

# OVERCOMING HURTS AND HATRED THROUGH DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** Dialogue is an essential element in contemporary relationship beginning from the family units to the wider society. This is akin to the fact that there are differences and diversities among people at various levels of interaction in the society. This paper examines dialogue as a potent tool in overcoming hurts and hatred that usually arise in the relations between adherents of different religious affiliations. The work adopts the historical, descriptive and evaluative methodologies and relies on Yankelovich's theoretical framework on dialogue which outlines the strategies through which relationships, trust and truth that bind people together could be strengthened, with special focus on the relations between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. The findings reveal that lack of proper understanding of religious worldviews between members of these sister religions (Islam and Christianity) and their exclusive claim to religious teachings and practices in the services of the Supreme Creator, create an avenue for hurt and hatred at various levels of their interaction in the society. Dialogue as a mission for both

adherents of Islam and Christianity is the recommendation of the work which submits that peace, love and unity of individuals of different religious beliefs are achievable when the dynamics of dialogue are held as ultimate responsibility.

**Keywords:** Dialogue, Muslims, Christians, Hatred, Hurt, and Peace

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### **Introduction**

Nigeria as an African country is home to many religio-cultural civilizations besides the Indigenous Religion popularly known as the African Traditional Religion. In other words, diversities and plurality characterize the nation Nigeria. Islam and Christianity are the two most prominent religio-cultural traditions in Nigeria. The penetration of these two religious traditions illuminated the socio-religious and cultural traditions of the people of Nigeria. The duo religions exert high influence on the nation's political space to the extent that the accessibility of political position follows the aprons of the two religious divides. The struggle and rivalry between these two religions have in the recent past degenerated to crisis that had wrecked damages to lives and property (Nenge, 2019). One of the ways that often breeds the rivalry tendency is the manner in which adherents of both Islam and Christianity appreciate the practice of the principles of their religion as ideal right worship of the Supreme Creator. The claim to absolute superiority and exclusive truth in salvific mission of one over the other stands as a major grand for the followers of a particular affiliation to disregard the others that do not share in their belief. Beginning from the family units to the wider society members of Islam and Christianity are apparently guilty of these ill-fated relations among themselves.

Religion as a phenomenon in human life is sensitive and it revolutionized the human heart and mind once it is received with conviction in the particular religious tradition the person is socialized into. It becomes an inevitable phenomenon one can hardly live without in daily human interaction given its teachings and principles. The presence of multiples of belief systems within a particular locale usually breed the development of revulsion in the individual, against other systems of beliefs different

from their own and this produce the feeling of hurt in the other person of different affiliation. Addressing these seeming inevitable occurrences among adherents of various religions without applying the ideal element is somewhat volatile because it involves the belief in the unseen Ultimate Reality. This is what drives the motive behind this paper which is geared towards examining dialogue as a concept and phenomenon that could serve as sedative to suppress the viral effect of hurt and hatred arising among votaries of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria

### **Theoretical Framework**

The thought and reflections of Yankelovich on dialogue are what we adopt in this paper. Yankelovich (1999) in his work *The Magic of Dialogue* sees dialogue as a crucial part of the therapy to a number of interconnected social problems in the society. He sees dialogue as a concept that possesses unique and highly valuable features which can strengthen relationships and trust, forges alliance, finds truths that could bind people together and bring them into alignment on goals and strategies (Yankelovich, 1999, p.217). The scholar affirms that in dialogue parties reach consensus that transcend beyond the confines of self to an authentic encounter with the other (Yankelovich, 1991, p.239). The scholar laments that, people are becoming trapped in separate compartments under the pressures of modern lifestyles according to status, politics, ethnicity, beliefs, languages and others. Besides being isolated, the average people are left disempowered and politically unengaged by seeming sense of the separation of experts and elites from the general public. He derived these issues from his study of the American society which he sees as a society moving towards a culture of technical control where people are treated as objects of manipulation (Yankelovich, 1999, p.157). Yankelovich therefore put forward that dialogue is the activity that has a unique ability to forge channels of communication and understanding between people separated by difference depersonalization when there is need to respond to fundamental issues in modern society. At a wider context, Yankelovich added that dialogue can help to reinvigorate democracy and redress the imbalance between elites and the public by strengthening the public's position. The opinion of the public could be strengthened when people are made to participate and work through issues dialogically. When this is realized, the public would accept responsibility for the consequences of its views and be ready to hold them consistently over time, Yankelovich maintained.

