



Noah's Ark to the Great Commission: Defusing Xenophobia in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

While incidents of xenophobia, or the occurrence thereof, in some parts of South Africa, are both deplorable and deeply reprehensible, it is important never to ignore the political factors that perpetuate them. Using the interpretive method, this article drew on the literature to present or reinterpret the story of Noah's Ark in Genesis 6:13-9:29 and the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 in a way that is aimed at defusing xenophobia in South Africa. The *Missio Politica* as used in this paper provided a missiological framework in which political factors perpetuating xenophobia were seen as an obstacle to the goals of the *Missio Dei*, particularly the complete redemption of humanity. This paper argued that the continued unlawful imposition of international sanctions against some African countries such as Zimbabwe and, moreover, the lack of refugee camps in countries such as South Africa significantly exacerbates the problem of xenophobia. Consequently, pursuant to defusing xenophobia in South Africa, this paper calls for a renewed mission that includes rejecting unlawful sanctions against African countries and establishing refugee camps not only in South Africa but in all African countries.

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INTRODUCTION

Xenophobia, as a description of the fear or dislike of anything that is perceived as foreign or alien, or a situation where local nationals view foreigners with suspicion,¹ has been the subject of intense research in recent decades.² Although xenophobia in the broadest sense has been experienced by many human societies throughout history,³ it has regained academic importance in recent years after its intense manifestations in South Africa, where dozens of African migrants became its recipients, particularly between the years 2000, 2008 and 2015 respectively.⁴ Consequently, and perhaps for all practical purposes, it is not surprising that there exists such a

¹ Jephias Matunhu, "Re-Visiting the May 2008 Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa," *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* 5, no. 1 (2011): 95.

² Jamie Bordeau, *Xenophobia* (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc, 2009); Matt Mogeckwu, "African Union: Xenophobia as Poor Intercultural Communication," *Ecquid Novi* 26, no. 1 (2005): 5–20.

³ S M Kang'ethe and V Duma, "Exploring Dimensions of Post-Apartheid Xenophobic Sentiments towards African Immigrants in South Africa," *Insight on Africa* 5, no. 2 (2013): 157.

⁴ Hussein Solomon and Louise Haigh, "Xenophobia in South Africa: Origins, Trajectory and Recommendations," *Africa Review* 1, no. 2 (2009): 111–21; Oluwaseun Tella, "Understanding Xenophobia in South Africa: The Individual, the State and the International System," *Insight on Africa* 8, no. 2 (2016): 142–58.

capacious body of literature, including but not limited to missiological literature, dealing with the problem of xenophobia throughout Africa but with a particular focus on South Africa.⁵

The main limitation, however, is the lack of a missiological focus on xenophobia from the perspective of the ongoing unlawful international sanctions against some African countries and, on the other hand, the lack of refugee camps offering legal protection to immigrants in South Africa. To that end, this paper relies upon literature and uses by analogy the story of Noah's Ark as found in Genesis to problematize illegal sanctions and the absence of refugee camps as inflating xenophobia in South Africa. Consequently, both Noah's Ark and the Great Commission are reinterpreted towards the missionary advocacy for the lifting of illegal sanctions against African countries and the urgent need for refugee camps to be established in South Africa.

This paper consists of four parts, each aimed at exploring and consequently deciphering the problem of xenophobia in South Africa. First, it revisits available literature seeking to define or describe what is meant by xenophobia. This aspect is geared towards the process of articulating the problem of xenophobia in relation to its manifestations within all human societies but more so in South Africa. Second, the problem of excessive immigration is discussed as setting a central context for the discussion on xenophobia, particularly as it relates to the overgrowing influx of African countries to South Africa. Third, the account of Noah's Ark as found in the book of Genesis is introduced with the purpose of using it analogously in relation to the problem of illegal international sanctions and the absence of refugee camps in South Africa. Last but not least, the Great Commission of Matthew 28 is briefly introduced to renew the missionary commitment to removing illegal international sanctions against African countries while calling for the establishment of refugee camps in South Africa. Finally, it stresses that the problem of xenophobia will be defused once illegal international sanctions against African countries are lifted and refugee camps are set up in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

