher concludes that the level of education in the three cities, L1, L2, and L3, were the same.

4.2.5 Church Affiliation

The study also sought to establish the church affiliation of the respondents. The findings showed that all 100% of the respondents described themselves as Creative Access Christians (CAC) which means they lacked the freedom to worship openly. The finding revealed most of the respondents were from one denomination, and that all the other denominations listed in the study questionnaire namely, Pentecostal, Mainline, Independent, Roman Catholic, and others were also represented in L1, L2, and L3. This confirms that in the cities of L1, L2, and L3, there was a severe restriction for these local Christians to exist and worship freely; thus, house churches could only exist in the CAC underground system.

4.2.6 Length of Years Following Christ

The study aimed to determine the length of time the respondents have been followers of Christ in L1, L2, and L3 cities. The findings are as shown in figure 4.4

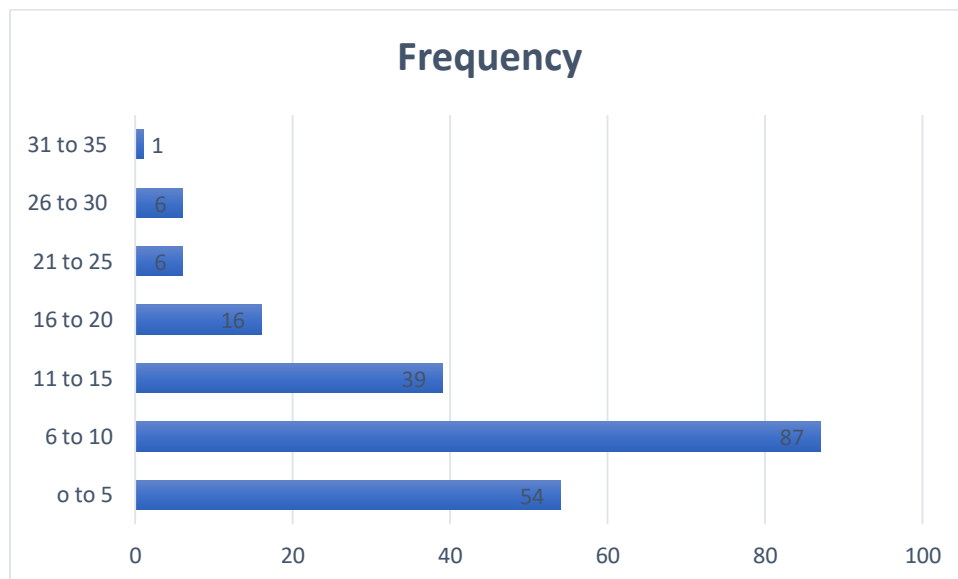


Figure 4. 3 Showing the number of years the respondents have been following Christ

The 209 CAC respondents’ years of being followers of Christ was, as shown in figure 4.4, with 93.8% had been followers of Christ for less than 20 years. Only, 6.2% had been followers of Christ for more than 20 years. This data also revealed that in the last 20 years is

when we have had the highest level of converts becoming followers of Christ, more specifically in the last 10 years. The data reveals that 67.5% of the 209 became followers of Christ in the last 10 years.

4.2.7 Length of Years Engaged in the House Church

The study aimed to investigate the number of years the respondents had been believers participating in the CAC. The data revealed the years of involvement, indicating most respondents were members for less than 15 years. This suggests that the Somali Church had more people come into membership in the last 15 years relative than they had in the prior time of 16 to 35 years. The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Skewness and kurtosis value on how long the Christians in L1, L2, and L3 have been followers of Jesus

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
How long have you been following Jesus	209	33	0	33	9.90	6.170	1.273	.168	1.790	.335

The number of years of involvement of participants ranged from 0 to 35years ($M = 9.90$, $SD = 6.170$). The number of years was non-normally distributed, with skewness of 1.273 ($SE = .168$) and kurtosis of 1.790 ($SE = .335$).

4.2.8 Non-Somalis in the House Churches

The study sought to determine the presence of non-Somalis in the CAC house-churches. All 209 respondents indicated that there were no non-Somalis in their house churches. In other words, the house churches served only Somalis. This result is shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4. 6: Statistics of non-Somalis in L1, L2, and L3

N	Valid	209
	Missing	0
Mean		.00
Median		.00
Mode		0
Std. Error of Skewness		.168
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.335

Percentages of non-Somalis in the house churches were ($M = .00$, $SD = .00$ Mode =0). Thus, non-Somali Christians were non-existent within the membership of house-churches in the cities of L1, L2, and L3.

4.2.9 Position in the House Churches

The study investigated the designation of respondents in their house churches (CAC). The study established that lay members were the highest, with 43.1% in number. Clergy were also in a large proportion of 34.4%. Lay leaders comprised 12.4%, but elders were only 11% as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4. 7: Position of service in the house churches

CAC Members	Frequency	Percent
Clergy	72	34.4
Lay leader	26	12.4
Lay member	88	42.1
Elder	23	11.0
Total	209	100.0

The informants had the following leadership ratio:¹⁸⁴ Lay member ratio of 11:8. The study assumes this conforms to the expected lay versus clergy breakdown for the survey, explained in 3.5.2 Sampling Procedure.

This study also established the position of service in house churches was non-normally distributed, with skewness of -.054 (*SE* = .168) and kurtosis of 1.400 (*SE* = .336) as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4. 8: Statistical positions in the house churches in L1, L2, and L3

N	Valid	209
	Missing	0
Mean		2.30
Median		3.00
Mode		3
Skewness		-.054
Std. Error of Skewness		.168
Kurtosis		-1.400
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.335

The Table enables the study to establish that positions of service were skewed and had kurtosis. This affirmed a significant number of members in CAC congregations were in leadership.

4.2.10 Length of Service as a Leader in the House Churches

The study aimed to determine the length of respondents' service as leaders in the house churches. The study established that most respondents had served as leaders between the periods of 0-6 years, (87.9%), as compared to those who served for a longer period between 7 and 25 years (12.1). These results were in a ratio of 7.36: 1 as shown in Table 4.9.

¹⁸⁴ That was clergy added to lay leader and Elder which were the three categories of leadership in CAC house churches.

Table 4. 9: Length of service as a leader in the house church

Length of Service in years	Frequency	Per cent
Less than a year	91	43.5
1	8	3.8
2	23	11.0
3	17	8.1
4	19	9.1
5	12	5.7
6	14	6.7
7	5	2.4
8	3	1.4
9	3	1.4
10	2	1.0
12	4	1.9
13	1	.5
14	1	.5
15	2	1.0
17	1	.5
18	1	.5
20	1	.5
25	1	.5
Total	209	100.0

The Table 4.9 indicates the following percentage: 1-6 years = 78.8% and 7-25 years = 21.2%. The survey also provides evidence that there has been a rapid acceleration of growth in the development of CAC leadership over the past twelve years. This was confirmed by this result having a mean (M) = 2.95, and a standard deviation (SD) =1.06 with a skewness of 2.217 (SE¹⁸⁵ = .168) and kurtosis of 6.399 (SE = .335). The researcher observes that something must have happened to bring such a significant increase in the number of people serving in leadership positions in the last 6 years relative to the 18 years before. This is as shown in Table 4.10.

¹⁸⁵ SE means standard error.

Table 4. 10: How long one has served in the house church

N	Valid	209
	Missing	0
Mean		2.95
Median		2.00
Mode		0
Skewness		2.217
Std. Error of Skewness		.168
Kurtosis		6.399
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.335

4.3 Presentation of Research Analysis, Findings, and Interpretation

This section includes a presentation of the results according to the objectives. Tables and figures are presented so that the data shows evidence to support the claims for each objective.

4.3.1 Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and its Influence on Church Growth

The first objective of this study was to examine selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth.

4.3.1.1 Biblical Teaching and Persecuted Church

The study first sought to ascertain which biblical teaching on the persecution of the church was prevalent and was in use by the Church in Somalia. To attain this, the study solicited Bible verses that respondents felt addressed and taught on the persecution of the church.

4.3.1.2 Does the Bible Say Anything About Christian Persecution?

In response to this question, 95.7% of respondents answered positively, stating the Bible teaches on persecution. 4.3% did not respond to the question at all. The study concludes they may have had a challenge leading some to omit a response to the question.

The study found out that 95.7% of the total respondents identified about 11 portions of Scripture that teach on the persecuted church, as shown in Figure 4.6.

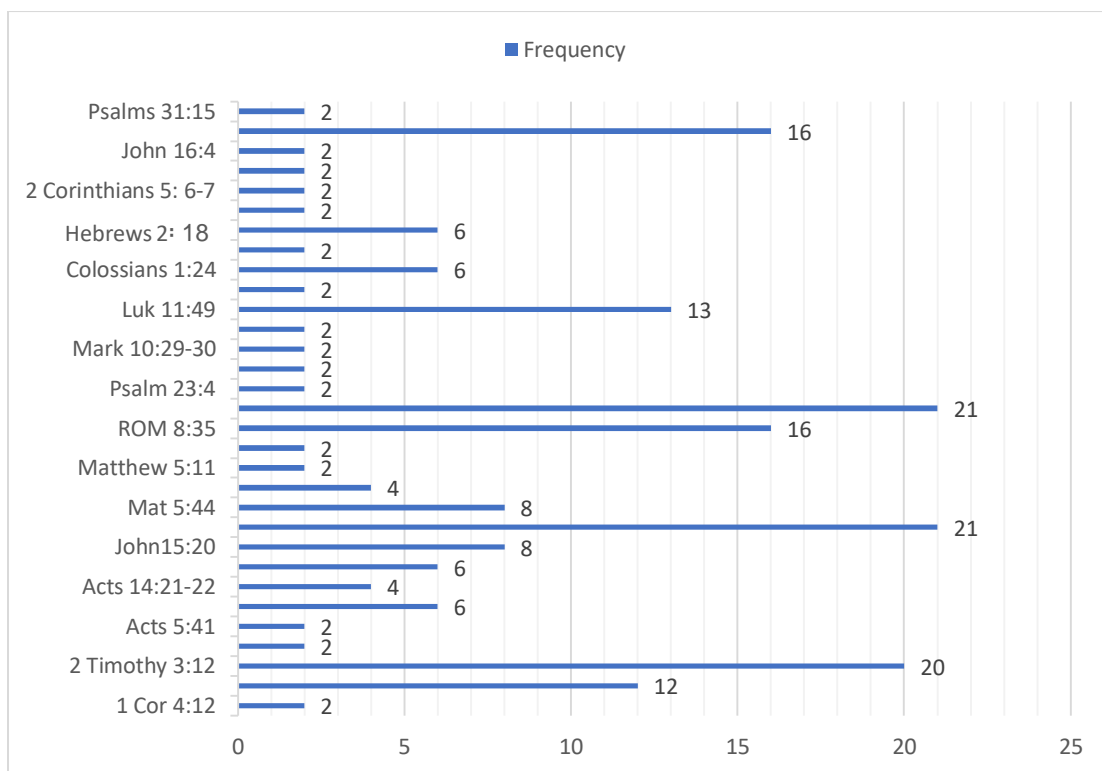


Figure 4.6 Bible verses the respondents felt teach on persecution


4.3.1.3 How Scriptures Help Respondents in Their Spiritual Life

When asked how Scripture references to persecution were useful to the respondents' spiritual life, the results were as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4. 11: Respondents' appreciation of how Scripture was helpful in their spiritual Life

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
These remind me that all faithful Christians will be persecuted in one way or another. There is nothing wrong with being persecuted; it is part of the Christian life	126	63
The Bible says we should love and bless those who persecute us. If we are persecuted for the name of Christ, we are blessed because the Spirit of God rests upon us	16	8
We pray in times of persecution and remember that God is with us	30	15
The verses teach me that even in persecution, I should persevere	5	2.5
The Bible references help me understand that my enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour	5	2.5
Total	200	100

The results revealed 95.21% responded to this question. At a frequency of 63% of respondents affirmed that all faithful Christians will be persecuted in one way or another.



According to these respondents, there was nothing wrong with being persecuted; it is part of their Christian life. According to 15% of the respondents, they prayed in times of persecution and this reminded them that God is with them. A further 9% of respondents cited that the Bible says they should love and bless those who persecute them. This 9% of respondents expressed that if they are persecuted for the name of Christ, they are blessed because the Spirit of God rests upon them. Another 8% cited that the Bible guides them to love and bless those who persecute them. So they were ready to be persecuted for the name of Christ, for they considered it a blessing because the spirit of God rests upon them. In two separate responses, each at a frequency of 2.5%, they opined that the Bible teaches that their enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour and that they should therefore persevere when persecuted.

4.3.1.4 Persecution and Church Growth

The study further investigated the relationship between persecution and church growth among churches in Somalia. Most respondents, that is, 96.1%, opined that the places where the church is persecuted the most are where the church witnesses the highest growth rate. A further 3.9% of respondents did not respond to this question. This may mean they may not have understood the questions, or they were not able to position themselves to answer the question.

4.3.2 Challenges Persecution Poses to the Church in Somalia

4.3.2.1 Reasons for the Persecution of the Church in Somalia

The study sought to determine challenges posed by persecution to the Church in Somalia; 96.1% of respondents deduced eight main reasons they felt were responsible for the persecution of the Church in Somalia, shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4. 12: Reasons the Church in Somalia is persecuted

What respondents observed was responsible for the persecution of the Church in Somalia	Frequency	Percentage
Faith in Christ	120	60
Somalia is a radical Muslim state	5	2.5
Before the 1990s, the Church in Somalia was not persecuted this badly, but today there is no official or above the ground traditional church that believers can attend except for small hidden house churches.	5	2.5
The Church in Somalia is persecuted because it is necessary if the church is to grow there	5	2.5
Muslims consider killing and persecuting Christians as a righteous act	10	5
Muslims view Christianity and its view of Christ as wrong	20	10
Muslims do not want to see Somali Christians	5	2.5
Somali are radical Muslims	30	15
Total	200	100

Faith in Christ was identified by 60% of the respondents as the main reason the Christians were persecuted in Somalia. The second-highest reason was suggested by 15% of respondents stating Somalia is predominately a radical Islamic state. The third-highest reason provided by 10% of respondents was that Muslims viewed Christians and their belief in Christ as being wrong and unacceptable. About 5% of the respondents even argued that the act of killing and persecuting a Christian is considered a righteous act in the teachings of Islam. Each of the remaining four reasons at a rate of 2.5% revolved around participants identifying Islamic teaching, practice, and culture as the main reason for the persecution of the church.

4.3.2.2 Types of Persecution Christians Suffer in Somalia

The study investigated the types of persecution Christians in Somalia face. The results were as shown in Table 4.13.

Table 4. 13: Showing some of the persecution Christians suffer in Somalia

The Persecution	Frequency	Percentage
Torture to death	42	21
Intimidation	16	8
Discrimination	37	18.5
Mocking	14	7
Insults	19	9.5
Death threats	6	3
Beheading	5	2.5
Physical torture	15	7.5
Mental torture	5	2.5
Economic restriction	16	8
Terrorism	3	1.5
Social exclusion	1	.5
Rape	1	.5
Refusal to stay married to Muslim wives	1	.5
Disability due to torture	4	2
Violence	11	5.5
Aggression	1	.5
Martyrdom	3	1.5
Total	200	100

The participants in the study postulated 18 different types of persecution against Somali Christians. This included torture to death, by 21% of respondents; discrimination, 18.5% of respondents; insults, 9.5% of respondents, intimidation and economic of restriction; 8%, of respondents; physical torture, 7.5% of respondents, mocking, 7% of respondents; violence, 5.5% of respondents; death threats, 3% of respondents; beheading and mental torture 2.5%; terrorism and martyrdom, 1.5% of respondents; and finally social exclusion, rape, refusal to remain married to a Muslim spouse who has not yet converted, aggression, 0.5% of respondents.

4.3.2.3 Treatment of Christians From Dominant Clans

The study sought to ascertain the treatment Christians from dominant clans received. See Table 4.14

Table 4. 14: Respondents' explanation on how Christians from dominant clans are treated

Explanation on what happens to Christians from dominant clans	Frequency	Percentage
Christians from powerful clans are the most protected	185	92.5
When you are very active in your clan, then they will protect you	5	2.5
So far, I have never seen them protected	10	5
Total	200	100

The findings showed 92.5 % of the participants identified that Christians from dominant clans were persecuted the least, for they were most protected. In further explaining this phenomenon, by pinpointing that the reason they were the least persecuted was that their clans were powerful. The results also showed that 5% of the respondents argued that they have never seen Christians from dominant and powerful clans receiving clan protection. However, another 2.5% of respondents stated that if the Christians are very active amongst their clansmen, then protection was provided for them by their prominent and powerful clan members.

4.3.2.4 Groups or Entities that Persecute the Church in Somalia

The study sought to determine the groups or entities that persecute the church the most in Somalia. The results were as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4. 15: Who persecutes Christians in Somalia?

Who persecutes	Frequency	Percentage
Muslims from other clans	145	72.5
My own clan may persecute me when they see me practicing Christianity; however, other clans always like to persecute me even on the suspicion that I might be a Christian	5	2.5
Yes by Muslims	25	12.5
I haven't experienced it yet	15	7.5
Not so much	10	5
Total	200	100

These results are cited by 95.7% of the 209 participants who responded to the question and identified those they thought persecuted the Christians, whereas only 4.5 % of respondents did not respond to this question. From the responses, 72.5% of them identified Muslims as the persecutors of the church, whereas a further 12.5% restated Muslims are responsible for persecuting the Christians. About 7.5% denied categorically that they had ever seen or experienced any persecution against Christians. Another 2.5 % showed that even their clan members also persecuted them when they were perceived to practice Christianity or are suspected of becoming followers of Christ. However, 12.5% showed that Christian persecution was not as bad as they initially anticipated; they indicated they had not observed any persecution of Christians, and it was not as much as they had expected.

Persecution of the Church in Somalia was further confirmed by data obtained from 12 Muslim informants from the three cities of L1, L2, and L3. One of the respondents in L3 did not respond to the question. This gave the study a 91.7% response rate to the 18 questions posed to the Muslim respondents. The Muslims disclosed their religious affiliations including their *madhab* and *tariqa* as shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4. 16: Madhab and tariqa affiliation of Muslim respondents

No	City L1	City L2	City L3
1	Sunni, Salafi, and Wahabbi	Sunni, Islah	Sunni, Sufi and Salahiya
2	Sunni, Sufi, and Qadiriya	Sunni, Sufi and Salihiya	Sunni, Sufi and Ahmediya
3	Sunni, Salafi	Sunni, Sufi and Ahmediya	Sunni, Sufi, Sayli's
4	Sunni, Sufi, Salihiya	Sunni, Salafi	Sunni Qur'ani

This result shows that Somali Muslims in this study were all Sunni including one Qur'ani who considers himself as Sunni (*Madhab*), 100% with varied religious paths (*Tariqa*) of practicing Islam with *Sufi* persuasion having the highest membership 41.7%, followed by the other paths (*Tariqas*) namely: Wahabbi, Qadiriya, Salafi, Salihia, Islah, Ahmediya, Sayli's and Qur'ani.

4.3.2.5 Things That Somali Christians Do Right According to Somali Muslims

The study sought to ascertain, from Somali Muslims, things that Somali Christians do right. The results were as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4. 17: Things Somali Christians do right according to Somali Muslims

Responses	Codes	Percentage
No hypocrites, practice their faith even in great physical threat	4	36.4
They tend to be more educated and more literate than their Muslim counterparts	1	9.05
They appear to be kind, at least many of them	3	27.3
I am not sure. What can they do right as apostates?	2	18.2
They mind their own business	1	9.05
Total	11	100

According to Somali Muslim respondents, Somali Christians do five right things right, 36.4% identified that these Christians were not hypocrites for they practice their faith under the greatest physical threat. Three of the respondents, 27.3% also opined that Christians were kind people, and it was the common character of most Christians. Two that is, 18.2% when asked what the Christians do right, affirmed that they were not sure if Christians could do anything right, as to the Christians were apostates. Another 9.1% of respondents observed that Christians tended to be more educated, while a further 9.1% opined that Christians had a collective character of minding their own business.

4.3.2.6 Things Somali Christians Do Wrong According to Somali Muslims

The study also sought to ascertain Somali Muslims' views on the things Somali Christians do wrong. These findings were summarized in Table 4.18.

Table 4. 18: Things Somali Christians do wrong

Responses	Frequency	
Abandoning Islam, encouraging others to abandon, and it is not acceptable	6	54.5
They commit blasphemy	2	18.2
They leave Islam	2	18.2
Leaving Islam because their lives are in danger as apostates	1	9.1
Total	11	100

All 91.7% of Muslims who responded to this question with 54.5 % opined that the Christians abandoned Islam and are also known to encourage others to leave the fold of Islam. According to 18.2% in two separate responses, Christians commit blasphemy as they also encourage others to leave the Islamic faith. There was 9.1% who added that the Christians are apostates leading dangerous lifestyle and cannot be accepted in the Somali Muslim community anymore.

4.3.2.7 Qur'anic Verses Which Provide Guidelines for Muslims to Treat Ex-Muslims Somali Christians

When asked to identify verses from the Qur'an which provide guidelines for the Muslims on how they should treat ex-Muslim Somali Christians, they gave about four main Islamic teachings that target ex-Muslim Christians, as shown in Table 4.19.

Table 4. 19: What the respondents felt the Qur'an teaches on how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated

What the Qur'an teaches about how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated	Frequency	Percentage
Rejected, punished: Qur'an 3:90, Qur'an 4:91	2	18.2
The apostates should be killed and even crucified and mutilated, Qur'an 5:33-34	6	54.5
Some verses indicate they must be killed, others indicate there is no compulsion in religion; it depends on one's interpretation	2	18.2
People are free to choose their faith according to the Qur'an	1	9.1
	11	100

With 54.5% of the responding, Muslims argued that such apostates should be killed and even crucified and mutilated; they justified their harsh pronouncements citing the Qur'anic verses of 5:33-34. Another 18.2% commented that Somali Christians should be rejected and punished. These Muslims justified their belief by citing the Qur'anic verses of 3:90 and 4:91. A further 18.2% quoted paraphrased Qur'anic verses that purported that Somali Christians must be killed. Some others felt there was no indication from the Qur'an that they are compelled in the religion to kill the apostates, but admitted it all depended on one's interpretation. However, 9.1% felt that people should be free to choose their faith according to the Qur'an.

4.3.2.8 *What the Hadith Teaches on How ex-Muslim Somali Christian Should be Treated by Muslims*

The study also ascertained Somali Muslims' views on what the Hadith teaches on how ex-Muslim Christians should be treated by Muslims. As shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4. 20: Hadith on how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated by Muslims

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Apostates should be killed. Sahih Bukhari, 9:83:17	8	72.7
They should be left alone; Allah can judge them in the hereafter	2	18.2
Rejected and punished Qur'an 3:90 and Qur'an 4:91	1	9.1
Total	11	100

The results showed 72.7% of the respondents argued that Somali Christians are apostates and should be killed; they justified their argument by citing Sahih Bukhari 9:83:17. 2 out of the 11(18.2%) another 18.2% Muslim respondents felt that Somali Christians should be left alone after all. They added that Allah can judge them in the afterlife. A further 9.1% presented that Christians should be rejected and punished. Hadith references to support this claim, as well as these Qur'anic references to include: 3:90 and 4:91

4.3.2.9 *Would Somali Muslims Harm Somali Christians if They Had an Opportunity?*

When asked to respond to the question, "If they had an opportunity, would they harm Somali Christians," one participant 8.3% did not respond to this question. However, 91.7% of respondents, answered in the affirmative. See Table 4.21.

Table 4. 21: Would Somali Muslims harm Somali Christians if they had an opportunity?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, to punish the apostates	3	27.3
Yes, it is the right thing to do	2	18.2
No, because I don't want to do that dirty job	1	9.075
Yes, because it is the teachings of Islam	2	18.2
No, because I choose not to	1	9.075
No, because it is none of my business; their life is theirs	1	9.075
No, who made me their judge?	1	9.075
	11	100

When asked to explain why they would do that, 27.3% argued that they would be punishing an apostate.¹⁸⁶ About 18.2% of the respondents justified their reasons to choose to harm Christians as being the right thing with a further 18.2% presenting that Islam teaches them to do so. One respondent in four separate responses at the frequency of 9.075% reasoned that they should not harm the Christians because they did not want to do that dirty job; they thus chose not to harm them because they considered it a dirty job that some other Muslims should do since they did not desire to do it themselves.