## **Defining Dialogue**

We explore the meaning of dialogue from its etymology. Dialogue comes from the Greek word *dialogos* and it is of the same root with dialectic (*dialektos*) which means “discourse” or “debate” (etymonline.com, 2025). Although, this etymology of the word dialogue suggests two alternate words (discourse and debate), there is need to further delineate it from these words and other related words of its synonym for us to properly situate the focus of this paper which centers on surmounting hurt and hatred. Yankelovich’s (1999) definition of dialogue reveals how dialogue is different from debate, deliberations and discussion. According to him, the difference between dialogue and debate is obvious. One engages in debate with the intent to win an argument but dialogue is about mutual understanding. It is impossible to strike a “mutual understanding” (p.38) when the underlying motive is to win debating points at the expense of others. Dialogue is also different from discussion Yankelovich maintained. Talk becomes dialogue rather than just discussion when three conditions are in place. The first is, there must be equality between the participants and there should be no coercive influences. Secondly, there must be empathy and lastly, is the exploration of the assumptions of all the participants in the activity. All these conditions are properties of dialogue but they are not readily required in a discussion activity. Deliberation, another related word to dialogue is an activity that can happen in dialogue, discussion or debate. It is a problem-solving activity involving the weighing up of different options to arrive at a decision. However, Yankelovich (1999) distinguishes it from dialogue in the sense that the priority of a conversation in dialogue is not for consensus and decision but mutual understanding even though it may sometimes lead to decision-making process but the focus of dialogue (mutual understanding) must be kept separate from decision making for the activity to function properly (Yankelovich, 1999, p.56f).

## **A Panorama of Muslim- Christian Relations in Nigeria**

Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria have some historical antecedents which could be traced back to the pre-colonial and the colonial periods during which a competitive activity began among the agents of both religions. History puts Islam as the earliest civilizing agent that penetrated West Africa through commercial and trading activities (Anoba, 2017). The trans-Saharan trade route created to facilitate

the commercial activities directly promoted the penetration of Islam in West Africa which extended to Nigeria and this made Islam possess overwhelming influence in northern Nigeria. Be that as it may, the rising influence of the Portuguese through their naval might in fierce competition with the other Mediterranean powers over the control of trade in the Mediterranean Seas, led to the declining sphere of influence of the Muslim powers. This declining Muslims' influence progressed with the rise of Western Christian influence in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and what followed was the promotion and popularization of Western values and material culture in African societies including Nigeria (Abdulquadir, 2024).

The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) which was a principal factor in the history and spread of Islam in West Africa and Nigeria in particular, played a significant role in what constituted disruption of the initial cordial relationship that had existed between Islam and other non-Islamic religions, particularly the African Traditional Religion of the people in the region. The Jihad encounter produced distinguishing elements in terms of what is permissible (*halal*) and what is forbidden (*haram*) in Islamic religious practices. By the classification, Sanneh (1983) cited in Nwanaju (2005) puts it that judgement was placed on the methods and forms of the traditional religious worship and divination, while the content and ideas of the Supernatural it introduces to the people were of less significant.

With the arrival of Christianity, a new trend was introduced that added to the strained relations between Islam and African Traditional Religion. The turn of events was brought about by the attraction of the African Christians to the features of the African Traditional Religion particularly the ones that prepared people's mind in having faith in the Creator and His divine providence, without bothering much on the effect of the mode and methods of the traditional practices. It is this aspect of the religious culture of African religions that acquires a new meaning in the Christian setting (Nwanaju, 2005, p.175). The Maguzawa phenomenon represents a major group of non-Islamized Hausa people who retain a social identity distinct from their Muslim surroundings. Although heavily influenced by Islam, their culture and especially their marriage customs retain much of their indigenous religious practices (Osewe and Musa, 2018). The entrenchment of Christianity in Nigeria became frosted with biases against Islam and the traditional religion as evidenced in the ardent zeal of the Christian missionaries in trying to rescue the