At this point, it is important not only to describe what is meant by the interpretive method but also to introduce its use in the context of Noah's Ark, the Great Commission in Matthew and/or how it is used to defuse xenophobia in South Africa. Interpretive research or method is all too often used in close association with qualitative research and for good reasons. Among other things, this methodology is associated with qualitative research due to its descriptive ability and the qualitative study of the goals and characteristics of a phenomenon.⁶ This method allows, so to speak, to interpret or reinterpret the socio-historical context in order to explain or make sense of the current social context and solve its challenges. The focus of interpretation is on human actions and the order of society, be it historical or current, as they lead to either salvation or destruction.⁷ This is what Sandberg means, albeit for a different context and focus, when he speaks of the production of knowledge about human actions and activities.⁸

The process of reinterpretation leads to the discovery or creation of a comprehensive understanding of each phenomenon studied, in this context xenophobia in South Africa. In other words, this process not only enables the interpretation of a historical context but also leads to an understanding of contemporary phenomena based on or with insights from the historical context. Overall, this method provides a framework for critically analyzing xenophobia in South Africa and uncovering its deeper layers through the interpretation of Noah's Ark symbolic element and the Great Commission in Matthew. However, as interpretation remains subjective, this article acknowledges that another scholar may use the above themes differently and consequently reach a different understanding.

Defining Xenophobia

Although acknowledging that there seems to be little to no consensus on what xenophobia might be, or an acceptable definition of it, it can be said that most classical definitions of xenophobia speak of prejudice by natives against foreigners, or what is perceived as alien by locals. This term (xenophobia) is a combination of

⁵ Chammah J Kaunda, "Enabling Liminality Prophetic Witness to Xenophobia: Proposing a Missiological Spirit Response for the Church in South Africa," *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship= Koers: Bulletin Vir Christelike Wetenskap* 81, no. 1 (2016): 1–9; Susan Wanjiru Ng'ang'a, "Aspects of Migrants' Theology of God and of Human Beings: A Missiological Exploration of Some Responses to the Xenophobic Violence in and around Tshwane, May 2008" (Citeseer, 2010).

⁶ Robert Elliott and Ladislav Timulak, "Descriptive and Interpretive Approaches to Qualitative Research," *A Handbook of Research Methods for Clinical and Health Psychology* 1, no. 7 (2005): 147–59.

⁷ D. E. Alvermann and C. A. Mallozzi, "Interpretive Research," in *Handbook of Reading Disability Research*, ed. Anne McGill-Franzen et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 488–98.

⁸ Jörgen Sandberg, "How Do We Justify Knowledge Produced within Interpretive Approaches?," *Organizational Research Methods* 8, no. 1 (2005): 41.

two Ancient Greek words - ξένος (xénos) 'strange, foreign, alien, and φόβος (phóbos) fear or fright, consequently building loosely into fear of strange. Xenophobia is consistently characterized by a desire to eliminate the presence of the alien group with the intention of protecting the native identity from conceivable contamination. According to Atrey, xenophobia is intersectionally constituted in its broadest sense, with a group of people being differentiated or discriminated against because of their belonging or non-belonging to a particular community, often a political community.⁹ More descriptively, Sangal agrees more with the Italian sociologist Guido Bolaffi, who defined that xenophobia most commonly manifests as an appreciation of one culture over another.¹⁰ To this, he (Sangal) adds: 'Xenophobia can also be exhibited in the form of an uncritical exaltation of one culture over the other culture which is ascribed an unreal, stereotyped and exotic quality'.¹¹ Although in most cases where xenophobia or related acts are observed, the local culture is favored over a perceived extraterritorial culture, this does not preclude the extraterritorial culture from being favored over the host culture. Referring to a form of xenophobia more closely associated with racism, Rydgren speaks of a situation in which one race feels somewhat agitated by the mere presence of another race, beginning on that basis alone, to act in a manner that demonstrates hostility.¹² This agrees with Atrey who spoke of a case of xenophobic discrimination based not only on the treatment of an outsider but on racial grounds.¹³ In addition, however, she expresses reservations about the tendency to define xenophobia on the basis of racial discrimination, arguing that there is a risk of denying its existence on non-racial grounds.¹⁴