¹⁸⁶ Indicative that 27.3 % of Muslims in this study in Somalia renounced the Christians, their religion, religious beliefs and principles.

4.3.2.10 Would Muslims be Happy if a Christian Was harmed by a Muslim?

The study sought to determine if Muslims would be happy if a Christian would be harmed by a Muslim. In response to the question, all eleven, 91.7%, opined that they would be very happy if a Somali Christian would be harmed by a Muslim because of their faith. The results are depicted in Table 4.22.

Table 4. 22: Reasons the Muslim respondents would be happy if a Christian was harmed by a Muslim

The reason given by the Muslim respondents of why they would be happy if Somali Christians are being harmed for their faith by a Muslim	Frequency	Percentage
“Kill anyone who leaves the fold of Islam” is the Sahih Bukhari hadith	8	72.7
They deserve a chance in case they repent years from now	1	9.1
Their freedom to choose their faith must be respected even though they are going to hell if they do not return to Islam	1	9.1
Religious beliefs are personal matters	1	9.1
Total	11	100

This they justified by giving the following reasons for their feelings; 72.7% aver, “Kill anyone who leaves the fold of Islam” and this was based on Sahih Bukhari hadith. In three different incidences, at a frequency of one respondent at a frequency of 9.1%, they stated that Christians deserve a chance if they repent; they have the freedom to choose their faith and must be respected even though they are going to hell if they do not return to Islam and religious beliefs are a personal matter.

4.3.2.11 Are Muslim Respondents Aware of Christians Who Have Been Persecuted?

When asked if they knew a Christian who had been persecuted for their faith, the findings of the same eleven participants, (91.7%), are as shown in Table 4.23.

Table 4. 23: Asks if Muslim respondents were aware of Christians who have been persecuted

To the knowledge of the respondent, if they knew a Christian who had been persecuted	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I know a few who were killed for their faith	8	72.7
No, I do not know any personally that closely, but I know about some who are persecuted	1	9.1
Yes, I know some who are regularly threatened	1	9.1
Yes, I have a few former neighbours who are in hiding because of their faith	1	9.1
Total	11	100

More specifically, 72.7% of the respondents mentioned that they knew a few Christians who had been killed for their faith. At a frequency of 9.1 % in three separate responders provided other examples to show they knew Somali Christians were being persecuted. One presented that they knew some Christians who were regularly maltreated. One other mentioned that they were aware of a few former Christian neighbours who were in hiding because of their Christian faith. However, one respondent stressed that they did not have a close encounter with a Christian being persecuted.

4.3.2.12 Somali Muslims' Views on the Somali Church and Persecution

The study solicited Somali Muslims views on the Somali Church and the responders gave their views as shown in Table 4.24

Table 4. 24: Other things the Muslim respondents said on the persecution of Christians

What else the Muslim respondents said on the persecution of Somali Christians	Frequency	Percentage
There is no room for Somali Christians in Somalia. They can move to the Vatican	4	36.4
Somali Christians are increasing in number, but the Muslim community will never accept them	1	9.07
Somali Christians will pay a heavy price for leaving Islam	1	9.07
Christianity is an alien religion	1	9.07
Christianity is not compatible with being a Somali	4	36.4
Total	11	100

In two counts and at a frequency of 36.4% the respondents affirmed, first, that they felt there was no room for Somali Christians in Somalia, and they should all move to the Vatican, and secondly, they opined that Christianity is not compatible with being a Somali. In three separate responses at a frequency of 9.07%, respondents cited three other points about the Somali Church and persecution: that Somali Christians will pay a heavy price for leaving Islam, that Christianity is an alien religion, and that Somali Christians are increasing in number, but the Muslim community will never accept them.

4.3.2.13 Can Somali Christians Ever Live Peacefully in Somalia?

The study also sought to find out from Somali Muslims if Somali Christians could ever live peacefully in Somalia. Results are as revealed in Table 4.25.

Table 4. 25: Views on whether Somali Christians could ever live peacefully in Somalia

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
No, Islam teaches that apostates should be severely punished	6	54.5
No, Somali Muslims are intolerant	4	36.4
No, because Somalis are Muslim	1	9.1
Total	11	100

All eleven respondents responded no to the question if Christians can ever live peacefully in Somalia. In more exact details, 54.5% giving their reasons as to why they felt so, stated that Islamic teachings advocate for the punishment of apostates and all those who leave Islam should be punished severely. Another 36.4% acknowledged that Somali Muslims are intolerant, whereas further 9.1% argued that to be a Somali is to be a Muslim.

4.3.2.14 Somali Muslims' Expectations When They Persecute Christians

The study inquired of what the Somali Muslims expected when they persecuted the Somali Christians. The results are as shown in Table 4.26 where all eleven respondents stated categorically it was not possible to be both Somali and Christian at the same time.

Table 4. 26: Outcomes Muslims expect when they persecute Christians

What Muslims expect to gain when they persecute Christians	Frequency	Percentage
To eliminate them	6	54.5
To keep Somalia 100% Muslim	4	36.4
To scare them away	1	9.1
Total	11	100

While 54.5% contended that Christianity should be eliminated, a further 36.4% declared that Somalia should be 100% Muslim. Another 9.1% opined that the action of persecution would scare the Somali Christians.

4.3.2.15 Views on Whether Expected Outcomes of Persecuting Somali Christians are Achievable

Respondents were asked if the expected outcomes of persecuting Somali Christians were achievable. The results are shown in Table 4.27

Table 4. 27: Views on whether outcomes of persecuting Somali Christians are achievable

Views on whether outcomes of persecuting Somali Christians are achievable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, though it can take time	3	27.3
Yes	5	45.45
Yes, in the short term	2	18.2
I hope so. Can't imagine Somalia becoming like Lebanon where Muslims and Christians fought religious wars	1	9.05
	11	100

Only 45.5% of respondents unconditionally answered in the affirmative whereas 27.3% said yes but acknowledged it would take time and another 27.3% felt the same but added that it would take a short time. One of the respondents 9.05% declared that they hoped Somali Christians would be eliminated for they could not imagine Somalia becoming like Lebanon where Muslims and Christians have fought religious wars in the past.

4.32.16 Hadith That Teaches on Inter-religious Tolerance

When respondents were asked to provide a hadith the teachings of which foster inter-religious tolerance and dialogue, the results were as found in Table 4.28.

Table 4. 28: Respondents opinion on Hadith that teaches on inter-religious tolerance

Their response	Frequency	Percentage
There was no such a hadith; are you serious?	1	9.05
There was no such a hadith	2	18.2
There was no such a hadith Islam is my way or no way	2	18.2
No tolerance	2	18.2
There is none	4	36.35
Total	11	100

Their response revealed all 91.7% of respondents affirmed categorically they were not aware of any hadith which advocates for or taught inter-religious tolerance. However, 16.7% further presented that no hadith taught inter-religious tolerance. Whereas another 16.7% opined there was no such hadith and it was either the Islamic way or no way. Further to this 8.3% opined there was no such a hadith, even wondered if the question was “serious.”

4.3.2.17 Relationship Between Persecution of Christians and Church Growth in Somalia

The study sought the Somali Christians' views on the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia. The results are as in Table 4.29.

Table 4. 29: Somali Christian views on the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia

Somali Christian views on the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia	Frequency	Percentage
Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you	10	5
Be strong in persecution	75	37.5
Counselling is necessary for the persecuted	10	5
Ministers work underground	5	2.5
Money is needed to support the persecuted	5	2.5
More ministers needed	5	2.5
More sharing of the word of God to strengthen Christians	5	2.5
N/A, nothing to add	5	2.5
Persecution keeps the Church holy and Christ-like.	5	2.5
Somali Christians may have to marry from Christian countries	5	2.5
The more the persecution, the stronger the Christians	30	15
Strong ministers	10	5
Christians need to be humbler and less judgmental towards their Muslim brothers and sisters	5	2.5
	200	100

Seventy-five, that is 37.5%, reiterated that they would be stronger in the event of further persecution. About 15% of them claimed they felt they were stronger Christians as the persecution increased, with 5% stating they love their enemies including those who were persecuting them. Another 5% asserted they felt counselling was necessary for persecuted Christians. Another 5% opined that persecution would make their ministry stronger, while 2.5% held the opinion that money was needed for the Christian endeavours when another 2.5% maintained that more ministers were needed and a further 2.5% identified that the Gospel needed to be preached more. A further 2.5% of respondents expressed that persecution kept the church holy and Christ-like. Also, an additional 2.5% argued that for their survival, they needed to marry believing women from other countries since there are not enough believing women in Somalia. Another 2.5% stated that ministering underground would enhance the Christian movement in Somalia. The results also revealed that 5% of the respondents felt they had nothing extra to say or to respond to in this question.

4.3.2.18 Period the Church in Somalia Experienced the Best Numerical Growth

The study sought to identify the period when the Church in Somalia experienced the best numerical growth. Only 76.1% responded to this question. The results are as shown in Table 4.30.

Table 4. 30: Period the Church in Somalia Experienced the Best Numerical Growth

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1990	24	15.1
1999	88	55.3
1999-2003	28	17.6
2000-2001	4	2.5
2000-2002	12	7.5
2000-2004	3	2.0
Total	159	100

While 55.3% of respondents identified the year 1999, 17.6% identifying the years of 1999-2003, then 1990 at a value of 15.1%, 2000-2003 at 17.54%, then 2000-2001 by 2.51% and lastly, 2000-2004 by 1.88%.

4.3.2.19 Period the Church in Somalia Experienced the Worst Persecution

The study sought to ascertain the period the Church in Somalia experienced the worst persecution. The findings are as shown in Table 4.31.

Table 4. 31: Period the Church in Somalia experienced the worst persecution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1994-1996	84	65.6
1990-2000	28	21.9
1990 -2012	16	12.5
Total	128	100

A total of 61.24% of respondents answered this question. Of those respondents, 65.6%, gave the period of 1994-1996 and a further 21.9% said 1990-2000 and a further 12.5% of respondents opined 1990-2012. The researcher observes based on the change in the percentage of respondents that persecution was intense in 1994-1996, but that it continued with reduced intensity in the cities L1, L2, and L3 after that date. Thus, while 65.6% of respondents focused on the window of 1994-1996, 12.5% of the responders saw that period in the context of a much longer window of persecution that continued through 2012. This is notable that as the years went by from 1994 to 2010, a 53.1% reduction is seen in the number of informants reporting that persecution was still ongoing. What is important here is that three times more people consider the window of 1994-96 to be the focal period, then look at the whole decade as a time of severe persecution. The study indicates either the CAC church had become accustomed to persecution and was avidly dealing with it, resulting in a 53.1% reduction of the respondents at the time of this research, or not responding positively to this question that persecution was on-going. This could also be indicative of the intensity of persecution or reduction in persecution must have occurred thus informant percentages reducing by a 53.1% from 1994 to 2012.

4.3.2.20 Reasons the Church in Somalia is persecuted

The study sought to find out the reasons for the persecution of the Church in Somalia, with 99% responding to this question. The responses were listed in Table 4.32.

Table 4. 32: Reasons the church is persecuted in Somalia

Reasons according to the respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Because Muslim communities have wrong views about Christianity	16	7.7
Because all Muslims are against Somali Christians	27	13.0
Because Muslim people think that Christianity can flourish	5	2.4
All Somali house churches are persecuted because of their faith in Christ Jesus	107	51.7
The Church in Somalia is persecuted because Somalia is an Islamic state and most Somalis are radical Muslims	32	15.5
Because those who choose to follow Jesus Christ in truth shall be persecuted	10	4.85
The Church in Somalia is persecuted because any growing church is persecuted, and persecution contributes to church growth.	10	4.85
Total	207	100

All the 99.04% of the respondents opined yes in agreement with the statement in the questionnaire that the Church in Somalia is persecuted. In giving their reason why they felt so, they provided about 7 different answers to justify their reasoning: Of 207 respondents, 51.7% affirmed that all Somali house churches are persecuted because of their faith in Christ Jesus. Another 15.5% stated that the Church in Somalia is persecuted because Somalia is an Islamic state and most Somalis are radical Muslims. 13% felt all the Muslim people in Somalia were against the Somali Christians. 7.7% of respondents identified Muslim communities to have a wrong notion about Christians and Christianity. Further 4.83% stressed that choosing to follow Jesus Christ is the right decision, despite the fact of persecution. In addition, 4.83% of respondents stated that the Church in Somalia is persecuted because any growing church is persecuted, and persecution contributes to church growth. Only 2.4% indicated that Muslim people think that Christianity can flourish in Somalia.

4.3.2.21 Biblical Teaching on Christians' Response to Persecution in Somalia

The study sought to determine Somali Christians' view in what the bible teaches on how they should respond to persecution. The results demonstrate that the respondents showed a clear dependence on the Bible and when asked how the Bible encouraged them, with 99% of the respondents provided about 10 reasons they felt the Bible encouraged and strengthened them to endure and thrive in the persecution. See Table 4.33.

Table 4. 33: Biblical teaching on Christians’ response to persecution in Somalia

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
It encourages that we love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.	123	59.4
It encourages that those who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.	5	2.08
	5	2.08
We are not to worry because nothing is impossible for God.	5	2.08
When we look at the Bible, many come to know Christ because of the displaced believers.	15	7.24
We should rejoice and be excitingly glad as we share in Christ’s suffering. 1Peter 4:13	39	18.8
A Christian yielding graciously to persecution demonstrates that they have superior divine quality compared to their adversary (see Hebrews 11:38).	5	2.08
We set our eyes on the things above.	5	2.08
It encourages us to guard in our hearts that Jesus is with us until the end.	5	2.08
Total	207	100

59.4% reiterated that the Bible encourages them to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. A further 18.8% provided that they should rejoice and be excitingly glad as they share in Christ’s suffering, and they justified this quoting 1Peter 4:13. Whereas another 7.24% conferred by studying the Bible, they realized how many come to know Christ and this was due to displaced believers. In six separate accounts at a frequency of 2.42%, they underlined that the Bible encouraged them to desire to live a godly life in Christ and that they will be persecuted, that they are not to worry because nothing is impossible for God, as Christians, they should yield graciously to persecution demonstrating that they have superior divine quality as compared to their adversary; this was justified by quoting Hebrews 11:38, that they are to set their eyes on the things above while keeping Jesus in their hearts, he is with them until the end, and lastly they were even to share the good news with those who wronged them.

4.3.2.22 How Somali Christians Ought to Behave Under Persecution

The study sought to establish how Somali Christians are to behave under persecution. The results are as shown in Table 4.34.

Table 4. 34: How Somali Christians ought to behave under persecution

How Somali Christians ought to behave under persecution	Frequency	Percentage
To endure persecution and suffering	40	19.2
To be glad and rejoice because our reward is great in heaven	20	9.61
My Muslim society does not accept me because I am a Christian, but I am loved by Christ	27	12.9
To pray for those who persecute us and love our enemies	10	4.8
That we should not be afraid of what we are about to suffer but to put all our trust in Christ	38	18.3
To bless those who persecute us, Romans 12:14	58	27.9
To be alert and sober-minded. Your enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour	5	2.4
Jesus often taught in parables, an ancient Eastern literary genre. A parable is a narrative that presents comparisons to teach an important moral lesson. The parables are recorded in the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Some parables are common to all three synoptic Gospels, such as the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4:2-20, and Luke 8:4-15)	5	2.4
Total	208	100

The respondents came up with 8 different responses. At the highest frequency of 27.8%, they argued that Christians were to bless those who persecute them and this was justified citing Romans 12:14. Another 19.2% outlined that Christians should endure persecution and suffering as 18.2 % opined that we should not be afraid of what we are about to suffer but to put all our trust in Christ 13% felt their Muslim society does not accept them because of their Christian faith, but they are still glad because Christ loves them. About 9.62% asserted that they ought to be glad and rejoice because their reward is greater in heaven. Another 4.81% argued that they, as Christians, should pray for those who persecute them for they are called to love their enemies; 2.41% of respondents said they needed to be alert and of sober-minded for their enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Following the teaching of Jesus which he often taught in parables, an ancient eastern literary genre, and the respondents explained that the parable teaching presented comparisons to teach them an important moral lesson. They argued that the parables were recorded in the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The respondents stated that the parables were common to all three synoptic Gospels, such as the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4:2-20, and Luke 8:4-15). The study observes that the behaviours of the Christian respondents, in their quest to respond to persecution, were significantly informed by Scripture, the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the divine maxim of overcoming evil by doing well, through loving and praying for the enemy fervently.

4.3.2.23 Scripture Verses Somali Christians find Encouraging During Persecution

The study sought to find scripture verses that Somali Christians thought were encouraging during persecution. This question was addressed by 34.49% of respondents giving 21 different biblical verses as shown in Table 4.35.

Table 4. 35: Verses which people find most encouraging during persecution

Bible verses Cited	Frequency	Percentage
1 Peter 3:14	1	1.42
1John 15:20.	1	1.42
1 Thessalonians 3: 3	5	7.1
2 Corinthians 1:6	1	
2 Corinthians 12:10	13	18.6
2 Thessalonians 1:4	1	
Acts 5:41	2	2.85
Acts 8:1-4	2	2.85
Colossians 1:24	9	12.9
Ephesians 3:13	3	4.3
John 15:18	1	1.42
Mathew 5:10	6	8.6
Mathew 5:11	6	8.6
Mathew 5:44	2	2.85
Philippians 1:29	1	1.42
Romans 12:12	1	1.42
Romans 12:14	1	1.42
Romans 12:19	1	1.42
Romans 8: 17	2	2.85
Romans 8: 17	1	1.42
Romans 8: 35	6	8.6
Timothy 3:12	4	5.7
	70	100

The general theme in these scriptures was mostly for Christ's sake like they should delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties for when I am weak, and then Christ is strong. Some responses emulated the example of Paul, who rejoiced in suffering for the sake of his Church. These respondents felt assured by being persecuted they were blessed for the Kingdom of God was theirs and nothing could separate them from the love of Christ, not even trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword as taught in Roman 8:35.

4.3.2.24 Further Reasons for the Persecution of Christians in Somalia

The study made further enquiry into the reasons why Somali Christians are persecuted. Respondents gave various reasons as shown in Table 4.36.

Table 4. 36: Further reasons for the persecution of Christians in Somalia

What respondents observed as the reason for the persecution of the Church in Somalia	Frequency	Percentage
Faith in Christ	120	60
Somalia is a radical Muslim state	5	2.5
Before the 1990s, the Church in Somalia was not persecuted as much but today is a different story There are no official churches but creative access house churches	5	2.5
The Church in Somalia is persecuted because it is necessary if the church is to grow there. Numerical growth also attracts persecution	5	2.5
Because Muslims consider killing and persecuting Christians as a righteous act	10	5
Because Muslim peoples' view of Christianity is wrong; they also think the Christian view of Christ is wrong	20	10
Because they do not want to see Somali Christians	5	2.5
Somalis are radical Muslims	30	15
Total	200	100

The results showed that 60% of those who responded to this question identified that faith in Christ by the Somali Christians was the main reason for the persecution. Another 15% identified the reason as Somalia being a radical Islamic state, whereas 10% cited the Muslims' view that the Christian faith is wrong. A further 5% observed that killing and persecuting Christians was considered righteous. Also, at a proportion of 2.5%, the respondents cited four other reasons they felt the church was persecuted including Somalis are radical Muslims, there is no official church but only creative access house churches; the lament of Christians that before the 1990s, the Church in Somalia was not persecuted as much, but that sense that time, it is different; that the Church in Somalia is growing, and that persecution makes it grow more; and, that Somali Christians are not welcome in Somalia.

4.3.2.26 Biblical Encouragement on What Christians Should Do During Persecution

The study sought to establish what the Bible encourages Christians to do during persecution. The findings are as shown in Table 4.38.

4.3.2.27 Somali Christians who are Active Members of Their Clan

The study sought to establish if Somali Christians were active members of their clan. As shown in Table 4.37.

Table 4. 37: Are you an active and respected member of your clan?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I am a respected and active member of my clan.	129	62.3
Yes, I try to be active. although my clan role is very limited because I am a woman.	5	2.42
Yes, I am different from my siblings at home, so my family loves me.	43	20.8
Yes, I pay the <i>qaaraan</i> because it helps those in need.	5	2.42
Yes, but I am still young and working on earning that clan respect despite my Christian faith.	5	2.42
No, I am not because I am a Christian, my birth family does not accept me.	5	2.42
Yes, I am patiently demonstrating Christ's love, so they may know Christ.	5	2.42
No, because women are not required to be very active in the clan, but I still pay my <i>qaaraan</i> .	10	4.8
	207	100

The results showed 62.3% indicated that they were respected active members of their clan with 20.8% showing that they were different from their siblings and that was the reason their families loved them, whereas 4.8% opined no because women are not required to be very active in the clan, but those women still pay their *qaaraan*. The respondents, at a rate of 2.41%, gave five other reasons for why they were loved and respected by their clan: that she was active although her activity was very limited because the respondent was a woman, that one pays the *qaaraan*. After all, this financial contribution helps those who are in need, the respondent was still young and worked hard to cultivate a good relationship in the clan. One respondent said the clan did not respect them because of their Christian faith. This respondent added that their birth family did not accept them because of their faith. This respondent stated they patiently demonstrate Christ's love to their people so that they may know Christ.

4.3.2.28 Somali Christians Who Pay the Clan *Qaaraan*

The study sought to determine if Somali Christians pay the clan *qaaraan*, a financial contribution paid by all reputable members of the clan. The findings are as shown in Table 4.38.

Table 4. 38: Somali Christians who pay the clan *qaaraan*

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, I pay the <i>qaaraan</i> because it is like a certificate of membership. If you want to remain in the clan, then you have to pay.	15	7.31
Yes, the Bible teaches us paying the <i>qaaraan</i> is a good thing.	15	7.31
Yes, I pay because it is a requirement.	27	13.2
Yes, I pay the <i>qaaraan</i> because it is good to help the clan when in need and to be a respected member.	123	60
No, I do not pay the <i>qaaraan</i> , but my parents do, and that is how my clan helps their members in need.	5	2.435
No, I don't pay the <i>qaaraan</i> because in Somali culture only men are required to pay that.	15	7.31
Respectful Christians enjoy clan protection.	5	2.435
	205	100

A full 60% of those who responded to this question stated they pay the *qaaraan* because it is good to help the fellow clan members who are in need, and it also earns one respect in the clan. Those who said they pay the *qaaraan* because it is a requirement were 13.2%. Just 7.31% offered various other reasons. One reason was that the *qaaraan* was paid because it is like a certificate of membership. A second reason was to remain active and respected in the clan. The Bible was cited as supporting paying the *qaaraan* (1Timothy 5:8). Thirdly, 7.31% admitted they do not pay the *qaaraan* because, in Somali culture, only men are required to pay it. Twice, at a rate of 2.4%, respondents stated that while they don't personally pay the *qaaraan*, their parents do. This *qaaraan* payment enables their clan to help them as active members. Other respondents highlighted that respectful Christians enjoy their clan's protection. From the way people responded to the question, the results indirectly reveal that 2.4% of respondents were women and another 2.4% were still financially dependent upon their families.

4.3.2.29 Clan Protection Extended to Somali Christians by Their Muslim Clan Members

The study sought to establish if clan protection is extended to Somali Christians by their Muslim clan members, as shown in Table 4.39.

Table 4. 39: Clan protection extended to Somali Christians by their Muslim clan members

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, caring and respectful Christians receive protection from their clan members.	112	54.1
Yes, Christians receive freedom and protection from their clans.	24	11.6
I can't be sure.	12	5.8
No, I have not experienced any protection as we speak.	5	2.4
Very limited protection is offered to Christians who live with their clan.	14	6.8
Yes, I have not experienced much opposition and I enjoy clan protection.	15	7.24
No, I pay the <i>qaaraan</i> because I need to help my clan members, but I do not enjoy much protection.	10	4.83
No, the Somali constitution does not give protection to Somali Christians.	5	2.4
No, I find it hard to say that there is much protection.	10	4.83
	207	100

The results showed 54.1% of respondents indicated that Christians were cared for, respected, and receive protection from their Muslim clan members. A further 11.6% agreed that Christians do receive freedom and protection from their clans. Another 7.24% presented that they had not experienced any opposition and that they enjoy clan protection. Another 6.8% reported that very limited protection is offered to those who live with their clan. Additionally, 5.8% were not sure if Christians received clan protection, with a further 4.8% in two separate accounts citing, first, that they pay the *qaaraan* because they need to help the clan members, but, second, that it was hard to say that there was such protection. An extra 2.4% indicated they had not experienced any clan protection, and a further 2.4% opined that the Somali constitution does not give protection to Somali Christians.