people from the claws of paganism and Islam in order to bring them into the orbit of western civilization This was however not peculiar to Christianity as other religions especially Islam equally expressed the same missionary zeal to gain followers. Prominent among the missionaries is Buxton, the Englishman who founded the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and for the Civilization of African in June 1839, and the Missionaries Association of Christianity with western technology (Nwanaju, 2005, p. 177). These individuals were among the missionaries that prepare the stage for the expressive missionary activities in Africa. The strategies which were adopted to express charity in order to gain attention became the breeding ground for the unhealthy relations. Items of modern technological gadgets such as flashlights, match stick and the hurricane lamp brought by the European Christian Missionaries which were taken as material benefits that attracted the indigenous people for conversion became something the Muslims regarded as works of evil in connivance with the Europeans owing to the level of civilization at that time. This attitude of the Muslims toward the Europeans led to the denigration of Islam as a 'backward religion' (Nwanaju, 2005, p.179). This negative portrayal of Islam thereafter became rooted in the belief that Islam was not the right religion to save Africa. This was viewed from the perspective of its century long domination in Africa vis-a-vis Nigeria without producing much needed modern civilization and progress.

### **Relations during the Colonial Era**

The colonial period witnessed a more profound dimension in the relations between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. In the two protectorates that later formed the nation Nigeria, separate administrative strategies were adopted by the colonial masters, to administer the protectorates. While the direct rule was applied in the Southern Nigeria, the indirect rule was operated in the Northern Nigeria through the Emirate system which Usman Dan Fodio introduced during his Islamic revivalism under the common wealth of Islam. The European colonizers found this system much more organized to foster their imperial and exploitative transactions. Anti-Muslim feelings became heightened among Christian missionaries with the prohibition placed by the colonial government preventing them from entry into the Muslim areas in the North as they were skeptical that the Christian teachings may create the tendency that could make the indigenous people especially the Maguzawa

disloyal to the Muslims who were ruling them (Osewe and Musa, 2018). Thus, as a strategy to safeguard the colonial motive, the British government deified the indirect rule to a status of an unquestioned creed and gave protection to the ruling Emirs, taking side with them in cases of disagreement between them and the local Christians (Nwanaju, 2005, p.184). The reason behind this leniency by extension toward Islam was largely economic and political while the need to have a mutual relationship that will have a lasting effect on the people did not find meaning with the British government. A similar scenario was prevalent in the South particularly Ibadan against the Muslims who provided military powers for colonial administrators but did not enjoy the special privileges like the Christians mission who enjoyed superior privileges in the areas of medical and religious activities because of their educational advantage in using the English language to advise the chiefs on diplomatic affairs involving the then British Governor in Lagos (Nwanaju, 2005, p.186).

The unwholly acceptance and denial on the part of British Government created a religious space of ill-feelings and dissension among votaries of Islam and Christianity. This discrepancy in terms of access and privileges enjoyed in the South by the Christian missionaries did not so much create apprehension on the part of the Muslims. This may partly be, because they were in minority and the darwah ministry had not so much taken grip on them the way evangelism had overwhelmed the Christian missionaries.

In the North, the Christian missionaries were optimistic that the British rule would give them access to the emirates and helped limit the spread of Islam towards the South. But Lugard, the British administrator had a treaty with the Muslim rulers which he was not ready to compromise (Rao, 2023). He had assured the Muslim rulers that he would not interfere with Islam and to safeguard his pledge, he adopted measures to put the Christian missionaries at bay with the emirates. His exception to Christian missionary activities in the emirates was in the apprehension that the missionaries held ideas and doctrines that may religiously inspired political uprising from the part of some Muslim extremists which could be inimical to the indirect rule system of administration. This scenario stalled initial interactions that would have provided access and familiarity with divergence religious doctrines and ideology among the people. This invariably was the breeding ground for mutual

contempt and distrust for the sacred goods promoted by votaries of either of the religious divides.

