

**THE IMPACT OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHURCH IN THE MAINTENANCE OF  
PEACE IN THE SOCIETY: THE STUDY OF ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA.**

**BY**

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## APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved, having satisfied the conditions for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in Peace and Human Relations of Dynamic Theological Seminary, Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria, Affiliated to Harvest Bible University, Los Angeles, California, United States

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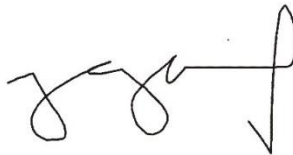


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## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this dissertation and the subsequent preparation of this dissertation by Rosa John (DTS/CPSHR/2022/2023/01) were carried out under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late Husband Mr. Andrew Zakariya who stood by me to see that I excel in life. May his soul continue to Rest in Perfect Peace with the Lord.

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## **Abstract**

This study examined the “The Impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church in the Maintenance of Peace in the Society”. The study used analytical research method. It revealed that; the church has a significant role in impacting the knowledge of how to maintain peace in the society. The findings showed that religion plays a vital role in society from the following responses; uniting divided societies together, facilitating a dialogue about virtues for shaping a better society, providing reconciliation which is based on Gods own reconciliation with sinful humanity, imposing equality among all humans without any facial discrimination, providing the sanctity of human kind and necessarily calls for equality and controlling deviance by means of ensuring peace in the society. The study also recommended that religious leaders must denounce all forms of fanaticism and racial discrimination based on religion, race, class, ethnicity, or descent. Additionally, the government must encourage religious leaders to cooperate with all relevant local institutions and authorities to highlight the true image of religions in their right conception. The study further recommended that; church leaders should approach politicians and teach them the importance of good governance and encourage them. They should preach and promote ethno-religious tolerance and to accommodate opposing views as part of deepening peaceful co-existence in the country. They should also monitor Christian politicians in order to sponsor bills of peaceful co-existence. The study concluded that; Peacebuilding is an essential part of human life in many countries today. Also, religions can serve as channels for implementing and sharing such knowledge among the faithful for effective peacebuilding in our communities and even globally. At the very heart of Christianity, all that it yearns for is how-to live-in peace with everyone. Religious organizations have played mediatory and humanitarian roles towards the maintenance of peace in the society. These roles include; religious tolerance, honesty and impartiality among others. Christian leaders and institutions have attributes that are considered trustworthy and credible by the local population to their established roles in their respective communities and as such should be used in conflict situations and peacemaking. Adamawa people should be re-oriented to see themselves as brethren no matter their religious differences.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATION**

LCCN – Lutheran Church of Christ in Nation

EYN – Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria

CAN – Christian Association of Nigeria

ATR – African Traditional Religion

NKJV – New King James Version

KJV – King James Version

UN – United Nations

PCR – Peace and Conflict Resolution

NGOs – Non- Governmental Organizations

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1:1 Background to the Study**

Adamawa State (also known as the Land of beauty) was created on 27<sup>th</sup> August 1991 alongside Taraba State from defunct Gongola State with Yola as its Capital. It is located in the North-East of Nigeria. It seats on a land area of 36, 917 square kilometers making it one of the largest States in Nigeria placing it at 8<sup>th</sup> just behind Zamfara at 7<sup>th</sup>. It is bordered to the Northwest by Borno State, Gombe State to the West and Taraba State to the Southwest. It also shares international borders with Cameroon to the East. The State has 3 Senatorial Districts, 8 Federal Constituencies and 21 Local Government Areas.

Before it became a state in Nigeria, Adamawa was a subordinate kingdom of the Sultanate of Sokoto which also included much of northern Cameroon. The rulers bear the title of Emir (Lamido in the local language, Fulfulde). The name "Adamawa" came from the founder of the kingdom, Modibbo Adama, a regional leader of the Fulani Jihad organized by Usman dan Fodio of Sokoto in 1804. Modibbo Adama came from the region of Gurin (now just a small village) and in 1806 received a green flag for leading the jihad in his native country. In the following years, Adama conquered many lands and tribes. In 1838 he moved his capital to Ribadu, and in 1839 to Joboliwo. In 1841 he founded Yola where he died in 1848. After the European colonization (first by Germany and then by Britain) the rulers remained as Emirs, and the line of succession has continued to the present day.

The Lamido is the chairman of the Adamawa Emirate Council. The state is essentially a mountainous land traversed by river valleys of Benue, Gongola and Yedzerem. The valleys of Cameroon, Mandara and Adamawa mountains form part of this undulating landscape. Adamawa State is noted for its rich cultural heritage which reflects in its history, i.e., dances, dress patterns, craftsmanship, and music. The three main religions are Islam, Christianity and Traditionalism.

Adamawa state is the home of a large number of Christians, forming the largest minority religion in the predominantly Muslim state. Christian communities in the state have been heavily attacked by Boko Haram which had caused conflict between the indigenes. However, these attacks have reduced in recent years due to the Nigerian military's efforts to combat terrorism in the region.

The President, Lutheran World Federation and the Archbishop Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria, LCCN, Most Reverend Musa Filibus Tanti, has condemned, in strong terms, the terror attack on a mosque in Mubi, Adamawa State and a clash in a Fulani community in Numan that claimed the lives of dozens of people and injuring many more. These happenings have caused tension.

The cleric's condemnation came as the Muslim Council and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Adamawa State differed on the genesis of the Numan killings.

“We woke up yesterday to the sad news of irreparable and disheartening losses of human lives due to the deadly attack on worshipers in a mosque in Mubi and a clash between herdsmen and farming communities in Numan Local Government, Adamawa State”, Filibuster said in a statement.

“This kind of wanton destruction of human lives is not acceptable for whatever reason and is condemnable in strongest terms. We must learn to live together in peace despite the differences in trade, creed or belief. At this time that Adamawa State is beginning to enjoy relative security and peace, the activities of insurgents and conflict between communities should not draw us back to the dark days”, the archbishop stated.

The Christian tradition has made significant contributions to world peace at a number of different levels (Albert, 2011). Among these are public statements by Church leaders, programs of action at local and international levels, organizations dedicated to bringing about peace, courses of study, commemorative days etc. In recent decades, Church leaders have frequently made statements in support of peace. In some cases, these statements have been specific appeals for peace in particular circumstances, however, on other occasions they have also published more comprehensive statements on the need for peace and the means of achieving it. The teachings of Christianity which is guided by the dictates of the bible (word of God) have constantly encouraged the members to ensure peace and harmony in the society.

Christian leaders have always publicly stand for societal peace and harmony and against violence. It is now widely accepted that violent conflict is the major hindrance to the development of the African continent and Nigeria in particular. It inflicts human sufferings through death, destruction of livelihoods, constant displacement and insecurity (Barash, 2000). Violent conflict disrupts the process of production, creates conditions for pillage of the country's resources and diverts their application from development purposes to servicing war. Violent conflict is thus responsible for perpetuating misery and under development in the country-Nigeria and the continent at large (Adetula, 2006).

Peace is a universal phenomenon that everyone desires and wishes to enjoy endlessly. Traditions, cultures, religions and societies do have different prescriptions to attaining and enjoying peace. Whenever and wherever, there is peace there tends to be development and longevity is enjoyed (Salawu, 2010). To this end, Christianity which is one of the predominant religions in the world today teaches peace and encourages all adherents to the faiths to pursue peace and live peacefully with one another. The above statement now seems to be questionable with the rise of intra, inter and ethno-religious conflicts in the world. While most Arab and some European countries are faced with intra-religious conflicts, an African country like Nigeria is faced with both intra and inter-religious conflicts. Nigeria, which is popularly known as Africa's most populous black nation with a population of now about 200 million people, with more than 250 ethnic groups has Christianity and Islam as its predominant religions, though there is still in existence the African Traditional Religion (ATR).

Christianity as a word means followers of Christ or Christ like. Christians therefore are those who follow and act the teaching of Christ in all ways of life. One of the climaxes of Christianity or Christian virtue is peace. Christians are enjoined in the Bible to embrace and live peacefully with their neighbors. The following scriptures confirm this: Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it (Psalm 34 vs 14). Blessed are the Peace makers for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5 vs 9). Let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it (1 Peter 3 vs 11). Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12 vs 14). If it be possible, as much as it lieth in you, live peaceably with all men (Rom 12 vs 18)

The word Peace in Christianity is translated from the Hebrew word 'Shalom', which is a key word in the Bible and it's at the center of how God wants us to live on earth. One of the key



things Jesus came to give humanity is Peace and expects us to live in peace as cited in the scriptural verses above. Peace was not only what Jesus taught but He also lived it, this in most cases is what scholars call pacifism, as Jesus never taught violence, even at his arrest by the Pharisees and one of his disciples struck the ears of the servant of the high priest, Jesus rebuked the disciple and said that “those who live by the sword shall die by the sword” (Mathew 26:52, NKJV). In another place Jesus taught the people not to retaliate any evil done to them as it used to be, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, if one should strike you on the right cheek, turn the left cheek (Mathew 5:38-39, NKJV) but now to always forgive those that offend them and he charged them to forgive their neighbors even seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22, KJV). With all these scriptural teachings of the church, Christians are supposed to live in peace and harmony in the society.

## **1.2 Historical context of Boko Haram**

The group known as Boko Haram is said to have emerged in 2002 under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri. Yusuf had a strict, Fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an and believed that the creation of Nigeria by British colonialist had imposed a western and un-Islamic way of life on the Muslims.

He set up a religious complex, which included a Mosque and an Islamic school. Many poor Muslim families from across Nigeria, as well as neighboring countries, enrolled their children at the school. But Boko Haram was not only interested in education. Its political goal was to create an Islamic state and the school became a recruiting ground for jihadist.

The most commonly accepted translation of the name “Boko Haram” in the indigenous lingua franca Hausa is: “western education is forbidden”. Boko originally means book (you can see “school instead”) but came to signify western education, while Haram means forbidden. It has

also been translated as “western influence is a sin” and “westernization is sacrilege”. The groups official name is *Jama’atu Ahlul Sunna Lidda’awati wal-jihad*, which is translated to mean “people committed to the propagation of the prophets and jiahd” (Anu, 2017).

The date of the emergence of Boko Haram is debatable by the schoolers. Some noted that Boko Haram started in 2002 while others examined that it was 2007 and others 2009. But majority of the schoolers adopted 2009 when it was known worldwide, but in the real sense Boko Haram began long ago. Murtala traces the origin of the group as far back as 1990s (2014). The group developed a Salafist who sees the secular authorities and educational system as un-Islamic. According to this ideology, Islam is completely holy and nothing should be associated to it. Since Islam is against the colonization, three spectrums of thoughts competed in Borno state in 1990s. Murtala examined that the first was the mainstream purist Salafi which was led by Sheik Jafar Mahmud; the second was the movement which later became the Boko Haram and the third was the Hijira or Taliban group (2014).

The purist Salafi leader stated that though democracy, circular authority and formal education are un-Islamic, but Muslims should embrace it because if they did not, they will be under the rule of the non-Muslims and which is slavery. Though Murtala noted that it is like eating dead animal, but it is allowed only under the extreme situation of salvation (2014).

Boko Haram and Hijira share the same beliefs. So, this group assert that the option for any Muslims that lives under the secular institution of the government is Jihad or migration. So, if they can’t subdue the government, then they should move to a place where they can live under pure Islamic system. And since they don’t have arms to face the Nigerian military, the Hijira decided to relocate to Yobe sate and founded an Islamic community in Kanama. Challenges

started over right of fishing day. They went for fishing in a pound where they were asked not to and because of that they launched attack on police stations in Bama and Gwoza where they got a lot of weapons (2014). Because of that, The Nigerian army was deployed and the group was crushed. Majority of these Hijira group are the students of Mohammed Yusuf. Even though Yusuf was not around when his students did these, but his name was put on police wanted list of police. But Jafar asks him to write a letter to the Borno State government and exonerate himself and he did. Base on that, Mohammed Yusuf was allowed to return to Nigeria. After his return, Yusuf released a video of his speech where he emphasized that democracy and formal education are all un-Islamic. He concluded that the only solution to the problem of secular institution and Muslims persecution is total Jihad against the Nigerian government and Christians (2014). This indicated that Boko Haram is not a recent phenomenon but has existed beyond the arguments of other scholars. Otherwise, 2009 was when the group was known publicly and internationally.

Boko Haram is also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. Authorities from a task force known as operation flush II in Maiduguri confronted Yusuf's followers in 2009, wounding at least 17 Boko Haram members. Yusuf angrily denounced the security forces and called on his followers to rise up against them.

In a violent campaign that stretched some five days, the group attacked police stations in Bauchi, Yobe and Borno states and engaged in gun battles before the military cracked down. Yusuf was eventually captured by soldiers and then handed over to the police, brutally killed him in cooled blood. Police claimed that he had tried to escape when they killed him, but witnesses said he was executed. His body was shown on state television and the security forces declared the end of Boko Haram in 2009. The group went underground for the complete year and the resurfaces in 2010 with assassinations, bombings and a major raid on prisons where their members were kept.

Yusuf's deputy Abubakar Shekau, who police claimed had been killed in the 2009 uprising, began to appear in videos as the group's new leader.

Attacks gradually grew more deadly and sophisticated, particularly with the use of explosives. A suicide attacker rammed a car bomb into UN headquarters in the capital Abuja in August 2011, killing 23 people in the highest profile of several incidents (Akande, 2012). Such violence gradually became frequent in many parts of northern and central Nigeria.

Boko Haram's trademark was originally the use of gunmen on motorbikes and has maintained a steady rate of attack since 2011. They have attacked politicians, religious leaders, security forces and civilian targets. They are allegedly partnering the Islamic states in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Freedom Onuoha is of the opinion that the philosophy of the sect emanated from orthodox Islamic teaching resembling that of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which treats anything western as completely un-Islamic. It considers western influence on Islamic society as the basis of religious weaknesses. Hence the sect declaration that conventional banking, taxation, jurisprudence, western education and indeed all western institutions are infidel and as such must be avoided by Muslims. This explains why the sect are popularly known as Boko Haram, literally meaning "western education is sin" (2012).

Lipido in the speech of Abubakar Shekau the leader of the Boko Haram who declared in a message sent to the press saying "in fact we are spread across all the 36 states in Nigeria, and Boko Haram is just a version of Al'qaeda, when we align with the respect. We support Osama bin Laden we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamized, which is according to the wish of Allah". Today, Boko Haram may likely to be linked to IS in Iraq and

Syria, whose pattern they follow in establishing an Islamic state across the vast areas of northern Nigerians (2015).

Worrisome is the rate at which extreme religious fundamentalist groups have flourished in Nigeria and “are united in the ultimate objective of establishing Nigeria as an Islamic state” (Suleiman, 2015). These groups include, among others, the Islamic movement of Nigeria led by sheikh Ibrahim El-Zakzakky and the Boko Haram led by Abubakar Shekau. The activities of some of these sects now threaten the legitimacy of the Nigerian state as well as undermine the safety of lives and property of its citizens.

Onyebuchi and Chigozi noted that Boko Haram’s ideological mission is primarily to overthrow the Nigerian states with its western values and then impose strict Islamic sharia law in the entire country (2013). This is a violent reaction against the Nigerian state with its western attribute. There is obvious clash of civilizations: a clash between Islamic values and western values, in fact, according to Huntington, the efforts of the west to promotes its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interest will engender counter responses (2013).

Boko Haram has impacted the lives of the Nigerians in a negative way. Indigenes no longer trust one another because of the fear of that it has created in their lives. The destruction that it has caused in the country cannot be quantified because the damages they caused on lives and properties are enormous. Therefore, is not wrong to say that Boko Haram is an inevitable result of poverty in Northern Nigeria.

It is true that over 60% of Nigerians live on less than one dollar per day, and that Muslim-majority Northern Nigeria trails the heavily Christian South in infrastructural development and

educational attainment. The North also has faster population growth. Yet economic deprivation alone cannot explain why violent movements grow in some places and not others, or why some movements develop particular worldviews (Thurston 7). Some of its tactics are familiar from the repertoires of AQIM and al-Shabab, such as kidnapping Westerners and conducting suicide bombings. Other Boko Haram tactics appear self-generated, such as attacking cell phone towers and kidnapping women in mass and its massacres of villagers (Thurston, 8).

One of the most dreaded fallouts of Boko Haram bombings and killing is the fear and hatred it has so far fueled between citizens whom have ultimately endangers the polity and the nation at large. People no longer love one another because they look at each other as enemies, most especially people from different faiths; Muslims and Christians. Viewed from whatever angle, it is generally acknowledged that the ugly development has not only threatened the polity but also the very existence of the Nigerian nation.

Boko Haram usually launch attacks on police officers, police stations and military barracks, explicitly in revenge for the killings of Yusuf and his comrades. The group has repeatedly demanded prosecution of those responsible, releases of their detained colleagues, restoration of the mosque and compensation for sect members killed by government troops. The groups campaign has grown, targeting security forces, government officials, and politicians, Christians, critical Muslim clerics, traditional leaders, the UN presence, bars and schools (Durotype 1252). This group conducted series of bombing attacks and armed assaults in many places in northern Nigeria. As at 2024, the table below shows the number of people that were killed by Boko Haram in the North East:

Characteristic	Number of deaths
Borno	38,255
Zamfara	6,803
Kaduna	6,195
Benue	4,391
Adamawa	4,127
Plateau	3,768
Yobe	3,229

**Fig. 1**

**Source:"<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1197570/deaths-caused-by-boko-haram-in-nigeria/>"**

In Adamawa state, the invasion of the militant has caused a lot of damages to the town and the villages around it. After the re-capturing of the area by the military men, the use of motor cycle was ban in some Local Government Areas, and since the people that came from the villages depended on it, that constituted transportation difficulty for them.

All over Northern Nigeria conflict has been prevalent. Since 1980s ethnic and religious violence have become recurring decimal. There is virtually no State out of the 19 States in Northern Nigeria that conflict has not reared its ugly head. This includes spate of conflicts in Kano, Bauchi, Tafawa Balewa, Ilorin, Katsina and Jos. Others are Chamba-Kuteb conflict in Taraba State, Tiv-Jukun crisis, Bassa-Igbira crisis in Toto Nasarawa State. In virtually all the cases, the conflict could be traced to colonial incorporation and State policies. The context of the conflict and manifestations or even contending force may differ, but the social definition is traced to these issues (Abdu 220). This simply means that conflict have been on a top front of the Northern States in Nigeria. This is the reason why the researcher wants to find out why the terrorism has a special target towards kidnapping women and children.

Since 1980, the character of the conflict has remarkably shifted from stronger issues of political disagreement and contestations to issues of citizenship as negotiated by ethnic and religious identity. The first of these crises was in Fagge in 1982 over the reconstruction of a church. In 1991 protest over a planned crusade by Rev. Rein hard Bonnke, a German evangelist resulted into a violent conflagration between Christians and Muslims in the city. Similar violence occurred in 1995, 1999 and 2001 (222). In trying to look at Islam and conflict in Northern Nigeria, Abdu asked, what is the foundation of violence in Northern Nigeria? Whereas Ikime traces the inter-linkage between the ethnicity and religion (85). He noted that among the varied ethnic groups in Nigeria, religion was interwoven with governance for the presentation of



political order, stability of government, and the endorsement of the moral code since the pre-colonial era. This observation finds concurrence in Falola's assertion that "religion and politics have been bedfellows throughout Nigerian history" (1-2).

The field of the religious conflicts has come to be the defining character of the Nigerian State and politics since independence in 1960. According to Kukah, the negative dimensions in religious crises in Nigeria aptly started when "both Islam and Christianity are saddled across the Nigerian polity, each no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity" (9). The situation has become quite anarchic that, by 1980, according to the reports on the Kano riots, the North had witnessed over 33 religious' conflicts (Falola5). It is clear that most conflicts in Northern Nigeria are with the parameters of religion as a persistence variable.

According to Hisket, in 1980 the "Maitatsine riots" revolted in Kano State which has led to the destructive and macabre climax in November and December of that year. But the riot was finally put down by the Nigerian Army. However, it did not end there, in October, 1982; similar riot broke out in Bulumkutu Maiduguri and in Kaduna, all which displayed similarities with the Kano riot. In February and March, 1984, violent events took place in Yola, allegedly perpetrated by the Anathematizer, under the leadership of a certain Musa Makaniki, who claimed the Christians mantle in the wake of the vatic ide (Hisket 210). All these riots happened in the Northern Nigeria.

Isichei (195) quoting Sheikh Abubakar Mahmud Gumi noted that Maitatsine was "a trail of one-track minded mallam versed only in the recitation of the Qur'an by heart, and not fully comprehending what it contained". In shedding light on this religion personage (Falola141) notes

that “Marwa was an enigmatic character, whose image has become mythicized by both his followers and his enemies. He apparently has an impressive ability to travel far and wide, to evade security networks, and to mobilize thousands of people”. It is pertinent to note here that Maitatsine’s teachings were rejected by all the conventional Muslim groups in Northern Nigeria.

Furthermore, the riot of Damboa, Borno State in 2000 was as the result of the Christians demand for the allocation of land for the building of the Christian place of worship, which was not granted. With the persistence refusal to allocate land to build their place of worship, construction work for Christian’s group started at the private presidential land of the cleric of the Christian for place of worship. The chairman of Damboa local government claimed that the construction work continued despite an injunction prohibiting such by the local government security committee, which was inclusive of Christians and Muslims. After they have finished building the worship Centre, the militant Muslims were unhappy with that and as a result of this, they started chanting ‘Allah Akbar’ demolished the new place of worship being constructed by the Living Faith Church on the private residence of its religious leader. Besides these, all the other Christians places of worship in Damboa were burnt. In this atmosphere, Muslims in this community were nursing grievances over the construction of Christian’s place of worship which they imagined to be against Islamic teachings. In all, about 20 people were reported dead (Hisket 216). Therefore, it would not be misleading to conclude, that the riots were solely on religious grounds.

The ideology of Boko Haram considers western influence on Islamic society as the basis of religious weakness. The sects declared that anything westerner are un-Islamic and must be avoided by the Muslims. Hence, they assert that conventional banking, taxation, jurisprudence, western education and all western institutions is infidel and as such must be avoided by all Muslims (Onuoha 408).

Onouoha still puts that,

Boko Haram's ideology is part of the global salafist Islamic ideological movement that seeks the imposition of its own interpretation of Islamic law. Salafism, for instance seeks to purge Islam of outside influences and strives for a return to the Islam practiced by the "pious ancestors", that is Muhammad and the early Islamic community. It stresses adherence to a rigorist's interpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith and aims at reforming the personal behavior of every Muslim. It also involves the duty to advise other believers to change their ways of life in the same sense (409).

Driven by a deeply-rooted anti-Western ideology, Boko Haram rejects all aspects of Western civilization. The group's positions were informed for many years by the extreme view of its late leader Mohammed Yusuf, who rejected evolution and scientific explanations for natural phenomena such as rainfall.

Today, Boko Haram's leadership insists that its name, which is widely translated from the local Hausa language to mean "Western education is forbidden/ sinful," in fact encompasses a rejection of Western civilization in its entirety, not just its teachings. Included among the positions it advocates are rejection of women's and gay rights, democracy, and the consumption of alcohol. In its early years, Boko Haram was often referred to as the "Nigerian Taliban" due to its shared anti-Western ideology and its use of force as a means to imposing a stricter form of Shariah law than that which was being implemented in northern Nigeria through government reforms (Onouha 312).

As a demonstration of its esteem for the Taliban, Boko Haram at one time flew the Taliban's flag at its headquarters, which it had dubbed "Afghanistan". Leaders of Boko Haram have also indicated publicly that they subscribe to Al Qaeda's ideology. In a statement issued in the wake of Yusuf's death, Sani Umaru, who claimed leadership of the group, declared that "Boko Haram is just a version of the Al Qaeda which we align with and respect. We support Osama bin

Laden, we shall carry out his command in Nigeria until the country is totally Islamized which is according to the wish of Allah.” Thurston also noted that Boko Haram’s ideology is often described as comprising two stances: opposition to democracy and rejection of Western-style education (5).