4.3.2.30 Protection Offered to Somali Christians by the Somali Constitution

The study sought to ascertain if the Somali constitution offered any protection to Somali Christians against persecution. The results are as shown in Table 4.40.

Table 4. 40: Explanation of 10 b: Protection offered to Somali Christians by the Somali Constitution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
No, the constitution does not give us any protection to speak of because it is easy to be accused, also we are not accepted in the community, so it is easy for Muslims to persecute any person who is suspected of following Jesus	124	60.5
No, we don't have that much protection	11	5.4
No, it bans the propagation of our faith, Bible study groups, and fellowship gatherings. Nothing good will come out of that constitution	17	8.3
There is a contradiction in the constitution, there is no full protection in the constitution for Christians, clan protection is better and more reliable than the constitution	4	2.1
No, Christians meet for worship, Bible study, fellowships in secret. The constitution does not offer us any real protection	21	10.2
No, the constitution acknowledges the right to religious belief but only the dominant religion, Islam, benefits here	6	2.9
Somali Christians receive basic legal protection from the law enforcement officials	7	3.4
Yes, it offers some protection	5	2.4
Caring and respectful Christians enjoy a degree of clan protection.	5	2.4
The constitution does not offer any meaningful protection for Christians.	5	2.4
	205	100

The responders to this question totalled 98%, with 60.5% of these respondents arguing that the constitution did not give them any protection; they added that it was easy to be accused as a Christian and that they were also not accepted in the community. The respondents said it was easy for the Muslims to persecute any person they thought was a follower of Jesus. Another 8.29% of respondents said that the constitution bans the propagation of their faith and that Bible study groups, fellowships, and house churches face huge legal challenges. Another 10.24% argued that Christians meet for worship and Bible study meetings in secret because the constitution does not give them much protection. This feeling of lack of protection was further presented by 5.37% more respondents who argued that Christians did not have much protection in the constitution. However, 3.41 % of respondents indicated that Somali Christians receive basic legal protection from the law enforcement officials and a further 2.92% cited that the constitution acknowledges the right to religious belief but only the dominant religion, Islam, benefits here.

4.3.2.31 Legal Protection Offered to Somali Christians by Somali Law Enforcement Officers

The study sought to ascertain legal protection offered to Somali Christians by Somali Law Enforcement Officers. The results were summarized in Table 4.41, with 96.7% responding and 3.3% not responding to the question.

Table 4. 41: Legal protection offered to Somali Christians by Somali law enforcement officers

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, Somali Christians receive basic legal protection from law enforcement officials.	145	71.8
Yes, because of pressure from the international community.	12	5.9
Yes, it does exist in some ways.	11	5.4
Yes, protection is on the books, but general lawlessness remains a problem.	10	4.95
More new believers come to Jesus because of the witness of the persecuted Christians.	5	2.5
It depends upon how a believer treats law enforcement officials.	9	4.45
Yes, they offer some protection.	8	3.96
Yes, but some helpful Muslim officers are not religious.	3	1.04
	202	100

The study concludes there was a general feeling among the respondents that law enforcement officials did offer some legal protection to Somali Christians. This was confirmed by 71.8% stating that Somali Christians do receive basic legal protection from law enforcement officials, and 5.9% further explaining that this was due to pressure from the international community. Another 5.4% of respondents maintained that some protection by law enforcement officers did exist in certain ways, whereas 4.95% showed that while the protection existed in the books, general lawlessness was still quite prevalent. An additional 4.45% attested that the protection they receive often depends upon how believers behave towards law enforcement officers. Additionally, 3.96% of respondents maintained that the law enforcement officers do provide some limited protection. Another 2.5% of respondents remarked that more new believers come to Jesus because of the witness of the persecuted Christians, and 1.04% noted that often the most helpful Muslim officers were not religious.

4.3.2.32 Respondents' Views on Whether Persecution Makes the Church Weaker or Stronger

The study sought to establish whether persecution made the church weaker or stronger. The findings are as shown in Table 4.42 with 95.7% of the respondents agreeing that persecution has made the church more resilient.

Table 4. 42: Respondents’ views on whether persecution made the church weaker or stronger

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, if you are faithful, then for sure persecution will make you more resilient than ever before	70	35
Yes, it helps us to grow	15	7.5
Yes, it helps our faith to be more resilient	14	7
Yes, persecution strengthens faith	90	45
Yes, it makes it more Christ-like and more like him in persecution	7	3.5
Persecution is a means of testing the difference between a strong believer and a weak believer	4	2
	200	100

The researcher concludes the Christian respondents felt extreme persecution and that persecution did not weaken them, but rather made them stronger. This was further confirmed by 35% of respondents stating that when they are faithful, persecution made them more resilient than ever before. Another 45% affirmed that persecution strengthens their faith, while 6.5% maintained that persecution helped them grow as Christians. A further 5.5% argued that persecution helped them to make their faith more resilient. An additional 2.5% advocated that they were more Christ-like and became more aware of him in persecution. Another 1.5% of respondents opined that persecution helped them in distinguishing between the strong believer and the weak believer.

4.3.2.33 Persecution of the Church and the Numerical Growth of the Church

The study sought to establish the relationship between the persecution of the church and the numerical growth of the Church in Somalia. The results are as abridged in Table 4.43, where 99% of participants answered, while 1% did not respond to the question.

Table 4. 43: Respondents’ views on the persecution of the church and the numerical growth of the church

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, because persecution allows us to speak about Christ where we live.	12	5.8
Yes, many people are saved because of persecution.	42	20.3
Yes, it helps the church grow because persecution leads many people to the truth of Jesus Christ and helps them receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.	72	34.8
Yes, it helps the church grow because persecution helps many people to hear and receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.	77	37.1
The pain of the persecution can sometimes cause health risks to the church.	4	2.0
Total	207	100

The question of whether persecution helped the church grow numerically, 37.1% maintained that it indeed helps the church grow numerically because persecution helps many people hear and receive the Gospel of Christ Jesus. A further 34.8% maintained that persecution helps the church grow because it leads many people to the truth of Jesus Christ and helps them receive the Gospel of Christ Jesus. A further 20.3% argued that many people are saved by following Jesus because of the persecution. Another 15.8% showed that persecution allows them to speak about Christ within their locality when only 2% of the respondents observed that the pain of the persecution sometimes makes the church suffer health risks.

4.3.2.34 Health Risks Posed by Persecution to Somali Christians

The study sought to establish health risks posed by persecution to Somali Christians. The researcher observed 95.2% chose to respond concerning the link between persecution and health risks. See Table 4.44.

Table 4. 44: Respondents’ views on the health risks posed by persecution to Somali Christians

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Christians are discriminated against in employment opportunities	4	2
Christians are not welcomed to respond to job openings in Islamic Somalia; even if they create their businesses, they will be boycotted	7	3.5
Persecution leads to death and emotional scars	20	10
Persecution can cause mental damage	25	12.5
Persecution helps us learn more about the word of God	6	3
Persecution helps us to be vigilant in everything	10	5
Persecution helps us to be alert about our surroundings	5	2.5
Persecution helps us open our eyes to what is happening.	3	1.5
Persecution can cause mental health problems	25	12.5
Persecution may lead to mental disability	5	2.5
After a persecution episode, it takes time for everything to return to normal as it was before the event; nevertheless, persecution is a normal thing	9	4.5
Persecution causes psychological and mental issues	30	15
Christians may experience mental and emotional scars when the pain of persecution is prolonged	20	10
Persecution leads Christians to become more careful than ever	1	.5
After persecution, one does not trust others as easily	15	7.5
Yes, persecution causes health risks; it maims Christians	15	7.5
	200	100

They further confirmed by their explanation were 12.5% opined that persecution sometimes causes mental damage and 15% of additional respondents cited the psychological and mental suffering persecution causes. A further 12.5% of the respondents said the pain and suffering from persecution was the cause of many mental health issues that some persecuted Christians suffer.

In a nutshell, a total of 40% of the respondents felt that persecution significantly gives rise to mental health-related issues in the Somali Church. In addition, 7.5% of respondents said Christians should not trust Muslims easily. A further 7.5% cited that persecution of Christians sometimes included maiming. Of respondents, 5% stated that persecution made them even more careful in almost everything they did. A further 4.5% said that when an episode of persecution has passed, it takes time for everything to return to

normal as it was before the incident. Another 3% of respondents argued that the persecution made them learn more about the word of God. When a further 3.5% of respondents mentioned that Christians were discriminated against when they applied for job opportunities in Islamic Somalia. They added that even if they created their businesses, many Muslims would boycott their businesses.

At a response rate of 2.5%, two claims were made: believers are vigilant about persecution, but persecution causes mental health problems for persecuted Christians. A further 2% of respondents showed Christians are discriminated against in employment opportunities, whereas 1.5% of respondents reiterated that they are watchful and alert when it comes to persecution. Only 5% of respondents said they needed to be more careful than ever before about persecution; avoiding unnecessary persecution and spotting the beginning of persecution is an important asset in the Somali Church.

4.3.2.35 Economic Problems Posed by Persecution of the Church

The study sought to ascertain if persecution causes economic problems to the church. In response, 96.1% of the total respondents affirmed that economic problems existed as a result of persecution. They explained the source of these economic challenges as shown in Table 4.45.

Table 4. 45: Economic problems posed by persecution to the church

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, the church does not receive enough revenue to cover her day-to-day ministry.	17	8.5
Yes, many Christians cannot find gainful employment	10	5
Yes, Christian owned businesses are boycotted	26	13
Yes, they don't give us job opportunities because of our faith	107	53.5
Yes, the church's expenses are far greater than its revenues.	15	7.5
Yes, the economy of the church is determined by the activities of the members that bring revenue and when the church faces persecution this hurts the church's income.	6	3
Somali Muslim leaders control most of the market, and they hate very much to have any business deals with Somali Christians	19	9.5
	200	100

Of all respondents, 53.5%, said they were denied job opportunities because of their faith. A further 13.0% of respondents affirmed that Christian-owned businesses were boycotted, while 8.5% of others said the church does not get enough money to cover her day-to-day ministry expenses. Another 7.5% identified that the church's expenses were far greater than its revenues. With 5% of respondents, there was the suggestion that the financial strains of the churches were the result of the Christian's lack of gainful employment. A further 5.0% of the respondents said the Somali Christians are financially poor and contribute very little to the church.

Moreover, some 9.5% of participants cited that Somali Muslim leaders control most of the market and hate to have any business deals with Somali Christians. Elsewhere, another 3% of respondents argued that the economy of the church is determined by the activities of the members which bring in revenues and when the church faces persecution, the income of the church suffers.

4.3.2.36 Family Problems Posed by Persecution to Somali Christians

The study sought to ascertain family problems posed by persecution among Somali Christians. As shown in Table 4.46.

Table 4. 46: Family problems posed by persecution to Somali Christians

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Somali Christians are rejected by their families and relatives and their close friends	170	85
The family could be broken up because of the persecution the members face	3	1.5
The Somali believers, especially men, can't find wives to marry because there are more men in the church than women	7	3.5
Somali Christian families face many challenges which can lead to unnecessary family fallout	5	2.5
Muslim family members hate Christians	6	3.0
Muslim family members see Christians as bad	9	4.5
	200	100

A total of 85% of respondents said that Somali Christians are rejected by their families, relatives, and close friends. A further 4.5% of respondents stated family problems are caused because Muslims perceive Christians as bad people. Another 3.5% of respondents affirmed that Somali Christians, especially the men, can't find a Christian woman to marry because there are more men in the church than women. An additional 3% of respondents said family problems were caused because Muslims hate Christians. A further 2.5% of respondents declared Somali Christian families faced a plethora of problems leading to unnecessary family fallout. Finally, 1.5% of respondents opined that family discord resulting in marital breakups often resulted from sustained persecution family members may face.

4.3.2.37 Problems Posed by Persecution of the Church in Somalia

The study sought to establish problems posed by persecution on the Church in Somalia. Results are portrayed in Table 4.47.

Table 4. 47: Respondents’ views on consequences posed by persecution to the Church in Somalia

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Persecution leads to numerous problems including death, fear, and economic problems	15	7.4
Persecution creates destruction of Christian-owned property and loss of family	11	5.4
Persecution results in discrimination	7	3.4
Persecution can result in imprisonment	5	2.5
Persecution makes Bible study groups and fellowships difficult.	31	15.2
Because of persecution, it requires time for new converts to be able to come into a fellowship and to be introduced to other Christians in a fellowship.	15	7.4
Persecution shortens the lives of Christians.	4	1.9
Persecution leads people to move from place to place	19	9.3
Persecution causes problems such as the abduction of Christians in the church.	5	2.5
Other problems include loss of life for targeted Christians, isolation; inability to participate in cultural or clan activities because people become outcasts	18	8.8
Other problems include hatred by the Muslim society	16	7.8
Sometimes it is very hard to look beyond persecution.	8	3.9
Spiritual attacks cause hatred, unhappiness, and poverty	3	1.95
Persecution leads to pain and suffering	37	18.1
Persecution results in the burning of Christian property	3	1.95
Worship becomes very difficult for persecuted church members.	7	3.4
	204	100

The table shows a 97.6% response rate to this question. Of these respondents, 18.1% stated that it caused pain and suffering, while 15.2% remarked that persecution made it hard for Bible study meetings and fellowship gatherings to take place unmolested. Another 7.8% of respondents said persecution causes other problems over and above Christians being hated by the Muslim community while, at a frequency of 7.4%, responses show that persecution makes it difficult for the new converts to join the fellowships and house churches and be introduced to other local Christians.

This persecution and the fear of it results in many problems for Christians, both new and old. Some Christians suffer death, fear, and economic problems. A further 9.3% of respondents stated that Christians move from place to place for safety. Another 8.8% of respondents affirmed that Christians lost their lives after Muslims targeted them and that others live in isolation and cannot participate in any kind of cultural or clan activities because they are perceived as outcasts. In addition, 5.4% of respondents stated that Muslims destroyed or confiscated Christian properties resulting in huge losses for targeted families. A further 3.9% of informants stated these hostile actions made Christians preoccupied with persecution. Another 3.4% of respondents maintained this persecution made Christian worship very difficult for the church members. A further 2.5% of respondents on two

different accounts cited that Christians suffered imprisonments and illegal detentions, as well as abductions. On life expectancy, 1.9% of respondents argued that the life expectancy of Christians was shorter than their Muslim counterparts as a result of persecution and the stress that accompanies it. 1.47% of respondents in two separate remarks cited, first, spiritual attacks, hatred, unhappiness, and poverty and, second, that Christian property might be burnt to cause harm to church members.

4.3.2.38 Self-inflicted Persecution Problems Suffered by Christians in Somalia

The study sought to establish if some persecution problems suffered by Christians were self-inflicted or could have been avoided. The results were as shown in Table 4.48.

Table 4. 48: Respondents’ perceptions on self-inflicted persecution problems suffered by Christians in Somalia

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Some Christians make innocent mistakes and some others act foolishly, thus angering the Muslim community. Muslims are not tolerant when it comes to Christian mistakes.	57	28.5
Christians need to cultivate better relationships with Muslims.	9	4.5
Christians are human beings who make mistakes just like anyone else. Muslims are not patient with Christian mistakes; no grace is extended to Christians when they err.	7	3.5
Christians must be smart, alert, and watchful; persecution is here to stay. Right now, Christians are not as vigilant as they need to be.	49	24.5
No, not really, but Christians do need to be more humble.	3	1.5
Some Somali Christians make foolish mistakes and thus invite the persecution of Muslims.	70	35
Christians, in their attempt to witness to Muslims, often end up offending the Muslims. Christians are then accused of insulting Muhammad and Islam. Some Christians do not know the best and safest way to witness to Muslims.	5	2.5
	200	100

A total of 90.4% responded to the question whether the persecution problems suffered by Christians were self-inflicted or could have been avoided, with 35% expressing the opinion that some Somali Christians make foolish mistakes and subsequently suffer persecution. Another 28.5% of other respondents said some Christians make innocent mistakes and others act foolishly, thus enticing Muslim anger against the Christians. A further 23% of the respondents opined that Christians must live intelligently and wisely to avoid unnecessary persecution. While 4.5% of respondents argued that Christians must be above reproach in love and kindness, a further 3.5% of respondents said that Christians are human and are subject to make mistakes just like other human beings do.

Numerous respondents added that while Muslims tolerate the mistakes of other Muslims, they do not extend that grace to Christians. Additionally, 2.5% of respondents said that Christians often witness to Muslims and this offends other Muslims who accuse the Christians of speaking ill of Islam and Muhammad, the Muslim Prophet. These respondents added that some Christians did not know the best and safest ways to conduct evangelism in Islamic Somalia. Lastly, 1.5% of respondents indicated that Christians were not exactly responsible for their persecution but had a lot to learn on the importance of humility. In other words, the persecution was rarely self-inflicted.

4.3.2.39 Strategies to Remedy the Problem of Persecution of Christians in Somalia

The study sought to ascertain how the problem of persecution could be remedied. The strategies, as highlighted by 97.12% of participants, are as shown in Table 4.49.

Table 4. 49: Respondents’ views on strategies to remedy the problem of persecution of Christians in Somalia

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
2 Timothy 3:12 says that Christians who live a godly life in Christ would be persecuted.	8	4
Religious sensitivity and respect for religious choice are important.	42	21
Christians must avoid being rude, so they do not offend Muslims.	16	8
Muslims would need to believe the truth of the Gospel	3	1.5
People need to realize that Somali Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters, instead of fighting over who is right we need to learn from each other and live in peace	7	3.5
Persecution will never end, 2 Timothy 3:12	15	7.5
Somali Christians need always to stand united and face persecution together like one body.	71	35.5
Persecution will end when Muslims stop using violence against Christians	4	2
Persecution will never end, but Christians can try to respect Muslims more.	34	17
Total	200	100

According to Table 4.51, 35.5% of respondents stated that Somali Christians must always stand united when facing persecution as the one body of Christ. Additionally, 21% of respondents said that some Christians needed to be more sensitive with their behaviour and witness since they live in a Muslim country. At two counts, and a frequency of 7.9%, respondents stated that Christians must avoid being rude and intentionally offending Muslims.

On the second count, the respondents cited that persecution will always be there and never end and justified their opinion with 2 Timothy 3:12.¹⁸⁷ Using the same text, 2 Timothy 3:12; a further 8% of the respondents argued that Christians ought to live a godly life even though godly Christians are always persecuted. In other areas, 3.5% of respondents stated that

¹⁸⁷ 2 Timothy 3:12.

people need to realize that Somali Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters and instead of fighting over who is right, they need to learn from each other and live in peace.¹⁸⁸ Some 2% of respondents argued that Muslims propagate their faith freely and use violence against Christians; yet they would not grant the Christians the same right of sharing their faith freely but instead persecute them. This double standard was also expressed by another 1.5% of respondents who stated that Muslims needed to be honest and truthful and abstain from persecuting Christians and also, they need to believe the truth of the Gospel.

4.3.2.40 Ways for Somali Christians to Overcome Persecution Challenges

The study sought to establish if respondents could overcome persecution challenges. Precisely 95.7% of them responded in the affirmative, providing 6 explanations concerning how this could be achieved, as shown in Table 4.50.

Table 4. 50: Respondents’ views on ways Somali Christians could overcome persecution challenges

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Christians should not blaspheme Islam	152	76
Christians need always to be an example of love and forgiveness. We must pray for those who persecute us as Jesus prayed for his persecutors, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”	8	4
Christians should respect Muslims	22	11
Christians should be humbler	3	1.5
Christians ought to be wise and patient	9	4.5
Christians should seek a good relationship with Muslims	6	3
Yes	20	10
Total	200	100

Exactly 76% of respondents suggested Christians should be wise and respectful and avoid blasphemy against Islam. Another 11% of respondents argued that Christians should respect Islam while 10% of respondents did not elaborate their answers, but simply answered, yes to this question.

However, 4.5% of respondents suggested that Christians needed to be wise in practicing more humility. With 4% of respondents, there was the opinion that Christians must always be an example of love and forgiveness towards those who persecute them as exemplified by Jesus in Luke 23:34 when he prayed while being crucified, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” The idea of Christians fostering a good relationship with Muslims was cited by 3% of the respondents. These respondents consider

¹⁸⁸ Interfaith dialogue to ensure harmonious living.

Muslim-Christian relations as a peace-making effort. A further 1.5% of respondents stated that Christians should learn to be humbler to avoid persecution.

4.3.2.41 Benefits of Persecution for the Somali Church

The study sought to establish if any good could come from the persecution challenges facing the Somali Church, with 95.7% of respondents offered 5 benefits of persecution, as shown in Table 4.51.

Table 4. 51: Respondents’ views on benefits of persecution for the Somali Church

Response	Frequency	Percentage
A stronger and more resilient church	130	65
Patient and watchful Christians	46	23
Peace and coexistence.	4	2
Spiritually mature Christians	9	4.5
Faithful Christians	11	5.5
	200	100

The participants felt the above-mentioned issues were good and beneficial to the persecuted church. The reason cited with the highest frequency was a strong and more resilient church, which was cited by 65% of the respondents. A further 23% of the respondents called attention to a more patient and watchful church, with 4.5% of respondents saying Christians grow spiritually and 2% of respondents citing peaceful coexistence.

When asked finally if there was anything else, they could say on persecution challenges, 99.52% of respondents did not respond. One single respondent stated that “persecution is allowed by God for the growth of His church and the spread of the Gospel. That is why even though God has the power to completely prevent it from happening; He still allows it because even in the darkest moment of the storm He is in control of it all.”

4.3.3 An Appraisal to Establish if the Church in Somalia Has a Locally Developed Distinctive Theology of Persecution

The study sought to establish the effect persecution had on the growth of the Somali Church and if it’s coping mechanism included the development of a distinctive theology of persecution to empower even during persecution. The researcher first sought to know from participants if they had heard of or had a theology of persecution. Exactly 99.04% responded to the question by saying yes, and their reasons for them replying yes are as shown in Table 4.52.

Table 4. 52: Development of a theology of persecution and its characteristics

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1980	54	29.0
1980 in the form of worship songs and Somali traditional hymns	102	54.8
These included teaching about persecution and the composition of the church's oral and formal traditional worship hymns	18	9.7
In the 1990s when several Somali Christians were martyred for their faith in Christ. These included teaching about persecution and the composition of its oral and formal traditional worship hymns	12	6.5
Total	186	100

These results indicated that the respondents were aware of this theology. The respondents also confirmed that the Somali Church had a theology of persecution, with 98.1% confirming that they had been taught the importance of a theology of persecution in the church.

About the question of when the Somali Church developed theology of persecution, at a frequency of 83.9% they identified 1980 as the year in which they started developing this theology. Of these, 54.8% detailed that that theology was entrenched in worship songs and Somali traditional hymns. Additionally, 9.7% presented that teaching about persecution was composed in the form of its oral and formal traditional worship hymns. However, 6.5% of respondents opined the time was the 1990s, which was the period when some Somali Christians were martyred for their faith in Christ. The respondents also agreed that their theology of teaching about persecution was composed of oral and formal traditional worship hymns.

4.3.3.1 Ways in Which the Theology of Persecution Helps the Church

The study sought to ascertain how this theology of persecution helps the church. 120 respondents listed 59 different reasons on how the theology of persecution has helped the church. The response with the highest outcome was 6.7%; they identified the benefits as the numerical growth of the church and the strengthening of house church members. The respondents also added that the challenges and the blessings that persecution causes are taught in the Bible.

A further 5.83% of the respondents in two separate subjects cited that the theology of persecution explains the challenges and blessings of persecution as taught in the Bible. They added that Christians are also taught how to act during persecution as taught in the Bible. At a response rate of 4.2%, in two separate responses, the respondents stated that Christians should never be surprised when they are persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ, but they should be astonished if they are never persecuted. The respondents cited this response by quoting "*all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2 Timothy 3:12) and they further argued at the same frequency that persecution theology ensures continuity of the church.

Also, at a frequency of 3.33%, in three separate accounts, the respondents highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of persecution of Christians as taught in the Bible. Secondly, the respondents stated that the theology of persecution teaches them how to deal with persecution just like the early Christians did. Lastly, they suggested that the theology of

persecution creates a common bond between the Christians and therefore helps the church to grow numerically.