### **The Pre-Independence and Independence Religious Relations**

The disharmony in Muslim-Christian relations from the colonial era inadvertently influenced the nationalist movements that were structured into party politics. The beginning of the nationalist sentiments in Nigeria could be traced to 1923 with the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) by Herbert Macaulay (d. 1946) at a regional level in Lagos to enable nationals participate in the colonial administration. Many indigenous people of Lagos who were mostly Muslims were attached to this political party. The youth in Lagos came up with Lagos Youth Movement (LYM) in 1934 in a bid to have a voice in government and by 1936 the movement transformed into National Youth Movement (Ebhomienlen and Ukpebor, 2013). As the name implies, Members of the Movement comprises young professional in different field who by creed, were Christians of both the Yoruba and non-Yoruba extractions. A rift in the group resulted in a split that saw the exit of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, one of the founding members from the south east (Igbo) and in 1944 he formed the Nigerian Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Azikiwe strove vigorously for the party to assume national character by incorporating the Muslim north and the Christian south to prosecute the nationalist agenda (Dudley, 1968).

Although the northerners were concerned about the preservation and the consolidation of the Islamic emirate system, but seeing the southern move towards a common political organization created apprehension that led to the formation of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) dominated by the Hausa and Fulani Muslims. The conservative orientation of the NPC led to the formation of the Northern Elements' Progressive Association (NEPA) as opposition movement to the NPC. The formation of NEPA brought in radical political organization that became critical of the established powers of the elite and the emirs in the north. In the southern part of Northern Nigeria, whose inhabitants were mainly Christians, a political association in the name of "Middle Zone League" (MZL) which later consolidated to United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) came on board in opposition to the NPC's regional orientation of preserving the political unity of the north.

Nigeria's independence experience is another trajectory in Muslim-Christian relations. The attainment of Independence in 1960 was greeted with the call for united Nigeria which was visible in the political slogan "bridge the gap" between the north and the south (Nwanaju, 2005, p. 236). To actualize this, Christians were given appointive positions in the north while some northern Muslims equally received appointments in National administration in Lagos, a region that was exclusively regarded for foreigners. There was no doubt about the mutual intelligibility between Muslims and Christians in the unification programme of making the Nigeria project work.

In spite of the above religious understanding and balancing, a sudden disruption that happened which shook the Nigeria's socio-religious space to disarray? The disruption began as inter-religious feud within the Muslims' circle when the Islamic reformist movements rose up against the traditional Islam of the Sufi brotherhood. The Sufi Brotherhood was the earliest contemporary Islamic organization that emphasized the spiritual essence of Islam. The group, by extension in religious practices invented additional rites and rituals that were regarded as innovations (*Bida'*) in Islamic religious practices by the Islamic reformist movements that later emerged and began to make a call for a return to the pristine Islam as enunciated in the Quran and practiced by Prophet Muhammad and his immediate companions (the Hadith). The series of frictions between these Islamic groups resulted in the first religious uprising organized by the Maitasine Islamic group in 1980. The effect was devastating on both Muslims and Christians, and after that follows, a host of other religious crises with dreadful consequences on the peaceful religious cooperation in Nigeria (Umejesi, 2011, p.93).

It is important to state that this latter development was never envisaged when the Nigeria project was formally launched in 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1914 through the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates. Be that as it may, the Nigeria project went through several constitutional developments beginning with a stamp of the British heritages. Although, the sovereignty of Nigeria began at Independence in 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, it was in 1963 that it actually became a Republic and by that period, the political leadership of the country had moved from the South to the North with the Nigeria Peoples' Congress (NPC) led by Ahmadu Bello, in control of the national government (Dudley, 143). This development led to the

promotion of Islamic heritage and identity since it was seen by the Muslim leaders that Nigeria had been under the British heritage derived from the Canon law belonging to the Christian tradition. Thus, to further consolidate Islam and Islamic principles, leaders who cooperated with the NPC government and its Islamic policies were favoured with appointments and promotions, while areas such as the Benue and the Plateau provinces which did not cooperate were denied development allocations (Nwanaju, 2005, p. 238). In the midst of this hostile development the Christians in the north came together and formed the Northern Christian Association (NCA) in 1965 in defense and protection of the Northern Christians. Also, the "New Life for All", another protestant organization of the Christendom was launched as a counter-campaign group to evangelize the Muslims (Nwanaju, 2005, p. 238). Against this, the political well-being of the Muslim community became a matter of supreme importance to the extent that by 1970s and 1980s, Muslim intellectuals sought a new identity for Islam in order to correct the perceived religious imbalance and elevate the status of Islam in Nigeria in the eyes of the Muslim world. What follows were the controversies surrounding Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Sharia debates which sought for the incorporation of certain portions of the Islamic law into the national constitution. With these hostilities and rivalry among Muslims and Christians in the North, the peace and tranquility the Nigeria Independence had heralded became elusive and the consequences have endured till this present day.