Throughout the nearly fifteen centuries of Muslim-Christian encounter, individual adherents of both traditions often have lived peaceably with each other. At the same time, Muslim expansion into Christian territories and Christian imperialism in Muslims lands have fostered fear and ill-will on both sides. Repercussions from the Crusades continue to resound in the contemporary rhetoric employed by defenders of both faiths. In recent years relations between Muslims and Christians across the globe have become increasingly polarized, fanned by anti-Islamic rhetoric and fear mongering. While a number of verses in the Qur’an call for treating Christians and Jews with respect as recipients of God’s divine message, in reality many Muslims have found it difficult not to see Christians as polytheists because of their doctrine of the Trinity. Christians, for their part, traditionally have viewed the Qur’an as fraudulent and Muhammad as an imposter (Smith 15). Old sectarian rivalries play out with serious consequences for minority groups, both Christian and Muslim. Conflicts in Africa were often labeled as ethnic, political, or ideological perpetuations of long-standing struggles over land, power, and influence. These conflicts now tend to be labeled in accord with the specifically religious affiliation of their participants. Understanding the history of Muslim-Christian relations, as well as current political realities such as the dismantling of the political order created by European colonialism, helps give context to current “hot spots” of Muslim-Christian conflict in the world.

Many areas of Africa, of course, are suffering greatly today as a result of deteriorating conditions and relations between Muslim and Christian groups. One obvious example is Nigeria. Since

1990 conflicts between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria have become violent and often deadly. The full picture is complex and related directly to the British colonialist venture in Nigeria. Thus, relations between the two communities are based not only on religion, but also more specifically are a combination of economic, political, and religious factors (Smith 22).

Today a major player in exacerbating Nigerian sectarian violence is the Muslim sect called Boko Haram, which is strongly opposed to Western values and forms of education and generally shares a Taliban ideology. In recent years, members of Boko Haram have raided schools, churches, and government offices in their fight to carve out an Islamic enclave in northeastern Nigeria. Such terrorist attacks have had a strong effect on the country's economy since farmers in the area are frightened away from growing their crops (Smith 25).

### **1:3 Statement of Problem**

The invasion of Boko Haram in 2013 in Adamawa state has caused a lot of mistrust between the indigenes. This group of terrorists does not hide its intention of destroying anything Western in Nigeria, ranging from Western education, mode of dressing and Christianity which is the Western Religion. They call for the Islamization of the country and uses every means including violent fear of physical death to pursue its goals.

The two major religions in Adamawa that is Christianity and Islam started to have differences among themselves. These religions no longer live in peace with each other. The church leaders and some religion leaders from the other side tried to see how they can illuminate the mindset of hatred among the people, but it proves abortive.

The church has always taught the members on the act of non-retaliation as taught by Jesus which helps to absorb violence instead of escalating it, hence every cycle of violence provoking revenge, which in turn provokes more violence is broken by the simple act of tolerating the violence and avoiding retaliation. On the contrary, there has been increased cases of disruption to peace and harmony in the world today despite the church teachings of peace as stipulated by Jesus Christ.

Historical analysis confirms the home-grown character of Nigeria's conflicts and the complexity of their peaceful resolution. Religious leaders have traditionally contested political space with other actors and continue to do so. But the religiosity of popular culture is such that Nigerian religious leaders can make a substantive contribution to peace building and countering religious extremism if given the time, space and tools to do so. Elections have been critical moments in the evolution of religious tensions and conflicts owing to the country's geographical demographic and history, and the popular hope of correcting injustice that they evoke. There is a need to distinguish between genuine religious conflicts and conflicts that are essentially socio-economic or about competition for political power which become "religionized." The evolution of the terrorist organization, Boko Haram, can be traced back to intra-Muslim conflicts and anti-Sufi movements. But it reflects no less the underdevelopment and poverty of the Northeast and the impact of corruption on the perception of state and national government. The crude and violent narrative of Abubakar Shekau, its leader, shows a deterioration beyond that of its founder Malam Yusuf, who was able to offer financial and economic inducements over and above a rejection of most aspects of modernity and Western education. Increasingly, efforts are being made by religious leaders at both national, and local levels through formal, and grassroots networks to build better understanding and awareness between faiths to change and challenge

narratives. With the appropriate support, these networks have great potential for improving communal relations and overcoming Boko Haram's narratives of hate. Although, notable scholars have written extensively on Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria from different perspectives all aimed at promoting good inter-faith relations for peaceful coexistence among all and sundry regardless of religious affiliations. Conferences on inter-religious dialogue have been held on several occasions, but despite all these moves to promote good Christian-Muslim relations and the areas of convergences of these religions, the nation has continued to witness cases of untold crises that have today led to mistrust, suspicion, and fear between the adherents of the two prominent faiths.

However, the researcher is examining the impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church in the maintenance of peace in the society: The study of Adamawa state, Nigeria.

The current population projection for Adamawa State in 2025 is approximately 5.2 million people. This represents a growth of about 6% from the estimated population of 4.9 million in 2022. However, the state has been experiencing a steady increase in population due to factors such as natural growth.

#### **1:4 Purpose of the Study**

The issue of lack of peace in the Northern part of Nigeria is worrisome and the hatred towards one another is so alarming. As we must note that some of these crises have affected Adamawa and her development tremendously that the damages caused to the state by the insurgence cannot be estimated. As the title of this dissertation indicates, the main aim is to examine the impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church in the maintenance of peace in the society.

While this is the aim of my research, other objectives are:

1. To examine the reason why the church chose to be a pacifist.
2. To find out what are the dictates of the church as regards peace in the society.
3. To examine the factors that disrupt peace in the society

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Looking at how Boko Haram affects the Northern part of Nigeria, this research is significant because it examines the impact that the attack of the terrorists has on the lives of the people and how these affected persons responded to the situation.

The findings of this study will be useful for the government, church leaders and the general public on the impact of maintaining peace in the society. The research shall also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the topic.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This research work intends to cover some selected Areas in Adamawa State. The researcher intends to visit villages, towns and cities so as to gather information from the indigene. Most of other catchment areas in Adamawa are under these villages and the researcher shall try to visit them all. The researcher tries to limit her study to these places because the religious leaders mostly gather there for dialogue in those places.

### **1.7 Methodology and Sources of Data**

The issue of conflict between the farmers and Fulani herds men and also the two major religions



in the Northern part of Nigeria is worrisome and the loss of life and properties is so alarming. As we must note that some of these crises have affected Adamawa and her development tremendously that the damages caused to the state cannot be estimated. As the result of that, this study will use the analytical research method. As an empirical method of investigation, the analytical study involves in-depth examination of the context of the study, interviews, observations, documents archival records and methods of analysis.

### **1.8 Conceptual Clarifications/ Theoretical Framework**

**IMPACT:** according to Oxford Dictionary, impact is the powerful effect that something has on somebody or something.

**CHURCH:** this is referred to in Greek as Ecclesia; which means assembly. It is the body of Christ- all the People who accept Christ's gift of salvation and follow Christ's teachings. It is much more than the building,

**MAINTENANCE:** This is the process of keeping something in good condition by checking or repairing it regularly.

**PEACE:** Peace is regarded "as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence and about peaceful coexistence". Although this definition has captured elements of peace, it was criticized by some scholars for lacking the adequate concept of peace. To overcome this limitation David P. Barash (2000) thus defined peace as a "process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community". In this respect, peace therefore connotes the absence of violence or war, the presence of justice, equality and development; the existence of

rule of law, respect for human life and dignity, and tolerance among and between people; maintenance of a balanced ecosphere and more importantly, having inner peace and wholeness.

Also, peace can be viewed as when we think of tranquility, order, calm, security and normalcy but also of development, of justice and respect for the right of others. It can also be a state or period of mutual concord between governments. *Peace* is when people are able to resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives.

**SOCIETY:** is the group of people that shares cultural aspects such as language, dress, norms of behaviours and artistic forms.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The issue of conflict in the Northeast is so devastating that Christians and Muslims are looking at each other as enemy. Why is it that the Mosque and the Churches are destroyed if the extremists are not fighting religion? If truly that they are fighting the Government as their names implies, why do they not destroy the Government offices rather they destroy the worship centers? Or if the agenda of the Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen is to Islamize the North Eastern states, why do they cause misunderstanding and lack of peace in the society? Here we can see that the ideology of these group of people has caused suffering and disruption in people's lives. Boko Haram has caused a lot of havoc in the Northern States of Nigeria; in this case, I will like to go by the theory of Juergensmeyer, Mark in his book titled "*Terror in the Mind of God*," Ch 1, 7-11. From his case studies, Juergensmeyer finds several characteristics of religious terrorism that make it distinct from other forms of terrorism. The selections from Mark Juergensmeyer's book on religious terrorism bring to light the symbolic nature of religious violence; in some instances,

in fact, oftentimes the symbolic target and/or date of an attack overshadow the strategic importance of the attack. Religious terrorists target a specific building or place not because of the magnitude of destruction that may take place, but to highlight the “vulnerability of government power” (Juergensmeyer: 135). For example, the World Trade Center attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> took thousands of lives and destroyed a symbol of American economic power, but in reality, businesses were up and running again in days, and the American economy did not crumble. The idea of a “cosmic war”-a struggle in which the reasoning, end point, and final result extends beyond individual human experience- is also a theme for religious terrorism. A cosmic war involves the struggle between good and evil, religion and secularism, and oftentimes the goals of religious terrorists are not measurable. Religious terrorism also exploits the religious ideas of sacrifice and martyrdom in order to justify their actions. Religious terrorists often characterize themselves as “warriors” with goals that are intangible and unreachable. According to Juergensmeyer, religion exacerbates the tendency to divide people into friends and enemies, good and evil, us and them, by ratcheting divisions up to a cosmic level. "What makes religious violence particularly savage and relentless" is that it puts worldly conflicts in a "larger than life" context of "cosmic war." Secular political conflicts that are, "more rational" conflicts, such as those over land are of a fundamentally different character than those in which the stakes have been raised by religious absolutism to cosmic proportions. Religious violence differs from secular violence in that it is symbolic, absolutist, and unrestrained by historical time (2000: 146, 153, 154, 217). All these that the insurgents are doing according to Juergensyner are that they are doing it in the name of God which has caused a serious conflict in the society.

With these, polarization theory is going to be used. This polarization simply means “the right to only use non-violent means in order to achieve (positive) peace, justice,” etc. (cf Martin Luther

King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement), (Juergensmeyer, 2000).

In support of the above theory, Jonathan Ishaku in his book titled “*The Road to Mogadishu: How Jihadist Terrorism Tears Nigeria Apart*” states that the use of Asymmetrical strategy makes it possible for the weak to subdue the strong by circumventing, undermining, or neutralizing the very “strong factor” of the stronger opponent or by exploiting the vulnerabilities of his advantages (Ishaku: 118). The writer cited an example with David and Goliath that David was a weak person and Goliath was very strong with all the armor covering his body, but David was vulnerable without any thing to secure him, but he subdues Goliath by killing him. What helped David was Asymmetrical strategy. Someone may ask, what is this Asymmetrical strategy? Ishaku defines it as “a strategy whereby a weak opponent maximizes his advantages by neutralizing the strength of a superior opponent through the manipulation of the latter’s vulnerabilities” (118).

Understanding Asymmetrical strategy can make us to reflect back to the act of the Boko Haram terrorism whereby they use bombing to attack the Nigerian Armed Forces. According to Abdulkareem Mohammed in his book titled “The Paradox of Boko Haram” he asserts that the pastures of the Boko Haram is not only fatalistic and irrational but also fool hardly-because they lack the number and military might with which to win the senseless war over the superior forces of the establishment.

Although the concepts of human needs, conflict, and peace according to John Burton’s theory are interrelated and affect all aspects of human life, academics and practitioners have usually addressed them in a rather fragmented manner. Human needs theories propose that all humans have certain basic universal needs and that when these are not met conflict is likely to occur.

Abraham Maslow proposed a hierarchy of needs beginning with the need for food, water, and shelter followed by the need for safety and security, then belonging or love, self-esteem and, finally, personal fulfillment and self-actualization. Later in his life Maslow (1973) proposed self-transcendence as a need above self-actualization in the hierarchy of needs.

Also, the African indigenous theory holds that the Human Needs Theory operates on the premise that all humans have basic needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later. The theory, therefore, holds that a pre-condition for effective resolution of conflict is the recognition and respect for some basic needs of the disputants. The authors of this paper argue that human right is a basic need of all persons at all time, hence, for effective resolution of conflicts, the fundamental human rights of the disputants must be met. Burton and Sandole (1986) referred to what they called the “ontological needs” to develop the human needs theory along which they argue that ontological needs are a consequence of human nature, which are universal and should be pursued always. Azar (1994) opined that basic human needs include security, distributive identity, social recognition of identity and affective participation in the processes that shape such identities. Walsh (2016) contends that without a consideration to the human needs of disputing parties, effective resolution of the dispute is a dilution. Vayrnen (2018) on his part is of the view that one’s culture is an essential need and should therefore be always recognized.

This theory requires that the resolution of any conflict must be done in a manner that would ultimately ensure that disputants feel that their respective basic needs are met at the end of the process. Human needs are varied and complex, therefore, the people who facilitate the process

of resolving conflicts must be tactical enough to identify the specific needs desired by disputing parties over which the dispute emerged.

Furthermore, Lederach also assert that there are three different levels of leadership involved at any conflict, and different approaches to building peace that are appropriate to use at each level. Most attention usually goes to top level leadership, the military, political, and religious leaders that have high visibility. These are the people that we think of as leaders when you say, for instance,” who is the leader of the Syrian government,” or “who's the leader of the opposition?”

But there are a lots of other leaders’ lower down that actually have key roles to play. At the grassroots, there's local leaders of local communities, there's leaders of indigenous NGOs, there's people working as community developers, local health officials, local education officials, refugee camp leaders. People who represent more than just themselves, but don't really have ties to higher levels of organization or action.

And then there's what Lederach calls the middle-range leadership. And these are leaders of respected sectors such as ethnic or religious leaders, academic or intellectual leaders, humanitarian leaders of major NGOs. These are people who have ties to the top. They can get in touch with and talk to people who are at the top level. But they also have connections at the bottom level, so that they're much more grounded. They are aware of the concerns of the people on the ground, the concerns of local citizens, much more so than the top-level leadership generally is.

If you're working with the top-level leadership, the focus is generally on high-level negotiations, working on cease fires, and ultimate peace agreements. They're usually led by highly visible

people, often just single mediators who are trying to work out a be-all and end-all agreement. Very often this doesn't work with the kinds of conflicts that we're looking at as highly intractable.

Again, skipping to the bottom you have people who work with local citizens on the ground to deal with the day-to-day manifestations of the conflict. There will be local peace commissions, they'll be grassroots conflict resolution trainers, they'll be trainers on prejudice reduction, psychosocial work, helping people overcome trauma. These are things that are of concern to people who have been victimized and engaged in conflict at the very bottom levels.

And then again, you have things that you do at the mid-range. One thing that's frequently done with mid-range leaders is what's called problem-solving workshops or interactive problem solving. This is when you get mid-level people from both sides of a conflict to sit down and examine the human needs that each side of the conflict has, and try to figure out a way that those human needs can be met by both sides simultaneously.

And this often leads to creative solutions that aren't so visible if you just look at the negotiations going on at the high level. These discussions are more grounded in the needs that you see at the bottom level, and often create interesting opportunities for breakthroughs that you couldn't get at either of those other two levels. The mid-level leadership also can be involved in training and conflict resolution and peace commissions, but generally at a higher level than at the grassroots level.

And there can be what John Paul Lederach calls insider partials. These are insiders who are involved in the conflict who are still able to work across the conflict lines to try to bring

opposing people together. This is a lot like Bill Ury's notion of third side roles, which I'll be talking about in another video.

So, the most interesting thing about this diagram is that you've got the three levels of a conflict-affected population that have few at the top, many at the bottom, and different ways of addressing each of those levels. And the thing that John Paul points out that isn't totally obvious from this diagram is that often working at that mid-range level is the most effective. Because they see things that can't be seen at either of the other two levels.

They can work between the top and the bottom and across the middle horizontally. So, they have more connections to more people and more ability to come up with creative ideas than most of the other people. This is a concept that many others have built on, and you'll see that in some of the lectures that I'm going to give after this, and it's just one of the key ideas that has made the peacebuilding field what it is today.

The question here is why did Boko Haram choose terrorism as its Asymmetrical weapon of jihad? The answer is probably they may find it difficult to face the Nigerian Armed Forces in a head-to-head confrontation any more than little David would have succeeded in Killing Goliath using the same weaponry and armor.

But in indigenous African theories of conflict resolution, emphasis community, reconciliation, and restorative justice, often incorporating practices like mediation, arbitration. And negotiation facilitated by elders or community leaders.

Indigenous approaches to conflicts resolution in African societies provide appropriate fora and opportunities for members of the societies to process their disputes when they do arise. The



indigenous approaches are structured and rooted on cultures and traditions of the societies in which they are applied. However, there are concerns with regards to how indigenous approaches to conflict resolution recognize and respect the human rights of persons involved in the process.

African societies are continually faced with different forms of conflict. Among these conflicts are ethnic, land, chieftaincy, marital and inter-personal. Many African societies have fashioned and applied indigenous approaches to deal with such conflicts since conflicts must be resolved in order to prevent them from escalating into violent actions and the destruction of social harmony. These indigenous mechanisms are based on the social, economic, religious, political and cultural contexts of the people applying them (Gebre, 2011; Gabbert, 2014; Mac Ginty, 2014; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015).

There are, however, some concerns over the use of indigenous mechanisms in the resolution of conflict when it comes to human rights. There are concerns that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms inherently compromise human rights, particularly those of women children and other minorities (Okrah, 2003, Owusu-Mensah, Asante, & Osew, 2015) such as the rights to own property, free expression and religion. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (2017) also contends that the application of customary law can also do tremendous violence to others who lack power or authority under the traditional regime and those who have been historically disenfranchised, such as non-natives.

Indigenous conflict resolution in Africa takes different forms and are usually embedded in African customary laws and reflect norms and values (Kariuki, 2015). It involves the use of council of elders (men and women) who act as third parties in the processing of conflicts. In Rwanda, the Gacaca is employed to resolve conflicts where elders of families sit on grasses to

guide the process. Also, the Tswana is used in Botswana where household heads, extended family heads and the customary court consisting of chief and paramount chief at the village and regional levels with their elders resolve conflicts. Similar institutions exist in Kenya and South Africa (Mac Ginty, 2014).

But, on the other hand, Galtung 's theory of peace is based on one underlying principle that peace is the absence of violence. Peace and violence can be comprehended and managed dialectical as polar opposite.

Violence is defined to measure what is peace and what peace is not. This implies the potential peace and actual peace depend on level of violence. Peace depend on an extent of violence. Extent of violence of determines potential accomplishment and level of attainment or optimal peace. Inability to achieve the desirable goal signifies being subject to violence. The central argument is potential peace and actual peace depends on potential resource need to have and actual inequalities exist in structure. For example, unequal distribution of wealth and health resources measure income level and life expectance level which in turn matters extent of peace.

This calls for operationalization of theory of violence to substantiate prevalence of peace just to explain where it is more or less prevalent in relation to extent of violence. Theory of violence more emphasizes on structure than actors or agents. Basic limitation of theory of violence is its overly emphasis on structure rather than dispositional factors. Sociologically speaking, as structure influence actors it is fact that actors influence structure. Accordingly, violence is categorized into personal and structural. Personal violence associates with harms or injuries affect persons which imply peace is absence of violations of personal sovereignty. Absence of direct personal violence is negative violence whereas structural violence is violence caused not by direct somatic harm, but by systems of unequal power that structure unequal life chances such

that a person 's potential is unrealized. Typical example of structural violence is: racial or sexual discrimination, declining terms of trade, malnutrition, famine and unemployment all affect people life chances such that realization of their potential is constrained. Structural violence, then, is about social justice and equality (called positive peace), and a limitation to Galtung theory is that while perfect equality is its goal, this is not practically possible and, indeed, may not be desirable. Structural violence is maximalist agenda aims to highlight the negative consequences of the uneven distribution of power and resources and to understand these as largely avoidable, highly destructive social processes. In Galtung formulation, then, peace is the absence of both direct and structural violence. Galtung notes that negative and positive peace is contiguous with each other. War is direct violence whereas absolute poverty and vertical and horizontal inequalities and famine are structural violence. Nevertheless, the positive/ negative peace dualism constrains thinking about peace by reducing its diverse and contingent nature into another dualism. Fundamental principle of structural violence is a concern for basic human needs' provision. This calls for integration of equitable development and genuine peace.

## **1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY:**

This work is been organized in an orderly way starting from the introduction to the conclusion. The research is analytical research which the researcher has used as a qualitative approach to carry out the work. It has been organized in a chronological order which drives the reader to read through the work to the end because of the idea that it carries.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2:1 Introduction**

"Establishing lasting peace is the work of education; all politics can do is to keep us out of the war." The founding of the United Nation (UN) after the Second World War has provided a stimulus for rigorous approaches to the study of peace and conflict resolution across the world. It is in this regard that many universities and other institutions of higher learning around the globe began to develop interest on the question of peace and conflict resolution (PCR). As it has been over the years, there is a general consensus on the importance of studies of peace and conflict resolution amongst scholars from a range of disciplines, as well as from many influential policy makers around the globe. It is in this regard that PCR studies today is widely researched and taught in a large and growing number of institutions and locations. With the successes and challenges so far, it is not totally surprising the inclusion of the course PCR in all Nigerian Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Monotechnic among several other higher institutions of learning.

In recent time, the world has witnessed waves of violent extremism that have taken lives of many innocent people either based on religious, ethnic or political grounds (UNDP, 2016). In 2014 alone, the Global Terrorism Index (2015) had shown that, Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan, and Nigeria were home to 78 percent of the lives lost to terrorist attacks in the globe. In Nigeria, as a result of Boko Haram insurgency alone, over Twenty Thousand people have lost their lives especially in its North Eastern region. Across the country in every region, the failure to significantly address evident cases of farmers/pastoralists, minority/majority, religious

domination, political power struggle and corruption and inequality have further aggravated terrorism, cattle rustling, armed robbery, political hugger, kidnapping for ransom, etc.

## **2.2 Understanding peace**

Peace is regarded “as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence and about peaceful coexistence”. Although this definition has captured elements of peace, it was criticized by some scholars for lacking the adequate concept of peace. To overcome this limitation David (2000) defined peace as a “process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community”. In this respect, peace therefore connotes the absence of violence or war, the presence of justice, equality and development; the existence of rule of law, respect for human life and dignity, and tolerance among and between people; maintenance of a balanced ecosphere and more importantly, having inner peace and wholeness.

Merriam Webster also viewed peace as when we think of tranquility, order, calm, security and normalcy but also of development, of justice and respect for the right of others. It can also be a state or period of mutual concord between governments. Peace is when people are able to resolve their conflicts without violence and can work together to improve the quality of their lives.

To add to this debate, Johan Galtung (1976), a renowned Norwegian theorist provided three types of violence (direct, structural and cultural) to help understand the concept of peace across the globe.

Galtung consider direct violence as the physical, emotional and psychological aggression caused by a direct attack through fighting or war thereby resulting in to deaths, destruction of property, and displacements of citizens among other consequences. He sees structural violence as caused by an unjust structure not to be equated with an act of God which involves structures that cause

human suffering and death which are quite avoidable if good governance exists. In his view cultural violence occurs as a result of the assumptions that bind one to structural violence.

For instance, one may be indifferent toward the plight of the poor which create discrimination, injustice and suffering thereby leading to the absence of peace in the society. In addition, Galtung's positive and negative peace framework is the most widely used model by most scholars. While negative peace refers to the absence of direct violence, conflict and war at international, national, community and individual levels, positive peace refers to the absence of indirect and structural violence, inequality and injustice, unjust structures and policies and inner peace at individual levels. Due to its comprehensives, this conception becomes the most widely used by peace and conflict researchers.