At a frequency of 2.5%, in seven separate accounts, the respondents said that persecution theology prepares the church for persecution that eventually may happen. Secondly, they argued that the Bible teaches them about persecution. Thirdly, they reiterated that the theology of persecution brings Christians from all walks of life together; fourthly, they added that this theology reminds Christians how to behave when persecuted and what to do for those who are persecuted. Fifthly, the respondents also stated that a theology of persecution makes the believers more educated about persecution and how to face it; followed by a sixth response that this theology helps them understand the teachings of the Bible. Lastly, on the seventh count, the respondents opined that this theology helps them increase their knowledge about persecution and how to deal with it in a biblically sound way.

Based on these findings, the study confirms that the Somali Church's theology of persecution teems with Biblical-centred teachings which are a huge help to the Christians under persecution. These respondents highlighted that this theology glorifies God and helps Christians live a Christ-like life as they face persecution. This response was also similar to 43 other responses, with a total frequency of 45%.

4.3.3.2 *Ways the Theology of Persecution is expressed in the Somali Church*

The study sought to establish how the theology of persecution is often expressed in the Somali Church. In response, 97.6% of respondents identified poetry and a further 95.2% affirmed Christian prose teaching. None gave sermons as a way in which this theology of persecution was expressed in the church. The study concludes that the mode frequently used to express persecution theology was poetry and Christian prose teaching; sermons were not mentioned at all.

Given the critical role of persecution theology, the respondents were asked to explain theological ideas they find useful during persecution time. The results were as shown in Table 4.53.

Table 4. 53: Theology of persecution concepts respondents find helpful

Response	Frequency	Percentage
That all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.	64	40
Persecution and discipleship come together; following Christ includes pain and suffering	16	10
Persecution and discipleship are intertwined, without persecution, Christianity has no meaning.	60	37.5
Theology of persecution makes us desire to know the word of God even more.	20	12.5
Total	160	100

At a prevalence of 40%, respondents indicated that all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, whereas a further 37.5% states that persecution and discipleship were interwoven and without persecution, Christianity did not have meaning. At a lower count of 12.5%, respondents further explained that this theology of persecution made them desire to know the word of God even more. At a count of 10%, the respondents opined that persecution and discipleship were important to the Christian life. They further explained that following Christ includes pain and suffering. The study observes that the Somali

Church's theology, ideology, orientation, and discipleship assume that all true disciples of Christ face persecution and that they must face it with serenity, Christ-like attitude, and divine discipline as advocated in the Bible.

The respondents justified their belief in the benefits of a theology of persecution by quoting 28 passages of Scriptures as given by 55.5% of the respondents. From these Scriptures, the study observes that the respondents encourage each other using these scriptures so that they may endure and even thrive in persecution as they bless their persecutors. Using these Scriptures, the Somali Christians encourage one another by praying for their persecutors. Biblical examples include how Paul and Barnabas endured and thrived while suffering persecution. These men of God demonstrated a divine attitude towards suffering while cherishing their relationship with Jesus; their suffering reminds Christians to a certain degree of the suffering of Christ.

Put another way, the Scripture not only enlightened them but also gave them hope that divine help was available to them as they undergo persecution because of Jesus' name. They accept the persecution, knowing they will be rewarded in the hereafter for their faithfulness. The Somali Christians' theology of persecution gives them peace of mind because they are confident; they have divine help and a reward waiting for them. There is a firm belief in the Somali Church that when one is persecuted, one is blessed, and suffering reminds them of the suffering of Jesus.

This study makes it clear that the Somali Christians are trained to accept persecution joyfully with full acceptance, showing their dependence on God's help as illustrated in the Bible. The respondents carefully justified their convictions based on 1 John 3:12 at a frequency of 17.2%, Matthew 23:35, at 6.4%, 1 John 3:13, at 10.34%, Genesis 3:15 at 8.61%, 2 Timothy 3:12 at 7.76%, 2 Corinthians 12:10 at 6.03%, Romans 12:14 at 76%, whereas the rest of the verses with a frequency of less than 4 totalled to 28.4%.

4.3.3.3 Characteristics of the Theology of Persecution Somali Christians Ascribe to Support their Faith

The study sought to examine the characteristics of the biblical theology of persecution to which Somali Christians ascribe to support their faith. As shown in Table 4.54, only 45.9% of the 209 participants responded to the question, which gives us a total of 96 responses.

Table 4. 54: Characteristics of the theology of persecution Somali Christians ascribe to support their faith

Bible verses cited	Frequency	Percentage
2 Corinthians 12:10	1	1.0
1 Corinthians 1 :4	1	1.0
1 John 3:12,	1	1.0
1 Peter 2:19	5	5.3
1 Peter 2:21	18	18.8
1 Thessalonians 3 :3	1	1.0
2 Corinthians 12;10	5	5.2
2 Corinthians 8:2	4	4.2
2 Timothy 3:12,	7	7.4
2 Timothy 4:7-8	1	1.0
Ephesians 3:13	1	1.0
Hebrews 13 :12	4	4.2
James 5:10	1	1.0
John 15 :20	2	2.1
Matthew 16:18,	18	18.8
Matthew 16:24	16	16.7
Philippians 1:29	2	2.1
Rom 8:36	1	1.0
Romans 12:14	1	1.0
Romans 5: 3-4	5	5.2
Romans 8 :17	1	1.0
Total	96	100

However, the Bible verses cited totalled 21 with 1 Peter 2:21 and Matthew 16:18 both having 18.8% responses, while Matthew 16: 24 had 16.7%, followed by 2 Timothy 3:12, with 7.4%, 2 Corinthians 12:10 and 1 Peter 2:19, each with 5.2%. In general, these Bible verses collectively teem with the notion that Christians will be persecuted, just like Jesus and his apostles. Christians are therefore called to be faithful to the calling, to forgive their enemies, and to understand that they will be blessed as they are persecuted.

4.3.3.4 Reasons There Cannot be a Persecution Free Somali Church

The study sought to obtain the respondents' opinion as to why they opine that the Somali Church cannot be free of persecution. Exactly 97.1% said that it was normal and expected for the Church to be persecuted. This response was indicative that most respondents felt strongly, beyond a doubt, that under all conditions, the Church in Somalia will always be persecuted as this is part of being the church. This conviction was further explained and detailed by 57.9% of the respondents. The results are as shown in Table 4.55.

Table 4. 55: Reasons there cannot be a persecution free Church in Somalia

The explanation	Frequency	Percentage
Eliminating the persecution of the church is impossible and unbiblical	12	9.9
Christ was persecuted, and he forgave his persecutors; He is our example	3	2.55
Persecution cannot be eliminated; it is bound to happen	6	5.0
Christianity without persecution is Christianity without the cross; that is an oxymoron	9	7.4
Persecution of the church contributes to the numerical growth of the church	5	4.1
Every Christian who lives a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted	13	10.7
As the church of Christ, the Somali Church will always be persecuted; there was never an un-persecuted church and there will never be one	10	8.3
Jesus taught us that as godly Christians, we will be persecuted - 2 Timothy 3:12	7	5.8
The persecution of the Somali Church is contributing to its numerical growth	15	12.4
The church can never be safe from persecution, it is part of the Gospel	9	7.4
Persecution makes the faith of Christians stronger	11	9.1
The Bible teaches that Christians who live a godly life will be persecuted	5	4.1
Christians numerically increase when displaced because of persecution	9	7.4
Persecution cannot be eliminated; we must understand that	3	2.55
We see in the Bible that persecution causes the church to numerically grow	4	3.3
	121	100

Precisely 12.4% of respondents argued in response to this question that when persecution increased, the number of Christians increased as well. Exactly 10.7% of respondents suggested that without persecution there would not be any true church as taught in the Bible. A further 9.91% of respondents stated that trying to eliminate persecution from the church of Jesus Christ would be wrong and unbiblical because those who live a godly life would always be persecuted. Another 9.09% of respondents stated that the persecution made Christians stronger in their faith; 8.2% more of respondents opined that a church that is not persecuted was illogical and unbiblical.

Respondents added that the church was persecuted at its inception in the Book of Acts and it would continue to be persecuted. A further 7.4% of respondents, in two separate accounts, argued, one, that the church will always be persecuted, and, two, that Christianity without persecution is Christianity without the cross. Thereafter, with a frequency of 3, 5, 6, and 7, the general response was that persecution can never be eliminated from the church because Christ taught that his followers will always be persecuted as he was persecuted. The kernel at the heart of the claims of respondents was that persecution is a necessary evil that contributes to the numerical growth of the church.

4.3.3.5 Benefits of a Theology of Persecution

The study sought to establish the benefits of a theology of persecution for Somali Christians. Exactly 50.2% of respondents suggested the benefits of a theology of persecution, asserting forty-two different benefits.

The most common benefit identified by them was that their theology of persecution gives them a biblical meaning to their suffering at a frequency of 12.3%, followed by the idea that a theology of persecution helps them grow spiritually; this response was given by 6.7% of the respondents.

The respondents further presented that a theology of persecution gives Christians meaning in their biblical journey. The respondents, twice, at a frequency of 5.71%, said that a persecution theology gives meaning to our suffering and encourages them to grow to be like Christ. They also added that a theology of persecution gives meaning to the journey of their Christian life.

The rest of the respondents had a frequency from 5 down to 1, totalling 69.5% of respondents. The general theme from all these responses indicates that theology of persecution was mostly derived from the Bible and enabled them to thrive in suffering. Persecution gave them a strong Christian life and the true benefit of being a godly Christian.

Accordingly, also at a frequency of 96.2%, respondents stated it was not possible to be a good Christian and avoid persecution. These findings are elucidated in Table 4.56.

Table 4. 56: Benefits of a theology of persecution to the Church in Somalia

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
See 2 Timothy 3:12. Avoiding necessary and normal persecution is akin to denying Jesus, Matthew 10:32-33.	27	15.3
2 Timothy 3:12 says that godly Christians must go through suffering and pain.	75	42.3
See 2 Timothy 3:12, 14, John 15:20	21	11.8
A theology of persecution is effective in enabling the conversion of Somali Muslims.	11	6.2
The world and the church oppose each other	4	2.3
A theology of persecution helps Christians stay true to the faith	8	4.5
There are extremist Muslims in Somalia	5	2.8
The world system and the church are not in agreement	7	4
Christianity is the right path	6	3.4
The world and the church disagree	4	2.3
Our theology helps Christians interact together under persecution	3	1.7
Somali Muslims do not accept Christ	2	1.1
2 Timothy 3:12 says “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”	1	.58
It is not possible because the majority of Somalis are Muslims who deny Christ.	1	.58
Godly Christians are truthful	1	.58
Somalis are overwhelmingly Muslim majority who do not accept Christ	1	.58
	177	100

To explain this notion, they gave 177 reasons; these respondents stated that it is imperative that Christians must go through suffering and pain and they justified this understanding by citing 2 Timothy 3:12. Another 15.3% of respondents argued that trying to avoid ordinary persecution associated with one’s Christian faith is akin to denying Jesus’ teachings; this reasoning was justified by citing 2 Timothy 3:12 and Matthew 10: 32-33. Respondents also cited 2 Timothy 3:12, 14, John 15:20 at a frequency of 11.8%. Some 6.2% assenters restated that a theology of persecution was effective in enabling the conversion of Somali Muslims as an opinion. The other responses had a frequency of less than 10 and there were 5 different responses with a total frequency of 30.51%.

The general theme in these verses is one of Bible-centeredness, Christian character, enduring and thriving in persecution to grow as Disciples of Christ and making Christ-like disciples even during persecution. Respondents made it clear that persecution of Christians generates the numeric growth of the church

4.3.4: The Role Somali Church Ministers Play During Periods of Severe Persecution

The study sought to ascertain the role Somali Church ministers play during times of severe persecution. In response, 99.04% of respondents asserted that Somali Church ministers play a critical role by responding ‘yes’ to this question asked (Table 4.57). To establish the role of ministers in the church during persecution, the respondents were asked to give at least three things leaders do to encourage the flock. Exactly 96.2% gave a total of 13 things they felt leaders do to encourage the targeted community of faith.

Table 4. 57: The role Somali Church ministers play during periods of persecution

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Offering prayers	7	3.5
Providing Biblical encouragement	17	8.5
By doing their best to help	30	14.9
Facilitating communication between the persecuted and their loved ones	14	7.0
Feeding the people: Jesus said more about this in John 21	3	1.4
Giving encouragement	8	4.0
Arranging monetary assistance	7	3.5
Giving us guidance	83	41.3
Providing protection	25	12.4
Teaching us	5	2.5
Making peace with our family members	2	1
	201	100

The response with the highest frequency was 41.3% of respondents who opined that clergy guided them during the persecution. This was followed by another response that ministers do their best to help the flock under persecution; this response was given by 14.9% of respondents. Also, 12.4% of other respondents cited that ministers provide protection. Another 8.5% of respondents stated that leaders give biblical encouragement and another 7% of respondents argued that ministers facilitate communication between the persecuted and their loved ones.

Furthermore, the respondents cited leaders offering prayers at 3.5% with another 3.5% stating that leaders also gave monetary assistance. Only at a count of 2.5% did respondents say that leaders teach them. Also, 1.4% of respondents said that elders feed people under persecution as taught by Jesus in John 21. Two respondents at 1% stated that ministers work to ensure peace with Christian family members.

4.3.4.1 What Ministers Could Do Better During Persecution

The study also sought the respondents’ views on what ministers could do better during persecution. Results are as shown in Table 4.58.

Table 4. 58: What ministers could do better during the persecution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
To become better listeners	7	3.6
To go through theological training to be able to deliver what is expected of them	5	2.6
I'm not sure	34	17.3
I do not know; it is hard to get to know that	30	15.3
Ministers are already doing a good job.	20	10.2
Ministers consistently help their members even if they are at risk; they care for the members of the church as a mother cares for her children	5	2.6
To offer more prayer and encouragement	5	2.6
They are already doing their best	50	25.5
To trust the Lord more and to share in the persecution	25	12.8
To help the persecuted feel they are not alone and that the church is with them in that tough moment	8	4.1
To pray more and more and more.	2	.8
To watch for anything that might destroy the church	5	2.6
	196	100

93.8% of respondents replied to the question. While 25.5% of respondents said that ministers do their best and 17.3%, others said that they were not sure what the role of the ministers was during persecution. A further 15.3% of respondents argued that they did not know what ministers could do better. 12.8% of respondents stated that ministers should trust the Lord more and share in the persecution. Another 10.2% of respondents said that ministers are already doing a good job. 4.1% of respondents said ministers should make the persecuted feel they are not alone in their trials and that the community of faith is with them. Also, a further 3.6% of respondents opined that ministers need to be good listeners.

On four different issues, 5 people, or 2.6 %, responded, first, that ministers needed to undergo theological training to better deliver what is expected of them; the respondents added that this theological training would help ministers to assist the flock even when at risk. Second, they said that ministers already care for the members of the church as a mother cares for her child. Third, they offer prayer and encouragement. Fourth, the minister should be on guard for anything that might destroy the church. Finally, 8% of respondents said that ministers should pray fervently and consistently.

4.3.4.2 What Ministers May be Doing Wrong During Intense Persecution

The study also sought to ascertain what respondents perceived Somali ministers may do wrong during times of intense persecution. To this question, 94.7% of participants responded. Their opinions as to what ministers do wrong are listed out in Table 4.59

Table 4. 59: What ministers may be doing wrong during intense persecution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Ministers may see everyone to be as mature as they are	56	28.3
Ministers may fail to take into account those who are not spiritually grown	12	6.1
Ministers often do not know all their members well	21	10.6
Ministers may be slow to respond to persecution	36	18.2
Ministers may not trust the persecuted immediately	21	10.6
Ministers sometimes do not have adequate answers	2	1.0
Ministers are not doing anything wrong	16	8.1
Their most important problem is lack of knowledge about their members	10	5.1
Due to the responsibilities placed on them, ministers tend to think they can do it all without help	5	2.5
Ministers do not know their new members as well as they know the older members	4	2.0
Ministers are not sufficiently cautious	5	2.5
Ministers need to help the persecuted feel they are not alone	3	1.5
Ministers may lose their confidence in some members	5	2.5
I do not know	2	1.0
	198	100

Of the respondents, 28.3% said that ministers see everyone as mature as them. Additionally, 18.2% of the respondents felt that ministers are slow to respond when their people were persecuted. A further 10.6% of the respondents suggested that ministers do not know all their members well.

Another 10.6% of the respondents felt that ministers may not trust the persecuted immediately, and therefore they may delay in responding to them. Another 8.1% of respondents said that ministers are not doing anything wrong, while 6.1% of respondents opined that ministers may forget to assist those who are not as spiritually mature. Additionally, 5.05% of respondents suggested the basic problem is that ministers lack good knowledge about the members. Another 2.5 % of the responders said that due to the many responsibilities placed on ministers, they tend to think they can do it all without help. Others responded that ministers are not sufficiently careful while some others responded that ministers sometimes lose their faith in certain members. However, another 2.0% of respondents said that ministers may not know their new members, as well as they know their older members. A further 1.5 % of respondents said that ministers fail to make the persecuted feel they are not alone in what they face. Exactly 1.0% of respondents said ministers sometimes don't have good answers. Another 1.0% responded that they could not identify what ministers were doing wrong.

4.3.4.3 Does Persecution Target Clergy?

The study sought to ascertain if clergy are a target of persecution. The results to this question are shown in Table 4.60.

Table 4. 60: Explanation on why clergy are targeted for persecution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, because clergy are in the public and well known	96	48
No, because clergy are the church leaders	49	24.5
Yes, because clergy tend to be the most informed on matters of Christianity	7	3.5
Yes, because clergy pray	15	7.5
Yes, because targeting clergy instills fear in new believers	18	9
Yes, because Muslims feel clergy are pillars of the faith	7	3.5
Yes, because clergy are in the spotlight	8	4
	200	100

It was noted that 75.6% of the respondents out of 96.1% who responded affirmed that clergy were targeted. By comparison, 24.5% of respondents identified lay believers as the targeted ones. Of the 95.7% of people who responded, at a frequency of 48%, they stated that clergy were the most persecuted because the public knows them very well. Exactly 24.5 % of respondents argued that clergy were persecuted because they were the church leaders. A further 9% of respondents opined that persecution was mainly perpetrated to create fear in new Christians. Another 7.5% of the respondents affirmed that persecution was inflicted on the clergy because they do not pray the Muslim prayer (as they are not practicing Islam).

This indicates that Christian leaders were punished by Muslims for practicing the Christian faith instead of the Islamic faith. They were identifiable as non-Muslim and thus persecuted. Another 4% of respondents said clergy were persecuted because they were in the spotlight. A further 3.5% of respondents, in two separate responses, opined clergy were persecuted the most because they tend to be more informed on matters of Christianity; a second response was that Muslims think they are the pillars of the Christian faith in Somalia.

4.3.4.4 Somali Church's Response When Persecutors Target Clergy

The study sought to determine the Somali Church's response when persecutors target clergy. In response to this question, 138 people responded, offering 52 distinct responses. Of these, 11.6% of respondents said the church surrounded the persecuted clergy with prayer. Further 42.75% more respondents cited prayer as the single most important remedy they used to aid the persecuted clergy. The respondents also added that assistance given to persecuted clergy included providing safe houses, collecting special offerings for them, and even assisting them to move to a safer area in the country for a while.

4.3.4.5 Reasons Clergy are Generally Persecuted

The study also sought to find out the reason clergy are generally persecuted. In response, a total of 94.7% of respondents gave reasons as shown in Table 4.61

Table 4. 61: Reasons clergy are generally persecuted

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Clergy are the leaders. They think if they strike the shepherd, the sheep will scatter	72	36.4
Because they are more visible to the whole community than regular members	21	10.6
They may live in different regions but no one knows them by name	8	4.0
They often target clergy because they assume if they strike the shepherd, the sheep will scatter, which is too often true	43	21.7
Persecutors believe a church without clergy will die	33	16.7
They think clergy are converting local Muslims using unholy means like giving money and promising them visas to go to Europe	9	4.5
They desire to create fear among Christians	12	6.1
	198	100

At a rate of 36.4%, they argued that since the clergy are the leaders, the persecutors opt to strike them. A further 21.7% of these respondents said the reason the clergy are often targeted is to instill fear in the laity. Also, another 16.7% of these respondents opined that the persecutors assume a church without clergy will die. Of these respondents, 10.6% said clergy were targeted because they are the most visible Christians in Somalia. Another 6.1% of these respondents said that clergy were persecuted to create fear among Christians. Furthermore, 4.5% of these respondents said the persecutors believe in a lie that clergy use unholy means to convert local Muslims, like paying them or promising them visas to go to Europe. At the same rate, the respondents argued the persecuted leaders live in different regions but no one knows them by name.

4.3.4.6 Heroic Acts of Ministers During Persecution

The study sought to establish what heroic acts ministers engage in during persecution. The results are as shown in Table 4.62.

Table 4. 62: Heroic acts of ministers during the persecution

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I do not know	44	22.2
Ministers risk their lives to serve a persecuted church	40	20.2
Some of the things they do can be called heroic.	21	10.6
They risk their own lives to save others.	54	27.3
They stand up for the rights of Christians	10	5.1
Their heroic deeds should be written in church history books	11	5.6
Persecutors think a church without ministers would cease to exist	6	3.0
Christians are on the right path, so they should not think about heroic acts	5	2.5
We see ministers housing displaced Christians	4	2
We could not answer this question	3	1.5
	198	100

The study observes that 94.7% of respondents answered this question. Most of them, 27.3%, contended that clergy risk their own lives to save others. A further 22.2% of respondents opined that they were not aware of any heroic deeds by clergy during persecution. However, another 20.2% of the respondents stated ministers risked their lives serving the church.

A further 10.6% of the respondents said that some things clergy do could be called heroic while 5.6% of the respondents said that the heroic deeds of these ministers deserve to be written in the church history books, but they could not mention any specific heroic deeds. Another 5.1% of the respondents opined that ministers stand up for the rights of the Christians. In addition, 6% of the respondents said that the persecutors assumed that a church without clergy would cease to exist.

However, 2.5% of the respondents argued that Christians are on the right path and they should not think about heroic acts. They added that being a disciple of Christ is heroic enough. Another 2.02% said they witnessed ministers housing displaced Christians. Finally, 1.5% of respondents said they could not answer this question.

4.3.4.7 Cowardly Acts of Clergy During Persecution

Furthermore, the study sought to investigate the cowardly acts of the clergy during persecution. A total of 95.2% of respondents answered this question. The results are as shown in Table 4.63.

Table 4. 63: Cowardly acts of the clergy during the persecution

Response	Frequency	Percentage
I do not know a cowardly leader personally, but I hear such ministers do exist; such leaders quickly lose their leadership position	124	62.3
Ministers who do not trust or believe the persecuted immediately bring disgrace upon the ministry	23	11.6
Ministers were not able to hold people together in intense persecution to bring disgrace	4	2.0
Cowardly ministers quickly lose their leadership positions	3	1.5
Ministers are very brave, but sometimes they leave an area to avoid persecution	5	2.5
Ministers who lack courage abandon the persecuted instead of helping them	21	10.6
Slowness to respond to the needs of the persecuted is cowardly	6	3.0
Failing to share in the suffering of the persecuted so that the persecuted feel alone is cowardly	8	4.0
We cannot call them to be heroes because all godly Christians are persecuted and thus heroes	5	2.5
	199	100

Of those who responded, 62.3% said that they do not know any ministers of cowardly disposition. However, some added that they heard about some ministers who could fit in this category. The respondents added that such cowardly ministers do not last in ministry, as they are quickly removed. Of respondents, 11.6% said they recall the acts of cowardice of some ministers when they had a close encounter with persecution, were fearful, and showed little faith. Additionally, 10.6% of respondents said that clergy sometimes abandon persecuted Christians who desperately need help from them. Another 4.0% of respondents said some clergy members do not share the suffering of the persecuted, so the persecuted suffer alone without any help from clergy.

At a frequency of 2.51%, the respondents opined that clergy were very brave, but sometimes they leave to avoid persecution. At the same frequency, some respondents said it was not a good idea to consider clergy heroic because they are simply Christians who face persecution as godly Christians are supposed to. The respondents, at a frequency of 2.0% are those ministers who are not able to hold people together in intense persecution bring disgrace. Finally, 1.5% of respondents argued that any cowardly clergy quickly lose their leadership position.

4.3.4.8 Laity's Expectation of Clergy

The study also sought to establish the laity's expectations of clergy. The results are as shown in Figure 4.64.