Harris has helpfully used the explanation of xenophobia in a somewhat comprehensive way, grouping definitions into three hypotheses, ranging from the scapegoat hypothesis, the isolation hypothesis, and the bioculture hypothesis.¹⁵ Of these three, however, only the isolation hypothesis, in which a particular group is identified, and the biocultural hypothesis, in which an unfamiliar culture is a target, seem much closer to truly describing the primordial nature of xenophobia, while the scapegoat hypothesis seems to reduce xenophobia to a mere blaming of foreigners out of sheer convenience or some sort of expediency. The scapegoat hypothesis in this regard, or at least as understood in this paper, appears to be more subjective to South Africa's economic and political struggles than to provide an objective definition of xenophobia. This approach is quite unfortunate as it has been followed by most scholars who sacrificed the understanding of xenophobia on the altar of discrediting South Africans. Observably, ambiguous definitions of xenophobia in relation to South Africa entered the academic scene not long ago, examples being the work of Wimmer, who attempted to review approaches to xenophobia and consequently held that it refers to an element of a political struggle around who has the right to be cared for by the hosting state.¹⁶ Quite the contrary, the rest of this paper will attempt to argue beyond any reasonable doubt that xenophobia is more a pure dislike of foreigners' cultural identity, while the situation South Africa faces is one of the most overburdened state systems due to excessive illegal immigration. To this end, it may be necessary to first introduce Noah's Ark in an attempt to understand the problem of illegal immigration and the resulting xenophobia in South Africa.

Xenophobia in South Africa

The literature is replete with details of how the rate of legal and illegal immigration rose to uncontrollable levels as people from war-torn and poverty-stricken African countries immigrated to South Africa after the collapse of apartheid in 1994.¹⁷ Perhaps for obvious reasons, South Africa was seen as a symbol of new heaven owing to it having the largest economy in Africa, and consequently, many people made their way across the borders in search of a better life, legal or otherwise.¹⁸ Referring to this very period, Peberdy has suggested that the re-establishment of an inclusive South Africa not only represented a new hope for the country's citizens but also

⁹ Shreya Atrey, "Understanding Xenophobia as Intersectional Discrimination," *Wash. & Lee L. Rev.* 79 (2022): 1013.

¹⁰ N. Sangal, "Xenophobia: An Outcome of Orientalism," *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies* 5, no. 43 (2018): 10431–34.

¹¹ Sangal, "Xenophobia: An Outcome of Orientalism," 10430.

¹² Jens Rydgren, "The Logic of Xenophobia," *Rationality and Society* 16, no. 2 (2004): 123–124.

¹³ Atrey, "Understanding Xenophobia as Intersectional Discrimination."

¹⁴ Atrey, "Understanding Xenophobia as Intersectional Discrimination," 1008.

¹⁵ Bronwyn Harris, "Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa," *Psychopathology and Social Prejudice*, 2002, 170-174.

¹⁶ Andreas Wimmer, "Explaining Xenophobia and Racism: A Critical Review of Current Research Approaches," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 20, no. 1 (1997): 17–41.

¹⁷ Daniel N Mlambo, "A South African Perspective on Immigrants and Xenophobia in Post-1994 South Africa.," *African Renaissance (1744-2532)* 16, no. 4 (2019); Sally Peberdy, "Imagining Immigration: Inclusive Identities and Exclusive Policies in Post-1994 South Africa," *Africa Today*, 2001, 15–32.