### **Notable Efforts towards Better Muslim-Christian Relations in Nigeria**

Several efforts have been made towards ensuring cordial Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria. One of the earliest notable attempts was the establishment of the Islam in Africa Project (Crossley, 2000) on the eve of Nigeria's 1960 Independence. The activity later developed to "Project for Christian-Muslims Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) which extended to Nigeria. The project was geared towards sensitizing the Christians about the Islamic creed. The goal was not actually to foster understanding between the two religious divides but for the Christians to understand Islam and the Muslims in order for them to effectively carry out the evangelization of the Christian gospel message to the Muslims. The words of Akinade (2002) are attestation in this regard.

The project started with the bold determination to understand Islam and utilize the resources within the African traditional worldview to create a better understanding between Christians and Muslims in Africa. ... The primary purpose of the project was, to keep before the churches in Africa their responsibility for understanding Islam and the Muslims of their region in view of the church's task of interpreting faithfully in the Muslim world the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Akinade, 2002, p.5).

The parochial nature of this project made it unsuccessful in achieving the desired goal of mutual understanding between the two religious divides, as frequent conflicts continue to emanate between Muslims and Christians with devastating consequences. The gory development led the Federal Government to come up with the formation of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) in 1999. The organization was formed with the combination of the umbrella body of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria; the Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). One major objective of this council is to create a permanent and sustainable channel of communication and interaction by promoting dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria so that members of both faiths may have mutual understanding of each other's religious position in order to achieve a peaceful co-existence among all people of Nigeria irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliations.

Although, this group has achieved commendable results in restoring peace in times of religious uprisings but Nigeria is yet to overcome the mutual suspicion that usually orchestrates hurt and hatred between Muslims and Christians. The reason adduced for this, perhaps, is the inadequate exploration and application of "dialogue" as defined earlier in this paper. We now turn to the strategies of dialogue as enunciated by Yankelovich whose theoretical framework we utilized in this paper.

### **Strategies of Dialogue**

Strategies of dialogue are what could be referred to as techniques that need to be expressed and experimented for a dialogic activity to achieve its goal of mutual understanding between the parties involved. For peace becomes inevitable when

there is mutual understanding. One strategy in dialogue which other strategies revolves around according to Yankelovich (1999) is “clarifying assumptions that lead to subculture distortions”. For instance, Christians and Muslims alike have the notion that those not within their fold are doom for hell. However, there is none who has gone out of this life and return to tell that the others are actually in hell as a proof. In this instance, the assumption of one person constitute distortion on others subculture orientation. Therefore, for dialogue to set out, it is pertinent to identify various assumptions, and dialogue becomes more beneficial when we let out our own assumption so that other people could respond with empathy and open mind. The essence is that there is danger in identifying other people’s assumption in the sense that it easily leads to provocation. A conversation that aggravates anger cannot be dialogical. Another salient strategy is “err on the side of including people who disagree”. The phrase indicates that, if we only include those who agree with us, the dialogue might boost everyone’s morale, but it will not help heal any divisions. Including those who disagree makes a dialogue more authentic and credible and gives it a chance to effect reconciliation.

The full list of practical dialogue strategies identified by Yankelovich (1999, p.127f) are as follows:

1. Err of the side of including people who disagree. Taking a risk often pays off, bringing greater mutual understanding between divided groups and individuals.
2. Initiate dialogue through a gesture of empathy. Acknowledging ‘the legitimacy of the point of view of the other’ often breaks down barriers of defensiveness and allows dialogue to begin.
3. Check for the presence of all three core requirements of dialogue – equality, empathic listening, and surfacing assumptions nonjudgmentally – and learn how to introduce the missing ones. Without the presence of all the three, there can be no real dialogue.
4. Minimize the level of mistrust before pursuing practical objectives. Efforts towards cooperation will be futile without a certain level of trust.
5. Keep dialogue and decision making compartmentalized. They are different kinds of process and if confused will undermine each other.