Table 4. 64: Laity's expectations of clergy

Laity's expectations of clergy	Frequency	Percentage
Some members forget that ministers are human beings like them	34	18.3
Some members expect too much from ministers	71	38.2
Members do not know anywhere else to look for help.	18	9.7
Some church members think that Somali ministers receive a lot of money for them	21	11.3
Some members think that ministers do not have their own life	19	10.2
Some members misunderstand the work of ministers who serve as volunteers	17	9.1
Members perceived ministers have an opportunity to flee to neighbouring countries.	6	3.2
	186	100

In explaining what expectations laity have about ministers, 7 different responses were given by 89% of respondents. More specifically, 38.17 % of those who responded to the question asserted that church members expect too much from ministers.

A further 18.3% of the respondents said that some members forget that ministers are human beings like them. Another 11.3 % of respondents opined that some church members think that the Somali ministers receive a lot of money on their behalf. Of respondents, 9.7% said that some members of the church think that ministers do not have a life of their own. A further 9.7% of the respondents said that church members only remember their ministers when these members need help. Exactly 9.1 % of respondents said some members misunderstand that ministers serve only as volunteers. Finally, the respondents, at a rate of 3.2%, believed that some members perceived their ministers to have an opportunity to flee to neighbouring countries.

4.3.4.9 Theological Training of Ministers

The study further sought to ascertain the level of the theological training of ministers. The findings are as shown in Table 4.65 with 95.7% responding to this question.

Table 4. 65: Theological training of ministers

Theological training of ministers	Frequency	Percentage
Ministers are trained within their house groups inopportune times.	15	7.5
Ministers are trained in different locations in the CAC	10	5
Training is by mentorship in the CAC	5	2.5
Somali clergy get ministry experience on the job. Very few of them study theology in neighbouring countries like Kenya and Ethiopia.	35	17.5
Most ministers learn from missionaries or those commissioned by missionaries to train ministers,	30	15
Ministers receive on-the-job training, and they go to Ethiopia or Kenya to study.	20	10
They get good theological studies in the neighbouring countries.	50	25
They learn from other ministers.	10	5
Most get training from fellow Christians.	10	5
	200	100

Of respondents, 25% said ministers receive good theological studies in neighbouring countries. A further 17.5% of the respondents opined that most Somali clergies get ministry experience on the job. However, according to them, very few ministers studied theology in neighbouring countries like Kenya and Ethiopia. Another 15% of respondents further opined that most ministers learn from missionaries or those commissioned by missionaries to train ministers.

A further 10% of the respondents reiterated that ministers are trained on the job. A further 7.5% argued that pastors are trained in the CAC inopportune times. In addition, they opined at a frequency of 5% that the training took place in different places within the CAC. At a frequency of 2.5%, they declared that ministry training included mentorship in the CAC.

4.3.4.10 Cooperation of different house churches during the persecution

The study sought to establish if there was cooperation among different Somali house churches during times of persecution. This question was responded to by 95.2% of assenters. Their exact opinion was shown in Table 4.66.

Table 4. 66: Cooperation of different house churches during the persecution

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
They both cooperate during persecution and compete at other times	85	42.7
They cooperate during persecution.	73	36.7
They cooperate because disciples of Christ love one another	5	2.55
They cooperate because they are called to preach the Gospel of Christ	6	3.0
They cooperate because Christians should work together	9	4.5
They minister together and share resources	16	8
Our omniscient God sees us all; we must not disappoint Him	5	2.55
	199	100

Of those who responded, 42.7% said they cooperate during persecution and compete other times. A further 36.7% of respondents simply affirmed that they cooperate during persecution. Another 8% of respondents confirmed that they cooperate to minister together and share resources. About 3.0% of respondents said their main call was to serve Christ no matter what. Another 2.5% of respondents said they are called to preach the Gospel of Christ and that this was their priority. Also, another 1.5% of respondents, at two separate accounts, said they cooperated because Disciples of Christ love one another; on the second count, they said their omniscient God sees them, so they must not disappoint Him.

4.3.4.10 Further Thoughts on the Role of Ministers in the Church During Periods of Severe Persecution

Lastly, when asked if they had anything else to say about the role ministers play in the church during severe persecution, 99.5% addressed this question, offering 13 different comments relating to ministers and persecution as shown in Table 4.67.


Table 4. 67: Further thoughts on the role of ministers in the church during periods of severe persecution

Response	Frequency	Percentage
All our ministers are bi-vocational and none of them are on salary. They need more theological training and scholarship. They are amazing, and we are proud of them – at least most of them.	9	4.3
All our ministers are human, we should help them where we can	7	3.4
I have nothing else to add.	110	52.9
Muslims and Christians can co-exist and live together peacefully.	5	2.4
Our ministers are amazing and we are proud of them	12	5.8
Our ministers are called by God.	10	4.8
Our ministers deserve salaries for the good work they do.	13	6.3
Our ministers help us when they can	9	4.3
Our ministers need more theological training.	5	2.4
It is not good for ministers to serve too long in a house church. New ministers need to emerge more often	4	1.9
Ministers must be kind to the persecuted and trust them right away. Nothing is more painful than when you are persecuted and no one believes you.	10	4.8
When severe persecution comes, we do not have the luxury to ponder about it. We must respond as soon as possible. It is very important to help those who need help right away.	9	4.3
N/A	5	2.4
	208	100

Of our respondents, 52.9% said they had nothing else to add to answers already given. Another 2.4 % of respondents marked “not applicable” as an answer. This means that 55.3 % of those who addressed this question thought they are already given enough answers and had nothing else to say.

However, 6.3% of respondents argued their ministers deserve salaries for the good work they do. House church ministers work for free as volunteers. Another 5.8% of respondents, in two separate accounts, said their ministers are amazing and they are proud of them; others said ministers must be kind to the persecuted and trust them immediately when they report severe persecution. These respondents added, “Nothing is more painful when you are severely persecuted, and no one believes you.” At a frequency of 4.3%, respondents said that when severe persecution breaks out, one does not have the luxury to take time to ponder about it but they must respond as possible immediately.

Another 4.3% of respondents affirmed their ministers help them when they can. A further 4.8% of the respondents stated that their ministers are called by God and have a challenging ministry. Exactly 4.3% of other respondents stressed that their ministers are bi-vocational and none of them is on a salary. In addition, 3.4% of respondents said that all their ministers are human beings and they also need our help. Another 2.4% of respondents, in two separate responses, said it was possible for Muslims and Christians to co-exist and live



together peacefully and that greater advocacy was needed for the minister's theological training.

Finally, 1.9% of respondents felt that house church ministers serving too many years in a house church was not a good idea; they added that new leaders must emerge more often and previous leaders must move on. This point of view is atypical in the Somali house churches, where most members prefer to keep their leaders as long as possible.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the five key research objectives: to examine selected episodes of persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth, to discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia, to determine if the Church in Somalia has a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution; to assess the role ministers play in this church during severe persecution, and to draw conclusions that could contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the persecution of Christians and church growth in Somalia

The study assumes a null hypothesis; that there has been no persecution of the Church in Somalia and that persecution has had no significant effect on church growth. The alternative hypothesis is that persecution of the Church in Somalia has had a significant effect on growth. The study rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative. The findings reveal that there was the persecution of the Church in Somalia, which has resulted in significant growth in the church.

5.2 Discussion

In this section, research findings are discussed as per each research objective. In each case, the results from the study are compared to the results of other scholars. The published research of others should be critiqued, noting the similarities and contrasts with other works.

5.2.1 Selected Episodes of Persecution of the Church Throughout History and its Effect on Church Growth

The study targeted 220 respondents with a response rate of 95% at a frequency of 33.5%, 33.5%, and 33.01% from study location L1, L2, and L3 respectively (See Figure 4.1). According to Babbie, a response rate of 53% is the recommended minimum for analysis.¹⁸⁹ Copper and Schindler also opine that a response rate of 50-60% is sufficient; 61-70% is good and above 70% is excellent.¹⁹⁰ This study affirms this was an excellent response rate; the data collected was adequate to accurately represent the views and the perceptions of the respondents. The results further revealed that 70.3% were male whereas their female counterparts were 29.7% in three study regions namely L1, L2, and L3 cities. See Figure 4.3. According to Reisinger's hypothesis, states that a healthy ministry ought to have all genders and ages, as it occur approximately in a family setting.¹⁹¹ These results suggest that something might have influenced the survey pool to have a ratio of men to women of 5:2. While there are more men than women in the Somali Church, the researcher speculates that severe persecution may have made it harder for more women to be part of responders in this study; women also face cultural barriers that keep them away from the frontline ministries of the Somali Church making men the prominent respondents in this study.

The findings also revealed 96.17% with a Ch.-square value $\chi^2 = 15.361$ with a $p = 0.018$ that the level of education in the three cities, L1, L2, and L3, were the same (Table 4.4). The study concludes that most respondents have education levels above secondary school, thus inferring that they had enough education to answer the questions in the questionnaires. Note that the average level of education of the survey group contrasts sharply

¹⁸⁹ E. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*, (Elmont Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1995), 56.

¹⁹⁰ D R Cooper, & PS Schindler. *Business Research Methods* (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin Publishers.,2014), 129.

¹⁹¹ D K Reisinger, *An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education*, ed, J Edward Hakes (Chicago:Moody ,Press,1972), 97

with the average educational level in the country of Somalia, which ties with Niger for the lowest high school graduation rate in the world, at 2%.¹⁹² The survey may overstate graduation rates because respondents were not given other ways to respond if they had finished middle school but had not completed high school.

All respondents, 100%, (see section 4.25) described themselves as Creative Access Christian (CAC) which means they lacked the freedom to worship freely. These Creative Access Christians are home-based churches where local Somali Christians in L1, L2, and L3 cities worship and do church in secret for fear of government and vigilante violence directed toward them by the Islamic citizenry. This level of threat results in a lack of freedom to worship freely in these three cities, and CAC becomes their only viable way of doing church to them. It was apparent in L1, L2, and L3 that other denominations such as Pentecostal, mainline, independent, Roman Catholic, among others, were present, but they all identified themselves as CAC for security reasons. The study concludes that CAC is the only mode of church structure and Christian ministry that existing in L1, L2, and L3 during the time of this study. Also, all 209 responders reckoned that non-Somalis were absent in their CAC house churches. The study concludes non-Somali Christians were non-existent within the membership of CAC house churches in the cities of L1, L2, and L3 as noted in Table 4.6. This study confirmed that the lay members were 43.1% of participants while clergy was 34.4%, lay leaders at 12.4% with elders being only 11%.

The growth and resilient adaptation to the Islamic hostility by the CAC church was confirmed by 93.8% whose Christian population has been on the increase from 6.2% between 1989 and 1999 and a 26.3% between 1999 and 2009 and another 67.5% in the years between 2009 and 2019 (Table 4.30). This suggests the likelihood that there was a steady and rapid growth across these two decades. The “steady and rapid growth” categorization is important here because four times more people reported that they were converted in decade two than in decade one. Three times more people report that they were converted in decade three than decade two. However, in examining the results of the survey, it is important to note that there is not a reliable record of how many converts were martyred, how many may have fled Somalia to seek asylum in Kenya or Ethiopia or to flee abroad, how many recanted their faith, and how many died from natural causes who have not survived from decade one.

The results also showed 55.3% of respondents identified the year 1999, followed by 17.6% identifying the years of 1999-2003, as the years the church experiences most numeric growth. It follows, a total of 72.9% felt that from 1999 to 2003 the CAC church had the best numeric growth. However, 15.1%, of the respondents cited 1990 with another 7.5% identifying 2000-2003 and another 2.51% mentioning 2000-2001; lastly, 1.88% pointed to 2000-2004 (Table 4.30). The researcher based on this finding observes that the period of the greatest church growth is likely to have been 1999 to 2004 because 84.9% of the respondents pointed to this period as their time of conversion.

From the 61.24% of respondents who responded to the question, the period when the CAC church experienced the worst persecution was 1994-1996 as opined by 65.6% of responders with further 21.9% mentioning 1990-2000 and another 12.5% of respondents opined 1990-2012. Based upon this percentage changes, persecution was perceived as intense in 1994-1996 and was felt to have continued with reduced intensity as reported by the informants from 65.6% to 12.5%. It is notable that as the years went by from 1994 to 2012, a

¹⁹² “World Inequality Database on Education Upper Secondary Completion Rate Upper Secondary Graduation Age http://www.inequalities.org/indicators/comp_upsec_v2#?sort=mean&dimension=all&group=all&age_group=comp_upsec_v2&countries=all (accessed 21 April 2021).

53.1% reduction in the number of responders giving evidence of persecution (See Table 4.31). Based on this evidence, the study notes the CAC church must have become accustomed to persecution and was avidly dealing with it since 84.9% of these same respondents claimed that it was more or less the same period of 1990 to 2004 they had experienced the greatest numerical growth (See Table 4.30).

In more specific terms, 6.2% of respondents reported having converted between 1990 and 1999, 26.3% between 1999 and 2009, and 67.5% between 2009 and 2019 (see Figure 4.4). This is why the study rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis therein making the general observation based on interpolating and comparison this results that the church even in intense persecution it had a significant growth that is what the informant identified as a CAC home church model. This finding also confirms David W. Shenk's observations, that General Mohamed Siad Barre's violent threat against local Christians in 1979 caused the stagnation of the growth of the church. However, based on this result, the church started again to experience significant numerical growth in 1990 and is still growing to date.

Most of the persecution of the above-mentioned years came from the Islamist group, al-Itihaad al-Islamiya which later joined forces with al-Shabab. This al-Qaeda-affiliated group confiscated farms owned by Somali Christians in 2011; also, in that same year, prominent "moderate" Somali Muslim scholars and preachers publicly advocated for the killing of Somali Christians in *fatwa*-laden press releases.¹⁹³ Prominent Somali Muslim religious leaders, including Sheikh Nur Barud, released *fatwas* demanding the killing of Somali Christians in Europe.¹⁹⁴ The Somali government's official National Television Network broadcast the *fatwas* showing beyond reasonable doubt its complicity in the anti-Christian *fatwas*. In an earlier *fatwa* released in 2003, Sheikh Nur Barud and members of the *Kulanka Culimada* (now *Majma'a Culimada*) said, "All Somali Christians must be killed according to the Islamic law."¹⁹⁵ This result enables the researcher to distinguish the CAC home church model being a resilient adaptation to the sustainable existence of the CAC church with growth even under the appalling conditions of persecution.

The study notes that Ahmed Ali Haile, a distinguished Somali Mennonite scholar, and peacemaker, opines in his book, *Teatime in Mogadishu*, that the Somali military regime of 1969-1991 was only a little less tolerant than the preceding civilian governments of 1960-1969. These civilian governments instituted in 1970 a law that prohibited teaching any Somali a religion other than Islam.¹⁹⁶ This restriction subsequently resulted in local Christians and expatriate missionaries incurring the Somali government's wrath each time they attended a Bible study or verbally witnessed it to a Muslim seeker. This intolerance led

¹⁹³ "Islamic militants confiscate Christian farms," *The Voice of the Martyrs* Canada, (10 February 2011). <https://www.vomcanada.com/so-2011-02-10.htm> (accessed 06 September 2018).

Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert and Nina Shea, *Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians*, (Thomas Nelson, 2013), 253.

See also: Stephen Mbogo, "Somalia's Tiny Christian Community Reportedly Under Fire," *CNSN*, (07 July 2008). <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/somalias-tiny-christian-community-reportedly-under-fire> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁹⁴ Shania-Shino Gabo, "Fatwa against Somali Christians in Europe," *YouTube*, 2017 <https://youtu.be/ygIcwlW9qz4> (accessed 06 September 2018).

¹⁹⁵ Sheikh Nur Barud was at the time the vice chairman of the powerful Somali Islamist group, *Kulanka Culimada*. "*Kulanka*" is Somali and "*Majma'a*" is Arabic and they both mean "council." "Somali Christians and Missionaries Murdered," *Worthy News*, 19 January 2003. <https://www.worthynews.com/378-somali-christians-and-missionaries-murdered> (accessed 13 January 2019).

¹⁹⁶ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 32.

to the Somali military government raiding a Somali Christian elders' meeting and throwing the key leader in jail in an extrajudicial manner.¹⁹⁷

The Somali civilian government adopted a constitution in 1961 which declared Somalia to be an Islamic State which respected a limited degree of religious freedom.¹⁹⁸ It is public knowledge that Somalia is an Islamic state since independence in 1960 which tolerated the local Christians as long as they kept a low profile. The military regime of 1969-1991 became more intolerant as it faced a burgeoning radical Islam, which the preceding civilian governments barely noticed. However, the Somali Church often found ways to survive such challenges and many times thrive in them as this study chronicles. The study moves to deduce the growth of the Somalia CAC situated in cities L1, L2 and L3 must have adapted well to persecution; as shown by Ahmed Haile discourse, the persecution was getting worse as years went by.¹⁹⁹ The CAC church experienced growth in the last 20 years because this CAC house church movement had become more resilient against Islamic hostility over time.

This study additionally identified one strategy the Somali Church adapted to survive or even thrive in the persecution. This was several years members served in leadership positions which ranged from 0 to 35 years. More specifically the results showed that as the church gained more members, it produced more leaders particularly in the last 15 years and especially when compared to the latter period before that, that is 16 to 35. The results suggest that since the persecutors often target the leadership, the remedy of the CAC church has been to overproduce them to compensate for the leadership loss expected.

The study suggests that many of the members of the CAC are in leadership positions either as clergy, lay leader and or elder. This is not a surprise, since most Christians martyred for their faith are leaders. To counter this loss, the study argues that as one becomes a member in the CAC, they were trained and within a short time they assumed some leadership roles. This quick development of CAC leaders gives the Somali Church a surplus of leaders either as clergy, elder, or lay leader. This strategy serves the Somali CAC Church very well.

The leadership development strategy was further confirmed by the results affirming that the respondents serving as leaders between the periods of 0-6 years were 87.9% when compared to those who became leaders between 7 and 25 years ago, who were 12.1% (See Table 4. 9), with $M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.06$, being skewness 2.217 ($SE = .168$) with kurtosis of 6.399 ($SE = .335$). See Table 4.10. Thus, the extent of growth of leadership in the last six years in CAC churches of Somalia appears to be highest despite the persecution. The growth rate experienced is attributed to an adaptation to cope with the hostile Islamic dominance.

This study further notes that Somali Christians have adapted to the hostile Islamic dominance that has failed to stop the growth of the church. According to the data in this study, the growth of the Somali Church escalated even during the onslaught of the Al-Shabab led persecution of Christians in Somalia. It is therefore important to continue training church leaders and equipping them with relevant teachings. There is a need to support the trained leaders with relevant materials which are in favour of standing against persecution.

This research acknowledges something must have happened to bring such a significant increase in the number of people serving in leadership positions in the last 6 years relative to the 18 years before. Thus, the extent of growth in the last six years of leadership in CAC churches of Somalia was highest despite the persecution. The CAC house church leadership has indeed experienced significant numerical growth in leadership, even with the reported heightened persecution.

¹⁹⁷ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 80-81.

¹⁹⁸ Saadia Touval, *Somali Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 120-121.

¹⁹⁹ *Teatime in Mogadishu*

5.2.1.1 Biblical Teaching and Persecuted Church

The study ascertains biblical teaching on the persecution of the church was prevalent and was in use by the Church in Somalia. In responding to the question if the Bible says anything about Christian persecution, 95.7% of respondents answered positively, agreeing to the question that the Bible teaches on persecution. 4.3% did not respond to the question at all (See Figure 4.6). A total of 95.7% of these responders identified about eleven portions of Scripture that help them in their spiritual life, especially during persecution (See Figure 4.6). This indicated that the CAC church has a Bible centered teaching on persecution and the members are fully aware of it since 95.7% of the total respondents identified that the Bible teaches a common theme central to all of them. A common theme in their response was, “*all godly Christians are persecuted, just like Jesus and his apostles.*” However, others including Hassan and Nur (pseudonyms), stated that “*the Bible encourages us to stay faithful and pray for the persecuted for they will receive blessings even when persecuted*”

Out of the 95.7% informants who responded to the question of what biblical teaching Christian response to the persecution should be based on, exactly 63% cited that Scripture helped them in their Spiritual Life of them affirmed that all faithful Christians will be persecuted in one way or another (See Table 4.33). According to them, there was nothing wrong with being persecuted; it is part of one’s Christian life. Another 15% of the respondents even prayed in times of persecution to remind themselves that God was with them. A further 9% of the respondents cited that the Bible shows them they should love and bless those who persecute them. Additionally, another 9% of respondents expressed that if they are persecuted for the name of Christ, they are blessed because the Spirit of God rests upon them. Another 8% of assenters cited that the Bible guides them to love and bless those who persecute them.

The study noted that the Somali Christians were ready to be persecuted for the name of Christ, for they consider it a blessing because the spirit of God rests upon them. Two separate responses, each at a frequency of 2.5%, opined that the Bible teaches that their enemy, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour and that they should therefore persevere when persecuted. Therefore, the Bible is the consolation of the Somali Church even when under intense persecution.

Another 96.1% of informants affirmed that places, where the church was most persecuted are where they witnessed the church to have the highest numerical growth rate; the responders mentioned eight main reasons they had considered to have caused the persecution that contributed to this growth (Table 4.12). One paramount reason was that they were persecuted for their faith in Christ; this claim was confirmed by 60% of respondents. Secondly, 15% of other responders identified Somalia as a radical Islamic state. Thirdly, 10% of informants argued Muslims viewed Christian beliefs as being wrong and unacceptable. Another 5% of responders stated Muslims considered the act of killing and persecuting a Christian as a righteous act in the teachings of Islam. The remaining reasons, as noted in Table 4.12, for the persecution are: the post-1990 (the start of the Somali civil war) anarchy accelerated the persecution, the growth of the church elicits persecution, Muslims do not want to see Somali Christians, and Somalis are radical Muslims.

The Somali Church is numerically growing in a very hostile environment. This fact is best illustrated by the North African theologian, Tertullian, who fervently believed that persecution helps the church grow. According to Tertullian, the more the church is persecuted, the more it grows.²⁰⁰ This research demonstrates that the church does not

²⁰⁰ *The Apology of Tertullian*, translation and annotation by WM. Reeve, A.M, 50, s. 13, initially printed in London in 1709 and Reprinted in a second edition in 1716/1717. http://www.tertullian.org/articles/reeve_apology.htm (accessed 03 May 2018).

diminish because of persecution alone but continues to grow and even thrives many times amid persecution; this study affirms that Tertullian's belief was held long before the 2nd century. It is not a wonder that Somali Christians today strongly believe that persecution and martyrdom are the seed of the church, helping it to numerically grow.

5.2.1.2 Types of Persecution Christians in Somalia Face

The study investigated the types of persecution Christians in Somalia face. The respondents described 18 different types of persecution against Somali Christians like torture to death, 21%; there is an Islamic consensus that the punishment for apostasy is death by the sword. These are: discrimination, 18.5%, insults, 9.5%, intimidation and economic restriction, 8%. They also include physical torture, 7.5%, mocking, 7%, violence, 5.5 %, death threats, 3%, beheading and mental torture 2.5%, terrorism, and martyrdom, 1.5%. Social exclusion, rape, refusal to stay married to Muslim spouses who have not yet converted, aggression, 0.5%, respectively (Table 4.13).

The Hadith teaches that it is the *ijma* (consensus) of the classical Muslim jurists that an apostate must be executed if they refuse to return to Islam.²⁰¹ Another 95.7% of respondents affirmed that Christians from dominant clans were persecuted the least on their clan turf. Explaining this phenomenon, 92.5% of informants pinpointed the reason they were the least persecuted because they enjoyed the protection of their powerful clans. However, 5% of informants indicated they have never witnessed Christians from dominant clans receiving clan protection. Whereas another 2.5% of informants stated that Christians who are very active in the affairs of their clan received a certain degree of clan protection (Table 4.14). Based on the above information, the CAC is aware of the hadith teaching and clans' protection. But they count it all joy to be persecuted for Christ sake as taught in the Bible.

Twelve Muslim informants from the three cities of L1, L2, and L3 participated in this research. One of the respondents in L3 did not respond to all the questions, giving a response rate of 91.7% who wholly responded to the 18 questions asked in this study. The Muslims disclosed their religious affiliations including their *madhab* (denomination) and *tariqa* (path) and the findings showed they were predominantly Sunni including one Qur'ani who considers himself a Sunni (*Madhab*). Of the eleven Muslims with varied religious paths (*Tariqa*), those of the Sufi persuasion having the highest membership of 41.7%, followed by the other paths (*Tariqas*) namely: Wahabbi, Qadiriya Salafi, Salihia, Islah, Ahmediya. Sayli and Qur'ani as noted in Table 4.16.