¹⁸ Matunhu, "Re-Visiting the May 2008 Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa," 96.

led to new interests manifested through immigration.¹⁹ Correspondingly, Mlambo listed the then public merits which largely made South Africa attractive for immigration, including judicious political stability, business opportunities, a robust economy, good infrastructure, a sense of security and many other traits.²⁰ Although South Africa had both progressive refugee and immigration laws, the main problem was how to deal with the growing number of asylum seekers in the absence of refugee camps, most of whom were ineligible for refugee status anyway. As a result, the undocumented immigrants, most of whom were fleeing the economic dislocations of their home countries, were not only willing to work for meagre wages but also began to live on the fringes of society with limited protection. Among other things, this situation began to weigh on local South Africans with a sense of apprehension about their social justice, especially given the promised land that never materialized. This very reality is observed by Tshitereke who in reference to South Africans stated: ‘People are more conscious of their deprivation than ever before.’²¹ Given this sequence of events, it then becomes easy to discredit unfounded assumptions such as those contained in Harris, who holds that more discriminatory practices, including xenophobia, were merely the result of the shifting of political power.²² Assumption such as these seems to suggest that discriminatory practices in South Africa have worsened with the advent of democracy, despite changes in political regimes. In fact, the precise words of Harris are: ‘Despite the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy.... Indeed the shift in political power has brought about a range of new discriminatory practices and victims.’²³ One such victim is “The Foreigner.”²⁴ As shown below, the feverish immigration to South Africa after the advent of democracy seems to be the more likely cause of the supposed xenophobia than a mere change of political regime.

Consequently, and arguably against the above circumstances, uncontrollable immigration to South Africa, which has consequently overburdened public services, coupled with the absence of what is referred to as the Promised Land, that South Africans began to react in ways suggestive of xenophobia.²⁵ Although this has always been clear to observers, few scholars, including Tshitereke and Mlambo, have been able to place discussion on xenophobia in its historical context,²⁶ while others have haphazardly accused South Africans of being xenophobic towards their fellow African compatriots without context.²⁷ More than anything else, the situation in South Africa seems far removed from what has been defined as xenophobia, which almost always involves fear or hatred of the unfamiliar culture and customs.²⁸ On the contrary, South Africans' fears have increasingly been absorbed by the prospect of a likely situation in which they will be forced to compete for scarce resources with migrants, particularly undocumented migrants.²⁹ Consequently, the protesting South Africans, particularly in the absence of refugee camps, regrettably sought to protect scarce resources from illegal immigrants. Actually, it can be argued that the lack of refugee camps exposes immigrants to the risk of being perceived as robbing locals, thus increasing xenophobia. This is perhaps more in line with what Atrey, albeit more in terms of racist xenophobia, would characterize as driving victims to the fringes of a political community.³⁰ Although the problem of xenophobia requires a multi-faceted approach, it is the view of this paper that the establishment of refugee camps remains another optimal solution to defuse xenophobia in South Africa.

What is interesting, however, is that in the above-mentioned cases, demonstrators are said to have complained that immigrants, particularly those who are being given disproportionately more jobs and less reserved for locals. They are also said to have complained about having to contest for scarce economic resources and public services with illegal immigrants. Consequently, as observed by Ukwandu: ‘In this battle for few

¹⁹ Peberdy, “Imagining Immigration: Inclusive Identities and Exclusive Policies in Post-1994 South Africa,” 15.

²⁰ Mlambo, “A South African Perspective on Immigrants and Xenophobia in Post-1994 South Africa,” 53.

²¹ Clarence Tshitereke, “Xenophobia and Relative Deprivation,” *Crossings* 3, no. 2 (1999): 4.

²² Harris, “Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa,” 169.

²³ Harris, “Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa.”

²⁴ Harris, “Xenophobia: A New Pathology for a New South Africa,” 169.

²⁵ Nigel C Gibson, “What Happened to the ‘Promised Land’? A Fanonian Perspective on Post-apartheid South Africa,” *Antipode* 44, no. 1 (2012): 51–73.

²⁶ Mlambo, “A South African Perspective on Immigrants and Xenophobia in Post-1994 South Africa.”; Tshitereke, “Xenophobia and Relative Deprivation.”

²⁷ Carol Adjai and Gabriella Lazaridis, “Migration, Xenophobia and New Racism in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” *Int’l J. Soc. Sci. Stud.* 1 (2013): 192.