As earlier provided, Ibeanu (2012) in his book titled *Conceptualizing Peace* has attempted to provide an understanding of peace which centers on increasing sustainable development and reducing conflict, both within societies and in the wider international community. He further pointed out that despite the general knowledge of peace; there are variations its meaning especially through the lenses of philosophy, sociology and politics. According to a philosopher, peace “is a natural, God-given state of human existence without the correlative tendencies of man”. According to sociologists, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms among people or group in a given community. For the political scientists, peace is a political condition that makes justice possible in any given society thereby entailing political order. Similarly, cultures and civilization have different viewpoints of peace. For instance, in a society that is constantly perpetuated with violence and armed conflict, it views peace as the absence of war and violence. In a political community governed by unjust policies, it may interpret peace with the presence of freedom and Justice. In a society that is materially

deprived or in poverty situation, it may perceive peace as equality, development and have the basic needs of life.

### **2.3 Global Issues on Peace Using few Countries**

**Rwanda:** The central teaching of the Church and the character of Jesus' disciples is love (John 13:34–35). The Christian faith and life have been seriously challenged by the events in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi, even though the population of the country was 89% Christian. Perhaps the person reading this article, after being informed about the main factors of mass participation in the ... [Show full abstract] genocide, will understand what succession in the churches of Rwanda failed to accomplish. Thank God, the genocide was eventually stopped and ended. However, measures should be taken to prevent the shameful and sorrowful history of ethnic division and genocide from repeating itself. Seeing how quickly Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction and development have proceeded, one might think that this has been accomplished smoothly. Reading this paper, one becomes aware of the diverse and difficult impacts of the genocide and learns how challenging the processes of reconciliation, healing and reconstruction have been. That the Church's mission is to be the salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13–16) should be experienced by supporting this country to rise out of its historical darkness. This paper describes the contribution of the Anglican Church of Rwanda/Shyogwe Diocese to the ministry of post-genocide reconciliation and healing.

Pope Francis "Ad Limina" Address to the Bishops of Rwanda 2014 which he wrote to Bishop states that:

Dear Brother Bishops,

I welcome you to Rome on the occasion of your visit *ad Limina Apostolorum*. I hope with all my heart that by the intercession of St Peter and St Paul and in light of their testimony, you may renew in your hearts the faith and courage necessary for your

demanding pastoral mission. I thank Bishop Smaragde Mbonyinge, President of your Episcopal Conference, for the cordial message he has just addressed to me.

In a few days' time, Rwanda will be commemorating the 20th anniversary of the start of that terrible genocide that inflicted so much suffering and so many wounds that are still far from being healed. I wholeheartedly join in the national mourning, and I assure you of my prayers for you, for your often-divided communities, for all the victims and their families, for all the people of Rwanda, irrespective of their religion, ethnicity or political leaning.

Twenty years after those tragic events, reconciliation and the healing of these wounds certainly remains the priority of the Church in Rwanda. And I encourage you to persevere in this resolve, which you have already put into practice through numerous initiatives. To pardon the offences and bring about sincere reconciliation, which might seem impossible to human eyes after so much suffering, are nevertheless a gift that it is possible to receive from Christ, through a life of faith and prayer, even though the road may be long and demand patience, mutual respect and dialogue. The Church, therefore, has a role in the rebuilding of a reconciled Rwandan society; with all the strength of your faith and of Christian hope, go forward decisively, bearing perpetual witness to the truth.

However we must remember that it is only by being united in love that we may ensure that the Gospel touches and converts hearts in a deep way: "that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me" (Jn 17:23), Jesus tells us. It is therefore important that, overcoming prejudice and ethnic divisions, the Church speak with one sole voice, manifesting her unity and strengthening her communion with the universal Church and with the Successor of Peter.

The celebration, on 6 June, of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Rwanda and the Holy See can be an opportunity to recall the beneficial fruits that can be expected from such relations, for the good of the people of Rwanda. Constructive and authentic dialogue with the Authorities cannot but foster the common work of reconciliation and the rebuilding of society on the values of human dignity, justice and peace. Be a Church that "goes forth" and takes the initiative (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 24) and builds trust.

I know that the work you have done, especially in the fields of education and healthcare, is considerable. And I acknowledge, in this regard, the steadfast work of religious institutes, which, with many people of good will, are dedicated to all those wounded by the war, in body and soul, in particular widows and orphans, but also the elderly, the sick and children. Religious life, through adoration and prayer, makes credible the witness that the Church bears to Christ Risen and to his love for all human beings, especially the poorest.



Educating the young is the key to the future in a country with a predominantly young population. “This youthfulness is a gift and a treasure from God for which the whole Church is grateful to the Lord of life. Young people should be loved, esteemed and respected” (*Africae Munus*, n. 60). It is therefore a duty of the Church to form children and young people in the values of the Gospel which they will learn especially through familiarity with the Word of God, which will be for them a compass indicating the path to be followed. There they learn to be active and generous members of society, for it is on them that the future rests. To do this it is necessary to strengthen pastoral care in universities and in schools, both Catholic and state, always seeking to link the work of education and the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, which must never be separated (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, nn. 132, 134).

In the tasks of evangelization and reconstruction, the laity have an essential role to play. And here I would like to thank all the catechists warmly again for their generous and enduring commitment. The laity are strongly involved in the life of the *Communautés Ecclésiales de Base* [grassroots communities], in movements, schools, charities, as well as in other areas of social life. Special attention should therefore be paid to their training and support, both in their spiritual life and in their human and intellectual formation which must be of a high quality. Indeed, their involvement in society will be credible to the extent that they are competent and honest.

An entirely special kind of attention must be given to families, who are the vital cells of society and the Church, and who today are seriously threatened by the process of secularization; moreover, in your country, so many families were broken up and reunited. They need your care, your closeness and your encouragement. It is first and foremost within the family that the young can experience the true Christian values of integrity, fidelity, honesty and gift of self, which will allow them to know true happiness according to the heart of God.

Their task is all the greater as they are still few in number. I urge you to constantly perfect the human, intellectual and spiritual formation of seminarians. May they ever find in their formators joyful examples of fulfilled priestly life. Be very attentive and close to your priests, listening to them, being available to them. Their task is difficult and they absolutely need your support and your personal encouragement. Do not neglect their continuing formation and I ask you to organize more opportunities for encounter and brotherly contact.

Dear Brothers, I assure you again of my affection for you, for your diocesan communities, for the whole of Rwanda, and I entrust you all to the motherly protection of the Virgin Mary. The Mother of Jesus wished to appear in your country to several children, reminding them of the efficacy of fasting and of prayer, especially the recitation of the Rosary. I sincerely hope that you can make the Shrine of Kibeho radiate even more the love of Mary for all her children, especially for the poorest and most wounded, and that there may be for the Church in Rwanda and beyond an appeal to turn with confidence to “N o t re Dame des Douleurs”, that she may accompany each one in

his or her path and obtain for them the gift of reconciliation and peace. I impart to you with my whole heart an Apostolic Blessing.

**Canada:** The Canadian residential school system, which operated from the 1880s until the 1970s, was a church-state enterprise designed to assimilate Aboriginal children into Euro-Canadian culture and was characterized by poor sanitation and widespread abuse. Recently, it has been the object of the most significant and most successful struggle for redress in Canadian history. However, for most of its ... [Show full abstract] long history, the many failings of the residential school system went unacknowledged by the organizations formerly involved in its operation. In this thesis, I seek to explain why. In doing so, I provide a framework for further study on the residential schools and on comparable cases. To resolve my question, I conduct a comparative historical analysis of the Anglican Church of Canada, which was formerly an important partner in the operation of the residential schools. My data is drawn from a wide range of archival material. My analysis is framed by a meaning centered approach to social behaviour referred to as the Strong Program. In sum, I argue that the initial meaning of the school system as a sacred enterprise hindered acknowledgement of its failings. For the church to acknowledge the failings of the residential schools, such a meaning needed to be replaced with a new meaning emphasizing the tragic consequences of the school system. This could only occur once the balance of social power had shifted away from the defenders of the sacred meaning and towards its detractors.

**South Sudan:** In 2013, when fighting broke out in the capitol of Juba, all sides in the conflict turned to “the Church” – meaning the Catholic Church and all of South Sudan’s Christian denominations – for help. According to Ashworth, no other institutions have the influence and moral authority that the South Sudanese churches possess. The Church has historically played a significant role in peace making in South Sudan. This includes the People to People Peace

Process, the Entebbe Process which shadowed the Intergovernmental Authority on Development negotiations in Naivasha, the paper “Let My People Choose” which puts the right to self-determination at the center of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and the advocacy to bring about the referendum which eventually led to the creation of South Sudan.

By June 2015, after nearly a year and half of preparatory meetings, the SSCC met in Rwanda and issued a “Statement of Intent” that contains an examination of conscience over the Church’s own role in the conflict and a commitment to follow the path of forgiveness through restorative justice. The 25 religious’ leaders of SSCC considered their prophetic role as denouncers of wickedness and evil and proclaimers of peace and reconciliation. They denounced war as senseless and argued that peace must have priority over pride, power and politics and went so far as to condemn negotiations for positions of power while people were being killed.

In clear and blunt language, the religious leaders laid out a searing analysis of the root causes of the current civil war. They include a power struggle between leaders and their hangers-on which has swept youth and ethnic communities into cycles of revenge killing; economic collapse; the destruction of national assets; human rights abuses that go unpunished; and the increasing militarization of society.

The statement of intent names four pillars for the path to peace which includes:

**Advocacy:** “Starting in South Sudan and reaching out to the region, the rest of Africa and beyond, we will embark on a process of advocacy.” In addition to reaching out to key regional leaders, members will also engage with the international community. Locally, they will advocate

for a change in the narrative about violence as well as the narrative around tribal identity and tribalism, the historical narrative, and the issue of hate speech.

**Neutral forum:** “We will find ways to bring stakeholders together in a less politically-charged atmosphere and to build bridges between them to overcome mistrust and disagreements.” They propose a series of forums for South Sudanese governmental and religious leaders to meet without outside interference. The goal would be to build trust and find solutions to the conflicts. These forums would take place on three levels: senior politicians, Sudanese women, and among military leaders.

**Reconciliation:** “We will spearhead reconciliation, where necessary incorporating existing mechanisms so as not to lose what has already begun on the ground.” This process will be based on the principle that reconciliation cannot be imposed. Local groups will be asked whether they want reconciliation and justice and what justice means in their context. Similar processes will then take place at the county and national level.

**Hope and forgiveness:** “We ask forgiveness for anything we may have done to divide our nation, and for all the times we have failed to speak and act in love to heal our nation.” During his Washington visit Ashworth indicated that the crisis in South Sudan may be mentioned in the forthcoming World Day of Peace message by Pope Francis. He suggested that Catholics in the U.S. ask Church leadership to reach out to the South Sudanese diaspora and urge them to promote the peace agenda. Citizens could lobby the U.S. government to use its influence with the Ukraine to stop providing weapons to South Sudan.

***Northern Ireland:*** Northern Ireland have significantly contributed to peace through the Good Friday Agreement, which ended decades of conflict, and through ongoing efforts in peacebuilding, community engagement, and reconciliation. The agreement established a framework for devolved government and power-sharing, along with the provisions of decommissioning, policy, and human rights.

Furthermore, Northern Ireland's experience provides valuable lessons for other conflict-torn regions, highlighting the importance of community involvement, human rights and peace partnerships.

During the 30 or so years of conflict known as "the Troubles", there was a series of formal attempts at reaching a constitutional settlement to reconcile loyalist (unionist) and republican (nationalist) divides. While they did not resolve any major substantive issues, they did lay the groundwork for the GFA process by improving and institutionalizing Anglo-Irish cooperation at the inter-governmental level, and reaching a consensus on the main topics and discussion strands future negotiations would address, including devolved democratic institutions in Northern Ireland, formal bodies dedicated to North-South relations (Northern Ireland and Ireland), and structures dedicated to institutional East-West cooperation (the United Kingdom and Ireland). The two Governments outlined these themes in a comprehensive set of proposals, the "Frameworks Document," which served as a blueprint for the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

The GFA process itself was also far from plain sailing. The IRA's attack in London in February 1996, ending its ceasefire, meant that while Sinn Féin still contested the election to the Northern Ireland Forum for Political Dialogue it was initially barred from attending the multi-party talks. Elections in the UK in May 1997 and in Ireland in June 1997 catalyzed the peace process: the

new Labour Government in the UK was better placed to temper the suspicions of nationalists in Northern Ireland about the UK Government's commitment to the process, and it had a more solid parliamentary base for engagement in the process; the new Irish Fianna Fáil government was in a better position to deal decisively with the republican movement due to its traditional association with the ideals of republicanism. In July 1997, the IRA announced the renewal of its ceasefire, prompting an invitation to Sinn Féin to join the multi-party talks. Despite a brief withdrawal of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), substantive negotiations began in October 1997. After all-night discussions and a 17-hour extension of the deadline, the talks resulted in the signing of the GFA on 10 April 1998.

### **The political Rubik's Cube: navigating the post-GFA political landscape**

The GFA is a multifaceted agreement dealing with issues relating to sovereignty, governance, decommissioning and security, policing and the judiciary, and discrimination. In addition to establishing formal institutions across these thematic areas, it also established a devolved system of government in Northern Ireland comprising a legislature – the Northern Ireland Assembly (“Stormont”), and a power-sharing executive – the Executive Committee – run by a duumvirate appointed by the two largest parties in the Assembly.

Yet, the political settlement ushered in by the GFA has proved highly contested; Northern Irish politics has remained extremely polarized, and there have been multiple collapses of the executive (which has now not functioned for over a third of its lifespan) and suspensions of the Assembly since 1998. Renewed talks in 2006 attempted to provide a road map (the 2007 St Andrews Agreement) towards addressing the major bones of contention, chiefly the acceptance of devolved policing and the rule of law for Sinn Féin, and the acceptance of power sharing for

the DUP. The power-sharing arrangement subsequently was slightly more stable, until circumstances – notably the result of the referendum in June 2016, on the United Kingdom leaving the European Union – once again muddied the constitutional waters. The power-sharing arrangement was suspended for three years in 2017 following a crisis over a renewable energy payments scandal, before being uneasily restored. Brexit provoked another collapse in early 2022 that is yet to be resolved; whether the February 2023 Windsor Framework for post-Brexit trading arrangements can do so remains to be seen.

### **Healing a divided and changing society**

The inherent weaknesses in the power-sharing arrangement are both rooted in and reflect the fact that societal tensions are yet to be fully reconciled. While efforts at peace-making and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland have significantly attenuated generations of violent inter-communal division in Northern Ireland, ongoing sectarian tension – including a lack of integration and cohabitation amongst communities and, in recent years, disputes over the use of flags and symbols, parades and marches that showcase sectarian identities, welfare and police reforms, the arrest of Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams in 2014, and the Irish National Language Act is both a symptom and a cause of ongoing distrust between loyalists and republican communities.

There has also been a marked recent shift in political and societal attitudes and priorities beyond sectarianism. The electoral success of both Sinn Féin and the non-sectarian Alliance Party in the 2022 Stormont elections are the manifestation of the Northern Irish population attaching greater importance to (universal) issues like education, healthcare, the welfare system, and economic considerations chiefly inflation and the cost-of-living crisis – than to sectarian issues and

Northern Ireland's constitutional status. Polls in 2022 found that 21% Northern Ireland's citizens consider themselves as "Northern Irish" rather than "British" or "Irish".

This can partly be explained by a (natural) generational shift; younger people in the country who didn't grow up during the Troubles seemingly view their aspirations and the challenges they face through other lenses than a purely or even principally sectarian one. All of this shows that what peace means and looks like in a specific context is a constantly moving target.

### **Building lasting peace is a society-wide endeavor**

Northern Irish society during the Troubles has been widely referred to as a state of "armed patriarchy" underpinned by conservative, masculinized values and discourse of nationalism and religion.

In spite of that, women were heavily involved in civil rights and particularly local community work during the Troubles, advocating for peace and social change. Women's groups succeeded in securing the participation of a dedicated women's caucus – the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition – in the track one negotiations. Women successfully advocated for the inclusion of language and provisions in the GFA on equal opportunity, women's rights to equal political participation, social inclusion, reconciliation and the needs of victims of violence, integrated education and mixed housing, and for a Civic Forum to engage with a broad range of stakeholders on the implementation of the GFA. Women were also included in official consultations, played a key role in the "yes" campaign that succeeded in ratifying the GFA by referendum, and were involved in GFA-mandated commissions.



Faith-based actors have also made a major contribution to building peace in Northern Ireland. During the Troubles, in spite of the sectarian divide, which was partly both crystalized around and perpetuated by socio-cultural religious organizations like the Orange Order, a number of Protestant and Catholic actors mobilized for peace. This included organizing large scale Peace Marches, acting as mediators between militants, and advocating for and facilitating ceasefires. They also worked to build trust and understanding within and between different sectarian groups through hosting meetings between paramilitary leaders on both sides of the conflict. Faith-based actors have been involved in the implementation of the GFA and have continued efforts to foster social reconciliation and healing, including through creating and facilitating spaces where people who identify as loyalist or republican can come together and have uncomfortable, but necessary conversations to humanize one another.



**Fig. 10**

*Caption: Peace walls decorated with hopeful murals are just one example of the myriad ways in which communities in Northern Ireland are trying to reconcile their differences and build a shared peaceful future*

We know from evidence and experience that society-wide involvement in building peace is crucial to making peace inclusive and sustainable. Bottom-up initiatives and spaces for societal involvement take on even greater importance in contexts like Northern Ireland, where the formal political arena is deadlocked. Recent and current examples, ranging from consultative bodies the Civic Forum and the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, to existing inter-sectarian civic spaces such as the Suffolk and Lenadoon Interface Group or the 174 Trust provide a blueprint to consolidate and expand. Doing so is a crucial aspect of reimagining and diversifying the ways we understand and undertake peacemaking and peacebuilding, which is essential to making sure

these processes are an integral part of – rather than separated from – the arc of a society’s changing development, and to ensuring that that arc bends towards a peaceful, just, and inclusive future.

Northern Ireland also has contributed tremendously through the following:

1. The Good Friday Agreement: This agreement signed in 1998, is a landmark achievement in peace negotiation. It provided a framework for a devolved government in Northern Ireland, with power sharing between unionist and nationalist parties.

The agreement also included provisions of decommissioning paramilitary weapons, reforming the police force, and addressing human right issues. The agreement paved the way for a more stable and peaceful future in Northern Ireland.

2. Ongoing Peacebuilding Efforts: Various organizations and initiatives continue to work towards peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. These efforts include promoting community relations, addressing the legacy of the conflict, and providing support to those affected by violence.

The community Relation Council (CRC), for example, supports initiatives that aim to build positive relationships between different communities. Healing through remembering focuses on encouraging dialogue and understanding about the events of the past.

3. Community Engagement: Northern Ireland’s experience highlights the importance of community involvement in peacebuilding. Community based organizations have played a

crucial role in articulating concerns, testing alternatives to violence, and building relationships with key combatant parties.

The peace process has also seen the rise of community activism, which has helped to build resilience and maintain inter-community connections.

4. Lessons for Other Conflicts: The Northern Ireland peace process provides valuable lessons for building sustainable peace in other conflict-torn regions. These lessons include the necessity of human rights-complaint police forces, the importance of meaningful community involvement, and the value of building partnerships.

The Northern Ireland experience also highlights the needs for sustained funding and long-term commitment to peacebuilding efforts.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **GENERAL ORIGIN OF PEACE**

#### **3.1 Biblical Origin of Peace in the Old Testament**

Both friends and dismissers of the Bible are quick to point out that the Bible does not give us an obvious and detailed blueprint for thorough going pacifism. One cannot simply take up the Bible as the basis for one's pacifism as if pacifism is the obvious perspective. Especially, one cannot simply take up the Old Testament as the basis for one's pacifism (Yoder 197). In the limited amount of space, this chapter have, the researcher will not be able to engage in apologetics, arguing against non-pacifist readings. Rather, she will simply present a reading of the scripture that she believes does support pacifism.

The core message of the Bible tells of God's concern to bring healing (salvation) to a broken world. Beginning with God's initial work of creation in Genesis one and ending with the vision of a transformed creation in Revelation twenty-one and two, we read in the Bible the story of God's healing strategy.

All the pieces of the Bible are part of a whole, and we may understand the whole in terms of God's healing strategy. In this approach, we do not let "variant" materials overly obscure the core message. We respect that pro-violence materials are part of the Old Testament picture. However, rather than assuming that we have a total contradiction with the way of Jesus we look for elements in these stories that may actually point ahead to Jesus' manifestation of God's healing strategy.

## **Torah**

At the very beginning of the Bible, Genesis one, we read of God as Creator. God has made what is, and it is good. Creation is abundant in what matters. The heart of things is God's goodness and love. That is the foundation of life itself God's goodness and love.

Genesis, one witnesses to life as peaceable at its heart. Creation is formed without conflict or opposition to God. This differs from other creation stories from the ancient Near East, which usually had conflict right at the heart.

Being created in God's "image" has to do with human beings exercising creative power like God does. We are bestowed with the power to be creative, the power to love, the power in harmony with God to mold peace out of chaos. Genesis, one establishes this world we live in as founded on peace, not violence (Perry 198).

The harmony of Genesis one will not last. Already in 2:17 we see that human beings have boundaries. They are created in God's image but they are not God. To be whole, they need to live within the framework God has provided.

Adam and Eve give in to the temptation to eat and numerous consequences follow. They are now afraid of God. They feel shame at their nakedness. There is established hierarchy between man and the woman. She will now experience pain in childbirth. A new struggle with bringing fruit from the earth ensues battling with weeds and thistles. Then, Cain murders his brother Abel. In the following chapters there are more of the widespread sinfulness which leads to the Flood, the human arrogance contributing to the construction the of the Tower of Babel, in Genesis 11, and the barren condition of Sarah, who is unable to have children. However, Adam and Eve and then

Cain still receive God's mercy even after their breaks with God. They are allowed time and space, the possibilities of a future.

The story of Noah and the Flood may be read as supporting peace. More than being a story about Noah or about sinful humanity, this story focuses on God. The place where the real action takes place is with the heart of God. The events themselves are more or less a backdrop, meant to get at the real issue what happens inside of God. We learn God feels grief and God is concerned with how violence, sin and evil mess up God's beloved creation. This story also tells us God isn't bound by attributes and principles that always require predetermined actions. God is free to respond; we could even say, in this story, God is free to learn (Yoder and Swartley 254).

This story about the Flood starts out as a story of judgment, but ends up being a story of mercy. The point of the story is not the judgment with which it begins "(I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created," Gen.6:7), but the promise with which it ends "(The waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh," 9:15).

It is notable that the change from judgment to promise is not based on a change in human beings. At the beginning, we are told that every inclination of the thoughts of people's hearts was only evil continually (6:5). Then, after the flood subsides, after human beings are restored to the earth, God repeats, "the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth" (8:21). However, instead of being a call to judgment, this description of human beings as being inclined toward evil becomes a reason for God promising not to destroy "every living creature." God has decided to persevere, to stay with creation as it is, to seek to heal the human heart.

As a unit, Genesis 1–11 essentially gives an account of the disintegration of the human community. The end of chapter eleven gives us a picture of this movement from wholeness to powerlessness in a nutshell: “The name of Abraham’s wife was Sarah....Now Sarah was barren; she had no child” (11:29,30). Sarah’s “barrenness” can be seen as a reflection of the general human condition.

With Genesis 12, God speaks to Abraham and Sarah in a way that creates life out of chaos. God speaks a new work with creative power, and makes a future out of barrenness. The dead end now becomes the path to life. We see a pattern that characterizes the core story of the rest of the Bible. God is a God of life, whose response to the destructive consequences of humanity seeking autonomous power is patience and creative love (Yoder and Swartley 372).

God’s strategy for healing is summarized in the words to Abraham in 12:3: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” God’s strategy for healing is to call a people, to establish a community of people who will know God. God’s strategy involves another act of creation, the creation of a community. Through people of faith living together, face to face, learning to love and give and take that God will make peace for all the families of the earth.