When asked if they observed Somali Christians doing anything right, they stated Somali Christians did five things right. About 36.4% affirmed that Christians were not hypocrites for they practice their faith under great threat. Another 27.3% of the respondents also declared that Christians were kind people, and this was a common character in Christians. However, 18.2% of Muslim informants asserted that they were not sure if Christians could do anything right since they were apostates. Another 9.1% in two separate accounts each with the same rate asserted they observed that Christians tended to be more educated and the second declared Christians incline minding their own business (See Table 4.17). The study affirms that even Muslims have nothing to say wrong about their daily practice other than different religious practices.

Elsewhere the Muslims cited what Christians do wrong. All of them declared that the Christians abandoned Islam and encourage others to leave the fold of Islam. According to them, Christians commit blasphemy. The Muslim respondents also added that Christians are

²⁰¹ *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2. (Stuttgart: Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation, 2000),726.

apostates who lead a dangerous lifestyle and they will never be accepted in the Somali Muslim community. The tenets of the Islamic faith equate abandoning Islam to treason, thus the harsh treatment.²⁰² But even under such threat, Somali Christians are still growing. On how they should treat ex-Muslim Somali Christians, the Muslim respondents quoted Islamic teachings where 54.5% of them argued that Christians were apostates who should be killed, crucified, and mutilated; they justified this harsh pronouncement by quoting Qur'an 5:33-34 (See Table 4.18). Another 18.2% commented that Somali Christians should be rejected and punished. They justified their belief using the Qur'an 3:90 and 4:91. A further 18.2% paraphrased Qur'anic verses and purported that Somali Christians must be killed.

The study found that the respondents agreed with the teaching of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt, a prestigious Islamic university in Sunni Islam. The university issues *fatwas* (religious decrees) considered binding in Sunni Islam.²⁰³ One *fatwa* was issued in 1978 by the university, which is hosted by the Al-Azhar Mosque, against an Egyptian Muslim who converted to Christianity. The *fatwa* instructed that the man should be killed if he did not return to Islam.²⁰⁴ Other Muslim informants contended that there was no clear indication from the Qur'an which compels Muslims to kill the apostates, but asserted it all depended on one's interpretation. However, 9.1% of the informants held that people should be free to choose their faith, which they claimed is what the Qur'an espouses (See Table 4.19). The study supports the idea held by the 9.1% who feel that religious freedom is the best way to go.

The Muslim respondents maintained the Hadith teaches on how ex-Muslim Somali Christians should be treated by Muslims. 72.7% argued that Somali Christians are apostates and should be killed; they explained this by quoting Sahih Bukhari 9:83:17. This hadith demands the killings of those who leave the fold of Islam.²⁰⁵ Other hadiths offer the apostates a grace period in which they should not be killed in case they choose to return to Islam.²⁰⁶ However, 18.2% of Muslim respondents said that Somali Christians should be left alone. They added that Allah can judge them in the afterlife. Rejection and punishment were recommended by 9.1% of informants who used a hadith reference to underpin this claim as well as a Qur'anic reference, Qur'an 3:90 and Qur'an 4:91 (Table 4.19). The study therefore, supports the need for religious freedom. The Somali government needs to enact laws that guarantee religious freedom. The current Somali parliament also needs to amend its constitution into a workable document that ensures religious freedom.

The Muslim respondents were asked if they would harm the Christians, and they responded in an affirmative (See Table 4.21). When asked to explain why they would harm a Somali Christian, 25% said they would be punishing an apostate based on the teachings of Islam. About 16.7% argued that harming Christians would be the right thing to do according

²⁰² Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East, a Brief History of the Last 2000 Years*, (Touchstone Books, 2017), 229.

²⁰³ Al-Azhar University is centred on the historic al-Azhar Mosque. See also: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Al-Azhar University," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (nd). <https://www.britannica.com/topic/al-Azhar-University> (accessed 18 September 2018).

²⁰⁴ Al-Azhar Council of Fatwa, "Mr. Ahmed Darwish," (1978) "Al-Azhar Fatwa," Former Muslims United, (nd.) <http://formermuslimsunitied.org/apostasy-from-islam/al-azhar-fatwa/> (accessed 4 February 2019).

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rechtsgutachten_betr_Apostasie_im_Islam.jpg (accessed 07 July 2017).

²⁰⁵ Kecia Ali and Oliver Leaman. *Islam: The Key Concepts*, (Routledge, 2008), 10.

²⁰⁶ John Bukhari, L. Esposito. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 22. <https://books.google.com/books?id=6VeCWQfVNjkC&pg=PA22#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed 06 July 2017).

to the teachings of Islam. On the other hand, 8.3 % maintained that they could not harm Christians because they did not want to engage in a dirty job. The study asserts that there is a need to expose Muslims to the teaching of the Bible so they can make decisions about Christians based on sound knowledge. The Muslims religious leaders should engage their members on passive teaching within Islam which talks about religious freedom in the Qur'an 3 and other passages which support the notion of religious freedom.

Elsewhere, all eleven asserted that they would be very happy if a Somali Christian would be harmed by a Muslim because of their faith (See Table 4.22). They advocated for this by giving the following reasons: 72.7% cited the hadith, "kill anyone who leaves Islam" which is taught in Sahih Bukhari. In three different responses at a frequency of 9.1%, they stated: if Christians repented and returned to Islam, they deserve a chance. They have the freedom to choose their faith and must be respected even though they are going to hell if they do not return to Islam and religious beliefs are personal matters. This finding affirms that giving apostates a chance to return to Islam is an old Islamic tactic still taught by some schools of thought in Somalia.²⁰⁷ Kamau cites Ayoub and Omar that the Christian delegation from Najran went to Medina from southern Arabia to make peace with Prophet Muhammed.²⁰⁸ Kamau further argues that "Evidence abounds of the Prophet's involvement in developing Muslim and Christian relations."²⁰⁹ It is therefore imperative that Somali Muslims be exposed to the teaching of Prophet Mohamed on his practice regarding other faiths in the early years of Islam.

Also, the eleven Muslim respondents were asked if they knew Christians who have been persecuted for their faith; 66.7% asserted that they knew a few Christians who had been killed for their faith. Also, at a rate of 8.3%, they identified that they were aware of Somali Christians being persecuted. At the same rate, they also affirmed they knew some Christians who were regularly mistreated and that they were also aware of a few former Christian neighbours who were in hiding because of their Christian faith. However, 8.3% mentioned that they did not personally know anyone who was persecuted for their faith. 33.3% affirmed they felt there was no room for Somali Christians in Somalia and said they should all move to the Vatican, shown in Table 4.23. Many Somali Muslims think the Pope represents all Christians. Muslims religious leaders should be encouraged to teach their congregants the value of respect for human freedom and value for life. Peaceful coexistence is in the best interest of all Somalis, regardless of their faith or lack thereof. Somalia has a long history of tribal and inter-communal clashes; a religious conflict is the last calamity the Somalis need.

Also, from Table 4.24, again, at the rate of 33.3%, they maintained that Christianity was not compatible with Somalia. At a lower rate of 8.3% in three counts, which is one respondent each, made the following declarations: the Somali Church will be persecuted and that it will pay a heavy price in Somalia. Secondly, they added that Christianity is an alien religion, and thirdly, they maintained that Somali Christians are increasing in number but added they will never be accepted by the Muslim community in Somalia. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the Somali Muslims to know that Christianity as faith will be not extinct and so there is a need to work together and allow them to practice their faith.

²⁰⁷ Abdul Rashied Omar, *The Right to Religious Conversion: Between Apostasy and Proselytization, in Mohammed Abu-Nimer and David Augsburg, Peace-Building by, Between, and Beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians*, (Lexington Books, 2009), 179–94.

Books.google.com. <https://books.google.com/books?id=HvrDWka4iRgC&pg=186> (accessed 06 July 2017).

²⁰⁸ Patrick Mburu Kamau, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue with Particular Reference To Pentecostals And Muslims In Nairobi North District, Nairobi County, Kenya" (Ph.D. Thesis, Kenyatta University, 2013), 111.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 111.

In table 4.25, all eleven Muslim respondents restated Somali Christians will never live peacefully in Somalia. Justifying why they said so, 54.5% argued Islam teaches that those who leave Islam should be punished severely. A further 36.4% agreed that Somali Muslims were intolerant; whereas, 8.3% opined to be a Somali is to be a Muslim, an old Somali saying. On their expectation when they persecuted the Somali Christians, 11 stated that it was not possible to be both Somali and Christian at the same time when 54.5% proposed Christianity should be eliminated from Somalia. 36.4% declared that Somalia should be 100% Muslim. Additionally, 9.1% of respondents suggested persecution should scare the Somali Christians away from Somalia. On elimination and complete removal of Christianity in Somalia, 45.5% mentioned it was achievable when 27.3% argued it may take time. Moreover, 27.3% opined that it may take a short time and one, 9.1%, declared Somali Christians should be eliminated for they could not “imagine Somalia being like Lebanon where Muslims and Christians fought religious wars in the past.” When the Muslims were asked if the Hadith had teachings on inter-religious tolerance, all eleven categorically opined they were not aware of any hadith which advocates or taught inter-religious tolerance. The study confirms that several verses in the Qur’an and Hadith teach on religious freedom. These tolerant hadiths and Qur’anic verses include: “There is no compulsion in religion — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error.” Qur’an 2:256a.²¹⁰ Hadiths that teach similar freedom of belief in Islam include the well-known hadith that chronicles early Muslims who abandoned Islam in the presence of the Prophet without anyone meeting out any punishment.²¹¹

This study affirms that Somalia is comparable to other Muslim majority countries which criminalized apostasy; persecution of Christians has been on the rise in these countries.²¹² Such Muslim majority countries prescribe punishments for apostasy, which range from imprisonment to death.²¹³ These countries include Iran, Saudi Arabia, and, until quite recently, Sudan.²¹⁴ The irony is that Afghanistan and Iran signed the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 while Saudi Arabia was one of eight countries that abstained.²¹⁵ Article 18 of the charter stipulates:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in

²¹⁰ A commentary on this verse in the Yusuf Ali translation of the Qur’an states: “To all the nonsense which is being talked about the Prophet offering Islam or the sword as alternatives to the pagan Arabs, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, the Muslims are told that when they hold power in their hand, their guiding principle should be that there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion. The presumption that this passage was directed to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless.” *Muslim.org*. <http://www.muslim.org/english-quran/quran.htm> (accessed 12 July 2017).

²¹¹ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Vol.9, Hadeeth # 316.

²¹² The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Centre, *Laws Criminalizing Apostasy*, (Library of Congress, 2014), 1. <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/apostasy/apostasy.pdf> (accessed 10 September 2018).

²¹³ The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center. *Apostasy*. *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, (Oxford University Press, 2012). <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e174> (accessed 06 July 2017).

²¹⁴ *Andrea Elliott*. “In Kabul, a Test for Shariah,” *New York Times*, (March 26, 2006). <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/03/26/weekinreview/in-kabul-a-test-for-shariah.html> (accessed 06 July 2017).

²¹⁵ Yearbook of the United Nations 1948–1949 p 535" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on September 27, 2013. https://web.archive.org/web/20130927221000/http://unyearbook.un.org/1948-49YUN/1948-49_P1_CH5.pdf (accessed 18 February 2021).

Most religious Muslim scholars, including Somalis, view the punishing of apostates as an agreed-upon Islamic canon. The punishing of apostates (and sometimes ignoring them) goes back to the early years of Islam when Muhammad was the head of the young Muslim community. The Islamic community under the four caliphs who succeeded Mohamed also taught that those who apostatized from Islam should be punished. Both the Prophet and his four immediate successors (caliphs) have sometimes distinguished between peaceful apostates and those who threatened the young Muslim faith. This study affirms the Somali Muslims, like their counterparts in other Islamic countries, assume that persecuting ex-Muslim Christians could suppress the growth of the church.

Muslim scholars and lay Muslims who subscribe to modernist or fundamentalist views of Islam usually agree that the punishment for apostasy is the death penalty according to Islam.²¹⁷ This explains why the majority of the Muslims furnished with the questionnaires for this research believe that Islam advocates for the killing of those who abandon Islam. Radical Qur'anic and Hadith teaching have been blamed for such atrocities committed against apostates in Somalia. The study recommends that peaceful imams and Sheikhs guide their followers in a benevolent way when teaching some Qur'anic verses and hadiths which propagate violence against non-Muslims, especially apostates. Such violent verses and hadiths include:

But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful (Qur'an 9:5. Yusuf Ali translation)

Ali burnt some people and this news reached Ibn 'Abbas, who said, "Had I been in his place I would not have burnt them, as the Prophet said, 'Don't punish (anybody) with Allah's Punishment.' No doubt, I would have killed them, for the Prophet said, 'If somebody (a Muslim) discards his religion, kill him.'²¹⁸

Somali Christians responding to the relationship between the persecution of Christians and the growth of the church. Table 4.29 shows exactly 15% of respondents opined they felt they were stronger Christians as the persecution increased, whereas 37.5% stated the more they were persecuted, the more they grew numerically and spiritually. However, 5% of the informants said they love their enemies and they pray for them, including those who were persecuting them. Another 5% thought counselling was necessary for the persecuted Christians. Again, another 5% maintained persecution would make their ministry stronger. With 2.5% arguing the persecuted Christians needed more financial support to thrive in Islamic Somalia. Another 2.5% said more ministers were needed, when another 2.5% stated that the Gospel needed to be preached more.

Another 2.5% felt persecution kept the church holy and more Christ-like. With 2.5% others said Somali Christian men needed to marry Christian women from neighbouring

²¹⁶ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. United Nations, 38
https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf (accessed 18 February 2021)

²¹⁷ Arab Law Quarterly, vol. 13. No. 3, Brill, (1998), 213-4. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i276475> (accessed 11 May 2019).

²¹⁸ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, translated by M. Muhsin Khan 4:52:260, (Kazi Pubns Inc1995).
<http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/052-sbt.php#004.052.260> (accessed 18 February 2021).

countries since there are no enough Somali Christian women in the country. A further 2.5% stated the creative access ministry strategy serves well the persecuted church. When 10% of the respondents felt they had nothing more to say about the question (Table 4.29). This finding affirms the fact that Muslim seekers start facing persecution long before they become Disciples of Christ. This means the CAC church members need to be very careful, creative, and very discrete when sharing the Gospel to their Muslim neighbours.

The church experienced the worst targeted and sustained persecution in Somalia in 1994-1996, according to 65.6% of the respondents (Table 4.31). Another 21.9 % said 1990-2000 was the worst time for the persecution and a further 12.5% thought 1990-2012 was when the church faced the harshest persecution. The period of 1994 to 1996 had the highest persecution rate. The highest numerical growth of the church was observed in 1999 according to 88% of informants. According to Daniel E. Miller, an Islamic scholar, this reported growth is most likely connected to the 1994 -1996 severe persecution.²¹⁹ Miller cites specific numerical growth the church in Somalia experienced after the intense persecution of 1994-1996:

By 1996 and 1997, a new network began to take hold from the seed of the martyrs in the form of a deep underground and persecution-resistant structure. By the year 1999, six fellowships existed; that included 95 believers. I gathered with leaders representing 9 fellowships and 125 believers in August 2000; in 2001, our gathering involved 12 house leaders representing approximately 180 believers.²²⁰

Numerical church growth often happens a few years after intense persecution. This is the reason that persecution and church growth years do not overlap. Thus, the study affirms that there is a direct relationship between the persecution of the church and the numerical growth of the Somali Christians. After every notable persecution period in Somalia, there was a significant church growth, as affirmed by the respondents.

The persecution the Somali Christians face was also described by Frank-Ole Thoresen who opined that Somalis who have turned to the church have often been subjected to stark persecution from the Muslim majority.²²¹ Thoresen further explains that meeting in a traditional church building is impossible for Somali Christians, as they can become an easy target. He also notes that is suspected to be a Christian alone can trigger persecution.²²² In that regard, the study argues that meeting in houses is a better option to save lives and keep the body of Christ active.

Based on the findings of the study, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis which claims that there is no persecution of the Church in Somalia and it has no significant effect on church growth. On the other hand, there is enough evidence to accept the H₁ which claims that there is persecution of the Church in Somalia and it has a significant effect on church growth. The Church in Somalia was forced to become 100% creative access (CAC) or underground where leadership development is taken very seriously. The numerical growth of the Somali Church was confirmed by 96.1% of asserters. The majority of respondents in this study attested to the fact that persecution of the Christians and the

²¹⁹ Daniel E. Miller, "The Numerical Strength of the Somali Church." Message to Aweis A. Ali. 30 March 2021. Email.

²²⁰ Daniel E. Miller, "The Numerical Strength of the Somali Church."

²²¹ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, 1st edition, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 1.

²²² "Persecution in Somalia," *Open Doors USA*, nd.

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/persecution/countries/somalia/> (accessed 06 September 2018).

numerical growth of church were directly proportional and a common phenomenon in L1, L2, and L3 of Somalia.

5.2.2 Challenges persecution poses to the Church in Somalia

With 99% of informants responding positively to the question in the questionnaire that the Church in Somalia is persecuted, the study inferred that they were serious challenges persecution poses to the church (Table 4.12). The responders confirmed that all Somali house churches were persecuted because of their faith in Christ Jesus. No informant mentioned that paying the price of following Christ was too much despite the persecution. The informants made it clear that the persecution the church faced contributed to its numerical growth. However, they confirmed that the Church in Somalia was persecuted and this contributes to the growth of the church.

About 60% opined that all Somali house churches were persecuted because of their faith in Christ Jesus. Another 15.0% disclosed the Church in Somalia was persecuted because Somalia is a Muslim country and most Somali Muslims sympathize with radical Islam. A further 10% indicated most Somalis are Muslim and were against Somali Christians. 7.7% of respondents acknowledged Muslim communities to have wrong perception about Somali Christians and Christianity in general. Whereas 4.8% of others stressed that choosing to follow Jesus Christ is the right decision despite the fact of persecution. A further 4.8% stated that the Church in Somalia is persecuted because any growing church is persecuted, and persecution contributes to church growth. Only 2.4% argued that Muslims think that Christianity is flourishing in Somalia (Table 4.12).

Furthermore, 99% of the responders stated that their source of encouragement was the Bible. These responders provided about 10 reasons they felt the Bible encouraged and strengthened them to endure and thrive in the persecution. 59.4% of the respondents argued that the Bible encourages them to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. Another 18.8% opined they rejoice and were excitingly glad as they share in Christ's suffering as taught in 1Peter 4:13 "*But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*" A further 7.24% of the respondents said they learnt from the Bible that more hear the Gospel when believers are persecuted, and they scatter throughout the land; these are how many encounter the Gospel and are saved.

In six separate accounts at a frequency of 2.42%, the informants said the Bible encourages them to desire to live a godly life in Christ fully knowing they will be persecuted. The informants stressed they yield graciously to persecution demonstrating that they have God on their side in contrast to their adversaries. This belief was justified by citing Hebrews 11:38, "the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground." Setting their eyes on things above remains a cherished belief in the Somali Church. The concept of thriving in persecution and focusing on Christ alone is necessary given the fact that persecution is an integral part of the Somali Church. Sometimes this persecution comes from the government and sometimes from the public.²²³ The intense persecution has not dissuaded the Somali Christians from studying and teaching the Bible amid severe persecution in Islamic Somalia.

The respondents mentioned some persecution challenges Christians face in Somalia including torture, discrimination, insults, economic marginalization, intimidation, mockery, beheading, mental torture, terrorism, social exclusion, rape, attack on Christian families, and

²²³ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 80-81.

various modes of martyrdom. Christians who are active in the affairs of their clan reported a certain degree of protection bestowed upon them; this clan acceptance is every Christian's high point. The informants offered several reasons why some are loved and accepted by their respective clans: that they are active members of the clan, they faithfully pay the *qaaraan*, a financial contribution that helps those in the clan who need help. However, some respondents maintained that the clan did not respect them because of their Christian faith. One respondent added that their birth family did not accept them because of their faith. This respondent added that they patiently demonstrate Christ's love to these people so that they may also know Christ.

It is notable in Table 4.38 that 60% of the respondents affirmed they pay the clan *qaaraan* because they want to help fellow clan members who need help. Subsequently, this generosity earned them the respect of the clan members. Another 13.2 % of informants said they pay the *qaaraan* because it is a requirement. Just 7.31% stated certain other reasons. One reason that the *qaaraan* was paid is because it is like a certificate of membership. A second reason was to remain an active and respected member in the clan.

The Bible was cited as supporting paying the *qaaraan* by quoting 1Timothy 5:8, "Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." Thirdly, 7.31% admitted they do not pay the *qaaraan* because, in Somali culture, only men are required to pay it. Twice, at a rate of 2.4%, the respondents stated that they don't pay the *qaaraan* but their parents do. This *qaaraan* payment enables their clan to help them as active members. The study supports the need to pay the *qaaraan* as a matter of family solidarity and other community work.

Other respondents highlighted that respectful Christians enjoy their clan's protection. This result indirectly reveals that 2.4% of responders were women from the way they responded to the questions by admitting they do not pay the *qaaraan* because, in Somali culture, only men are required to do so. Women are not traditionally required to pay the *qaaraan* but this had changed in modern times since many women have their resources and can afford to pay the *qaaraan*. Some other informants highlighted that Christians seen as clean and respectful enjoy a certain degree of clan protection. This claim was made by 58.9% of respondents. However, 7.25% of respondents said clan protection for Christian members is very limited.

However, some informants stated that they never experienced any clan protection to speak of. They were not *qaaraan* payers. These Christians and others also feel that the Somali constitution does not offer them enough protection as citizens. Also, an observation affirms 98% of the informants identified that the Somali constitution gives them a limited degree of protection. The informants agreed that the restrictions Christians face in their worships and witnesses are cruel and unfair. The reason behind this sentiment is best described by the *Voice of the Martyrs* Canada, which quoted Al-Shabaab Islamist group who in the past declared that it wants "Somalia free of all Christians"²²⁴ In 2011 the al-Qaeda affiliated group impounded farms belonging to Somali Christians. This happened in the same year that a prominent Somali scholar advocated publicly for the killing of Somali Christians in press releases.²²⁵ The study therefore, recommends that the Somali constitution ought to be

²²⁴ "Islamic militants confiscate Christian farms," *The Voice of the Martyrs* Canada, (10 February 2011). <https://www.vomcanada.com/so-2011-02-10.htm> (accessed 06 September 2018).

²²⁵ "Islamic militants confiscate Christian farms," *The Voice of the Martyrs* Canada, (10 February 2011). <https://www.vomcanada.com/so-2011-02-10.htm> (accessed 06 September 2018).

Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert and Nina Shea, *Persecuted: The Global Assault on Christians*, (Thomas Nelson, 2013), 253.

amended for religious inclusivity, particularly for Christians who are a religious minority outside the fold of Islam. Christians suffer intense persecution in Somalia.

Shania and Shino, Somali Christian ministers, quote a *fatwa* press release by a prominent Somali Muslim scholar, Sheikh Nur Barud.²²⁶ The Somali government's official National Television Network broadcast the violent *fatwa* press release showing beyond reasonable doubt the Somali government's complicity in the anti-Christian *fatwa*. In an earlier *fatwa* released in 2003, Sheikh Nur Barud and members of the *Kulanka Culimada* (now *Majma'a Culimada*) said, "All Somali Christians must be killed according to the Islamic law."²²⁷ The clan protection and *qaaraan paying* form an antithesis to the anti-Christian phenomena highlighted by the *Voice of the Martyrs* because, the researcher observes through the clan system and the Somali tradition of paying *qaaraan* provides an opportune leeway for Somali people to help one another, it also ensures the common good for all members despite their religious differences. This study recommends that this can be realized through a deliberate "*intra/inter-faith dialogue*" based on all clans working together to help and support fellow clan members in ensuring the common good for all through a holistic human rights process and endeavour.

It is notable Somali tribal elders also use the powerful clan system to isolate and humiliate those who dare to leave the fold of Islam and embrace Christianity, a faith Muslims see as an alien threat.²²⁸ The researcher agrees with Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk that deliberate "*intra/inter-faith dialogue*" initiated by the Christian members of the clan, can resolve a great deal of the persecution which is directed against the Christians. Ahmed Ali Haile's strategy of interfaith dialogue, and peace-making, is very effective.