²⁸ Peter Hervik, “Xenophobia and Nativism,” *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* 2 (2015): 796–801.

²⁹ Malemela A Mamabolo, “Drivers of Community Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa: Poverty and Unemployment,” *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 11, no. 4 (2015): 143–50; Christina Steenkamp, “Xenophobia in South Africa: What Does It Say about Trust?,” *The Round Table* 98, no. 403 (2009): 439–47.

³⁰ Atrey, “Understanding Xenophobia as Intersectional Discrimination,” 1008.

resources and jobs available in the country, it becomes a battle for survival'.³¹ Although some scholars are more inclined to call these genuine protests mere social conceit, the fact that they are perceived by protesting South Africans, especially those trapped in abject poverty as a challenge is more important in the context of decoding xenophobia or its manifestations and consequently seeking solutions to end it.³² What cannot be taken for granted or simply ignored is the fact that ordinary South Africans, senior community leaders,³³ including state officials,³⁴ have repeatedly expressed displeasure at the influx of undocumented migrants, which is no doubt inflating labor markets and burdening various sectors such as public healthcare. Xenophobic incidents, such as those observed within South Africa's borders, remain more of an aftershock or the unfortunate consequences of ignoring serious concerns when voiced by local people. What makes these concerns serious is the undeniable recognition that even without immigrants, South Africans face difficulties in finding jobs or accessing public services, consequently making any conceivable sharing of such commodities unsustainable. It is arguably important never to allow a situation in which immigrants of any legal status compete with natives for jobs or public services, as this would provoke unnecessary animosity. It is important to stress, however, that in every respect the blame lies with a dysfunctional regime and certainly not with the innocent immigrants who sadly find themselves on the brink of local public frustrations.

Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark in its variations needs no introduction as it is one of the few biblical stories most people recognize, and is particularly popular in Abrahamic religious circles. Followers in such religious circles can easily repeat the story of the vessel God used to save Noah and his family from the Great Flood (known as the *mabul* – מַבּוּל Hebrew) as recorded in the Genesis account. This narrative closes the cycle of the creation narrative and plays an important role in restoring the world from the state of the Fall or human corruption as it were. The fall resulted in the never-ending corruption that grieved God and caused Him to regret ever creating humankind, consequently declaring: 'I will destroy from the earth the people I have created. And with them, the animals, birds, and creeping things' (Gen. 6:5-7). Against this background, Noah, who is said to have gained favour in the sight of the Lord, was commissioned to build an ark by which he, his family, and couples of other living creatures would be saved during the then impending flood.

God was very precise with the size and proportions of Noah's ark instructing: 'This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark is 300 cubits, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above..... make it with lower, second and third decks' (Gen. 6:15-16). He also instructed Noah to store food that would sustain them for forty days of destruction, or completion of the salvation project, so to speak (Gen. 6:21). Possibly, or at least considering its specifications, this ark must have been the largest building at the time, but it would still be illogical to imagine that it could hold more people than its measured capacity. Also, the size and proportions of this ark may have been designed to adequately withstand the waves and consequently outlive the surge. Ultimately, thanks to the ark and its abilities, God was able to save His creation through Noah. By analogy, as will be seen below, the story of Noah's Ark can be used in two ways to decipher the problem of xenophobia in South Africa: First, it can be used to problematize the prolonged illegal international sanctions against several African countries, and secondly, to problematize the resulting excessive immigration to South Africa, particularly in the absence of refugee camps.

Noah's Ark Against Sanctions

Although it is difficult to measure the direct effectiveness of sanctions against criminal regimes, there are exceptional cases, such as during apartheid in South Africa, where the temporary imposition of international sanctions arguably led to much-desired political change. There is very extensive literature on how the economic sanctions imposed on South Africa exerted enough pressure to end apartheid and consequently make way for

³¹ Damian C Ukwandu, "Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa—What Happens to a Dream Deferred?," *African Journal of Public Affairs* 9, no. 9 (2017): 50.

³² Jonathan Crush, "The Perfect Storm: The Realities of Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa," 2008, 33.