The book of Genesis ends with the children of Israel in Egypt. When Exodus picks up the story, Egypt has come under the rule of a new king, “who did not know Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). Pharaoh subjects the Israelites to slavery, setting the stage for the main salvation story of the Old Testament.

God’s saving work in the exodus establishes several key attributes of God’s work for salvation in the story. The God of the Exodus, unlike other gods, is not a projection from the king, a way



merely to reinforce the king's power. Rather, the God of the Exodus is a God of slaves. This is a God who hears the cries of those being treated like non-persons, those being treated only as tools to increase the king's wealth.

The liberation of the Hebrews from slavery and toward freedom was not accomplished through human military might. The Hebrews did not out-muscle Pharaoh. God used miracles in nature (the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea) to bring about liberation. The center of power in this new society lay not with the generals and the warriors, but with the people of God. That the power rests with God means that what God values most mercy, compassion, caring for the powerless and outcast, just distribution of resources matter most in the society (Horward 865).

Following the exodus, Egypt is not simply left behind but is rejected. Egypt and Pharaoh stand for the human will-to-power and trusting in brute strength. Israel and Moses stand for God's justice, life lived in trust in God's mercy, and treating the powerless with respect.

Exodus 15 celebrates God's deliverance of the people of the promise from slavery in Egypt. "In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed" (Exodus 15:13). This deliverance kept the promise alive. God initiated this act of mercy simply out of God's commitment to the promise.

At Mt. Sinai, the people are told that they were to be "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). As a "priestly kingdom," they will mediate God's word to others a "holy nation" meant to be a channel for the blessing God promises for all the families of the earth.

After this affirmation of Israel's vocation as the mediator of God's word, the next step is the revelation of the commandments that begins in Exodus 20. The Law (Torah) provided social and

political structure for the delivered slaves so that the effects of that deliverance could be sustained and the Hebrews could be a channel for God's peace to spread to the nations.

Throughout the Law codes in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy we see echoes of the contrast between life under Torah and life under Egypt's enslavement. The Law self-consciously provides structure for social life in which the wellbeing and wholeness of all the people in the community receive the highest priority. Torah rejects the exploitation of many for the aggrandizement of the few out of hand and when in later times the Hebrews evolve toward such exploitation, the prophets invoke the original intention of the Law as a basis for critique (Yoder and Swartley 388).

### **The prophets**

The story continues with the Hebrews ready to move into a homeland. The land provides the context for living out Torah as part of the gift God gave God's people to enable them to live as a light to the nations. For this promise to be actualized, the community must exist as a concrete community in a particular location.

In terms of its role in the bigger biblical story, the account from the book of Joshua of the Hebrew people entering the promise land, settling down with the mandate to embody Torah, accountable to their liberating God, tells of a crucial beginning. Reading this account today, we find many elements of the account to be deeply disturbing. We struggle with the violence, the massive, indiscriminate slaughter of the people who happened to be in the way of the Hebrews.

While the book of Joshua itself celebrates the events that established the Hebrews in Palestine, we end up by the time the Old Testament concludes with something quite different. To the extent

that the Joshua story reflects the establishing of Israel as a nation-state, a project wherein the promise must be embodied to be sustainable, the conclusion of the Old Testament tells us that the nation-state option failed. The promise will be fulfilled apart from being linked with any particular nation-state.

The promise does not rely on the founding violence of conquest nor on the sustaining violence of standing armies and centralizing economic practices that came to characterize this nation-state. In fact, when read as a whole, the story makes clear that the main effect of gaining the promised land was to make apparent that the families of the earth will ultimately only be blessed by a genuinely alternative politics centered on love not coercive violence. The story that takes us from Joshua to Jesus radically transforms the promised land motif.

The Joshua story in important ways is part of the trajectory that runs from Abraham through Moses and then later prophets on down to Jesus. This trajectory shows that God's central concern is with right-making and life-sustaining justice for vulnerable people (slaves, widows, orphans, aliens), not with buttressing the power of the dominating human king. The basis for the victory was trust in God, not a large collection of horses, chariots, and warriors (Yoder and Swartley 433). Possession of the land from the start was understood to be contingent on continued faithfulness to God.

The Joshua story also sets the stage for the events to follow events concluding in the Old Testament with the final failure of the Hebrew nation-state. The destruction of the Temple and the king's palace led to the recognition in the prophets that these events did not signal God's desertion (or death) but in fact reflected God holding the people accountable to the covenant. Out of the rubble comes an awareness that the promise continues, that the nation-state route actually

is incompatible with Torah and the promise, and that the calling of God's people is to "seek the peace of the city where they find themselves" (Jer 29:7) that is, to spread the promise through diasporic existence as counter-cultural communities among the nations.

The integral place the Joshua story plays for Christians may be seen, symbolically, in the fact that our central figure, Jesus, takes his name from the central figure of the older story. Jesus and Joshua must be reckoned with together. But that does not mean that they must be harmonized. We should look for important points of continuity while also recognizing crucial points of contrast.

Jesus was named after Joshua. The name means "help of the Lord." Both bring down the proud and the mighty. In the story of Joshua, the main people who are mentioned as resisting God's will are the kings of the various nations. God's work through Jesus is characterized thus: "He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly" (Luke 1:51-2).

Both Joshua and Jesus preached trust in God. Do not trust in human wisdom or in empires and their horses and chariots. Trust in God's care and power. Jesus and Joshua both sought to establish a community characterized by faithfulness to God's law. The basic message of the book of Joshua as a whole is that Israel will meet with success only if Israel remains faithful to God's commands. For Jesus, the kingdom of God is at hand. God loves you and wants you to know life and to share life with others. All God asks is that you live faithfully in response to this love.

However, we also see discontinuities. For one thing, in Joshua's conquest, the enemies were killed. The kings especially are emphasized but as we read, "all the people they struck down with

the edge of their sword, until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed” (Joshua 11:14). In contrast, Jesus insists that even enemies are to be loved.

In the story of Joshua, violence wins the victory. This violence is qualified in some ways. Many of the important victories are won by God’s miraculous involvement, not by superior human firepower. Israel was not to be a militaristic state, with a permanent army, and the generals’ running things. Nonetheless, Joshua’s victories are won through violence, fighting against the oppressors, the kings of Canaan. In contrast, Jesus’ victory is won through refusing to fight back (Perry 97).

When we accept the Joshua story as part of our bigger story, even as we focus on ways that it helps lead to the clarity of Jesus’ message of peace, we of course must come to terms with the terrible violence that remains. And we also must come to terms with the legacy of that violence for “people of the book.”

I find it helpful to recognize that the Bible simply reflects actual life for better and worse. In life we do have a great deal of violence, but as pacifists we choose to interpret the violence in light of our convictions of the supremacy of love and compassion, seeking healing over seeking to dominate. The biblical stories are stories of life, they too may be interpreted in light of our convictions about peace.

In being honest, then, we admit that we do not read Joshua as an accurate portrayal of the true character of God at least the parts that speak of God commanding putting every single person in various communities to the sword. These stories were told in a historical context prior to the kind of clarity about pacifism that came with Jesus. Nonetheless, the overall story points toward

Jesus, not toward power politics. The Joshua story helps make clear how ultimately the nation-state option was a failure. It also helps make clear the portrayal of God by Jesus as one who loves enemies and calls believers to do the same.

In the story, the book of Joshua ends with a sense of triumph. However, right away in the book of Judges, the fragility of Joshua's achievement becomes clear. Judges portrays the disintegration of the covenant community. Judges concludes with a time of particularly intense chaos. Then, Israel is blessed with a powerful and effective leader, Samuel, whose birth itself is portrayed as an intervention of God on behalf of the people. Things get better, but only for a while.

The beginning of 1 Samuel eight points toward a return to chaos: "When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel....His sons did not follow in his ways, but turned aside after gain; they took bribes and perverted justice" (8:1-3). It is not surprising that in the face of a fear of returning again to chaos, the Israelites (or at least their elders) ask Samuel, "appoint for us a king to govern us, like the other nations" (8:5). The response to the fear of chaos is the desire to impose order (Barrett 135).

When Israel's elders came to Samuel asking for a king, he responds with strong words, recounted in 1 Samuel 8:11-18: "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots....He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and courtiers. He will take...the best of your cattle and donkeys, and put them to his work. You shall be his slaves. In

that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

Samuel argues that the turn toward human kingship will likely lead to a transformation in Israel away from the central tenets of Torah. Kingship will tend toward a redistribution of power and wealth. Power and wealth will move upward in the social system, shifting from the broader community toward the elite. This social transformation will lead to more and more poverty and disenfranchisement among the people.

Along with the increasing concentration of power and wealth in fewer hands, and linked with this dynamic, under a human king Israel will move toward more and more militarization. With the king will come a standing army, rather than the ad hoc militias that had gained and defended the promise land. With the standing army will come the accumulation of horses and chariots, the tools of war. As well, a new class of person heretofore not known in Israel will gain prominence career military officers as a major power bloc in the society.

The gain in human-determined security that would accompany kingship and militarization will have an inverse relationship with the people’s sense of closeness to and dependence upon Yahweh. Growth in human strength and power corresponds with a growth in a sense of autonomy over against Yahweh (Louis Barrett 207).

Israel’s first king is Saul. However, Saul departs from God’s wishes and loses the kingship. He is succeeded by David. David leads the armies to victory. He establishes a family. He gains favor with the people. He trusts in God and gives God credit for his success. Israel is on the way to prosperity, moving toward peace and wellbeing.

Then, however, Samuel's fears are realized. Conflicts with Israel's enemies continue. David remains at home while his soldiers go to fight his battles. He rests in the sun and spots a beautiful woman, Bathsheba. No matter that she is married to one of his key officers. No matter that he is also married. He must have her, and he takes her.

Bathsheba informs David that she is pregnant. In order to be with Bathsheba, David has her husband killed. David tells Joab, the person directly responsible for Uriah's death, "Do not let this thing be evil in your eyes, for the sword devours now one and now another" (2 Samuel 11:25). Don't let it be evil in your eyes.... But someone else sees things differently: "This thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of God" (2 Samuel 11:27). Evil in the eyes of God.

God sends Nathan the prophet to confront David. Nathan tells David that he broke three main commandments thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt not kill. David coveted another man's wife. David committed adultery with her. Then David killed her husband. God passes judgment on David: "Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me." (2 Samuel 12:7-12)

David, to his great credit, responds to God. He repents. "I have sinned against the Lord," he cries. God's judgment relaxes a little. David stays alive. He remains king and his son Solomon succeeds him to the throne. David is never the same, and Israel is never the same. From now on, Israel will be plagued by violence and injustice. The violence begins immediately. David's own sons fight against each other and rebel against him.

The story of Solomon, David's son and successor, as presented in the Bible is in many ways flattering. But not so much if we read it closely. By reading closely, we see Solomon as a



sophisticated, power-seeking, ruthless leader, who as much as anyone moved the ancient Israelite nation-state toward its tragic ending.

Once in power, Solomon reorganizes the social structures toward much greater centralized control. He institutes a rigorous taxation policy to expand his treasury. He begins to draft soldiers, to expand the collection of horses and chariots into a large, permanent army with career military leaders. And he also institutes a policy of forced labor to construct his palace, first, and then the temple (Yoder 428).

These practices go against Deuteronomy 17's report that Israel's kings were explicitly commanded not to accumulate wealth for themselves. Samuel warned that the kings would build standing armies, take the best of the produce of the people, and make them slaves. This is precisely what Solomon does.

Solomon also cultivated ties with other countries. He had hundreds of wives—women from many nations. Again, this is precisely what Deuteronomy tells the king not to do. “He must not acquire many wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away” (17:17). We read later in 2 Kings 11 that indeed Solomon's heart did turn away. His many wives influenced him to worship other gods.

The key passage from 1 Kings 9 concludes with a promise from God: “If you turn aside from following me...and do not keep my commandments..., but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut Israel off from the land...; and the [Temple] I will cast out of my sight....This [Temple] will become a heap of ruins” (9:6-8).

Solomon did turn aside from following God. “His wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true to the Lord his God” (1 Kings 11:4). And in time Israel is cut off from the land and the Temple does become a heap of ruins (Yoder 442).

The books of First and Second Kings are called the books of kings. The central characters in these books actually are the prophets. The kings might have been the people who seemed to have power, but the people who keep alive awareness of who God is and what God’s will be the people who actually express godly power are the prophets.

The prophets had one basic message, the same message they proclaimed for hundreds of years. The basic message of the prophets was two pronged, with a positive and a negative component. The negative part was to call people of faith to a stance of disbelief toward the powers-that-be in their unjust society. The world is not the way that the kings say that it is. When the kings claimed to act in God’s name, the prophets raised doubts.

The positive part of prophetic faith was to call people of faith to a stance of belief in the ways of the Lord. Their God is the God revealed in the exodus, the God who loves them. Their God gave them the law to order their lives in such a way that all people (including the marginal ones) are cared for and encouraged to meaningful living.

The prophet Amos, the first of the “writing prophets,” entered the scene expressing a harsh indictment, speaking God’s words critiquing the people: “They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals they who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way; father and son go in to the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned” (Amos 2:6-7).

What are the dynamics of injustice? One is depersonalization. Powerful people tend to treat other people as things. A second dynamic is exploitation. Exploitation has to do with using someone else to one's own advantage or to satisfy one's own desires regardless of the cost to that person. The third aspect of injustice is religiosity.

Shockingly, Amos sees depersonalization and exploitation going hand in hand with active religiosity in Israel. The powerful people not only hurt the weak in the name of increased power and wealth, they believed their power and wealth were a sign of God's blessing.

In the face of this injustice, Amos offers a corrective. "Seek me and live," God says, "but do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beer-Sheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into exile and Bethel shall come to nothing" (Amos 5:4-5). Bethel, Gilgal, and Beer-Sheba were three of the main religious centers in Israel. Amos says seeking God there will only make things worse unless the peoples' social practices change (Yoder 429).

Amos makes the solution to Israel's crisis clear: "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). Amos calls for justice, for righteousness. He challenges an unjust society to turn back to God. That is their only hope of finding life.

Judah's King Hezekiah is one king portrayed as having been responsive to the prophets. The story told in both the book of Isaiah and the book of Kings tells how Hezekiah's attentiveness to the prophet's guidance helped Judah to survive the onslaught of the Assyrians. Hezekiah is one of only two kings to receive praise from the author of Kings "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord just as his ancestor David had done" (2 Kings 18:3).

However, the kings that followed moved further and further from God's will according to 2 Kings moving further and further from the directives of Torah. Hezekiah's son Manasseh might have been the worst of all Judah's kings: "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, following the abominable practices of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel" (2 Kings 21:3).

Manasseh's son Amon succeeded him, continuing in his father's unfaithfulness but not for long, for assassins ended his life in the second year of his reign. Amon's son Josiah, the "boy king," took the throne at the age of eight. Josiah received the same praise from the author of Kings as did Hezekiah. "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 22:2) during his 31 years in power.

Under Josiah's leadership, the Israelites rediscover God's law. The Israelites seek to return to God's ways. Josiah institutes major reforms. Josiah leads a turning of the tide away from injustice and exploitation and idolatry, and toward faithfulness and genuine worship. But this happy story does not have a happy ending. Josiah is killed. He is only 39 years old. His reforms are abandoned. In a few years, the nation is wiped out.

Josiah shows that people in power have potential to perceive the truth of Yahweh's call for faithfulness to God's will above political expediency. In what the story portrays as a social context shaped profoundly by generations of corrupt practices, Josiah's commitment to returning to Torah nonetheless gained significant traction.

Even with the failure of Josiah's reforms, God's healing strategy continues. In the long run, the crucial aspect of this story may be seen in the recovery of Torah just as the nation-state phase of

ancient Israel's communal life neared its end. Josiah's reforms could not cut deep enough to stem momentum toward destruction. However, this effort at reform, based on the recovered law book, gave the community an essential resource for their long-term sustenance.

The story of ancient Israel as a nation-state tells of how close the path of politics-like-the-nations came to ending this community. However, with the providential recovering its founding document, the community found the resources to continue. This story makes clear that it is in spite of horses and chariots, centralized coercive state power, and religious institutionalization that serves the power elite, that the people of the promise continue (Yoder and Swartley 231).

In the end, the ancient Israelite project of seeking to order their lives as a conventional nation-state, reliant upon the sword for security, even survival, ended in failure. Crucially, though, the story then makes clear that this failure of Israel's existence as a nation-state did not mean the failure of the community as the conduit for the promise to Abraham of healing for all the families of the earth.

The prophet Jeremiah covers the time from the last days of the Judean monarchy and Judah as a nation-state through the Babylonian conquest and the ensuing time of exile. With Jeremiah we come to the end of the history of ancient Israel as a nation state, to the fulfillment of centuries of warnings. If you turn from God's ways of justice and peace and trust in wealth, horses and chariots, the sword then you will suffer the consequences. During Jeremiah's time, the Babylonian empire conquers Judah. Judah lay in ruins.

Beyond expressing anger, Jeremiah gets down to grief: "Thus says the Lord of hosts; Consider and call for the grieving women to come; send for the skilled women to come; let them quickly

raise a dirge over us, so that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids flow with water. For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion: ‘How we are ruined! We are utterly shamed, because we have left the land, because they have cast down our dwellings.’” (Jeremiah 9:17-19)

In his grief, Jeremiah represents God. Jeremiah’s God is not a distant God. God is not most centrally concerned with purity and having rules followed and just waiting to vent anger and vengeance.

We find hope in God’s grief. God’s grief is crucial because here we see the depth of God’s caring for human beings. The basis of any command or law that comes from God is because God cares for people. The commandments are for the sake of life. When these laws are violated, suffering and brokenness result, as God promised they would. But when God’s ways are rejected, God does not gain pleasure seeing rebels get their just desserts. No, God suffers too.

Jeremiah also hears from God words of hope: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt a covenant that they broke. I will put my law within them, and I will write it by their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

This renewed covenant will find expression not in a reconstituted nation-state, but in communities scattered around the world, living as witnessing communities within the various nation-states. The exilic experience will contain within it the seeds of a renewed healing strategy

wherein people of the promise seek genuine peace throughout the world, presenting alternatives to power politics through their counter-cultural alternative communities.

Jeremiah expresses this hope when he speaks to the exiles: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7). This command points ahead, to spreading the vision of wholeness contained in the promise to Abraham and in Torah to the ends of the earth (Perry 157). This is a vision for wholeness not established through coercion and the sword, but through faithful witness. Such witness requires self-consciousness of the people’s distinct identity as people of the promise. Jeremiah is not envisioning simply conformity to the ways of the nations. This identity needs to be sustained through prayer, worship, study of Torah, and doing justice, not through domination and top-down political control.

In the generations after Jeremiah, the community struggled to maintain its identity without the locus of a Hebrew nation-state. During this time, for understandable reasons, the Israelites focused on their internal life, hoping to establish a clear sense of identity and to sustain their communal existence in this uncertain time following the destruction of their nation-state and Solomon’s great temple.

However, they ran the danger of becoming too insular, too concerned simply with establishing boundary lines that fostered an attitude to hostility toward those outside the community. They too easily reduced God to a tribal God limited simply to the confines of the people Israel. The little book of Jonah addresses these dangers. The message of the book of Jonah focuses on reminding the people that Yahweh is the God of the whole world who has called Israel to be a people in order to be a channel for the blessing of all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).

Jonah did not really want God to act consistently with God being “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love” (Jonah 4:2). He hoped that God was actually an angry God, a God who delights in punishing God’s supposed enemies. But that kind of God would have been a projection of Jonah’s own hatreds and desires. The true God is not after some kind of eye-for-an-eye equilibrium. Rather, the true God desires healing, restoration of relationships, genuine peace.

The true God has compassion on the tens of thousands of Ninevites “who cannot tell their right hand from their left” (Jonah 4:11), desiring that they be freed from their bondage to sin and death. The book ends with God asking Jonah a question: “Should I not be concerned about that great city?” (Jonah 4:11). That is, “Should the mercy I’ve given you not extend to your enemies?”

The last Old Testament book is likely the book of Daniel, probably written around 165 BCE. The basic message of the Daniel is a good one for a last word. Daniel teaches: be patient, trust in God’s faithfulness even when you suffer and are afraid, do not be dominated by your anxiety, let God’s will work its way. Trust that God’s will is salvation and that even in hard times, God’s love perseveres.

The interpretive key for reading the Christian Bible as supporting pacifism, of course, may be found in the life and teaching of Jesus. However, Jesus’ message of peace ableness and restorative justice stemmed directly from his Bible (our Christian “Old Testament”). Jesus provided a clarity of focus, but he essentially reiterated what he saw as the central themes of the Bible concerning God’s compassion (Barrett 233).



From the start, the Bible presents God as willing peace for human beings for all human beings. God means for this love for “all the families of the earth” to be channeled through a community formed through God’s election of them as a people of the promise. The story makes it clear that this election is pure mercy God’s persevering love for God’s elect is itself an expression of God’s love for enemies. Time after time, the story makes clear, the people turn from God. Yet, as the prophet Hosea reports (chapter 11), God ultimately does not respond with violence and wrath, but with healing love.

The original calling of Abraham and Sarah and the gift to them of descendants in spite of their barrenness (and their unfaithfulness), the saving work of God to bring the Hebrew people together and to free them from slavery in Egypt (again, as the story makes clear, saving work in spite of the Hebrews’ unfaithfulness), the gift of Torah to guide their lives as the people of the promise (a priestly kingdom mediating God’s love to the entire world), and many more gifts, including the gift of new life even after the fall of the Hebrew nation state (a fall that Hebrew prophets attributed directly to the people’s unfaithfulness) all of these gifts clearly portray God’s love as unearned, even undeserved.

The basic guidance that Jesus draws from the story of God with God’s people, the story that he understood himself to stand within, may be summarized in Jesus’ words as reported by Luke: “Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Highest; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your father is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36) (David Alleman).

### 3.2 Historical Origin of Peace in the New Testament

The term *eirēnē* occurs in all the NT writings except 1 John, appearing most often in Luke-Acts, Romans, and Ephesians. Occasionally, *eirēnē* is used in its classical sense to designate a condition of law and order or the absence of war, as experienced, e.g., during the *Pax Romana* (Mt 10:34 par; Lk 11:21; 14:32; Acts 12:20; 24:2; Rev. 6:4). Usually, however, the term is used to refer to the experience of salvation that comes from God or the harmonious relationships between persons.

In Luke-Acts Jesus is proclaimed as the one who brings "peace on earth," understood as salvation for (not from) the world (2:14), and who guides others "into the way of peace" (1:79). In fact, peace is used as term for salvation (7:50; 8:48). It is a peace that Jerusalem (the "city of peace") unfortunately has failed to understand (19:45) because it failed to recognize its "king" of peace.

The disciples are instructed to have peace among themselves, i.e., to form a community of peace (Mk 9:50) and to seek reconciliation among themselves before worship when the communal peace has been disturbed (Mt 5:23–26; 18:15–20). They are sent on mission to bring peace, but only the person receptive to God's salvation receives it; those who are non-receptive come under God's judgment (Mt 10:13 pa.; cf. Acts 10:36). Those who decide against Jesus can expect not peace but the sword (Mt 10:34–36 par).

In John's Gospel, the "world" is portrayed as a hostile place neither able to give, nor easily receptive to the peace that already exists between Jesus and his disciples (Jn 14:27; 16:33).

Accompanying the gift of the Spirit is the risen Jesus' gift of peace (Jn 20:19, 21, 26), a gift that drives out fear.

In the Pauline letters, the reconciling love of God in Christ (Rom 5:6–11) has bestowed justification upon believers, resulting in "peace with God" (Rom 5:1; *see* Col 1:20; Eph 2:11–22). Those who live according to the Spirit know peace (Rom 8:6). Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), the hallmark of the gospel (Eph 6:15), and, along with righteousness and joy, the essence of God's kingdom (Rom 14:17). For this reason, Paul urges his readers to be "at peace" not only with other believers (Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 7:15; 2 Cor 13:11), but with everyone (Rom 12:18). Similarly, in the other letters' believers are called to cultivate peace (Jas 3:18; cf. Mt 5:9) among themselves, with outsiders (Heb 12:14), and even with their enemies (1 Pt 3:10–12, quoting Ps 34:12–16).