This study noticeably shows that the Somali clan system grants its members multifaceted protection and other benefits that include a financial safety net when needed. A constitutional amendment, to realize religious freedom, and an inter-clan dialogue led by Somali Christians can alleviate the pain and suffering Somali Christians endure.

Frank-Ole Thoresen describes in his study that the Somali Church has faced "persistent oppression and persecution" for decades at the hands of the Somali Muslims.²²⁹ This study suggests interfaith dialogue spearheaded by Somali Christians can resolve many of the persecution problems.

The researcher recommends the use of inter-clan dialogue and the harnessing of the Somali clan protection system. Both are sure avenues to decrease the intolerance towards the tiny Somali Christian community by the majority Muslim. The researcher does not recommend this as a wholly inclusive panacea to the Christian persecution in Somalia but presents that this could serve as an otherwise "*unexpected trigger*" to begin decreasing the violent persecution the Church in Somalia faces, and to allow Somali Christians to strengthen the contribution they are making to their clans and their nation.

See also: Stephen Mbogo, "Somalia's Tiny Christian Community Reportedly Under Fire," *CNSN*, (07 July 2008). <https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/somalias-tiny-christian-community-reportedly-under-fire> (accessed 06 September 2018).

²²⁶ Shania-Shino Gabo, "Fatwa against Somali Christians in Europe," *YouTube*, 2017 <https://youtu.be/yglcwlW9qz4> (accessed 06 September 2018).

²²⁷ Sheikh Nur Barud was at the time the vice chairman of the powerful Somali Islamist group, *Kulanka Culimada*. "*Kulanka*" is Somali and "*Majma'a*" is Arabic and they both mean "council." "Somali Christians and Missionaries Murdered," *Worthy News*, 19 January 2003. <https://www.worthynews.com/378-somali-christians-and-missionaries-murdered> (accessed 13 January 2019).

²²⁸ Ahmed Ali Haile and David W. Shenk, *Teatime in Mogadishu: My Journey as a Peace Ambassador in the World of Islam*. (Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2011), 77.

²²⁹ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, 1st edition, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 132.

Another challenge Christians face is a health risk because of the persecution, as reported by 95.2% of the respondents (Table 4.44). Sustained persecution causes mental, emotional, and psychological traumas. Many persecuted Somali Christians need professional counselling. Overall, 40% of the respondents felt significant that persecution gives rise to mental-related health risks in the church. The leadership of the CAC ought to offer online counselling services for affected members. There is a need to develop a seminar on the training of trainers to avoid being earmarked for violent persecution. House churches and fellowships leaders should offer counselling services to members.

Another challenge Christians face is that they are denied employment opportunities because of their faith. See Table 4.45. Some Christians who operate their businesses experience Muslim boycotts to force them to return to Islam. Christians who face product boycotts should not give up but persistently venture into new relevant businesses less subject to boycotts, such as farming. Wealthy Christians should support their less fortunate members to avoid ridicule. Education and other training ought to be encouraged among Christians so that they are not lacking. Somali Christians should be inspired by the Egyptian Christians who are thriving in Islamic Egypt despite the Muslim discrimination and outright persecution.²³⁰

Persecution also causes family problems as affirmed by 85% of the informants (See Table 4.46). Somali Christians are often rejected by their Muslim families and friends. Many men lose their Muslim wives and children when they convert. The idea of a Muslim wife staying with a Christian husband is rejected as unacceptable by most Somali Muslims. CAC leaders should encourage their members to love their families unconditionally and provide for them whether they live together or not.

Persecution is also a security threat that interferes with normal church functions like meetings, worship, and Bible study according to 97.6% of respondents. Some informants admitted that under persecution, some Christians become careless and some problems Christians suffer are self-inflicted. Some Christians claim that these Christians are often overzealous and act foolishly. Similarly, some Christians make innocent mistakes that can cost them dearly. Christians must act wisely all the time to avoid self-inflicted persecution.

When the participants in this study were asked their opinion of how the problem of the persecution could be remedied, 97.12% responded that Somali Christians must always stand united, educate themselves and be respectful. See Table 4.50 The respondents added that persecution will always be present and it is the mark of a good Christian to be persecuted according to 2 Timothy 3:12 "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (NIV)." The study is in favour of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians to foster brotherly relations.

In Table 4.48, another 95.7% of the respondents suggest Christians can avoid unnecessary persecution by being respectful and sensitive. Insulting Islam and its Prophet are never a good idea. Mocking the tenets of Islam fosters enmity. These respondents emphasized the importance of humility among Christians. The respondents added that if Jesus forgave those who crucified him out of ignorance, Somali Christians can also forgive their persecutors because they do not know what they are doing. Informants were also asked if any good could come out from the persecution challenges. The listed benefits of persecution included: Godly church, numerical growth, and spiritual maturity. The study suggests that Muslims need to understand that they can propagate their faith freely without

²³⁰ Liane Hansen, Egypt's Coptic Christians a Powerful Force, NPR, 20 April 2008. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89790980> (accessed 29 March 2021).

using violence against Christians. Persecuting Christians will only cast a bad light on Muslims and their Islamic faith since many Muslims portray Islam as a religion of peace.

5.2.3 Determination if the Church in Somalia has a locally developed distinctive theology of persecution

This study found that the Somali Church thrives in the persecution with verifiable numerical growth amid persecution. One thing that helps the health of the Somali Church is its well-developed theology of persecution. This was affirmed by 99.04% (Table 3.52) who cited they were well versed in this theology and this distinctive theology of persecution was well thought out in the Church. They further confirmed this theology enabled the church members to thrive as followers of Christ even under intense persecution.

Over 99% of the respondents confirmed that the theology of persecution was expressed in hymns and Christian songs only. These findings were in agreement with Richard Burton who wrote that “Somalia teems with poets.”²³¹ Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi also affirms that contemporary Western scholars, like Margaret Laurence, describe Somalis as a “*nation of poets*” and a “*nation of bards*.”²³² Hence, it is not a surprise that the Somali Church expresses its persecution of theology in hymns and Christian songs as was shown in Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 demonstrate an exemplum of songs sung to help the community of faith, not only survive but also thrive, amid persecution whether the persecution is real or perceived. The poetry fits well in the category of a distinctive theology of persecution. The study asserts that such a theology of persecution should be encouraged by clergy to avoid new converts' backsliding to Islam.

Furthermore, 98.1% of informants noted in Table 4.53, affirmed this theology of persecution was taught to them and that it helps them overcome the persecution. Additionally, 83.9% of respondents said the Somali Church developed its first theology concerning persecution in 1980 using poetry. Another 54.8% of the informants detailed how Somali hymns are rich with the theology of persecution. However, another 11.83 % opined that some of their fellow Christians were martyred in the 1990s, and Somali hymns with a solid theology of persecution sustained the community of faith during that testing time. This agrees with the fact that Somali Christian hymns often express a deep theological conviction that addresses persecution and martyrdom. Somali hymns which build upon a theology of persecution are highly prized in the community of faith.

There is also a humorous oral tradition in the Somali Church that church leaders do not need a retirement plan since persecutors often target church leaders. Accordingly, the majority of Somali Christians martyred since 1991 were house church leaders, as recorded by the *Somalis for Jesus* blog.²³³

When asked to respond to how the theology of persecution helps the church, 49.2% of respondents listed three different reasons about how a theology of persecution aids the church: ensured church growth, strengthened members, helped them to read the Bible more to understand how the people of God responded to persecution. See Table 4.53. Respondents added that Christians should never be surprised when they are persecuted, but they should be very worried if no one persecutes them for their faith in Christ. Firstly, respondents explained that their theology of persecution clarifies both the advantages and disadvantages of persecution.

²³¹ Burton, Richard, *First Footsteps in Somalia*, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1854, 91.

²³² Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, *Culture and Customs of Somalia*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001), 75.

²³³ Somalis For Jesus: The Martyrs' Corner, October 2012.
<https://somalisforjesus.blogspot.com/2008/11/martyrs-corner.html> (accessed 08 June 2019).

Secondly, informants said that the theology of persecution helps them understand and deal with persecution as early Christians did. They also argued that a theology of persecution creates a common bond between Christians and that it helps with church growth. The study findings affirm and agree with Nik Ripken's claim that the Somali Christians are light-hearted and meek in the way they speak about persecution. Their light-heartedness and humility demonstrate their confidence in their Lord as they accept the persecution as a way of life. Their purpose is to maintain a sense of humour during persecution as it helps the community of faith to remain optimistic and maintain a sense of normalcy. Nik Ripken further describes this humour as "a powerful indicator of psychological health."²³⁴

This study hence affirms further that theology of persecution prepares the persecuted Christians for the inevitable persecution that all godly Christians must face. This research confirms that the informants are deeply versed in the theology of persecution taught to them. Most Somali informants can define, defend, and describe the theology of persecution as taught in the Bible and as practiced in the Somali Church.

The findings in this study agree with Jurgen Moltmann who popularized a theology of hope with an eschatological bent highlighting the hope that the resurrection brings.²³⁵ This is a Christ-centred eschatology that describes an eschatology that gives hope. According to Moltmann, the eschatology of hope in times of persecution instills a divine hope in the hearts of maligned Christians. Furthermore, at the heart of the locally developed Somali theology of persecution is that it gives divine hope that sustains the community of faith. Theologies of persecution, like theologies of hope, generate a defiant posture towards the oppressors of the church.

The findings in this study also agree with Anthony Kelly who describes the eschatology of hope as an "incalculable fulfilment in terms of what can never be fully expressed."²³⁶ Kelly further affirms that an eschatology of hope wins against the fear, pain, and uncertainty, and suffering in general that persecution inflicts on the disciples of Christ.²³⁷ Similarly, Matthew O'Reilly also explains the benefits of the theology of hope which is related to one's theology of persecution, "...creation will emerge from its sorrow into the bliss of God's manifest presence."²³⁸

This study further affirms that their theology of persecution serves as the glue that holds the Somali Christians together. These Christians are very knowledgeable about that theology of persecution and can make sense of all the sufferings they face because of their Christian faith. This Bible-centered theology of persecution is an important lifeline for the Somali Church. Such a theology also helps the persecuted Christians maintain a right attitude towards their persecutors who think they please God. This theology also helps Christians to glorify God and live a Christ-like life no matter what suffering they face.

The mode of sharing the theology of persecution is mostly in poetry and formal teachings as affirmed by 97.6% of respondents See Table 4.53. Sermons are rarely or never used to teach the theology of persecution. Somalis have a deep appreciation for poetry and important messages are often transmitted in poetic forms to be memorable. Many of the informants eloquently stated that they will be persecuted as long as they live a godly life. A

²³⁴ Nik Ripken, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected*, (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group. Kindle, 2014), 224.

²³⁵ Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology Of Hope: On The Ground And The Implications of a Christian Eschatology*. (SCM Press: London. First American edition, 1967), 234.

²³⁶ Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 13.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

²³⁸ Matthew P. O'Reilly, "Towards an Eschatology of Hope: The Disappearance of the Sea in Revelation 21:1 and its Significance for the Church." *The Princeton Theological Review*. Volume XVII, No. 1. Issue 55. (Fall 2011), 52.

theology of persecution helps them thrive in this inevitable persecution. Informants also said that proper discipleship prepares believers for persecution. The study, thus, encourages a discipleship program combined with the theology of persecution, to help Christians thrive in the suffering.

This research further confirms that Somali Christians derive their encouragement from various scriptures which support Christians to stand firm in their faith as noted by 55.5% of informants (See Table 4.54). The respondents attested to the fact they recite these scriptures to uplift one another. The concept of blessing their persecutors is also a common theme in these verses. These scriptures give the Christians hope and divine help. Some of the informants made it clear that they identify with Christ when they are persecuted.

The following Scriptures should be used to encourage the community of faith: 1 John 3:12, Matthew 23:35, 1 John 3:13, Genesis 3:15, 2 Timothy 3:12, 2 Corinthians 12:10, Romans 12:14, 1 Peter 2:21, Matthew 16:18, Matthew 16:24, 2 Timothy 3:12, 2 Corinthians 12:10 and 1 Peter 2:19. There is a firm belief in the Somali Church that their persecution and the numerical growth of their church are directly connected. The informants also consider an un-persecuted church an oxymoron.²³⁹ One informant mused, “I will question my Christ likeness if I am not persecuted for my faith.” For this informant and many others, Christianity without persecution was akin to Christianity without the cross.

5.2.4 To assess the role ministers play in this church during severe persecution

This section finds out the exact role ministers play in the Somali Church during severe persecution. This research reveals that ministers play a very critical role in the church even during severe persecution where they are often the target, with 94.7% of the respondents describing their ministers as heroic. Another 38.4% of informants stated that clergy were persecuted the most since the persecutors assumed that a church without clergy would cease to exist (see Table 4.57). These results agreed with David W. Shenk, an eminent Mennonite scholar, who identifies that Somali Church ministers and lay leaders are often the initial targets of the persecution; he defends his argument that there is a long history of different Somali governments denying passports to church leaders to prevent them from attending ecclesiastical related gatherings outside of Somalia where the Somali government has no control.²⁴⁰ Shenk further presents at least one Somali Church leader who had his passport confiscated after returning to Mogadishu from a church conference in Tanzania in 1967.²⁴¹ While the pre-civil war military government confiscated passports and detained some local Christians, Somali Christians feel less safe now because of the anarchy of the civil war. An anti-Christian Muslim government is much better for the church than total anarchy.

The study shows a further 27.3% of the respondents said their clergy risked their own lives to serve others. Assistance provided by ministers includes hosting Christians fleeing from severe persecution. Another 10.6% of the informants were so impressed with their ministers that they suggested church history books should be written and their names included so that future generations can learn about them. The study presents that the church

²³⁹ Nik Ripken writes, “Perhaps the question should not be, ‘Why are others persecuted?’ Perhaps the better question is, ‘Why are we not.’” Nik Ripken with Gregg Lewis, *The Insanity of God: A True Story of Faith Resurrected*. (iPad Mini), 2013. Retrieved from Amazon.com.

²⁴⁰ David W. Shenk, “A Study of the Mennonite Presence and Church Development in Somalia from 1950 Through 1970.” (Ph.D Thesis, New York University, School of Education, 1972), 203. Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology* (Bible and Theology in Africa Book 17), Book 17 of 12: Bible and Theology in Africa (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014).12

²⁴¹ Shenk, 344-345.

leadership had a coping mechanism that was effective and positioned them to deal with persecution onslaught.

The ratio of leaders to non-leaders among informants is 11:8. The study assumes this ratio represents the Somali Church's ratio of leaders to non-leaders. To overproduce leaders, whether clergy or lay, is necessitated by the intense persecution in the country which often targets leaders. The strategy of having too many leaders in the church membership according to 57.9% of the responders confuses the persecutors who cannot eliminate the majority of the local Christians. See Table 4.7. This study affirms, according to the survey, that in the last six years, the Somali Church produced 7 times more leaders compared to the previous 18 years; the rate of numerical increase being 22 times higher than compared to the previous period of 7-25 years. This is an adaptation to the persecution and preparation for the numerical growth of the church which is witnessed shortly after intense persecution.

Despite the enemy often targeting the shepherds, the sheep were too many to be persecuted in any lethal way. The findings reveal a strong belief held by the persecutors that the community of faith will scatter if their ministers are stricken down thus the Somali proverb, "if you want to kill a snake, hit it on the head."²⁴² These results also are confirmed by *International Christian Concern* (ICC) report of 2009 of the martyrdom in Mogadishu of a Somali Church leader, Pastor Ali Hussein Weheliye, popularly known as Ali Weyne.²⁴³ This martyrdom of this minister was not an isolated incident but was persecution that targeted him as a minister of the Gospel like other church leaders are targeted.²⁴⁴ Ministers are the most susceptible to persecution due to their prominent role in the church and the larger community. Therefore, the study supports that the CAC community should continue teaching more leaders and lay leaders. Influential government leaders should be approached to champion freedom of worship.

The effectiveness of the leadership in the creative access ministry was affirmed by 96.2% of informants who confirmed further that according to them the church leaders play the following critical roles during severe persecution: giving guidance, providing protection, giving biblical encouragement, facilitating communication between the targeted Christians and their loved ones, praying and interceding for the persecuted, providing monetary assistance and feeding those in hiding because of the persecution. 75.6% of the respondents affirmed that clergy are the most persecuted in the church. Only 24.4% of the assenters thought that the lay Christians were the most persecuted with 95.7% of respondents confirming that clergy are the most persecuted because of their high profile as leaders. Another 66% of the respondents said that the laity helps the clergy when they become the target of severe persecution. The study posits the need to offer humanitarian support to the affected Christians besides prayers, hosting, and feeding (Table 4.62).

The shortcomings of ministers during persecution were elaborated by 94.7% of informants (Table 4.63). Their inadequacies included the slow response of some ministers when their quick response is needed. This alleged slow response is partially caused by ministers sometimes questioning the accuracy of some reported incidents of persecution. In other words, it takes time to evaluate all reported persecution. Another reported failing of some ministers is their overconfidence and lack of deep knowledge of the people they serve

²⁴² "Mas madaxaa laga dilaa" strategy was widely used by the repressive Somali military government (1969-1991) by largely ignoring members of the opposition parties and protest movements and targeting only the leaders of these two entities.

²⁴³ Islamic Militants Kill Somali Church Leader, *Worthy News*, (16 November 2019).

<https://www.worthynews.com/6898-islamic-militants-kill-somali-church-leader>(accessed 08 June 2019).

²⁴⁴ Frank-Ole Thoresen, *A Reconciled Community of Suffering Disciples: Aspects of a Contextual Somali Ecclesiology*, (Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2014), 135.

in the church. Based on the above challenge, there is a need to have a communal reporting center for quick response and authentication whenever such problems arise.

Also, another 95.2% of the responders identified that ministers did cowardly things during severe persecution. These cowardly acts include disappearing when they are needed the most. Persecuted Christians then feel abandoned. However, 62.3% of respondents said they could not name any cowardly acts. These informants added that any minister who fails when needed most often loses their leadership role in the church very quickly. This study affirms that ministers overall perform well despite the difficult challenges. Other leaders who serve selflessly include elders and lay leaders.

5.3 Summary of Main Findings

The findings in this study established that the Somali Church is persecuted and that the persecution is contributing to the numerical growth of this church. Similarly, the study also presented that the Somali Church takes leadership development very seriously. However, in the church, men outnumber women by a margin unsustainable in a healthy church. The gender disparity is seen in the informants (70.33% men and 29.67% women) represent the gender gap in the Somali Church. The study also found that the Somali Church has a well-developed distinctive theology of persecution which is often expressed in poetry. Despite the Islamic hostility Somali Christians face, interfaith dialogue is widely seen as a constructive strategy to improve the relationship the Somali Christian minorities have with the Muslim majority. The study also established that Christians who are very active in the affairs of their clan have better clan protection than those who do not. Paying the *qaaraan* is therefore seen as a litmus test to see if one is respected by his fellow clansmen.

5.3.1 Persecution of the church throughout history and its effect on church growth

This study recommends action ought to be taken to minimize cultural barriers women face that keeps them away from the frontline ministries. These actions include rejecting the Islamic and Somali traditions which treat women like children. The Somali proverb, “a woman is a child with big feet” illustrates the discrimination Somali women face.²⁴⁵ The Islamic doctrine of *walayah* (adult women needing male guardianship) it also limited woman’s freedom.²⁴⁶ CAC house churches should be equipped to support families who have been rejected for their faith. Dialogue should be sought by the minority Christians to ensure their human rights, in particular the right to worship and enterprise and earn a living without discrimination.

The Somali Church should embark on a more robust interfaith dialogue with the Muslim majority in the country. This constructive discourse has the potential to defuse any religious tension. Many anti-Christian sentiments in Somalia are based on ignorance about the Christian faith. Interfaith dialogues can alleviate some of the fears many Muslims have.

²⁴⁵ The proverb says in Somali “*Naagi waa caruur caga wayn.*”

²⁴⁶ Qur’an 4:34.

5.3.2 Discover the challenges that persecution poses to the Church in Somalia

Somali Christians must always reflect Christ. Their Christlikeness, love, and humility are the best protection against sustained persecution. Sooner or later, the persecutors will see that targeting Christians is counterproductive. Somali Christians should better harness the provisions of the Somali clan system, the only time-tested social safety net among Somalis. Somali Christians should also faithfully pay the clan *qaaraan*, the financial contribution which helps fellow clan members who need assistance. Every reputable clan member is required to support themselves and aid those less fortunate. The Somali proverb, *keligii cune, keligii buu dhintaa* (if you eat alone, you die alone) best illustrates this point. Somali Christians must strive to have a good relationship with their government and seek political office either by election or by appointment.

5.3.3 Somalia Church locally developed distinctive theology of persecution

The theology of persecution is well established and effective in keeping CAC membership together and encourages them to face the persecution with God's help. The Somali Constitution ought to be amended to allow others to practice their faith. There is a need for the Christian community to lobby their government for fair treatment.

5.3.4 Role ministers play during the persecution

Ministers play a very critical role in the operation of the CAC church. Their training needs to be beyond on-the-job training; most leaders in the CAC churches are trained on the job. There is a need for ministers to have sound theological training. The CAC community should start online Bible training for all CAC ministers and other leaders. The CAC community must find ways to attract more females to the church. The church is currently mostly males (females being minority) which is not sustainable. Strengthening and expanding the church's ministry to women can remedy this shortfall of female membership in the church.

Somali ministers could benefit the community of faith more if they could reach out to Somali Muslims to dispel the myth that Christianity is a newcomer faith in Somalia. Ways ministers could go by this is to write books, blogs, and use social media more extensively to make their case. Since Somali Christians face employment discrimination, the ministers and other church leaders should encourage fellow Christians to self-employ by owning their businesses.

5.4 Conclusion

The outcome of the questionnaire administered in L1, L2, and L3 cities revealed that Somali Christians are predominantly male relative to their female counterparts in a ratio of 5:2 which cannot be healthy for any church.²⁴⁷ Fewer women come to the Lord in Somalia because of cultural pressures and unique vulnerabilities. Intense persecution in L1, L2, and L3 cities resulted in Christians meeting in a creative access manner. These meetings are known as house churches and they keep a very low profile. This is the reason that there are no expatriate members in the Somali house churches.

This study establishes beyond a reasonable doubt that there is a direct link between the persecution of Christians in Somalia and the numerical growth of that church. The study chronicles that regions in Somalia where the church is most persecuted are where it grows the

²⁴⁷ D. K. Reisinger. Teaching Training ,An Introduction to Evangelical Christian Education ,ed J Edward Hakes (Chicago, Moody ,Press,1972), 97

most. On the contrary, the regions where the church is least persecuted are where it grows the least.

5.5 Recommendations


This study affirms that persecution of Christians, in its severest form, is predominately found in the Muslim world. Sharia Law heavily influences the Somali constitution, which makes the Somali government and its various organs prejudiced against the Somali Church. This study further corroborates that the current Somali Christian persecution is so intense that international para-church organizations and expatriate churches left Somalia or maintain a very low profile for security reasons. However, some of these international organizations are still involved in the Somali ministry while based in neighbouring countries including Kenya and Ethiopia. The Somali Church found creative ways to flourish in Somalia despite the unprecedented persecution. The fact that the Somali Christians have been growing in number for decades, especially in the last 6 years, gives credence to their proverbial resilience. This research makes the following recommendations.

1. Somali Christians must always reflect Christ. Their Christ likeness, love, and humility are the best protection against sustained persecution. Sooner or later, the persecutors will see that targeting Christians is counterproductive.
2. The Somali Church should embark on a more robust interfaith dialogue with the Muslim majority in the country. This constructive discourse has the potential to defuse any religious tension. Many anti-Christian sentiments in Somalia are based on ignorance about the Christian faith. Interfaith dialogues can alleviate some fears many Muslims have.
3. Somali Christians should better harness the provisions of the Somali clan system, the only time-tested social safety net among Somalis. Somali clans operate like mini-states and have enormous influence in the country. Somali Christians should also faithfully pay the clan *qaaraan*, the financial contribution which helps fellow clan members who need assistance. Free-loaders are despised among Somalis. Every reputable clan member is required to support themselves and aid those less fortunate. The Somali proverb, *keligii cune, keligii buu dhintaa* (if you eat alone, you die alone) best illustrates this point.
4. Somali Christians must strive to have a good relationship with their government and seek political office either by election or by appointment. Somali Christians have in the past served in Somalia as ambassadors, cabinet members, and military officers. Somali Christians have also been visible in the private sector which gave them some protection from wanton discriminations.