³³ D. Smith, "Zulu leader suggests media to blame for South Africa's xenophobic violence," (2015). [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/20/south-africa-xenophobic-violence-zulu-king-goodwill-zwelithini>. [Accessed 4 Apr. 2023].

³⁴ M. AmaShabalala, "I will resign once all foreign 'rascals' are locked up and keys thrown away: Aaron Motsoaledi," (2022). Available at: <https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2022-04-19-i-will-resign-once-all-foreign-rascals-are-locked-up-and-keys-thrown-away-aaron-motsoaledi/> [Accessed 4 Apr. 2023]; Y. Sobuwa, "ANCYL backs Ramathuba, says she had to address issue of undocumented immigrants," (2022). [online] City Press. Available at: <https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/ancyl-backs-ramathuba-says-she-had-to-address-issue-of-undocumented-immigrants-20220825> [Accessed 4 Apr. 2023].

political change.³⁵ This was long noted by Hanlon and Omond, who argued that the purpose of sanctions against apartheid South Africa was simply to induce political powers into negotiations that could lead to political change.³⁶ On the contrary, such international sanctions when imposed unilaterally on punitive grounds, pose an obstacle not only to the political agenda of problematic regimes but also to the livelihoods of ordinary citizens of the targeted countries. Punitive grounds in this regard relate to when individual international governments unilaterally decide to impose sanctions to force target countries' domestic policies to serve the interests of the imposing countries.³⁷ As a result, several African countries, including but not limited to Zimbabwe, have fallen victim to illegal economic sanctions unilaterally imposed by international states.³⁸ What makes sanctions on Zimbabwe even more illegal is that they have been maintained despite calls from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for international communities to lift them.³⁹ It defies logic to make sense of why international communities would insist on imposing sanctions upon Zimbabwe when African intergovernmental organizations like SADC are calling for their lifting. Without delving further into this point, what is clear here is that the sanctions against Zimbabwe are designed more to serve international interests.

The above-briefly introduced the application of sanctions not only causes political problems for the ruling regimes, as in the case of the apartheid government but essentially leads to economic hardship that destroys ordinary livelihoods. When sanctions go so far as to force ordinary citizens to flee economic hardships in their own homelands, they turn into economic crimes against humanity. Analogous to Noah's ark of salvation, this use of sanctions is tantamount to denying Noah the essential tools to build an ark to save his household. Not only that, had Noah been denied carrying food as God directed in Genesis 6:21, his entire household might have conceivably starved, or worse, perished before the end of the Flood. As one can imagine the lack of food might have made the stay at Noah's ark unsustainable for his household, if the imposition of sanctions causes unsustainable economic hardship for ordinary people, they are likely to migrate to other countries in search of a better life. As will be shown next, the lack of refugee camps means the lack of an Ark capable of attending to the fleeing economic woes and consequently making the host country conducive to xenophobia, as is the case in South Africa.

Noah's Ark and Refugee Camps

Although there are several countries around the world that operate without refugee camps, South Africa's absence of refugee camps exacerbates illegal immigration and fuels xenophobic sentiments. It is conceivable that, in the absence of a camp policy, both refugees and asylum-seekers will have to live in host communities without full legal protections and at times access to essential services. South Africa's constitution has been careful not to repeat past mistakes of segregation, particularly since the dawn of democracy, and is, therefore, less inclined to put migrants in camps. This was reiterated by South Africa's Home Affairs Minister, Mr Aaron Motsoaledi who has been quoted as saying: 'Very deliberately, this country – in its constitution – opted for a policy of non-encampment, meaning people who migrate to South Africa for one reason or the other, shall not be put in camps'.⁴⁰ However, given that South Africa has been the main African hub for refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, refugee camps should have long been a priority. Without a doubt, the establishment of refugee camps would do much to prevent a situation where immigrants become embroiled in local socio-political frustrations likely to lead to xenophobic incidents.