The book of Revelation has a pretty bad reputation among many people not least because it is easily interpreted as portraying quite a bloodthirsty God. And many Christians have affirmed that interpretation.

The first three chapters of Revelation set the stage for the book's key vision that comes in chapters four and five. This is a "revelation of Jesus Christ" that conveys a message to Christians in "the seven churches that are in Asia" (1:1, 4). This message is needed, chapter two and three tell us in the form of individualized letters to each of the seven churches, because Christians are being severely tested as they seek to remain faithful to the way of Jesus in the midst of the Roman Empire. The severe testing takes two major forms. The first kind of test is that when Christians seek to live as Jesus lived and resist the Empire's call to give it loyalty, they face severe persecution. The second kind of test is facing the temptation actually to give loyalty to the

Empire and compromise the core message of Jesus with acceptance of Rome's violence and social injustice. John, the author of Revelation, believes that this choice of loyalty is the central issue of faith. He understands the Empire to be God's chief rival in the world.

Yoder and Swartley stated that;

### **Jesus's identity in the Gospel of Luke**

In talking about the New Testament as a peace book, I will look first at how the gospels present Jesus. I will focus on the Gospel of Luke. At the very beginning, from Mary, upon her learning of the child she will bear, we hear that this child will address *social* reality. He will challenge the power elite of his world and lift up those at the bottom of the social ladder. This child, we are told, will bring hope to those who desire the "consolation of Israel." Those who seek freedom from the cultural domination of one great empire after another that had been imposed upon Jesus' people for six centuries will find comfort. From the beginning, this child is perceived in social and political terms.

Later, at the moment of Jesus' baptism, God's voice speaks words of affirmation, "Thou art my Son" (Luke 3:22). These words should be understood to name Jesus's *vocation* more than simply emphasizing his divine identity. "Son of God" was a term for kings (Psalm 2:7). It states that this person is the leader of God's kingdom on earth, he has the task of showing the way for God's will for God's people to be embodied.

Jesus' baptism was a kind of commissioning service for this vocation. We see that in the events that following shortly afterward. Jesus retreats deeper into the wilderness and there encounters Satan, the tempter. Satan presented Jesus with temptations that all had at their core seductive

appeals to his sense of messianic or kingly calling. He could rule the nations, he could gain a following as a distributor of bread to the hungry masses, he could leap from the top of the Temple and gain the support of the religious powers—that be through his miraculous survival that would confirm his messianic status. That is, Jesus faced temptations concerning how he would be *king*. He did not deny that he was called to be “Son of God”—that is, king or messiah. But he did reject temptations to be king in ways he knew would be ungodly.

### **Jesus’s ministry: an upside-down kind of king**

Luke then tells of Jesus’ entry back into the world in which he was called to minister. In his home synagogue, Jesus spoke prophetic words from Isaiah that directly addressed social transformation. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Isaiah’s prophecy referred to the installation among God’s people of the provisions of the year of Jubilee, “the year of the Lord’s favor,” that would restore in Israel the socially radical tenets of the Old Testament law: social equality and the empowerment of the oppressed, prisoners, and poor.

Jesus’ verbal proclamation was accompanied by works of healing. He drew great crowds and acclaim. However, from the beginning he attracted opposition. His townspeople sought to kill him when they realized that his message of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy meant to welcome Israel’s enemies. It was for everyone—Jews *and* Gentiles. As his ministry gained traction, Jesus began to run up against opposition from defenders of the status quo who angrily schemed against him (6:11). The scribes and the Pharisees “were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do with Jesus.”

In face of this opposition, Jesus created a more formal community of resistance. He realized that his teachings and actions alone would not bring genuine transformation. He knew that if he himself were removed from the scene, his message would end with him unless he had created social structures that would continue and that would provide a critical mass to embody the message of Jubilee that he proclaimed.

So, Jesus taught those who joined his community. In Luke 6, we have a summary of this teaching. He started by saying, “*kill* your enemies!” No, of course not, that is exactly *not* what he said.

Jesus structured his social ethic around the call to imitate God’s expansive *love*. Break free from the conventional “commonsense” ethics of mainstream society. “I say to you that listen, *love* your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you, and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask them again.”

In his teaching about a willingness to “take up the cross” as a part of being in his community of healing, Jesus conveyed a clear message. To follow Jesus meant, without qualification, a willingness to share his fate—the fate of one labeled an enemy of the Empire and an enemy of the Temple hierarchy. To follow Jesus meant to accept the (accurate) designation of a social radical. “He said to them all, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’”

## Jesus takes up his cross

With his counter-cultural community learning more and more his messianic agenda (that is, his “kingly” agenda), Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem and entered the final phase of his ministry. Jesus entered Jerusalem at the beginning of the final week of his life. He met with adulation, then headed to the Temple where he successfully challenged the standard operating procedures. By driving the money changers out, he heightened the sense of conflict with the guardians of the social order.

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For those around Jesus who had retained a hope that this social change agent would *violently* overthrow the present political and religious order, things seemed to be coming to a head. Jesus clearly did have a political agenda. He had organized a vanguard movement, calling his followers to clarity about their willingness to make the effort and bear the consequences of revolution. Of course, Jesus had not directly been preparing his community for a violent takeover, but with his own power and close connection with God, he would seemingly not be requiring overwhelming human firepower to overturn Rome violently. He could call on angels for this work.

This final step of pulling together the crowds and wielding the sword of the Lord in a *coup d’etat* is precisely, however, the step Jesus *refuses*. Only later did his followers figure out that his agenda was never a violent revolution but rather a different kind of revolution, no less social and political but a revolution based on love for *all*, all the way down.

In chapters 19–22, Luke tells of confrontations Jesus initiates with the existing social system. The obvious example is when Jesus is challenged about paying taxes to Rome. He poses two

options, give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and give unto God what is God's—you can't do both when they conflict. In real life these two "kings" demand loyalty in ways that require a choice, one or the other. Jesus's teaching in several places here heightens the conflict between Caesar's kingdom and God's kingdom.

When Jesus drove the money-changers out from the temple he was warned that the religious leaders now plan to do him in. As his time of crisis approached, he prayed on the Mount of Olives that God would "take this cup" from him. Such a prayer, in this context, only makes sense in terms of one final temptation on Jesus' part to think again of violent overthrow.

Satan tempted him with this in the wilderness at the beginning. Peter tempted Jesus with this after confessing Jesus as Messiah. The crowds tempted him with this after he miraculously fed them. The crowds again tempted him with this when he entered Jerusalem to their acclaim. Such a temptation had been fundamental throughout Jesus' ministry because, indeed, it was close to his calling. He did have the vocation to head a political revolution, to bring about a transformation in relation to Roman domination and the Temple hierarchy.

Thus, as the forces aligned against Jesus close in, he faces one more time the option of channeling his divine power toward violence, to use the sword of "justice" forcibly to overthrow the oppressors of his people and set them free.

In the power of the Spirit, Jesus resists that temptation. He resists even when Peter draws his sword in an act that could have set the battle off. Legions of angels *could* have cleansed the land and restored David's kingdom. Jesus says no, *not* because he was apolitical and only interested in escaping from history into heaven. Jesus says no because the true enemy of the kingdom of



God, the true enemy of the social order God called Jesus to inaugurate, is the sword itself. Jesus the king, the leader of God's kingdom on earth, brings peace not war.

So, Jesus accepts his arrest. He goes first before the religious leaders then to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The story makes clear that it was indeed thinkable that Jesus would be seen as a genuine threat to the Roman Empire. Throughout the story of Jesus' final hours, the charge that he set himself up as "king" runs throughout the story the gospels tell of Jesus public ministry makes apparent the bases for such a charge. Jesus *did* pose a political threat.

We read, the religious leaders "began to accuse Jesus, saying 'we found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king. Then Pilate asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?'"

Rome executes Jesus. He dies a revolutionary's death. Rome makes an example of him. He meets his end labeled "king of the Jews," following the affirmation of the religious leaders that they recognize no king but Caesar. Such a public, painful, and decisive death awaits all who set themselves over against Rome.

### **Victory over death**

Jesus' followers had been told this would happen. However, when the events unfolded they proved not quite ready. They continued to the bitter end to hope for a new king David who would bring in the kingdom with force. A few days after Jesus' death, several of his followers recounted the tragic events to a stranger they met on the road to Emmaus. They said, "Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. Our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified. We had hoped he was the

one to liberate Israel.” They had expected a violent revolution to drive out the foreign empire and its collaborators.

To their shock, these disciples discover that their companion was Jesus himself. He confronts them, not because they had hoped Jesus would “redeem Israel” (that is, not because they had been looking for a new kingdom). Rather, he confronts them because they had not truly recognized that in his life and teaching, including especially his rejection of the violent revolution option even while directly challenging the status quo, this new kingdom was fully present in the self-giving love of the Messiah.

When God raised Jesus and utterly amazed Jesus’s followers who had scattered in fear after his arrest God provided a powerful reversal. Jesus was *not* defeated. Jesus’s message of the presence of God’s kingdom was not an idealistic moment in the end crushed by the forces of domination. God placed the most powerful endorsing blessing possible on Jesus’s way of life. Indeed, Jesus did show the world what God is like and what God wants all people to be like.

### **Jesus’s words of peace**

Let’s look quickly at what Jesus had to say. His teaching reinforced the message of his practice: love the vulnerable, forgive the broken, resist domination, band together in solidarity to witness to all God’s ways of peace.

I will just mention two key teachings that express Jesus’s theology and ethics. First, his great sermon Matthew’s longer version is called the Sermon on the Mount, Luke’s sometimes is called the Sermon on the Plain.

The message is straightforward following the path of peace and generosity, not retaliation and hoarding. Love, even your enemies. Imitate God by being merciful. This is about *political* life the alternative to Rome's politics of empire is Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the king's politics of compassion.

The second great teaching is one of Jesus's most familiar and radical parables. He is asked a deep, deep question one, actually, with profound political significance. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Not simply, what must I do to go to heaven, but more, what must I do to be a full citizen of God's kingdom?

What do *you* say? responded Jesus. Well, how about this: Love the Lord your God with your entire being, and love your neighbor as yourself. This summarizes all the commands. You're right, affirmed Jesus love of God and neighbor go together and that is what it takes.

Great, says Jesus's questioner. But one more thing: Who exactly is my neighbor? Or, rather, what he meant was, who is *not* my neighbor? Who *don't* I have to love? This is where it gets political. Jesus answers with a story. A man on his way to Jericho is mugged and left for dead. A couple of religious leaders pass by and don't stop to help. Who does help him? A Samaritan. What Jesus doesn't say, but everyone would know, is that the Samaritan would have been a sworn enemy to Jesus's questioner who was a mainstream Jew. Not only is the Samaritan, the enemy, the one who is to be loved, he actually *models* the love Jesus wants his listeners to practice. A profound challenge to politics that separate us from our supposed enemies.

So, the social ethics of the New Testament have at their heart a call to follow the way of Jesus, especially the aspects of Jesus' ministry that led him into conflict with the powers that be. The

New Testament presents Jesus' cross as the norm for his followers. This cross is understood as the consequence of standing against the status quo of power politics. Jesus' cross represents his call to reject tyrannical politics in favor of a politics of servanthood and his refusal to take up the sword even for seemingly legitimate purposes.

Jesus proclaimed a message of the presence of God's kingdom. As the metaphor "kingdom" makes clear, his concern centered on political and not purely religious or spiritual elements. When Jesus disavowed Peter's attempt to defend him with the sword at the time of his arrest, he did so not because Peter got in the way of Jesus' non-ethical vocation to be a perfect sacrifice for sin. Rather, Jesus rejected Peter's efforts because he understood his calling as the Son of God to include turning from the use of the sword to further what are claimed to be necessary ends.

Following Jesus' resurrection and the reinstitution of his community as the vanguard of the coming kingdom of God, his followers looked back at the whole of his ministry, death, and resurrection, and confessed him to be the unique manifestation of God in history. Language of incarnation, divinity, and Trinity emerged to name Jesus' actual identity as God-in-flesh.

Confessing Jesus as God Incarnate speaks to God entering history and defining authentic humanness in terms of this exemplary, Spirit-filled life. Confessing Jesus as the "second person" of the Trinity speaks to the unity of all manifestations of God as harmonious with the life and teaching of this person confessed as God among us.

At the heart of Jesus' message, we find clarity that people in power do *not* represent the divinely endorsed definition of what it means to be "political." Jesus' message about politics is clear. Those in power tend to *misunderstand* the true meaning of politics. If we understand "politics" to

have to do, most fundamentally, with how human beings order their social lives, Jesus presented a clear alternative to politics as domination. The politics of domination is a perversion of the intention of God for how we are called to be human beings socially.

### **Paul's witness to Jesus's way of peace**

Let's now consider a major early Christian witness of Jesus. The Apostle Paul echoed Jesus's core concerns. Before he met Jesus, Paul himself had been a persecutor of the followers of Jesus; he was a violent man who believed God wanted him to punish those who threatened his "true" faith. Paul changed when Jesus revealed himself to him. After that, Paul presented the work of Christ in terms of creating a new community made up of former enemies.

For Paul, the center of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be seen in the *breaking down* of the wall of hostility that had separated Jew and Gentile. The very wall of hostility Paul had tried to enforce. Jesus had placed the formation of a counter-cultural community of Jubilee generosity and mercy at the center of his proclamation of the presence of God's Kingdom. So too did Paul present the presence of God's Spirit in this reconciled community of former enemies.

Paul's meaning of "justification" emphasized "making right," or "making just." We see in Paul's thought concerning "justification" the clear sense that God's "making things right" centers primarily on establishing faith communities where former enemies are reconciled. As he wrote to the Ephesians: "Jesus is our peace; in his flesh he has made both Jews and Gentiles into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us."

Paul confirms Jesus's words that God is a God who loves God's enemies. In Romans, he states: "God proved his love for us in that while we were sinners Christ died for us.... While we were

enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son.” Paul emphasizes the concrete application of these words in the joining together of Jew and Gentile in these Jubilee communities. The gospel of Jesus has no clearer or more powerful expression than that insider and outsider are united in one fellowship, tearing down walls of enmity.

Paul applies Jesus’ message to his discussion of power and social structures. For Paul, human social structures and their spiritual dimension (the “principalities and powers”) are both part of God’s good creation and fallen. They often fail to serve their created purpose of ordering social life for the sake of human flourishing. In fact, they often seek to separate people from God by demanding loyalty due to God alone. Paul believed Jesus entered directly into the world of power with its fallen social structures. Jesus’ distinctiveness may be seen in his freedom from bondage to any of the powers. He lived freely in relation to laws, customs, communities, institutions, values, or ideologies. He remained free even to the point allowing the powers to put him to death rather than give them his loyalty. And God vindicated Jesus. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes: “Jesus disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in his cross and resurrection.”

Jesus’ confrontation with the powers and their efforts to destroy him serve to bring to the surface their true nature in fallen creation. As the agents of death to the Son of God, they make clear that their claims to be God’s agents for the good of humanity are misleading. When the true God enters directly into history, these “servants of God” (the state, the religious institutions, the cultural mores, et al) turn out to be in rebellion against God. Jesus’ life of freedom from the powers’ domination system, his willingness to remain committed to the way of peace even when they committed acts of horrific violence and injustice against him, and God’s vindication of

Jesus through resurrection make clear that loyalty to the fallen powers contradicts loyalty to the true God.

The main weapon the powers wield in seeking to dominate human existence is deception. They seek, all too successfully, to convince people that they are *God's* agents for order and justice in the world. They persuade people to give them loyalty and trust, thereby enhancing their dominance. To those who truly perceive the significance of the life and teaching of Jesus, this demand the powers make for loyalty is recognized as an effort to usurp the true God. Staying close to Jesus empowers his followers to *see* truthfully.

The existence of fellowships of followers of Jesus (called “churches” = *ekklesia*, a term for an assembly of citizens) proclaims to all with eyes to see that the unchallenged reign of the powers in human culture is coming to an end. Portraying the church this way, Paul follows Jesus in conveying an ethics of social engagement, not an ethic of withdrawal. Paul means for the church to be a community of free citizens of God’s kingdom, each bringing gifts and abilities to the work of the church. Here we find the “new humanity” that expresses power through service rather than domination and that resolves conflicts through forgiveness and reconciliation rather than the sword. When the churches imitate Jesus’ style of politics, they embody the transforming work of God to make the kingdoms of the world into the kingdom of the Creator.

### **The Christian witness to the state**

Paul’s thinking about the relevance of Jesus’ way for the political life of his followers also finds expression in his notorious statements in Romans 13, but not in the ways the mainstream Christian tradition has assumed.

The first step in understanding Paul's political thought here is to see Romans 13 as part of a larger framework. Early Christians believed that the state is one of the *fallen* powers; they portrayed the state as under *Satan's* dominion. In Jesus' temptations at the beginning of his ministry, when Satan tempted him with political leadership, the story does not question that it was Satan's to offer. We may assume that Paul has this suspicion of the state in mind when he wrote Romans.

In Romans, we see other elements of Jesus' own basic stance toward power and social ethics expressed. Romans 12:1 being a new section of the book. The first word that Paul offers here is a call to nonconformity to the ways of the world. Paul begins with a confession of God's transforming mercy. He follows that with a call to the community to reject the ways of domination. They must practice persevering love that will reveal the character of their liberating God.

Paul concludes his Romans 12 summary of Jesus's way with a call for non-retaliation toward enemies. "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good. So far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Never avenge yourselves. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."

Then, skipping ahead to 13:8-10, we see that Paul emphasizes (quoting Jesus) that the law itself is summarized in the call to love one's neighbor. The only debt that matters is the call to love. "Owe no one anything except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."



In between the call to non-retaliation that conclude Romans 12 and the affirmation of the true meaning of God's law in 13:8-10, Paul elaborates his thoughts on how the Roman Christians ought to relate to governmental authority in 13:1-7. He surely could not have had in mind in 13:1-7 a validation of a blank check attitude toward secular government that authorizes Christian participation in violence. Paul speaks to how non-retaliatory, neighbor-loving Christians might remain true to those convictions.

Paul's broader thinking about the powers helps us understand what he means early in chapter 13. Paul calls not for "obedience" in 13:1, but for "subordination." The key motif here is how Paul understands God to order the powers. This ordering dynamic reflects both the sense that the powers retain some sense of independence over against God and the sense that nonetheless God uses the powers even in their rebellion to serve God's ultimate purposes.

Paul's language in 13:1-7 includes several words that connote this kind of ordering. He does not mean literally "obey the state." He is not implying that one is obligated to do tasks the state calls for that violate Jesus's expectations for his followers (including those expectations named elsewhere in this Romans 12–13 section such as non-retaliation and neighbor love). Christian witness includes respect for the realities of fallen governmental power. The authentic subordination of Christians to such a government would include respect for the ordering function of government (when it ministers for people's "good," government provides for social services and social stability) even as Christians also refuse to give their ultimate loyalty to such governments.

When Paul asserts in 13:7 that readers should "render to each his due," he echoes Jesus' call for *discernment* (render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's). This "rendering"

includes respect and taxes to Caesar; however, loyalty is due only to God. This loyalty leads directly to the affirmation that *love* is due everyone (13:8). So, Paul's message in Romans 12–13, rather than being in tension with Jesus' call to persevering love in the Sermon on the Mount, actually restates that call. *Both* these passages instruct believers to practice non-retaliatory love. *Both* call upon believers to renounce vengeance. And *both* challenge believers to respect God's ordering work through the powers in ways that include a refusal to take up the sword. The end point in Romans 13 is this call for discernment. *All* actions Christians take and support should have as their goal love of neighbors (which means love for *everyone*).

### **A “revelation” of the way of Jesus**

The New Testament concludes in the book of Revelation with one more restatement of Jesus's political message. Revelation, chapter five, the key vision in the book, portrays the slain and resurrected Lamb as the one who can open the scroll, which means he's the one who will bring history to its fulfillment. The Lamb is worthy to receive praise and glory and power. It is the Lamb's self-giving love, the cross (and the life that led to it and the vindication of it in resurrection) that reveals the meaning of history not the sword of power politics. God's people are called to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, and, like him, they “conquer” due to their politics of persevering love, not to their politics of coercion.

This is the Lamb's victory: John *heard*: “The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered, so that he can open the scroll” a mighty warrior. John *saw*: “Between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slain. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne” a suffering servant. This is the victory of the Lamb's followers” “They have conquered the Dragon by the blood of the

Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.” And this is the consequence of these victories: “The angel showed me the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. On either side of the river is the tree of life, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.”

Revelation echoes Jesus’ approach to effectiveness. Truth wins out *in history* not due to its superior firepower but due to its faithfulness to the One on the throne. God’s people participate in transforming the kings of the earth from enemies of God to worshipers in the New Jerusalem through their willingness to join the Lamb in his style of life and his style of confronting the powers. The Jesus who is worshiped in Revelation as the one worthy to receive power is precisely the Jesus who accepted his fate as a political rebel executed by the Empire with the sign next to his cross, “King of the Jews.”

Paul’s affirmation of Jesus as “equal with God” in Philippians 2 follows from Jesus’ renunciation of power as domination. When Jesus asserted that only those willing to take up their cross and follow him and his true disciples, he pointed in precisely this direction concerning the exercise of power. God’s kind of power, the power that ultimately goes *with* the grain of the universe, underwrites a politics of compassion and self-giving love.

The New Testament throughout portrays Christian politics in ways that directly link with the life and teaching of Jesus. What matters is to form communities that reject violence and embody inclusive Jubilee-shaped economics. Jesus’ own cross becomes the political model, the style of life that leads to the social transformation the New Testament portrays with the coming down of the New Jerusalem.

The beginning of Revelation describes Jesus with a concise, powerful three-part picture (1:5): He is (1) “the faithful witness” (referring to Jesus’s life of truth telling, resistance to human structures of injustice, and pervasive love and welcome to the vulnerable), (2) “the firstborn of the dead” (referring to the collusion between the Empire and the religious leaders to execute Jesus and to when God raised Jesus from the dead, an act that vindicated Jesus’s way of life as truthful, and rebuked those Powers that put him to death for their rebellion against God), and (3) “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (referring to Jesus’s messianic [i.e., “kingly”] role as the revelation of God’s will for all of humanity, including all the nations and tribes [7:9] of the earth). We discover as we read on that this third element of the picture of Jesus seems a bit paradoxical, as the “kings of the earth” in Revelation signify the human leaders of the rebellious nations. As it turns out, Revelation may be appropriately read as a meditation on Jesus’s role as this “ruler,” a role directly linked to “the Lamb’s war” I will consider in the next post.

The first vision of Revelation begins at 1:9 when John hears a voice calling him to write to the seven churches. He then sees one walking among those churches who is described in ways that make it clear that it is Jesus. So, this “revelation of Jesus” both reveals insights about Jesus and reveals what Jesus’s message to his current followers is. The first vision continues with letters to each of the seven churches that make clear the book’s sense of urgency about the choices its readers must make about following Jesus’s way. We also learn of the encouragement Jesus offers to those who face suffering due to their faithful living and of the confrontation Jesus offers to those who are too at home in the Empire.

After the seventh letter, John is transported at 4:1 to a worship service where he will behold the ruling vision for the entire book and the ruling vision for John’s own faith. There is One seated

on a throne obviously a supreme being. This is where contemporaries of John might have expected to find the emperor or his affiliated gods. John will make it clear that the One on the throne he sees is the *opposite* of the Romans gods. This One is exalted and worshiped by representatives of all living creatures.