6. Focus on common interests, not divisive ones. Concentrating on shared interests is more conducive to dialogue.
7. Use specific cases to raise general issues. Referring to concrete examples helps people to appreciate the issues at stake.
8. Bring forth your own assumptions before speculating on those of others. Highlighting the assumptions of others can easily sound accusatory, whereas recognizing one's own sets a helpful example of self-awareness and openness.
9. Clarify assumptions that lead to subculture distortions. When the assumptions associated with particular subcultures are shaping a conversation without this being recognized, tactfully identifying them can bring helpful clarity.
10. Where applicable, identify mistrust as the real source of misunderstandings. Mistrust prevents openness and inhibits dialogue. Sometimes simply recognizing, that this is happening is enough to help people overcome it and converse more openly.
11. Expose old scripts to a reality check. We interpret reality through 'the web of beliefs, values, assumption and customs that have shaped our views over decades of experience. It is valuable to bring assumptions to the surface; sometimes when we do, we see that they are no longer valid and need to be amended.
12. Focus on conflicts between value systems, not people. Avoid stereotyping people according to their subculture.
13. Be sure, trust exists before addressing transference distortions. Sometimes the dynamics of previous relationships interfere with current ones. For example, the experience of being taken advantage of by a relative may make a person touchy when a colleague asks her to do something outside her official role. Bringing such 'transference distortions' into the open can explain and ease mysterious tensions between people. However, examining these 'ghosts' of past relationships can be personally threatening, and it should not be attempted where there is not a relationship of trust.
14. When appropriate, express the emotions that accompany strongly held values. Emotions are a legitimate and important part of the process of dialogue.

15. Encourage relationships in order to humanize transactions. Encountering one another as individuals on a human level breaks down stereotypes and hostility.

However lofty these strategies may be, there are challenges that may hamper its adoption. These challenges are in the form of habits engrained in individual's mind. One of such challenges is the attitude of "holding back". This is the art of being unwilling to take the risk of speaking out. Most religious faithful are not willing to talk about issues that pertain to their religion. Muslims and Christian must be willing to talk about issues instead of holding it back for dialogue to thrive. Another challenge is what could be called 'being locked in a box'. That is, the attitude of being unable to see beyond the restrictions of the same old ideas. We must let loose the boundary of our ideas and be open to listen in order to understand others of different ideas. Lastly but not exhaustive, is the attitude of 'showboating'. This is the art of showing off knowledge or intelligence at the expense of real dialogue. This results when people are unable to go beyond discussion of their own pet preoccupation.

### **Conclusion**

All along, the discussion in this paper has been on the sources of the frictions that have hampered cordial Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria which have beclouded love and acceptance of one and the others' religions. We have seen how the pre-colonial days witnessed the hatred that greeted Islam as a result of the Muslim's rejection of the European goods brought by the Christian missionaries in the attempt to gain converts. The period of the colonial rule was another divisive period that generated mutual suspicion for both Muslims and Christians as a result of inaccessibility created by the British administrator to safeguard their imperial rule. The nationalist movements during the pre-independence period became enmeshed in ethnicity and religious politics with the structure of the political parties possessing the apron of either of the religious divides. The Independence period saw the emergence of fundamentalist movements that heated up the polity and heightened the hurt and hatred with the renewed struggle for proper identity and recognition of Islam in Nigeria's socio-political space. The consequences have been alarming and retrogressive due to the religious crises that sprang up from the tension generated by the ill-fated religious relations. Dialogue defined as the move

for mutual understanding is the recommendation of this work. Although, effort towards mutual cooperation between Islam and Christianity has been made, this paper emphasizes the adoption of Yankelovich's strategies of dialogue which transcend beyond discussion, debate and deliberations, with salient characteristics of empathy, equality and non-judgmental in the dialogic process. It is therefore the submission of this work that if the mission to gain converts is subsumed in dialogic process by the proselytizing religions, Muslims and Christians will be able to overcome hurt and hatred that made peace, love, unity and cordial religious relations elusive in Nigeria.

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