5.6 Areas for further Research

This study makes the following recommendations for further study

1. Exploring how can Somalia's higher education institutions and clan elders be involved in the interfaith dialogue.
2. Examining the viability of Somali Christian teachers and lecturers in Somalia's education sector. Educators enjoy immense respect among Somalis.
3. Evaluating the positive influence of high-profile Somali Christians in the Somali culture. Many Somali Muslims are unaware of the existence of established and successful Somali Christians in their midst. This is not a surprise since most Christians have traditionally kept a low profile for security reasons.
4. Studying the tactics ministers of the Gospel employ to lead the CAC house churches effectively in Islamic Somalia.

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5. Researching how the CAC house churches train their members to maintain a high percentage of clergy relative to laypeople.
 6. Ascertaining the model of operation of the house church-based creative access ministries in L1, L2, and L3 and beyond in Somalia.
 7. Investigating the significance of the 95% high school graduation rate reported among survey respondents in a country with one of the lowest graduation rates in the world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

Dear informant,

My name is Aweis Ali and I am doing a Ph.D. at Africa Nazarene University. I am currently conducting research on the persecution of Christians and its effect on church growth in Somalia. This is part of my academic requirement for the Ph.D. degree. I am requesting your help to the best of your knowledge. Please write the answers on the space provided at the appropriate space. Please note that the information provided and the identity of the individuals will be treated as confidential and materials are for academic purposes only.

Thanks in advance.

Aweis A. Ali



Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Africa Nazarene University
P.O Box 53067-00200
Nairobi, Kenya

Title of Research Project: Persecution of Christians and Its Effect on Church Growth in Somalia.

Name of Principal Investigator: Aweis Ali

Email of Principal Investigator: amazingwisdom@gmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

Aweis Ali, a Doctor of Philosophy in Religion student at Africa Nazarene University, is conducting research on “**Persecution of Christians and Its Effect on Church Growth in Somalia.**” The purpose of your participation in this research is to help the researcher with data on the Persecution of Christians and Its Effect on Church Growth in Somalia. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are deemed knowledgeable on the above-mentioned subject.

The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All questionnaires and transcripts will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Only research personnel will have access to the files. After the study is completed on the 30th of July 2021, all collected data with identifying information will be destroyed for your security.

Your decision whether to participate in this study is voluntary and will not affect your relationship with the Somalia Government. If you choose to participate in this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign on the space below:

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for Christians

Please answer the following questions and fill in the blanks.

I. Background Information

1. Name (optional) _____
2. Date _____ Research assistant assigned number _____
3. Research site (L1, L2, L3) _____
4. Gender: Male ___ Female ___ Age _____
5. Level of formal education completed (optional)
None ___ b. Primary ___ c. Secondary ___ d. Post-Secondary ___ e. University ___
f. Others _____
6. What is your church affiliation?
a. CAC ___ b. Pentecostal ___ c. Mainline ___ d. Independent ___
e. Roman Catholic ___ g. Others _____
7. How long have you been following Jesus? _____
8. Are there any foreigners in your house church? If yes, what percentage?
9. Please write your position in your church
Clergy _____ Lay leader _____
10. For how long have you served as a leader in the same church? _____

II. Biblical teaching and Persecuted Church

Extent, intensity, and the culture of persecution against the church

Answer the following questions:

- A. Does the Bible say anything about Christian persecution? Yes ___ No ___
 1. If yes, give some Bible references _____
 2. If yes, explain in simple way your understanding of how such references are helpful to your spiritual life _____
- B. According to the Bible, does persecution help church growth?
Yes ___ No ___
Please explain your answer _____
- C. According to the Bible, does persecution hinder church growth?
Yes ___ No ___
Please explain your answer _____
- D. Which groups or entities persecute the church the most? Please explain.

III. Challenges persecution poses to the Church in Somalia

1. Why is the Church in Somalia persecuted? Please explain.
2. List some of the persecution Christians in Somali face
3. Are you an active and respected member in your clan? Please explain
4. Do you regularly pay the clan *qaaraan* – the financial contribution all reputable members pay?²⁴⁸ Why or why not? Please explain _

²⁴⁸ *Qaaraan* is a regular financial contribution paid by all respected members of the clan to meet the extraordinary financial needs of clan members. Clan members who do not pay their clan dues are derogatorily called *qaaraan-diid*, those who refuse to pay the *qaaraan*. The *qaaraan-diid* are often considered as outcasts and do not enjoy any significant clan welfare or protection. When a *qaaraan-diid* dies, their funeral is not

5. How much clan protection is extended to Somali Christians by their Muslim clan members? Please explain _____
6. Does the “Provisional Somali Constitution give Somali Christians any legal protection? Please explain _____
7. Do Somali law enforcement officials offer any legal protection to Somali Christians? Please explain _____
8. What Qur’anic verses or hadith do Somali Muslims quote to justify persecuting you? Please explain _____
9. Does persecution make the church weaker or more resilient? Weaker ___ More resilient _____ Please explain your answer _____
10. Does persecution pose a health risk to the church? Yes__No__
Please explain your answer _____
11. How does persecution cause economic problems for the church? Please Explain _____
12. How does persecution cause family problems for the church members? Please Explain _____
13. In your own view, what other problems does persecution pose to the Church in Somalia. _____
14. Could any of the above 13 problems be self-inflicted? Please explain _____
15. How can these problems mentioned in question 13 be remedied? Please explain _____
16. Are any of these challenges avoidable? Yes___No___
If yes, how can they be avoided? _____
17. What good do you see coming out from these persecution challenges?
18. Please write anything else you consider relevant not included in this persecution challenges

IV. Somali Church and theology of persecution

1. Have you heard of a theology of persecution? Yes___No___
2. Have you been taught the importance of persecution theology in the church? Yes___No___
If yes, please explain your answer _____
3. When did the Church in Somalia start developing a theology of persecution?
4. How does this theology of persecution help the church?
5. Where is this theology of persecution often expressed?
poetry ___ sermons___ Christian teachings___.
6. Write some of the ideas concerning a theology of persecution concepts that you find useful _____
7. Write down some verses in the Bible that support a theology of persecution
8. What theology of persecution in the Bible do you use to support your faith?
9. If you could, would you eliminate persecution so the church could be safe in Somalia? Please explain _____
10. What is one benefit that a theology of persecution contributes to the church? Please Explain _____
11. Is it possible to be a good Christian and avoid persecution at the same time in Somalia? Please explain your answer _____


attended by the most reputable members of the clan, thus the saying, *keligii cune, keligii buu dhintaa*, if you eat alone, you die alone.

V. Role ministers play in the Somali Church during severe persecution

1. Do you find Somali ministers in your church helpful when you are facing intense persecution? Please explain how _____
2. Write at least three things the leaders do to encourage the people
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. What could your ministers do better to be of help to you when you are facing intense persecution? Please explain your answer _____
4. What are some of the things ministers do wrong during intense persecution? Please explain _____
5. Do persecutors often target clergy or laity? Please explain _____
6. If they target clergy or laity, what does the church do to help them? Please explain _____
7. If they target clergy, what do you think the reason is? Please explain _____
8. Share one heroic example of a minister aiding the persecuted church _____
9. Share one cowardly example of a minister deserting their people under persecution _____
10. Do people in your church expect too much from ministers? Please explain _____
11. Do your ministers get good theological training and if they do, where do they study? Please explain _____
12. Do Somali Christians from different house churches or denominations compete or cooperate in their ministries? _____
13. Write something not indicated in this part for the role of ministers _____

VI. Conclusions that could contribute to the understanding of the relationship between Christian persecution and church growth in Somalia

1. Is there any relationship between persecution and church growth? Please explain _____
2. When did the Church in Somalia experience the best numerical growth? Please give a year _____
3. When did the church experience the worst persecution in Somalia? Please give a date _____
4. Are Christians living in their clan turf persecuted the least or the most? Please explain _____
5. Are Christians from dominant clans persecuted the least or the most when they are in their clan turf? Please explain _____
6. Are you most persecuted by your Muslim clan members or Muslims from other clans? Please explain _____
7. Is it accurate that a theology of persecution helps the church survive or thrive despite the persecution? Please explain _____
8. Do you think the persecution could eventually destroy the Church in Somalia? Please explain _____



9. Is there anything else you could say about the relationship between persecution and church growth in Somalia?

Appendix 4: Questionnaire Guide for Muslims

Please answer the following questions and fill in the blanks.

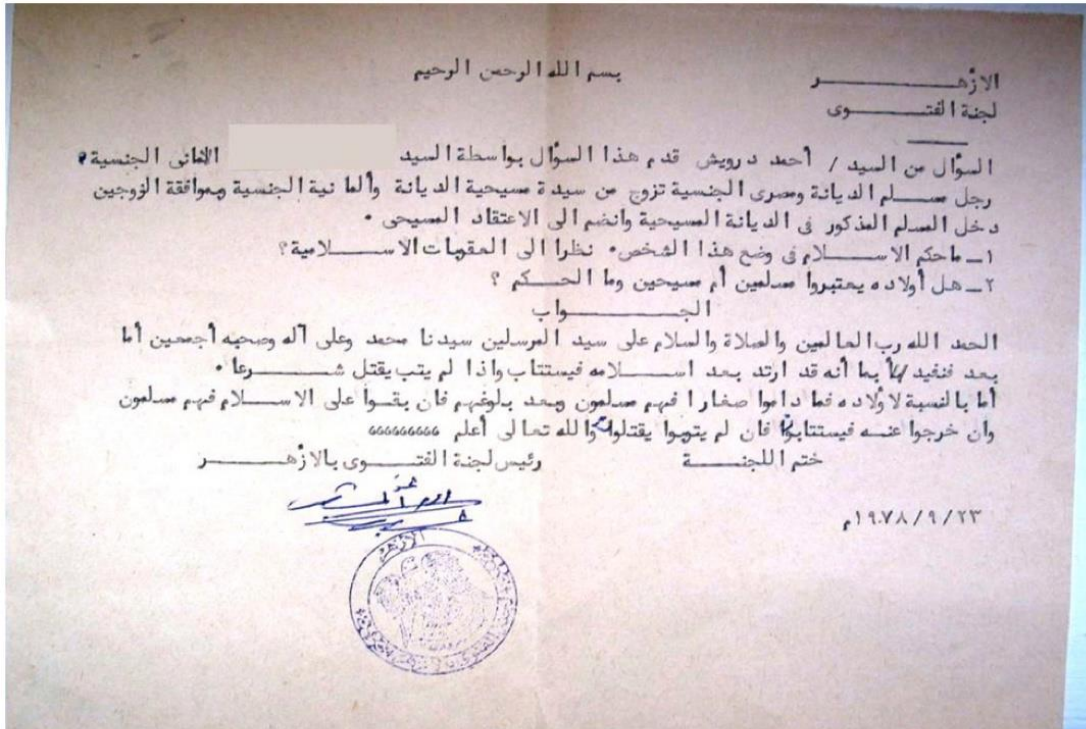
I. Background Information

1. Name (optional) _____ Date _____
Informant assigned number _____
2. Gender: Male ___ Female ___ Age _____ Research site _____
3. a. Level of formal education (optional) None ___ b. Primary ___ c. Secondary ___ d. Post-Secondary ___ e. University ___ f. Other ___
- g. Informant signature (optional) _____

II. Are You a Cleric/ *Ulama* _____ or a Lay Muslim _____?

1. What is your Religious affiliation/*madhab and tariqa*? _____
2. What is your view of Somali Christians? _____
3. What do Somali Christians do right? _____
4. What do Somali Christians do wrong? _____
5. According to the Qur'an, how should ex-Muslim Somali Christians be treated by Muslims? _____
6. According to the hadiths, how should ex-Muslim Somali Christians be treated by Muslims? _____
7. Would you ever harm a Somali Christian because of their faith? _____
Why or why not? _____
8. Would you be happy if a Somali Christian is harmed by a Muslim because of their faith? _____ Why or why not? _____
9. Tell me about any Somali Christians you know who are persecuted for their faith? _____
If you do know any Christians who were persecuted, what happened to them? _____
10. Do you think Somali Christians could ever live peacefully in Somalia? _____
Why or why not? _____
11. How is persecution affecting the Somali Church? _____
12. Is it possible to be a Somali and a Christian at the same time? _____
13. What outcome do Muslims expect when they persecute the church? _____
14. Is that outcome for question 13 achievable? _____
15. What else could you tell me about the Somali Church and persecution? _____

Appendix 5: Al-Azhar *Fatwa* (Religious Decree)



Description English: This Fatawa describes how an Egyptian man turned apostate and the subsequent punishment prescribed for him by the Al-Azhr Fatawa council.

The following translation is a rough guide:

In the Name of Allah the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful.

Al-Azhr
Council of Fatawa.

This question was presented by Mr. Ahmed Darwish and brought forward by [name obscured] who is of German nationality.

A man whose religion was Islam and his nationality is Egyptian married a German Christian and the couple agreed that the husband would join the Christian faith and doctrine.

- 1) What is the Islamic ruling in relation to this man? What are the punishments prescribed for this act?
- 2) Are his children considered Muslim or Christian?

The Answer:

All praise is to Allah, the Lord of the Universe and salutations on the leader of the righteous, our master Muhammed, his family and all of his companions.

Thereafter:

This man has committed apostasy; he must be given a chance to repent and if he does not then he must be killed according to Shariah.

As far as his children are concerned, as long as they are children they are considered Muslim, but after they reach the age of puberty, then if they remain with Islam they are Muslim, but if they leave Islam and they do not repent they must be killed and Allah knows best.

Seal of Al-Azhr

Head of the Fatawa Council of Al-Azhr.

Abdullah al-Mishadd (عبد الله المشد)

23rd September 1978.

Date

Source Orientalist

Author al-Azhr, the Egyptian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs

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Appendix 7: The population of Somalia and its key cities

Somalia has an estimated population of about 15,610,089 people.²⁴⁹ Following are some of the biggest Somali cities and towns.

#	Name	Population	Source
1	Mogadishu	2,425,000	World Atlas ²⁵⁰
2	Beled Hawo	632,865	World Atlas
3	Jamaame	185,270	Mongabay ²⁵¹
4	Baidawa	129,839	Mongabay
5	Beledweyne	55,410	Mongabay
6	Hargeisa	477,876	Mongabay
7	Garowe	570,578	World Atlas
8	Galdogob	440,433	World Atlas
9	Bur'oo	288,211	World Atlas
10	Garbaharey	234,000	World Atlas
11	Merca	230,100	World Population Review ²⁵²
12	Borama	215,616	World Atlas
13	Bosaso	74,287	World Population Review
14	Lasanod	60,100	World Population Review
15	Jowhar	47,086	World Population Review
16	Afgoye	65,461	World Population Review
17	Galka'yo	61,200	World Population Review
18	Lasanod	60,100	World Population Review
19	Elder	26,562	World Population Review
20	Wanlawein	22,022	Mongabay

²⁴⁹ Somalia Population 2019, World Population Review, 2019.

<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population/>

(accessed 09 June 2019).

²⁵⁰ "Biggest Cities In Somalia," World Atlas, 11 June 2018.

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-somalia.html> (accessed 09 June 2019)

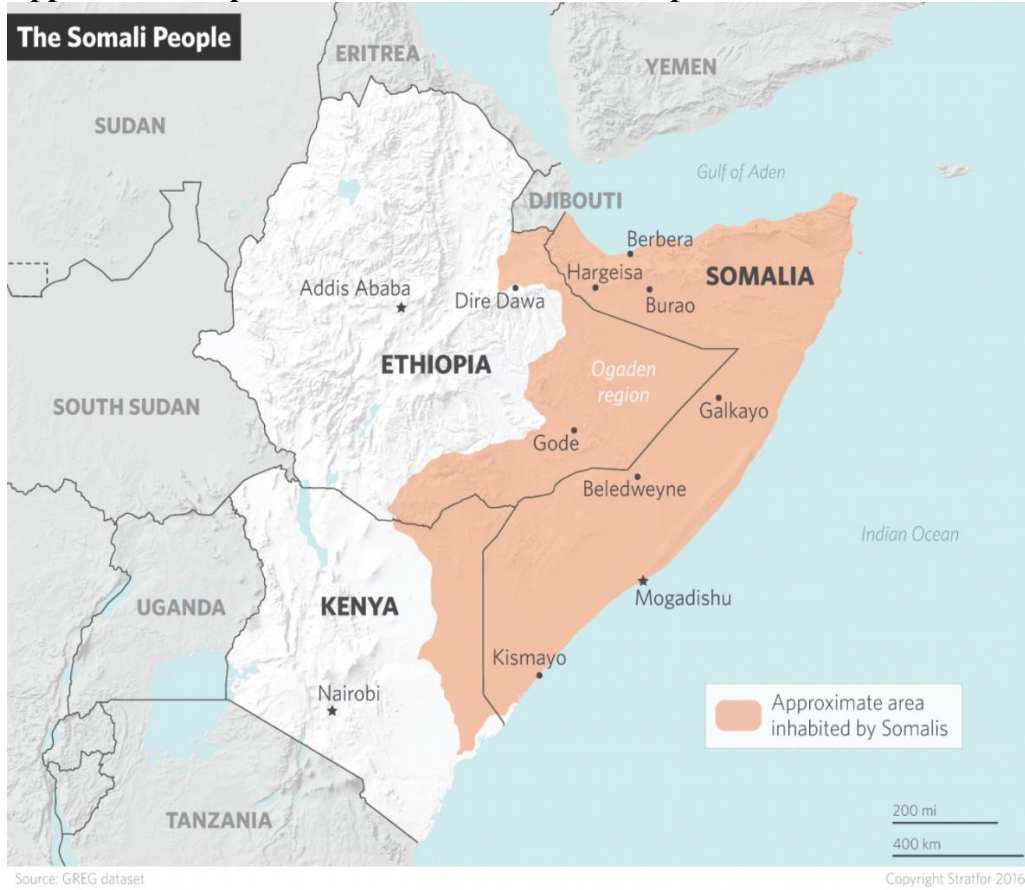
²⁵¹ Largest Cities in Somalia, Mongabay, 2019.

<https://population.mongabay.com/population/somalia/> (accessed 12 June 2019).

²⁵² Population of Cities in Somalia (2019), World Population Review, 2019.

<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/somalia-population/cities/> (accessed 09 June 2019).

Appendix 8: Map of Somalia and the Somali People





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aweis A. Ali, Ph.D., is a missiologist and an authority on the persecuted church in the Muslim world with special expertise on the Somali Church. Aweis was a co-pastor of a house church in Mogadishu, Somalia, in the mid-1990s when 12 of its 14 members were martyred for their faith. Aweis, an ordained elder, has been ministering in the Muslim world since 1993; he has lived and served in world areas that include the Horn of Africa, East Africa, West Africa, and the United States. Aweis earned a B.Th. degree from the Evangelical Theological College in Addis Ababa; an M.Div. degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri; and a Ph.D. from Africa Nazarene University in Nairobi. Aweis is the author, editor, or translator of 9 published books and a dozen articles. He is the founder and the Series Editor of the annual *Maansada Masiixa* (Anthology of Somali Christian Poetry). Aweis' two upcoming books, *Understanding the Somali Church* and *A Brief History of the Somali Church*, will be published in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Aweis' research interests include the persecution of Christians, church history, and church growth in the Muslim world; Waaqism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Somali peninsula; global paremiology and Somali poetry. Dr. Aweis can be reached at amazingwisdom@gmail.com.

BOOK INDEX: A-Z

A

Ahmediya, 48, 102
Al-Azhar University, 19, 103, 121
Ali Hussein Weheliye, 27, 115
Andrew Kibet, 23
Annalena Tonelli, 9, 23, 131
Apostasy, *xvi, xvii, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 104, 105, 120, 123, 124, 128, 131, 133*

B

Bedouin, *xv, 21*
Belet Weyne, 6
British Somaliland, *xvii, 4, 5, 6*
Bulo Burde, 6

C

CAC church, 56, 98, 99, 100, 101, 107, 117
Caliph, *xv, 20*
Catholics, 4, 5, 6
Christian owned businesses, 71
Christian persecution, *xiv, xv, 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 16, 17, 28, 31, 47, 101, 111, 118, 136, 138*
Christian property, 73, 74
Christian songs, 112
Church growth, *xv, 15*
Clan, *xiii, xv, 5, 62, 63, 64, 136*
Clan members, 136
Clan protection, *xiii, xv, 5, 64*
Clans, 5, 46, 123
Constitution, *xiii, 64, 65, 117, 137*

D

David Abdulwahab Mohamed Ali, 28
Daymoole, 5, 6
Death threats, 46
Dick and Enid Eyeington, 23
Discrimination, 46
Djibouti, *xvii, 4, 5, 9*

E

Edict of Milan, 18, 122
Elders, 30, 35
Eschatology, 26, 27, 113, 125, 127

F

Fatwa, *x, xv, 19, 24, 99, 103, 110, 127, 130, 141*
Frank-Ole Thoresen, 23, 27, 28, 107, 110, 114, 115
French Catholic Mission, 5, 8

G

Gilford Koech, 23
Giorgio Bertin, 4

H

Hadith, *xii, xv, 21, 50, 54, 102, 103, 105, 106*
Haji Mohamed Hussein Ahmed, 5
Heroic, *xiii, 89, 90*
House church, *xv, 95*

I

Interfaith dialogue, 76
Iran, 2, 3, 14, 19, 105, 124
Islah, 5, 6, 8, 48, 102, 120
Islamic hostility, 98, 100, 116
Islamic state, 45, 57, 61, 100, 101
Italian colony, 4, 11

J

Jamaame, 5, 143
Jigjiga, 6
Jilib, 5
Judaism, 14, 20, 145
Jurgen Moltmann, 26, 113

K

Khaled Abou El Fadl, 21
Kismayo, 5
Kulanka Culimada, *xix, 24, 99, 110*

L

Leonella Sgorbati, 8
Liibaan Ibraahim Hassan, *vi, 9*

M

Majma'a Culimada, *xix, 24, 99, 110*
Margaret Laurence, 24, 112
Martin Jutzi, 23
Martyrdom, *xvii, 46, 121, 127*
Martyred, 28, 124

Martyrs, 2, 3, 8, 9, 23, 24, 26, 28, 99, 109,
110, 112, 124, 127, 128, 130

Mennonite Mission, *xix*, 6, 7, 8

Missionaries, 11, 24, 99, 110, 130

Mohamed Siad Barre, 22, 99

Mugaambo, 5

Muslim clerics, 30

N

Najran, 104

Nik Ripken, 23, 26, 113, 114

O

Ogaden region, 5, 6

P

Persecuted Christians, 15, 116

Persecuting Christians, 112

Persecuting Somali Christians, 53

Physical torture, 46

Pietro Salvatore Colombo, 8

Prophet Muhammad, *xv*, *xvii*, 20, 21

Q

Qaaraan, *xvii*, 62, 136

Qur'ani, 48, 102

R

Rape, 46

RCC, *xix*, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12

Research site, 36, 37, 136, 140

Richard Burton, 112

Roman Catholic Church, *xix*, 4, 7, 8

Roman Empire, 1, 14, 17, 18

Ruth Myers, 23

S

Sahih Bukhari, 20, 50, 51, 103, 104, 121

Saudi Arabia, 19, 105

Sayid Muhammed Abdulle Hassan, 5

Somali clan system, 23, 110, 117, 118

Somali clergy, 93

Somali constitution, 64, 109, 118

Somali hymns, 112

Somalia, *vi*, *viii*, *ix*, *x*, *xii*, *xiii*, *xiv*, *xvii*, *xix*,
1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 22,
23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 42, 44,
45, 46, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58,
61, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 81, 82,
84, 88, 89, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102,
104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111,
112, 114, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121,
122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129,
130, 131, 132, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138,
139, 140, 142, 143, 144, 145

Somaliland, *xvii*, 4, 5, 6

Suffering, 23, 27, 28, 107, 110, 114, 115,
132

Sufi, *xvii*, *xviii*, 48, 102

Sunni, *xv*, *xvi*, *xvii*, 18, 19, 48, 102, 103

Swedish Overseas Lutheran Church, *xix*, 5,
8

T

Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, 22

Tariqa, *xviii*, 48, 102

Tertullian, 1, 2, 14, 17, 101, 102, 121, 125,
129, 131

Theology of persecution, *xiii*, 79

V

Venanzio Francesco Filippini, 4

Verena Karer, 23