Interestingly, the One holds a scroll that appears to signify the transformation and healing of creation the hopes of all human generations. However, we first are told that this scroll must be opened for the hopes to be fulfilled and that no one can be found to open it. John begins to weep bitterly (5:4). Then, he is told to relax, one has been found who will open the scroll. This moment underscores that Revelation is concerned with the big issues of human history and the fulfillment of hopes for healing. In an extremely short and subtle description, we then read of a powerful drama at the heart of our existence. There is a great scroll, but it can't be opened. Then one *is* found to open it described to John as a mighty warrior-king, as David of old. However, the actual victor is seen as he truly is: "A Lamb standing as if it had been slain" (5:6). What John sees turns what he hears on its head.

The Lamb here obviously is a picture of the executed and resurrected Jesus the "ruler of the kings of the earth." As the opening description in 1:6 had said, he "loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood." That is to say, Jesus's faithful witness of nonviolent resistance to the Powers, including the Roman Empire, that led to his bloody execution actually is the *means* of victory that makes him the one who may open the scroll of ultimate healing. The power of Jesus's embodied love is indeed the power of the mighty "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (5:5). This victorious witness provides the basis for the remarkable conclusion to chapter five's vision where the Lamb is worshiped for his witness that brings healing for "saints from every tribe and

language and people and nation” (5:9). This liberated multitude is made into “a kingdom and priests serving our God [who] will reign on earth” (5:10). Such an astounding outcome is confirmed by the praise of “every creature in heaven and on earth and in the sea” (5:13).

The “peace of the Lamb” is none other than the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God’s “faithful witness.” Clearly from the beginning of Revelation, when John writes “blessed are those hear and who keep” the words of this book (1:3), and when John writes we are “freed from our sins” and “made to be a kingdom” (1:5-6), the story of the peace of the Lamb in Revelation is also the story of the calling of the book’s readers. This calling is to follow the Lamb, to share in his witness, and to embody his victory in helping to heal the world. The task of navigating life in Empire is simply the task of sharing in Jesus’s faithful witness.

### **The Lamb’s healing blood**

To confirm these points, John reports another dramatic vision in chapter seven. We have another “hear one thing, see another thing” dynamic. In chapter five, John had heard mighty warrior-king and had seen a slain Lamb that stands. These two pictures together define the image the Lamb, in its self-sacrifice, *is* the mighty king. Then, in chapter seven we are given a vision of people “sealed” as the people of God. What John hears is a list of the twelve tribes of Israel, twelve thousand in each, for a total of 144,000. But then, what he sees is “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages” (7:9). These two pictures, as with the earlier vision of the Lamb, *together* define the image. The 144,000 is not a literal number but it is a way of referring to the *universal* spread of God’s healing work anchored in the particularity of the Old Testament people of God.

This uncounted multitude stands before the throne and before the Lamb (7:9). This alludes back to chapter five where the One on the throne and the Lamb are both worshiped for their powerful, healing love also by those healed from “every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9). In both cases, the means of the liberation of the multitude is the Lamb’s “blood.” The “blood” here refers not simply to Jesus’s crucifixion but to the entirety of his life, teaching, death, and resurrection. The key element of this image is the reality that Jesus’s life of nonviolent resistance to the Powers-that-be, political and religious, led to his execution. God’s vindication of that life proved that Jesus’s life was truthful, and it exposed the political and religious structures as rebels against God and unworthy of the kind of loyalty they demand. These Powers are God’s rivals, not God’s agents.

When Revelation seven describes the multitude, they are said to be robed in white, which is a symbol that affirms that they shared in Jesus’s faithful witness. “Where have they come from?” (7:13), an elder ask. “They have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (7:14). The “great ordeal” simply refers to life in the complicated and often traumatic everyday history of human existence. In this history, followers of the Lamb are asked continually to follow his path of nonviolent resistance to the Powers and of faithful witness to the Lamb’s self-sacrificial love—even in the face of continual hostility from the Powers.

The image of washing the robes and making them white in the Lamb’s blood refers to discipleship, following the Lamb’s path in life. The “peace of the Lamb” is, in the simplest terms, embodying the compassion and care of Jesus. And this connects directly with another

image in Revelation, “the war of the Lamb.” This war has to do with nonviolent resistance where love replaces domination even when such love is rejected.

Revelation makes it clear that the embodied love of Jesus and his followers are precisely the very weapons that defeat the Powers of evil the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. So, in my next post I will reflect more on this “war.” The key verse that in some sense signals a transition in the book from clarifying the Lamb’s identity as the embodiment of peace to sketching the nature of the Lamb’s war is found in 12:11: The comrades of the Lamb have conquered the Dragon “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”

Furthermore, as Paul was walking on the road to Damascus in order to arrest Christians, a bright light surrounds him and he hears a voice claiming: “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” Saul loses his sight but gains it again through the laying on of hands by Ananias who then baptizes him.

After his conversion, Paul returns to Jerusalem and while he is praying in the Temple, he enters into a trance. In Greek, the word for trance is ἐκστάσει {ecstasei} or “ecstasy.” We learn something more about Saul here. Although he did not capture Christians in Damascus, he did previously and personally “imprison and beat” Christians in Jerusalem “in every synagogue.” Saul was the chief of Anti-Christian police in Jerusalem. Saul would have had to have authority from the High Priest and Herod Antipas to accomplish this.

### **3.3 Peace in the Intertestamental Period**

During the four hundred years intertestamental period, God’s people experienced significant challenges and spiritual declension. This four hundred years period was characterized by six



historical eras according to Yoder and Swartley: 1. The Persian Era (397-336 BC); 2. The Greek Era (336-323 BC); 3. The Egyptian Era (323-198 BC); 4. The Syrian Era (198-165 BC); 5. The Maccabean Era (165-63 BC); 6. The Roman Era (63-4 BC)

**The Persian Era (397-336 BC):** This era actually dates back to Persia's conquering Babylon in 536 BC, yet it continued on into the early years of the Intertestamental Period (397-336 BC). So, the first thing Persia contributed to the people of Israel was a *"foreign policy."* You need to remember the history of the people of Israel — once Solomon goes off the scene, the kingdom splits into two kingdoms (Israel & Judah). Both of those kingdoms eventually are taken out of the land, and made subjects to foreign entities. The northern kingdom of Israel is scattered all over the Assyrian empire, and later Babylonia conquers the southern kingdom of Judah and basically takes the people out of Judah (though not all of them, certainly the leading people) and settles them in Babylonia. Persia eventually conquers Babylonia and when they do, their foreign policy lets the people of Judah return to their homeland. So, with Ezra and Nehemiah, we have people who have been in exile, returning home. With the foregoing in mind, Persia was a strong influence over the Jewish people for some two hundred years (536-336 BC). God used Persia to deliver Israel from the Babylonian captivity (cf. Dan 5:30-31) and allow the Jewish exiles to return to their land, rebuild it, and worship at the temple in Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chron 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4). These are significant things that Persia let the people of Israel do, and it is all related to that foreign policy that let them return to the land, and if they did not rebel, actually let them pretty much govern themselves. For about one hundred years after the close of the Old Testament canon (425 BC), Judea continued to be a Persian territory under the governor of Syria with the High-Priest exercising a measure of civil authority. The Jewish people were allowed to observe their religious tenets without any outside governmental interference. Persia's attitude

was tolerant toward the Jewish remnant in Palestine until internal rivalry over the politically powerful office of High Priest resulted in partial destruction of Jerusalem by the Persian governor... other than that the Jewish people were pretty much left undisturbed by Persia during this period.

**The Greek Era (336-323 BC):** Between 334 BC and 331 BC, Alexander the Great defeated the Persian king, Darius III, in three decisive battles that gave him control of the lands of the Persian Empire. In many respects, Alexander the Great has been regarded by historians as perhaps the greatest conqueror of all time; he was far and away the central figure to this brief period he conquered Persia, Babylon, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, as well as western India. Although he only reigned over Greece for thirteen years (he died at the age of thirty-three), his influence lived long after him. The cherished desire of Alexander was to found a worldwide empire unified by language, custom, and civilization. Under his influence, the entire western world began to speak and study the Greek language — this process, called *“Hellenization,”* included the adoption of Greek culture and religion in all parts of the world. Hellenism became so popular that it persisted and was encouraged even through the Roman era and New Testament times. The struggle that developed between the Jews and Hellenism’s influence upon their culture and religion was long and bitter. Alexander, however, permitted the Jews to observe their laws and granted them an exemption from taxes during their sabbatical years. It was Alexander’s goal to bring *Greek culture* to the lands he had conquered; he wished to create a world united by *Greek language and thinking*. This is the crucial element that Greece brought to the table they brought a Greek culture that is both educated, and a multi-god worshiping culture; thus, there were many gods in the land; they brought in magic and the onslaught of mystery religions... so the religious impact was big on the land. Perhaps the most important impact Greece had, outside of culture, was that

they brought the Greek language; and that language eventually became the language of the land. People actually became bilingual in a very short period of time. Ultimately this policy was dangerous to the religion of Israel, because the Greek way of life was attractive, sophisticated, and humanly appealing, but utterly ungodly in that sense, it was very representative of our world today. Faithful Jews staunchly resisted the strong influence of pagan polytheism. Although the Greek language was sufficiently wide-spread by 270 BC, and resulted in the bringing about of a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament) this translation was called “the Septuagint” (more on that later).

**The Egyptian Era (323-198 BC):** When Alexander the Great died in 323 BC, the Greek empire became divided into four segments under his four generals: Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Selenus. Ptolemy Soter, the first of the Ptolemaic dynasty, received Egypt and soon dominated nearby Israel. He dealt severely with the Jews at first, but toward the end of his reign and on into the rule of Ptolemy Philadelphus (his successor), the Jews were treated favorably. It was during this time that the *Septuagint* was authorized. The policy of toleration followed by the Ptolemies, by which Judaism and Hellenism coexisted peacefully, was very dangerous for the Jewish faith. A gradual infiltration of Greek influence and an al-most unnoticed assimilation of the Greek way of life took place. During this period Jewish worship was influenced to become more external than internal, a notion that had a lasting impact upon Judaism. Two religious parties emerged: the pro-Syrian Hellenizing party, and the Orthodox Jews (in particular the Hasidim or “Pious Ones” the predecessors of the Pharisees). A struggle for power between these two groups resulted in a polarization of the Jews along political, cultural, and religious lines. It was the same conflict that brought about the attack of Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC. The Jews had prospered until near the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty when conflicts between Egypt and

Syria escalated. Israel was again caught in the middle. When the Syrians defeated Egypt in the Battle of Panion in 198 BC, Judea was annexed to Syria.

**The Syrian Era (198-165 BC):** Under the rule of Antiochus III the Great and his successor Seleucus Philopater, the Jews came under the control of Syria... though treated harshly, they were nonetheless allowed to maintain local rule under their High Priest. All went reasonably well until the Hellenizing party decided to have the person they favored, Jason, replace the High Priest favored by the Orthodox Jews they brought this about by bribing Seleucus's successor, *Antiochus Epiphanes*. This set off a political conflict that finally brought Antiochus to Jerusalem in a fit of rage. So angry was Antiochus, that in 168 BC he set about to destroy every distinctive characteristic of the Jewish faith he forbade all sacrifices, out-lawed the rite of circumcision, canceled the observance of the Sabbath and the offering of sacrifices, and disallowed the celebration of feast days... additionally, he mutilated and destroyed nearly every copy of the Hebrew Bible. Jews were forced to eat pork and make sacrifices to idols. His final act of sacrilege, and the one that spelled his ultimate ruin, was the desecration of the Most Holy Place by building an altar and offering a sacrifice to the god Zeus. Many Jews died in the ensuing persecutions. Perhaps a reminder of God's way of working with man is needed at this point He creates or allows a desperate situation, then calls upon a special, faithful servant. Man, however, often attempts to rescue himself and seems to be almost at the point of success only to wind up in worse shape than before. This was about to happen in the life of God's people the Jews. God was simply setting the stage for the coming of His Deliverer (the Lord Jesus).

**The Maccabean Era (165-63 BC):** An elderly priest named *Mattathias* (he was of the house of Hasmon), lived with his five sons in a village just northwest of Jerusalem. When a Syrian official

tried to enforce heathen sacrifice in that village, Mattathias revolted, killed a renegade Jew who offered a sacrifice, slew the Syrian official, and fled to the mountains with his family. Thousands of faithful Jews joined him, and history records one of the most noble demonstrations of holy jealousy for the honor of God. After the death of Mattathias three of his sons carried on the Maccabean Revolt in succession: *Judas* (166-160 BC), *Jonathan* (160-142 BC), and *Simon* (142-134 BC). These men had such success that by 165 BC they had retaken Jerusalem, cleansed the temple, and restored biblical worship this event is commemorated even today as the Feast of Dedication – [Hanukkah] – which Jesus Himself also celebrated (cf. Jn 10:22ff). Though fighting against Syria continued in outlining areas, the Jewish people finally received their independence under the leadership of Simon in 142 BC. They experienced almost seventy years of independence under the reign of the Hasmonaean dynasty (the High Priesthood), the most notable leaders of which were John Hyrcanus (134-104 BC) and Alexander Jannaeus (102-76 BC). The most significant religious development of this period resulted from a strong difference of opinion concerning the kingship and High Priesthood of Judea. For hundreds of years the position of High Priest was held by individuals of political strength rather than those who were descendants of Aaron... orthodox Jews resented this development. When John Hyrcanus became governor and High Priest, he conquered Transjordan and Idumaea and destroyed the Samaritan temple his power and popularity led him to refer to himself as a king. This flew in the face of the orthodox Jews, who by this time were called ***Pharisees*** (which literally means “*separatists*”); they recognized no king unless he was of the lineage of King David. Those who opposed the Pharisees and supported the Hasmonaean were called ***Sadducees*** (they adopted their name from a Hebrew word meaning “*righteous*”). These names surfaced for the first time during the reign of John Hyrcanus who himself became a Sadducee.

**The Roman Era (63-4 BC):** The independence of the Jews ended in 63 BC when a Roman general named Pompey conquered Syria and entered Israel. When Aristobulus II of Israel, who claimed to be king of Israel, locked Pompey out of Jerusalem, the Roman leader in anger took the city by force, and in doing so he reduced the size of Judea. Antipater the Idumaean was appointed procurator of Judea by Julius Caesar in 47 BC. As some of you will recall, Antipater's son Herod, eventually became the king of the Jews around 40 BC. Although *Herod the Great*, as he was called, planned and carried out the building of the new temple in Jerusalem, he was a devoted Hellenist and hated the Hasmonaean family. Ultimately, he killed every descendant of the Hasmonaews, including his own wife (the granddaughter of John Hyrcanus) ... as well as his own two sons (Aristobulus and Alexander). Remember, Herod was the man on the throne when Jesus was born in Bethlehem. During this era, the *Pharisees* believed in strict adherence to the *Scriptures* (the written law), as well as to the *Misnah* (the oral law), which sought to apply the written law to everyday life. Whereas the Pharisees were strongly connected with the Scribes, the *Sadducees* were strongly related to the High Priest; the priests seem to have tended toward the more social, political, and earthly aspects of their position (this position was obviously more attractive to the wealthy, socially minded Jewish leaders).

### **3.4 African understanding of peace**

To African man, peace is rooted in the traditional African philosophy of human relations, community values and spirituality. It recognizes that peace is not just the absence of conflicts and violence, but also the presence of justice, equity, social harmony, and well-being. In African societies, peace is a positive and constructive concept that is essential for human flourishing and development.

Firstly, African understanding of peace underscores the importance of community values, which prioritize cooperation, solidarity, compassion, and respect for human dignity. It recognizes that peace is not a personal achievement but a collective effort, and therefore emphasizes the need for individuals to cultivate positive relationships with one another and work towards common goal. This is reflected in the African concept of **Ubuntu**, which emphasizes the interdependence of human beings and the essential unity of humanity.

Secondly, the African understanding of peace is characterized by a holistic approach that recognizes the interconnection between human beings, nature, and spiritual realm. It recognizes that peace is not only a social and political issue, but also an ethical and moral issue. African tradition regards peace as a spiritual state that involves inner peace, which is attained through spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and communal rituals.

Thirdly, African understanding of peace emphasizes the importance of addressing the roots causes of conflicts and violence, such as poverty, inequality, injustice, and exclusion. It recognizes that peacebuilding requires addressing structural and systematic challenges that leads to conflicts, such as land disputes, political exclusion, and economic deprivation. These requires collective action and a commitment to social justice and human rights.

African understanding of peace emphasizes the role of traditional institutions, such as chiefs, elders, and religious leaders, in promoting peace and conflict resolution. These institutions have the authority to mediate conflicts, settle disputes, and promote social harmony. In some cases, traditional approaches to peacebuilding have been successfully integrated with modern approaches, resulting in innovative and effective strategies for conflict resolutions.

Africans know what peace is to them; they know why they are not enjoying peace at present; and do not wait for external powers to restore peace on the continent. Relying on the ideologies of *Pax Africana* and *Negritude*, Africans crafted mechanisms under the auspices of the African Union, through which they attempt to ensure that they are at peace with each other.

Africans understand that peace is a precious good for all humanity. They know what peace means, want to have it, but they do not have and enjoy it in its totality. The main constraint to enjoyment of peace on the African continent lies in the realm of intervening exogenic forces of imperial colonialism and other Western and Eastern powers currently with economic influence on the continent. Moreover, global interests are much broader than imperial colonial powers, and their impact is more destructive than any other forces hitherto experienced on the African continent.

In conclusion, African understanding of peace is based on the principles of community values, holistic approach, addressing root causes, and traditional institutions. It offers valuable insights and practices for promoting peace and conflict resolution, which are relevant not only in Africa but also globally.

But, indigenous conflict resolution in African societies exists at different levels right from the family through the clan and to the community levels. Traditional conflict resolution mainly involves using indigenous institutions, knowledge and ideas to deal with conflicts. Traditional conflict resolution is defined as the “capability of social norms and customs to hold members of a group together by effectively setting and facilitating the terms of their relationship. Sustainability facilitates collective action for achieving mutually beneficial ends” (FredMensah, 2005, p. 2). It is a process in which stakeholders take conscious effort to work towards the



management of a conflict with the main focus on re-establishing the flow of harmonious relationship within individuals, families and communities (Matthew, 2014). It is reconciliatory in nature which is often characterized with symbolic gestures and associated rituals including the exchange of gifts and slaughtering of animals such as chickens, goats, sheep and cows (Ndumbe III, 2001). Traditional conflict resolution focuses on creating and restoring the impaired relationship with God, the spirits, ancestors, family and neighbors as the case might be and it is a healing process (Mbiti, 1991; Mahama, 2010).

Conflicts must be understood in their social context, involving “values and beliefs, fears and suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions, relationships and networks...” (Brock–Utne, 2006, p. 4). It is therefore essential to understand the root causes of conflicts so as to enable shared understandings of the past and present. The focus of conflict resolution especially from the indigenous perspective is as noted by Kendie and Bukari (2012), to mend the broken or damaged relationship, rectify wrongs and restore justice. Another aim is to ensure the full integration of parties into their societies again and to adopt the mood of co-operation. The overall objective of traditional conflict resolution is to avoid accusations and counter-accusations, settle hurt feelings and reach a compromise with a greater focus on helping improve the future relationship of the parties involved (Galaa & Bukari, 2014).

The key players in traditional conflicts resolution depend on the level at which it is being handled. Some conflicts can be processed at the family level with family heads or at the community level with the chief and elders. The roles played by the key actors may change from time to time as the situations demand. This is because there is no standard model with indigenous conflicts resolution processes (Esia-Donkoh, 2012). Thus, the traditional conflict resolution

approaches are flexible and dynamic and the whole process and content are influenced by the social context. The social situation of those involved is also important. Thus, the social surroundings feedback into or influence the process (Esia-Donkoh, 2012; Annan, 2013).

In some parts of Africa including Ghana, when the agreement is reached through indigenous conflict resolution, it is usually shared with all parties including the general community. This social perspective on conflict transformation has general advantages including the shared understanding of the conflict. It also encourages harmony through active participation in the process by all parties (Brock– Utne, 2006). According to Okrah (2003), traditional society's process conflicts through internal and external social controls. The internal social controls use processes of deterrence such as personal shame and fear of supernatural powers. External controls rely on sanctions associated with actions taken by others in relation to behaviors that may be approved or disapproved. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms focus on the principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation in dealing with common problems which underline the essence of humanity (Murithi, 2009).

Generally, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa involve the identification of the root cause of the problem and engaging all parties concerned to address the underlying issues. This usually ends with the guilty party(ies) acknowledging and accepting wrongdoing, which potentially leads to reconciliation. Usually, the process ends with either a compensation or just forgiveness (Brock- Utne, 2006; Murthi, 2006). The process of indigenous conflict resolution has to do with how indigenous structures and systems bring about actions intended to ensure peace at the individual and community level relationships. In this respect, conflict resolution procedures are generated from general cultural life and daily experiences of living.

Indigenous conflict resolution approaches in Africa are often criticized as being discriminative in nature especially among the vulnerable like children. For example, Opasina (2017) reported in his study that some people in Nigeria indicated a child of the commoner is not likely to get fair justice in the traditional system and that justice is sometimes delivered on the basis of “the son of whom you are”. Again, in Madagascar, the indigenous practice of “Dina” has allowed for summary executions to be perpetrated based on its decisions. Under indigenous system in Somalia, families of murder victims have the right to choose between compensation and the execution of the perpetrators (Kariuki, 2015).

Looking at the Nigerian context, the years 1841-1891 covered, roughly, the last half-century before the establishment of British rule in Nigeria. 1841, the year of the first Niger Expedition, marked the beginning of the movement to re-establish Christianity in this country, following the failure of earlier Catholic missions in Benin and Warri. 1891, the year of Bishop Crowther’s death, marked the end of the first phase of this new movement, the phase when the success of the missionary enterprise was associated largely with the creation and the encouragement of a Western-educated and Christian middle class. For the history of Christian missions in Nigeria, this first phase was only the ‘seedling’ time in preparation for the great expansion that came later with British rule. For the history of Nigeria, however, it was in this earlier period that the work of the missionaries has its greatest significance. After 1891 their expansion was largely incidental to the establishment of the colonial administration. Before 1891 they had a greater measure of initiative and their work had its own decisive influence. Things had not ‘fallen apart’. With the exception of Lagos, the different city-states and kingdoms, towns and villages, although increasingly under pressure from the British navy along the coast, still retained enough political authority and cultural stability to deal with missionaries more or less on a basis of equality.

There was no rush to join the Churches. Conversion among men in authority was negligible, except within the Delta states. For the most part, a dialogue was still possible between missionaries and the different communities, and there was room for ideas and personalities on both sides. It was not enough for the missionaries to be Europeans to be believed. They had to use education and the technology of Europe to argue, and to convince people. Later, the missionaries as Europeans became like gods, and tended to treat their parishioners as less than men. The dialogue was virtually suspended, for gods have no need to argue. The missionaries were able to exploit the prestige and the power of the white man already won by the colonial soldiers and administrators. It was then that, in the non-Muslim areas at least, the fabric of the old society gave way and people began to flock to the missions.

Spasmodic missionary activities started in Benin in 1515 when some Catholic missionaries set up a school in the Oba's palace for his sons and the sons of his chiefs who were converted to Christianity. The Catholics, through the influence of the Portuguese traders, were the first missionaries to set foot on Nigerian soil. The primary objective of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the 'heathen' or the benighted African to Christianity via education. The second missionary endeavor to Nigeria was marked by the advent of the first English-speaking Christian mission in Badagry in September 1842.

The Christian missionary school in Nigeria was without any doubt an adjunct of the Church. It was a replica of a similar development in Britain during the Dark Ages. The missionaries were generally strong disciplinarians and they had abiding faith in manual labour and the rod as the cure to all ills idleness, laziness, slow learning, truancy, disobedience, and irregularity of attendance. In the 17th century, the Roman Catholic missionaries found their way to Nigeria.

They came into cities like Benin and Warri where they preached Christianity. But they were unable to convert the kings and traditional rulers as these leaders were only interested in the guns and mirrors the Europeans offered them.