While there are those who are less sympathetic to the idea of refugee camps, it might be beneficial to think of refugee camps as reminders of Noah's Ark, particularly in the context of xenophobia, as is the case in South

³⁵ Neta C Crawford and Audie Klotz, "How Sanctions Work: A Framework for Analysis," in *How Sanctions Work: Lessons from South Africa* (Springer, 1999), 25–42; Philip I Levy, "Sanctions on South Africa: What Did They Do?," *American Economic Review* 89, no. 2 (1999): 415–20.

³⁶ J. Hanlon and R. Omond, *The Sanctions Handbook* (Puffin Books, 1987), 12.

³⁷ Bronwen Manby, "South Africa: The Impact of Sanctions," *Journal of International Affairs* 46, no. 1 (1992): 193.

³⁸ Jan Grebe, "And They Are Still Targeting: Assessing the Effectiveness of Targeted Sanctions against Zimbabwe," *Africa Spectrum* 45, no. 1 (2010): 3–29. Thomas Lines, "Investment Sanctions and Zimbabwe: Breaking the Rod," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1988): 1182–1216.

³⁹ M. Michael-Phiri and J. Cassim, SADC calls for lifting of all sanctions on Zimbabwe (2021). [online] Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/sadc-calls-for-lifting-of-all-sanctions-on-zimbabwe/2402797> [Accessed 7 Apr. 2023].

⁴⁰ T. Solomons, "No such thing as refugee camps in SA, says Motsoaledi," (2012). [online] Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/no-such-thing-as-refugee-camps-in-sa-says-motsoaledi-b95da83e-712d-4c7d-b70f-f43fe4e4910f> [Accessed 7 Apr. 2023].

Africa. Much like Noah's Ark was intended only temporarily to provide his household with the coveted sanctuary from the Flood, refugee camps are to be used temporarily to provide the refugees with the coveted shelter until they are fully assimilated into the host societies. The temporary nature of refugee camps is precisely what Turner sought to emphasise in stating: 'Temporally, refugee camps are meant to be temporary, while in practice this temporariness may (at times) become permanent.'⁴¹ In other words, just as Noah's Ark was a vehicle of transit into salvation, refugee camps are for transitional purposes through which refugees would be either formally integrated or freely chosen to be returned to their homelands. Consequently, this paper argues that the continued absence of refugee camps in countries around the world, particularly South Africa, would lead to prolonging of illegal immigration or the presence of undocumented immigrants, and subsequently exacerbate the problem of xenophobia. The continued absence of refugee camps also makes it impossible for interested aid organizations, including mission societies, to carry the mandate of providing for the basic needs of migrants. Furthermore, unless the intention is to leave both refugees and asylum-seekers without adequate living conditions and citizenship, the scale of illegal immigrants and a mere recurrence of xenophobic incidents justify the instituting of refugee camps in South Africa. No doubt the existence of such camps will represent Noah's Ark of Salvation for most refugees and asylum-seekers, who will enjoy legal protection until such a point in time they are documented or even granted citizenship.

The Great Commission

Christ's earthly ministry and God's redemptive mission associated with it culminates in the resurrection account, which brings forth the reality or manifestation of eternal life in line with all that Christ would have promised. Consequently, and precisely for these reasons, the theme of the risen Christ, or resurrection, constitutes, so to speak, the cornerstone of the Christian faith against which all other doctrines that have antedated its realization are measured. Every aspect of Christ's earthly ministry, beginning with discipleship, His teachings, and all the miracles He performed in the period leading up to His crucifixion and death, culminates in the Resurrection, which is the ultimate cornerstone on which the Christian community is instituted. Perhaps for these very reasons, Paul emphasized the fundamental centrality of the resurrection, arguing to the Corinthians that in the absence of the risen Christ, all preaching and witnessing is false or in vain (1 Cor. 15:12-26). However, the resurrection never marked the conclusion of the mission of salvation but sealed the covenant between Christ and his disciples, who from that point forward would wholeheartedly embrace the ministry, knowing that it would lead to eternal life. It is precisely at this critical moment that Christ decides to give his disciples instructions or marching orders that will ensure the coherence of his earthly ministry as the starting point of his saving mission beyond the point of his ascension to succeeding generations.