Eventually, slave trade was abolished in the British Empire in 1833 and many of the slaves were freed. Many years later, some of these slaves returned to Nigeria with the religion they had learned from their Europeans masters. The education provided by the missionaries was also instrumental in converting a good number of slaves to Christianity. One of the slaves that was instrumental to the advent of Christianity in Nigeria was Samuel Ajayi Crowther who was captured by the age of 12 by Fulani slave raiders and sold to Portuguese slave traders. Ajayi Crowther later regained his freedom and became the first African to be ordained bishop by the Christian Missionary Society (CMS). Additionally, Crowther was a pioneer of local Christian missionary work in the country and he was pivotal in the translation of the Bible into Yoruba language. Over the years, Christianity has grown rapidly.

In 1953, the percentage of the Christian population was 21.4% and that percentage has doubled to over 50% with over 75 million Christians in Nigeria. Currently, the Southern part of the country is dominated by Christians while the Northern part is composed of predominantly Muslims. Recent estimates put the percentage of Nigeria's population that practice Christianity between 40% – 49.3%. Of that percentage, about 74% are Protestants, 25% Roman Catholic, while the rest are split among other Christian denominations.

## **THE FIRST MISSIONARY IN NIGERIA**

In the days of Portuguese contacts with Nigeria, Catholic priests had established missionary stations in Benin and the neighborhood. But despite the work of Portuguese missionaries based on the island of Sao Tome and later of Spanish missionaries in Benin, it was not until the nineteenth century that the Christian religion was firmly established in Nigeria. It started first among the Yoruba receptive who had embraced the Christian faith while in Sierra Leone (freed from slave trading ships by the British Royal Naval Squadron), and who returned home between 1839 and 1845.

The pastors of the Church Missionary Society, from Badagry and later from Sierra Leone, visited these Christian communities in Abeokuta and other towns. Among the first missionaries was the Rev. Henry Townsend who went from Sierra Leone to Badagry in 1842 in his company was the Rev Ajayi Crowther. Success followed the efforts of the pioneer missionaries. C.M.S. churches were firmly established in several important towns, such as Abeokuta (1846), Lagos (1851), Ibadan (1853), and Oyo (1856). Next, branches of the C.M.S. church were founded in south-eastern Nigeria, the chief centers being Bonny and Brass.

The effects of work done by Bishop Ajayi Crowther, assisted by the Igbo receptive the Rev. J. C. Taylor, in these parts of southern Nigeria can still be seen today. Other missionaries opened mission stations in the country. These included the Baptist missionaries who under the American evangelist, Thomas Bowen, started work from Ogbomosho in 1855. About the same time, the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) headed by the Rev. Hope Waddell started pioneering work, in 1846, in Calabar.

Hope Waddell was later joined by the Rev. Hugh Goldie and William Anderson. Another missionary whose memory is revered in Nigeria was Mary Slessor, she arrived in the country in 1876, and for many years worked assiduously as a missionary nurse. She succeeded in stopping the killing of twins in the areas where she served.

The story of the planting of Christianity in Nigeria would be incomplete without a mention of the Italian Roman Catholic priest, Father Berghero. Operating from Whydah in what is today the People's Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey), Father Berghero, in 1860, visited Abeokuta and Lagos where freed Catholic slaves from Brazil welcomed him warmly.

A permanent station was established in Lagos in 1868, soon followed by others at Lokoja, Abeokuta and Ibadan. Within ten years of Father Berghero's visit, the Roman Catholic Church in Nigeria had become so well established that it ceased to be under administration from Dahomey. By 1885, the church had spread further inland, thanks to Father Joseph Lutz who started work around Onitsha in 1886 and spread the gospel in many parts of the present-day Imo and Anambra States.

Another important Catholic missionary in this area was the Irishman, Bishop Shanahan. Although Lokoja had a small C.M.S. station in 1858, it was not until 1889 that the missionaries entered Hausa land, which was predominantly Muslim. Their converts, for many years, were confined to the people of southern Nigerian extraction resident in the north, and to the large non-Muslim population of the north. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2025.

## **CHRISTIANITY TODAY IN NIGERIA**

When it comes to Christianity in recent times, the tides seem to have changed as the country has begun to export its Christianity to other parts of the world. This has been partly due to a new type of churches called the mega churches. Mega churches seem to have arrived with the advent of Pentecostalism which can be traced to the early 20th century in America. The mega church syndrome can be traced to 1910 when a local charismatic movement led by an Anglican deacon split from the Anglican church to become the Christ Army Church.

There was a revival in this new church and as a result, the church grew in size forming independent churches. These churches were characterized by fervent prayer styles, known by the Yoruba word Aladura (praying people). Some of the early Aladura churches include the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society, founded in 1925, and the Church of the Lord (Aladura), founded in 1930.

One of the most popular preachers during this period was Joseph Babalola of Faith Tabernacle. The preacher led a revival in the 1930s that converted thousands of locals. In 1932, his church was initially associated with the Pentecostal Apostolic Church of Great Britain but later broke away to form an independent church, the Christ Apostolic Church.

Over the next two decades, foreign Pentecostal churches began to plant branches in Nigeria. It was during this period the Welsh Apostolic Church was established in 1931 and Assemblies of God in 1939. Also, the Foursquare Gospel Church was also introduced in Nigeria at the same time. Some local Pentecostal churches also sprung up; these include the Celestial Church of



Christ which arrived in western Nigeria from Benin to become one of Africa's largest Aladura churches.

## **CHURCH OF NIGERIA.**

Christianity came to Nigeria in the 15th century through Augustinian and Capuchin monks from Portugal. The first mission of the Church of England was, though, only established in 1842 in Badagry by Henry Townsend. In 1864 Samuel Ajayi Crowther, an ethnic Yoruba and former slave, was elected Bishop of the Niger and the first black Bishop of the Anglican Communion. Lagos became a diocese of its own in 1919.

Leslie Gordon Vining became Bishop of Lagos in 1940 and in 1951 the first archbishop of the newly inaugurated Province of West Africa. Vining was the last Bishop of Lagos of European descent. On 24 February 1979, the sixteen dioceses of Nigeria were joined in the Church of Nigeria, a newly founded province of the Anglican Communion, with Timothy O. Olufosoye, then Bishop of Ibadan, becoming its first archbishop, primate and metropolitan. Between 1980 and 1988, eight additional dioceses were created.

In 1986, he was succeeded by J. Abiodun Adetiloye who became the second primate and metropolitan of Nigeria, a position he would hold until 1999. In 1989 the Diocese of Abuja was created on the area of the new capital of Nigeria with Peter Akinola as first bishop. The 1990s was the decade of evangelization for the Church of Nigeria, starting with the consecration of mission bishops for the mission dioceses of Minna, Kafanchan, Katsina, Sokoto, Makurdi, Yola, Maiduguri, Bauchi, Egbado and Ife. Between 1993 and 1996 the primate founded nine dioceses;

Oke-Osun, Sabongidda-Ora, Okigwe North, Okigwe South, Ikale-Ilaje, Kabba, Nnewi, Egbu and Niger Delta North.

In December 1996 five more mission dioceses were added in the north Kebbi, Dutse, Damaturu, Jalingo and Oturkbo and their respective first bishops elected.[8] In 1997 and 1998 four more dioceses were established; Wusasa, Abakaliki, Ughelli and Ibadan North. In 1999 the Church of Nigeria added 13 new dioceses; four in July (Oji River, Ideato, Ibadan South and Offa), eight in November (Lagos West, Ekiti West, Gusau, Gombe, Niger Delta West, Gwagwalada, Lafia and Bida) and Oleh in December. So, within 10 years there were 27 new regular dioceses and 15 mission dioceses created.

The Archbishop of Canterbury declared the Church of Nigeria to be the fastest growing church in the Anglican Communion. In 1997 the Church of Nigeria was split into three ecclesiastical provinces. In 2000, Archbishop Peter Akinola succeeded Archbishop Adetiloye as primate of the Church of Nigeria.

One of his first actions as primate was to get together 400 bishops, priests, lay members and members of the Mothers' Union to elaborate a vision for the Church of Nigeria under the chairmanship of Ernest Shonekan, a former President of Nigeria. Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2025.

### **3.5 Sociological Perspective on Peace**

As earlier posited, peace can be a state of harmony or the absence of hostility. "Peace" can also be a non-violent way of life. "Peace" is used to describe the cessation of violent conflict. Peace can mean a state of quiet or tranquility; an absence of disturbance or agitation. Peace can also describe a relationship between any people characterized by respect, justice and goodwill. Peace

can describe calmness, serenity, and silence. This latter understanding of peace can also pertain to an individual's sense of himself or herself, as to be "at peace" with one's own mind.

So far concepts of peace closely linked with state of absence of war, harmonious relations; freedom from disputes, the absence of mental stress or anxiety, security and peace environment to cease hostilities. Since absence of war does not guarantee for absence of hostilities or social problems, no war does not imply peace and peaceful society. Holistic meaning and genuine peace are possible where there is virtue, justice, order, good law, good government, good relationship, well-being, freedom, and respect for human rights, security etc., or an absence of violence. On the other hand, if we focus on the state of mind, peace is calm, serenity, tranquility or peacefulness of mind. Furthermore, if we refer to the state of a place or an atmosphere, peace means quietness and silence (Yoder Shalom 208).

### **3.6 Christian-Muslim Relationship in Nigeria**

Throughout the nearly fifteen centuries of Muslim-Christian encounter, individual adherents of both traditions often have lived peaceably with each other. At the same time, Muslim expansion into Christian territories and Christian imperialism in Muslims lands have fostered fear and ill-will on both sides. Repercussions from the Crusades continue to resound in the contemporary rhetoric employed by defenders of both faiths. In recent years relations between Muslims and Christians across the globe have become increasingly polarized, fanned by anti-Islamic rhetoric and fear mongering. While a number of verses in the Qur'an call for treating Christians and Jews with respect as recipients of God's divine message, in reality many Muslims have found it difficult not to see Christians as polytheists because of their doctrine of the Trinity. Christians, for their part, traditionally have viewed the Qur'an as fraudulent and Muhammad as an imposter

(Smith 15). Old sectarian rivalries play out with serious consequences for minority groups, both Christian and Muslim. Conflicts in Africa were often labeled as ethnic, political, or ideological perpetuations of long-standing struggles over land, power, and influence. These conflicts now tend to be labeled in accord with the specifically religious affiliation of their participants. Understanding the history of Muslim-Christian relations, as well as current political realities such as the dismantling of the political order created by European colonialism, helps give context to current “hot spots” of Muslim-Christian conflict in the world.

Many areas of Africa, of course, are suffering greatly today as a result of deteriorating conditions and relations between Muslim and Christian groups. One obvious example is Nigeria. Since 1990 conflicts between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria have become violent and often deadly. The full picture is complex and related directly to the British colonialist venture in Nigeria. Thus, relations between the two communities are based not only on religion, but also more specifically are a combination of economic, political, and religious factors (Smith 22).

Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria from different perspectives all aimed at promoting good inter-faith relations for peaceful coexistence among all and sundry regardless of religious affiliations. Conferences on inter-religious dialogue have been held on several occasions, but despite all these moves to promote good Christian-Muslim relations and the areas of convergences of these religions, the nation has continued to witness cases of untold crises that have today led to mistrust, suspicion, and fear between the adherents of the two prominent faiths. It is on this premise that the paper stressed selected theological doctrines common to the two religions which can be employed to bring about good neighborliness, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence, especially among the adherents of Islam and Christianity. The historical development of each of these religions is also exploited.

It has been a protracted and difficult relationship between the Christian and Muslim civilizations. The balance of power has fluctuated over the centuries in a pendulum-like manner; at times it appears that the Muslim community has taken the initiative, with the Christian world simply being forced to respond to events outside of itself, while at other times it appears that Muslims have been forced to respond to Christian challenges in various ways (Goddard 2000).

Christian and Muslim people have interacted with one another throughout Nigeria's pre- and post-Independence history. Additionally, there have been crises and disputes between the two communities. Therefore, it is important to look for opportunities for peaceful interaction and communication between followers of Nigeria's two most popular religions, Christianity and Islam. As a strong human drive, religion has a contradictory impact on society since it simultaneously plays a major role in influencing the spiritual, sociopolitical, and economic well-being of millions of people while also catalyzing conflict. The tragic interreligious war in Nigeria calls into question the notion that Islam and Christianity are peaceful religions. For instance, Tamer (2020) explores the history, meaning, and application of the term "peace" in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It reveals the similarities and distinctions among the three monotheistic faiths as well as the various discussions of peace that have taken place within each of these three traditions. These days, several researchers focus on the crisis and conflicts between these two religions (Salawu 2010; Ojo and Lateju 2010; Çancı and Odukoya 2016). It is on this note that it becomes imperative to realize that matters relating to religion are issues that should be handled with care considering the constitutional nature of Nigeria as a multi-religious state, which allows every citizen to practice a religion of his or her choice. With this constitutional provision, places of worship, especially Churches and Mosques exist in every nook and cranny of the country, and those that have the privilege to hold key posts in the affair of the nation also

practice either of these religions. This view, therefore, connotes that, Islam and Christianity are two of the major religions that influence the thinking and values of a great percentage of the population of the country, but the religious situation in the country today calls for the immediate and urgent need for dialogue that would lead to peaceful coexistence among all and sundry. This is because. Worshippers of God in whatever form, are generally viewed belong to one family of God, and should, as a result, promote brotherly love, and mutual kindness towards one another.

In fact, they are expected to put hands together for the betterment of the community in which they live. But this is not always the case in most parts of the world, and Nigeria in particular (S. A. Fatokun 2013, 315).

Similarly, events in the country have also proven that many adherents of Islam and Christianity are very intolerant as shown in the various cases of inter and intra-religious crises, which have for decades affected Nigerian developments negatively. These two religions that are expected to proclaim and project the love and kindness of God are frequently at war with one another.

Today a major player in exacerbating Nigerian sectarian violence is the Muslim sect called Boko Haram, which is strongly opposed to Western values and forms of education and generally shares a Taliban ideology. In recent years, members of Boko Haram have raided schools, churches, and government offices in their fight to carve out an Islamic enclave in northeastern Nigeria. Such terrorist attacks have had a strong effect on the country's economy since farmers in the area are frightened away from growing their crops (Smith 25). The research states that religious leaders, instructors, Government, ecumenical movements, and other stakeholders in religious matters should endeavor to be more committed to the truth claim of religion.

The need for peaceful coexistence becomes very germane in a secular state like Nigeria arising from her history of diverse religious crises. Peace is synonymous with tranquility which every society desire. It is a situation that is free from violence, commotion, or disorder. Therefore, Peaceful coexistence is the ability to live amicably with one another without friction, regardless of religious affiliation. Wambutda (2012) defines it as “equal partners working harmoniously in a system for a noble cause” (p. 10). Generally speaking, the two religions have many things in common, that should call for peaceful co-existence. There are areas of belief they both shared. According to Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, the current Vice President of Ghana in a lecture to mark the Ghanaian National Chief Imam’s 100th Birthday; he stressed the areas of cordiality between Christians and Muslims which should be food for thought to adherents of the two religions, Islam and Christianity, globally. In his lecture, he opined as follows: Many people don’t realize that between Muslims and Christians, there is more that unites us than divides us. What’s more, we worship the same God, Allah, the God of Abraham, the God Moses, the God of Isaac, and the God of David. Same God we all worship. We all believe in the virgin birth of Jesus. As the two religions, we both believe that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. We reverence Mary so much that she is the only female who is mentioned directly by name in the Quran, the only female. And you have a whole chapter in the Quran Surat Mariam which is dedicated to the virgin Mary. Indeed, there are more mentions of Mary in the Holy Quran than in the whole New Testament, we all believe in the miracles of Jesus Christ. We believed as Muslims, He talked when He was in the cradle. We believe in the miracles He performed to give sight to the blind and so on. As Muslims and Christians, we all believe that Jesus will come back before the day of judgement to defeat the false prophets or the anti-Christ. We all shared that common belief. But what is also more important is that the Prophet Mohammed (SAW), told all of us as Muslims that among all

the faiths that we have, we as Muslims should be close to the Christians, that is what he told us, that we as Muslims should be closest to the Christians because they are good people. So, today, if you are a Muslim, and you say you don't like Christians, it means you don't understand Islam. And if you are a Christian, and you say you don't like Muslims, then you don't understand Christianity. There is more that unites us as the two religions than divides us. There is so much more. But we allow people like terrorists to hide under the cloak of religion to try to divide us (Youtube.com 2019). From the discussion above, it could be said that Christianity and Islam shared so many things in common. They are both revealed religions. Both religions are missionary to the core (Boer 2009, 8002:106). Also, Quadri in supporting the aforementioned was of the view that; "the Quran contains much information about the life of Jesus" (Quadri 2012, 32).

Other areas of convergences that could be employed for peaceful coexistence are belief in the oneness of God, in life after death, the day of judgment, and the fall of man because of disobedience. Additionally, events have also revealed that Islam and Christianity teach tolerance, hospitality, and good neighborliness regardless of religious differences. This is expressed during social functions or festival periods where we have an exchange of gifts, and food items.

The kind of relationship that exists between them further explained the concept of salt which Jesus spoke about in Matthew 5:13-14; "you are the salt of the earth". This ought to be the position of Christians among their neighbors in the world. The Holy Quran as well teaches this concept in Quran 32:19 which says "But as for those who believe and do good works, for them are the gardens of Retreat." here it urges one to do well and refrain from evil practices. Similarly, believers of the two religions are admonished to live in peace with all men. For instance, Psalm 34:14, says; "Turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." Romans 12:18, also



declares; “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Also, the Glorious Quran in Sura 8:61; “And if they incline to peace, incline thine also to it, and trust in Allah. Lo! He is the Hearer, the Knower.” Sura 9:26, also declared, “Then Allah sent His peace of reassurance down upon His messenger and the believers and sent down hosts ye could not see and punished those who disbelieved. Such is the reward of disbelievers.” Furthermore, teachings about the dignity of labour and discouraging harvesting where one has not planted are adequately explained in the two glorious books. For instance, Paul in 1Thessalonians 3:6-13 warned that: ‘If anyone will not work, let him not eat’. On the other hand, the Quran too condemns seeking wealth illegitimately. It condemns the vanity of this world as the Quran puts it in Quran 57:20: “The life of this world is but a matter of illusion’. In line with this is the concept of God judging all men on the last day taught by the two religions. To the Muslims, the Quran 23:117 mentioned the idea of a man appearing before Allah as a judge. And in various places, God is called the avenger. Likewise, among Christians, God is called the Judge. In Romans 2:16, the apostle Paul talked about the day when God shall judge the secret of man by Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is apparent that none of these religions preach violence. They are consistent in encouraging peaceful co-existence and harmonious living in society. This is because, evidence abounds that in this kind of social structure and dispensation, adherents of the different faiths, without doubt, relate with one another in every aspect of life socially, economically, and politically. Thus, they should mutually and reciprocally interact well to further be of benefit one another and improve individual and national productivity. This is because we are all citizens of the same country. We have no other nation we can call our own, hence the need to protect and guide our common heritage and identity. Similarly, arising from, several attempts have been made by individuals and governments in the past as far back as 1958, 1974, and 1978, on official and unofficial levels

to promote dialogue. For instance, it was recorded that in December 1978, an official attempt at the dialogue was made when at Jos; Under the auspices of the National Catholic Bishops Conference, Chukwulozie organized a dialogue meeting at a national level. In the meeting, it was advocated that Christian-Muslim committees in every state in the country should be set up. Such committees were never created, and even where they had existed, like the Jos, at the time of this dialogue meeting, the committees were dormant (Ottuh, Ottuh, and Aitufe 2014, 60). The above is an indication that some Muslims and Christians have genuine motives and good intentions to promote dialogue. Why it is also germane for us in a secular nation to promote peaceful co-existence is that the three officially recognized religions in Nigeria hold God in very high esteem above any creature. No wonder it was opined that; Whether in the shrine, the mosque, or the church, the recognized final arbiter who accepts all prayers and supplications made in each of the places of worship is God. It does not matter then what ways or methods are employed to reach the omnipotent God, long as the ways or methods do not infringe on the right of others (Balogun 2012, 4).

Dialogue can bring about transformation. That conviction grounds Ikenna Paschal Okpaleke's argument concerning dialogue between groups and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue in particular. In *Ecumenical and Interreligious Identities in Nigeria: Transformation through Dialogue*, he examines the fundamental question: What are the additional assets and transformed views which Christian denominations committed to ecumenical dialogue can bring to the table of interreligious dialogue? If Christian dialogue partners, particularly in Nigeria (in this case, Anglicans and Roman Catholics), can change how they perceive one another moving from antagonism to friendship, division

to unity then, they as ecumenically transformed Christians, can better engage in fruitful and transforming dialogue with the religious other, particularly Muslims.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY IN ADAMAWA STATE

#### Introduction

The Demography and Religious Composition of Adamawa State can be seen in the table below which will give us more understanding about the state.

The projected population for Adamawa State's Local Government Areas (LGAs) in 2025

No	Local Government Area	Population Porjection (2025)
1	Demsa	293,175
2	Fufore	344,800
3	Ganye	280,300
4	Girei	213,500
5	Gombi	243,300
6	Guyuk	290,800
7	Hong	279,400

No	Local Government Area	Population Porjection (2025)
8	Jada	277,300
9	Lamurde	183,800
10	Madagali	222,500
11	Maiha	181,500
12	Mayo-Belwa	251,300
13	Michika	255,300
14	Mubi North	244,800
15	Mubi South	213,500
16	Numan	150,300
17	Shelleng	244,300
18	Song	321,800
19	Toungo	85,800

No	Local Government Area	Population Porjection (2025)
20	Yola North	328,700
21	Yola South	323,500

**Fig. 2**

#### Age Distribution

Age Group	Percentage	Estimate Population
0-14 years	45%	2,340,000
15-64 years	50%	2,600,000
65 years & older	5%	260,000

**Fig. 3**

## Gender Distribution

Gender	Percentage	Population Estimate
Female	51%	2,652,000
Male	49%	2,548,000

**Fig. 4**

## Ethnic Composition

Ethnic Group	Major Groups in the State
Fulani	Predominant ethnic groups in both rural and urban areas.
Bachama/Bata (Bwatiye)	Found mainly in Numan and Lamurde LGAs.
Huba (Kilba)	Primarily in Hong LGA.
Longuda	Found in Guyuk and Shelleng LGAs.
Margi	Predominantly in Madagali and Michika LGAs.
Higgi	Found in Michika and Mubi areas.

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Major Groups in the State</b>
Hausa	Scattered across the state, especially in urban centers.
Mumuye	Found in Mayo-Belwa and Jada LGAs.
Bura	Found in Gombi and Song LGAs.

**Fig. 5**

#### Religious Composition

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sunni Muslims	50%
Christians	40%

**Fig. 6**



## Urban and Rural Population

Area	Percentage	Population Estimate
Urban	26%	1,352,000
Rural	74%	3,848,000

**Fig. 7**

## Socioeconomic Factors

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Returnees:

Category	Estimated Number	Percentage of Total Population (%)
IDPs	218,555	~4.2%
Returnees	858,420	~16.3%

**Fig. 8**

## Employee Sector

Sector	Percentage	Estimated Workforce
Agriculture	70%	3,640,000
Trade/Commerce	15%	780,000
Public Sector/Services	10%	520,000
Construction	3%	156,000
Manufacturing/Industry	1.5%	78,000
Tourism	0.5%	26,000

Source: Facts About Adamawa State Population (2025)  
Posted on January 23, 2025 By Kenneth

### 4.1 Spiritual Impact of Christianity in Adamawa

Adamawa state is the home of a large number of Christians, forming the largest minority religion in the predominantly Muslim state. Christian communities in the state have been heavily attacked by Boko Haram. However, these attacks have reduced in recent years due to the Nigerian military's efforts to combat terrorism in the region. The state has the Roman Catholic Diocese of Yola, Ekklesiyar 'Yan'uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren) has its seat in the province. Deeper Life Bible Church and Living Faith Church are present in Yola. Most of the members of

the Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria are in the state, with the headquarters being at Numan. Fellowship Baptist Conference of Nigerian Baptist Convention has its seat at Mubi and Gongola Baptist Conference-Ag of Nigerian Baptist Convention has its seat at Numan. Gombi, Golantabal, Uvu, Nokwam Nbulum, Wurobarka and Mubi have National Evangelical Mission churches.