The Great Commission, as found in Matthew 28:16-20, has been widely viewed as a blueprint outlining Christ's purpose with his disciples and consequently, or by extension, with his church. Consequently, Christian literature on the missionary commission is plentiful and easy to find, particularly as it pertains to the vocation of the church in relation to the world at large.⁴² Having said that, particularly in consideration of the problem of the exaggerated presence of xenophobia in South Africa, which arguably focuses on overwhelming immigration, it may be necessary to examine the Great Commission from an immigration perspective. Given that the Great Commission is said to be looking far into the then unknown future to the end of the age, connote in retrospect that Christ, through his divinely oriented omniscient knowledge, became fully aware of the emerging disproportionate movement of people from parts of the world to Jerusalem and it circumvented through the missionary commission.⁴³ In other words, Christ may well have realized that presenting Jerusalem as the center of salvation would undoubtedly contradict the main aims of the *missio Dei*, which encompass all-inclusive salvation and the all-embracing kingdom of God. To that end, it may be necessary at this very point to pause and revisit Jerusalem, especially towards the close of Christ's earthly ministry. The basic missionary direction in this regard is perhaps expressed more in the words: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19-20). Perhaps the prevailing missionary logic in this regard is that although Christ's earthly ministry, followed by the spread of the gospel, began in Jerusalem, Christ's disciples should carry it and transplant it to all the nations of the world, without making Jerusalem the exclusive symbol of hope and likely attract excessive immigration. Interpreted in light of Noah's ark, the instruction for followers of Christ is to go forth and make nations of the world arks of salvation.

⁴¹ Simon Turner, "What Is a Refugee Camp? Explorations of the Limits and Effects of the Camp," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29, no. 2 (2016): 139.

⁴² Paul Hertig, "The Great Commission Revisited: The Role of God's Reign in Disciple Making," *Missiology* 29, no.3 (2001): 343-53.

⁴³ Hertig, "The Great Commission Revisited: The Role of God's Reign in Disciple Making," 343.

To the extent that South Africa truly became a center of superficial hope after 1994, hosting a growing number of refugees, such a situation would in many ways be reminiscent of the excessive immigration that Christ in Jerusalem sought to avoid by offering the Great Commission of Matthew 28. The situation in South Africa calls for a renewed Great Commission, which will be manifested through missionary advocacy for the lifting of illegal international sanctions against African countries and through the establishment of refugee camps not only in South Africa but in all African countries. In other words, or at least by the standards of any interpretation, the success of such a renewed Great Commission will be reflected in the missionary removal of illegal international sanctions and in ensuring the presence of refugee camps in all countries of the world, including but not limited to South Africa. Not only that, but the success of this renewed mission will also be more complete if all African countries manage to elect disciplined leaders who do not make the socio-political situation unbearable for their voters and consequently eliminate the need for refugees and asylum seekers. Therefore, the renewed mission, or grand mandate so to speak, is to focus on lifting illegal sanctions from African countries and setting up refugee camps as a temporary solution to the xenophobia problem.

CONCLUSION

Finally, it is important to reiterate that while xenophobia, unfortunately, persists in South Africa, its magnitude is being increased in part by unlawful international sanctions against several African countries and the lack of refugee camps in South Africa. This article assumes that the problem of xenophobia or its reported incidents in South Africa can be functionally addressed through missionary advocacy for the lifting of illegal international sanctions against African countries and the establishment of refugee camps in all African countries, especially in South Africa. On the one hand, removing illegal international sanctions against African countries like Zimbabwe will help regain its economic glory, making it unnecessary for its citizens to flee elsewhere for a better life. On the other hand, the establishment of refugee camps in South Africa will certainly provide some level of security for both refugees and asylum-seekers until they are either safely repatriated or legally integrated into host societies. Consequently, two things outline the interpretation of Noah's Ark and a renewed Great Commission geared towards solving xenophobia in South Africa: First, Missionary advocacy for the lifting of illegal international sanctions against African countries; Second, Accelerated establishment of refugee camps in African countries, but more so in South Africa.

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