#### **4.2 Social Impact of Christianity in Adamawa**

Christian missionaries exercised considerable impact on the society through the medical services they provided. Unlike the Muslims Organizations' that recently built health centres, the Christian medical effort has been more institutionalized (Gbadamosi, 2004).

Also deserving of attention is the contribution of Christian religion to the intellectual development of the country. Apart from building schools and teacher training colleges, scholars of Christian religion wrote many works on the history and cultures of many Nigerian societies. Many Christian literary men produced series of local histories.

With the mastery of the grammar and vocabulary of several Nigerian Language, the Christian literary men were able to translate many religious works into them. It was these pioneering works on Nigerian Languages that made possible the beginning of a literary education. Religious works such as the Bible and the Catechism were therefore done into Yoruba, Hausa or Efik. Other works such as the Pilgrim's Progress also began to be translated (Gbadamosi, 2004).

Perhaps, the most laudable of the whole religious enterprise was the provision of a different and formal education. It is possible that no more than an elementary education was initially planned for the new converts who needed initiation to some basic teachings of the new faith. But as the educational appetites became whetted, it was the converts themselves who clamored for more. The Christians brought Western Education and on their pioneering effort the educational system

in the country has been built. They introduced not only elementary, but also secondary, teacher training and technical schools.

#### **4.3 Economic Impact of Christianity in Adamawa**

Before the advent of Christianity in Nigeria, the people of the Northern part were mostly African Traditional Religionists. Islam had penetrated the northern regions of Nigeria via the trade routes from the Southern shores of the Mediterranean and the Nile valley. The consideration of the role of Christian religion in Nigerian economic and socio-religious development historically brings into focus the important and far-reaching contributions of Christianity to Nigerians development in the areas of her economy, social life and religious development.

Max Weber (1992) has argued that issues of religion cannot safely be ignored in human discourse as it provides legitimacy and justifications for man's actions. Based on this dissertation, the activities of the Christian Religion (missions) in Nigeria had very important impact on the economic and socio-religious evolution of the Nigerian State. My attempt in this paper is not to concentrate on the spiritual dispensations of the Christian missionaries in their theological and doctrinal underpinnings. Rather, the motive is to bring to the fore, the role played by the Christian religion towards growing the economic, social and religious life of Nigerians since the advent of Christianity in Nigeria over 200 years.

The Christian missionaries who brought Christianity to Nigeria, founded mission homes, churches, schools, hospitals, dispensaries and plantations (Barkindo, 2012).

Nigeria has passed through incredible changes at an unprecedented speed within the last hundred years. Changes have occurred in the physical development, scientific inventions, education, and social structures of the country. Big vessels sail Nigeria's waterways, dock in its harbors, and are unloaded with huge, modern machinery. In one century, Nigeria witnessed the termination of the

slave trade, the coming of Christianity, the period of colonialism, and the declaration of independence. During the last century, Christianity has spread remarkably and its spread had also impacted on the Nigerian economy.

#### **4.4 Structural Impact of Christianity in Adamawa**

The structural impact of Christianity in Adamawa State, Nigeria, can be observed across various societal dimensions. Here are some key areas of impact:

1. **Educational Institution:** Christian missions have historically established schools, contributing to literacy and education in Adamawa. Some of the government schools most especially in the northern part of Adamawa were owned by the EYN church before the government has taken over in the name of, we are one. The Presence of private Christian schools has enhanced educational access and quality in the region.
2. **Healthcare Infrastructure:** Christian organization have played a significant role in healthcare provision, establishing hospitals and clinics that deliver essential medical services, maternal healthcare, and health education. This has improved the overall health outcomes in the state.
3. **Community Development Projects:** Churches and Christian NGOs often engage in community development initiatives, focusing on agriculture, clean water supply, and poverty alleviation. This poverty reduction and sustainable development work supports the livelihoods of local communities.
4. **Socio-Cultural Transformations:** Christianity has influenced local cultural practices, introducing new values and reshaping community norms. This includes the promotion of family structures, gender roles, and community gatherings.

5. **Interfaith Relations:** in diverse religious landscape, Christianity has fostered dialogues between different faith groups in Adamawa. While there are interfaith collaborations, tension can also arise, impacting community relations.
6. **Political Structure:** The influence of Christianity in political interactions and leadership structures is notable. Many Christian leaders are involved in local governance, advocating for issues important to Christian communities.
7. **Conflict Resolution:** Christian institutions in Adamawa have been active in peacebuilding and conflict efforts, particularly in addressing issues related to ethnic and religious tensions.

The structural impact of Christianity in Adamawa State is evidence in these areas, contributing to the region's social, economic, and political frameworks.

#### **4.5 Political Impact of Christianity in Adamawa**

Christianity has significantly influenced the political landscape in Adamawa through various means. Here are some few points regarding its political impact:

1. **Political Mobilization:** Churches and Christian organizations often mobilize congregations for political action, encouraging voter registration and participation in elections. This has led to increased electoral participation among Christians.
2. **Advocacy and Social Justice:** Many Christian leaders and groups advocated for social justice, human rights, and ant-corruption measures. They are vocal about issues such as governance, public accountability, and the welfare of the marginalized.
3. **Political Leadership:** A number of prominent Adamawa political leaders identify as Christians, which may influence party affiliations and electoral strategies, especially in

predominantly Christian regions. People like Dr. Suzan Mark Zira are doing their best in that capacity that she is the PDP Women Leader of Adamawa State.

4. Religious Institutions as Political Actors: Churches have sometimes acted as political entities in their own right, influencing policies and governance structures at local and state levels. Some Clergies like Rev. Amos A. Duwala and Rev. Amos Yohanna (RAY) are actively involved in politics and are using their platforms to address political issues sometimes.
5. Interfaith Relations and Tensions: Christianity's presence in Adamawa can create both cooperation and conflict with Islam, leading to political tensions, especially in areas where both religions coexist. Such dynamics can shape political scenarios, including elections and policymaking.
6. Influence on Policy: Christian values and teachings have the potential to influence public policy, particularly concerning issues like education, healthcare, family, and moral standards.
7. Civil Society and NGOs: Many Christian organizations operate as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that focus on governance, human rights, and development, significantly shaping public policy and community initiatives.
8. Peacebuilding Efforts: Christian leaders and denominations often play critical roles in mediating conflicts, promoting peacebuilding initiatives, and addressing the root causes of political violence.

Overall Christianity in Adamawa and Nigeria at large has contributed to both the democratization process and ongoing challenges related to religious and ethnic conflicts within the country's political system.

#### **4.6 Role of the Church in Conflict Resolution in Adamawa**

Religious diversity is a possible feature of any human society. Even in a religious homogenous society, there are factions and sects within a particular religion. The diversity in religious conviction gives rise to a lot of options based on religious inclination. The society in which the religion is practiced need to be at peace for the religion to thrive and be propagated hence, dialogue is necessary as to see how the orthodoxy and orthopraxy can lead to peaceful co-existence as they define the societal norms and values. This research has looked into the issues of dynamism of religious dialogue or inter-faith meeting in the light of growth of Christianity in Adamawa, being a multi-faith, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state. In Adamawa, inter-religious dialogue has been in progress especially through Christian and Muslim Peace Initiative (CAMPI).

The foundation for religious dialogue and peaceful co-existence was laid by EYN-Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. And during this meeting, it was discovered that inter-religious dialogue melts the walls of in-difference and enhances understanding of the religious world view.



## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **CHURCH AND MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN THE SOCIETY**

#### **5.1 The impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church in the maintenance of peace in the society:**

The contemporary churches should continue to emphasize the biblical teaching on love, forgiveness, and reconciliation through sermons, Sunday school lessons, and other church gatherings, and promote peace as a core Christian value.

Churches also create inclusive communities. Many churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century strive to welcome an inclusive community that embrace people from all backgrounds and walks of life. This helps foster a sense of belonging and reduces social divisions.

Churches often serve as platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, bringing together individuals and groups with different perspectives. They provide a safe space for people to share their experiences, listen to each other, and work towards common understanding. It continues to play a vital role in advocating for justice and equalities. They speak out against discriminations, oppression, and human violations, and support policies that promote a more just and equitable society.

Other impacts that the church plays are striving to be a model of peace and reconciliation within their own community. By resolving conflict peacefully and seeking forgiveness, they demonstrate the transformative power of Christian values. Besides, many churches actively support peacebuilding initiatives, both locally and globally. They provide financial, material, or volunteer support to organizations working to promote peace and reconciliation. They offer educational programs on peace and justice, teaching about the causes and consequences of conflict and the importance of non-violence conflict resolution.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, churches are increasingly engaged in interfaith cooperation, working with other religious communities to promote peace and understanding. This helps to build bridge between different faith traditions and reduces religious tensions.

More so, churches often engage in community outreach and service programs, providing assistance to the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable. This helps to address underlying social and economic factors that can contribute to conflict and instability (Tutu, 57). With the rise of digital technology, churches are leveraging social media, websites, and other online platforms to spread messages of peace and promote peacebuilding initiatives. This helps to reach a wider audience and amplified the impacts of peacebuilding efforts.

## **5.2 The Challenges Faced by the 21st Century Church:**

Some of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century churches are:

**1) Biblical Illiteracy.** Biblical literacy is a huge problem in the Nigerian churches, and it makes many of the challenges on this list all the more challenging. Quite simply, people in churches may pay lip service to the importance of the Bible, but by and large they do not read it or know it.

**2) Presence.** Christians ought to be people of presence, connected to God and to one another through the inhabiting, unifying power of the Holy Spirit. But the 21st century world busies our lives and distracts us so that every moment pulls us away from presence. The church must reprioritize its vocation as presenters of God's presence in the world, and to do so we must cultivate habits and liturgies that create the space and contours for that presence to be felt and known.

**3) Disembodied Tendencies.** The trajectory of technology is away from incarnational presence and toward disembodied experience. We increasingly live our lives via screens, streams, apps, phones. Our relationships are digital. This exacerbates existing Gnostic tendencies (a cerebral rather than embodied faith) and subtly deemphasizes the crucial physicality of the church, the “body of Christ” in the material and not just theoretical sense. Churches should find ways to encourage physical gatherings, the practice of the Lord’s Supper, meals together in neighborhoods, bodily movement in worship, shaking hands and hugging each other, whatever it takes.

**4) Compartmentalization.** We live our mediated lives via windows and boxes. We chat with multiple people at a time, post one fragment of our lives here and another there, consume visual media in one window and read the Bible in another. All of this makes it easier to fracture our lived experience into disconnected compartments, a process that wreaks havoc on our spiritual formation. Integrity is wholeness, all parts of our lives integrated and reflective of the Lordship of Christ. Churches today must work extra hard to cultivate this.

**5) Boredom.** We are an antsy culture. Everything is fast-paced and harried. We have short attention spans and get bored easily, and this poses a huge challenge to the church. The values of routine, tradition and stability that define the church are distasteful in our fretful age. The tricky task of the church in the 21st century is to lead people to awe, wonder and worship without watering things down or constantly reinventing the wheel.

**6) Temptation to Reinvent the Wheel.** The boredom challenge leads to this challenge, to “rethink” church every couple year. The problem is endemic in Nigerian evangelicalism. It is exhausting to read the scores of books that come out every year that provide a new paradigm or

prescription for a revived church. One is tempted to just become Catholic so as to avoid the nauseous glut of “The church must become to survive” blog posts and book rants. In this sense the researcher thinks that the evangelical church should become a bit more Catholic, trusting a bit more in continuity rather than seeing every cultural change as an invitation to reinvent the wheel.

**7) Complexity.** Related to our temptation to reinvent the wheel is the temptation to complicate Christianity and church life. We see it in the enormous staffs and array of programs that turn churches into bureaucratically complex corporations. Complexity is cumbersome. It impairs mission. Especially at a time when faithful churches will be increasingly exiled from mainstream culture, we need to become leaner and nimbler. We need to rediscover the beauty of simplicity, focusing on the core practices and historic sacraments of the church. The more complicated we make the church, the less countercultural she is.

**8) Consumer Christians.** The ubiquity of consumerism in late capitalism has fully infiltrated the church, to the extent that “church shopping” and “what I got from the sermon” are things we say without thinking anything of it. People go to Sunday services to “get something.” They choose churches that “fit them” and match their checklist of preferences, just as one would choose a car or a new pair of jeans. But churches must challenge rather than cater to this mentality. Church is a place where members of a body come together for purposes beyond themselves. It’s an invitation to join Christ in what he is already doing in the world, not an invitation for Christ to affirm our self-actualization.

**9) The Temptation to Homogeneity.** The consumerism of contemporary Christianity has unsurprisingly led to churches that are more homogeneous than ever. When we go to churches that fit us (how we look, talk and worship) we will naturally be surrounded by people who look, talk and worship just like us. But homogeneity is not the biblical ideal. The power of the gospel is that of unifying diverse groups of people, breaking down the walls of hostility that naturally divide us (race, class, culture, gender, music preference, whatever). At a time when social media allows us to curate feeds and surround ourselves with people who agree with us and confirm our biases, this work becomes even more difficult.

**10) The Idol of Autonomy.** Little poses a bigger threat to the church in 21st century western culture than the pervasive mindset that individual people are the sole arbiters of their identity, morality and destiny. The “be and do whatever feels right to you” philosophy of expressive individualism is fundamentally at odds with Christianity, which calls us to bow to the lordship of Christ. Churches must counter this and disciple people to submit their convictions about themselves, however sincere and authentic they may be, to the authority of Jesus Christ as revealed to us in Scripture.

**11) Aversion to Commitment.** We live in a culture that is commitment averse. Millennials are the fear of missing out generation, preferring to keep options open rather than committing to something or someone and foreclosing other possibilities. We are the generation that is opting to own homes at a far lower rate than previous generations did. We are far less likely to be affiliated with a religion or a political party than previous generations were, and we get married at lower rates and later in life than our parents and grandparents did. Naturally, this leads to weak (if any) commitment to the local church, which makes discipleship and true “long obedience”

formation difficult. Against this backdrop, churches can be relevant not by reinforcing unencumbered individualism but by challenging people to connect and commit to the body of Christ.

**12) The Struggle for Balance in an Immoderate Age.** As the world becomes more and more polarized and less and less capable of nuance and complexity (favoring simple, soundbite answers and tweetable convictions), the church will increasingly struggle to resist oversimplifying or too neatly resolving important tensions and complex paradoxes (which often leads to heresy). Truth and love. Word and Spirit. Justification and sanctification. General and special revelation. Gathering and scattering for mission. Now and not yet. Churches must lean into the complexities and paradoxes of these things and try to seek healthy balance, tempting as it will be to claim “radical” and “extreme” positions so as to appeal to Generation Antsy.

**13) Social Media.** There are some positive things social media offers, but there are many things about it that pose challenges to the contemporary church. Chief among them is the challenge of *posturing*, a performative obsession that feeds pride and hypocrisy. But social media also can complicate pastoral situations and make existing problems worse. Closely associated with social media, the allure of celebrity and “platform” has become pervasive in the 21st century and can destroy a church, particularly when pastors and leaders become more interested in impressing their “audience” than tending to the flock of God.

**14) The Need for Racial Reconciliation.** The church should be no haven for racism, and yet too often the church has let racial wounds fester and prejudice (whether explicit or implicit) go unaddressed. The 21st church must not be on the sidelines in the work of justice, healing and reconciliation; she must actually lead these efforts. The most vibrant centers of global

Christianity are not in western countries these days, and the face of western Christianity is becoming much more diverse. Churches that celebrate, embrace and embody this reality in their communities will thrive, while those that resist diversity and cling to their ethnocentric privilege will falter.

**15) Gender and Sexuality.** This is a vast area that encompasses a wide range of things (homosexuality, gender identity, marriage, divorce, egalitarian vs. complementarian gender roles, pornography, etc.), each of which could be its own category on this list. We are already seeing how this issue creates fragmentation within churches, denominations and para church organizations, and this will only continue. It will also be the primary issue that drives the cultural alienation of the church in the 21st century. The challenges are aplenty here, with major theological and pastoral implications. One of the biggest challenges for theologically conservative churches will be to maintain a consistent biblical ethic on these matters, speaking in truth and love about (for example) the witness of Scripture on divorce as much as the witness of Scripture on homosexuality.

**16) Religious Freedom.** The days are numbered for churches to freely conduct their affairs according to traditional beliefs and practices on issues of sexuality and gender, without government interference. Churches will need to disentangle from the government to the extent that they can (return to house-churches), or else figure out how to deal with inevitable legal/legislative challenges.

**17) Hyper-Intellectualism.** The other end of the spectrum is a challenge as well. As important as apologetics, theological training and rigorous rational defenses are for the faith, if our presentation of Christianity is entirely cerebral it is missing something. The church in the 21st

century must embrace the *mystery* and *embodied* elements of Christianity, the experience of God rather than just the conception of Him. This means worship and church life will be messier, more emotional and more unpredictable than the rationalists would prefer, but it will be more powerful and I daresay more transformative.

**18) Distrust of Authority.** For many reasons, younger generations today have a real distrust of authority. This makes church inherently challenging for them, not only because they have a hard time trusting leader, but they struggle with submitting fully to the authority of Christ and the authority of Scripture. Yet churches must lean into the “transcendent authority” of Christ, countercultural as that may be. As Russell Moore observed, “In an age suspicious of all authority outside the self, the appeal to a word that carries transcendent authority can be just distinctive enough to be heard, even when not immediately embraced.”

**19) Entanglements of Allegiances.** This has been a struggle for the church since her earliest days. In what sense does a person’s allegiance to empire or nation or some other secular community interact with their allegiance to Christ and his church? Today we’re seeing this play out in the messy entanglements of Christians in politics, to the point that we have to say out loud that trickle-down economics and the right to bear arms are political, not biblical values. Today’s focus on identity politics makes this even more challenging, as any given member of a church may see their Christian identity as secondary to some other identity (gender, race, political affiliation, nationality, etc.). Churches will have the messy task of acknowledging and respecting multifarious identities while also challenging people to prioritize them in the right way.

The security threat that the society has cannot be over-emphasized. Because the continued state of insecurity is a threat to the existence of Nigeria as a nation and people. It has also become a



threat to the fabric of national integration in the country. It has succeeded in creating an atmosphere of fear, anxiety, disquiet and mutual distrust among the ethnic groups in Nigeria (Jegede 69). The ever-increasing insecurity challenge in Nigeria has resulted to loss of human lives which cannot be equated with any other forms of loss. The herdsman and farmers' clashes, amongst many other conflicts' situations in the country, have led to the decimation of many lives since independence till date. Onwumere (10) quoted the number of deaths as at 2014 resulting from the herders and farmers' clashes as officially recorded by Institute for Economic and Peace as 1,229. This figure pales into insignificance when compared with the most recent killings witnessed in Benue State. This most recent Benue State experience, for example, recorded over 70 lives lost in one single attack of a community (Gadzama 15). No doubt, many individuals have been affected in several ways, such as, loss of bread winners, children became orphaned, women widows, while not forgetting the emotional and psychological effects of these challenges on them.

Owing to these security challenges, the Nigerian government, on its part, has also taken different policy measures to combat insecurity and insurgency. The military, through the command of Operation Lafiya Dole, has undertaken a series of actions aimed at defeating Boko Haram and other militia groups in the country. The creation of the 7th Division of the Army headquarters in Maiduguri, the use of air power through a series of operations called Ruwan Wuta (Rain of Fire) has also been an important aspect of combating insecurity (Adetuberu 185). Despite these efforts by the government, the security situation in Nigeria keeps deteriorating on daily basis. In fact, the crises between herders and farmers in Nigeria have been rated six times deadlier than Boko Haram insurgency. The recent abductions of students in Katsina, Niger and Kaduna States are few examples of the deplorable state of security in the country (Onu 87). At this juncture, one

wonders if there are roles the Church should be playing in combating insecurity or has the Church failed Nigeria in performing her duty of speaking out on the ills of governance. The Church should be an example in guiding and helping the Nigerian government to shape the society in whatever capacities. The General Superintendent (GS) of Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DLCM), Williams Kumuyi, reiterated the roles the Church can play in solving security challenges in the country. According to him,

Many people do not understand what the Church can offer when we talk of insecurity...the Church is not just for religion. If we look up to God and look up through the people, He has raised up to bring solutions to our problems, the Lord will give directions and solve everything (22).

On the lips of many Nigerian citizens and visitors to the country in recent time is the alarming rate of insecurity. This has affected all strata of the society; it has also made peaceful co-existence, national progress and development an impossible task (Abdulkadir 33). The security challenges facing Nigeria today includes but not limited to ethno-religious intolerance, poverty, Boko-Haram insurgency, banditry, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping among other related challenges. These challenges underscore the position of Defense Chief, General Abayomi Olonishakin, when he submitted in 2017 that the military is battling at least fourteen challenges across the country and this unpleasant situation indicates that the country “is effectively permanently in a state of emergence (56).” As at 2019, the military units were deployed in 28 of the 36 states owing to internal insecurity challenges. Many officers overstayed at their duty posts for many months as a result of lack of man power.

The maintenance of law and order in Nigeria became very challenging coupled with the fact that the available military personnel could only make do with obsolete weapons to fight bandits and insurgents who operate with sophisticated weapons.

Suffice it to say that the feeling of insecurity could be traced to the period of independence (1960-1970). At independence, the colonial government imposed a federal structure of government. Achumba (31), while quoting Wheare defined federalism as a constitutional division of power between two levels of government that are independent and coordinated in their respective spheres of influence. Unfortunately, the federal structure handed over to Nigeria at independence was not in conformity to Where's concept of a federal state. To this extent, the arrangement has often led to conflicts among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria whenever any part of the country feels threatened and cheated in sociopolitical arrangement. This has given rise to clamour and agitation for a true federating State, restructuring and the minority agitation after independence has been on the increase. These agitations, have no doubt, contributed to insecurity challenges being witnessed in all parts of the country, as seen in the activities of IPOB, Boko-Haram, Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra, agitation for Yoruba nation (Oodua Republic) and a few others (Gambari 21).

It is also pertinent to mention that security challenges in the North Central of Nigeria are on the rise. It has resulted in serious humanitarian tragedy in terms of loss of lives and property. The violent conflict of Plateau State, for example, has taken a worrisome and disturbing dimension as more than 4,000 and 7,000 persons have been killed since late 2001 in the outbreak in Jos (Sule 15). International Crisis Group (ICG) (18) reported that from September 2017 to June, 2018, many more were wounded and about 300,000 displaced; an estimated 176,000 in Benue State, about 100,000 in Nasarawa State, over 100,000 in Plateau State, about 19,000 in Taraba State and an unknown number in Adamawa State. In the same vein, it was reported by Olaniyi (32) etal, that Fulani herdsmen had killed 32 people in communities in Dekina and Omala Local Government Areas of Kogi State. They wore military uniform and wielded AK47, numbering

over 500; they burnt over 20 houses, killed anyone in sight and shot at those who tried to escape into the bushes (28). Similarly, the Daily Trust (56) reported that gun men had killed no fewer than 19 people in Tawari community in the Kogi Local Government Area, burning down buildings, including the palace of the king of the community. It was also a gory sight as heavily equipped dastardly-armed robbery gang stormed the Offa city on the 5th of April, 2018 and robbed 4 Commercial Banks in Kwara State, living 33 people dead.



**Fig. 11**



**Fig. 12**

**Michika Bridge that was destroyed by the insurgency**

The wave and fear of security challenges in Nigeria are increasing on daily basis. This has been compounded also by the rising activities of terrorism since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. More so, what the current trend of violence is imprinting on the psyche of an average Nigerian is that the government security apparatus is incapable of arresting the situation and guaranteeing the safety and security of its citizenry. This inability can be attributed to lack of insufficient fund, personnel and sophisticated weapons. This would therefore impact on the several human securities as the situation promotes fear while also limiting the people's ability to

develop economically. The nation's capacity to attract foreign investors would also be impaired as a potential investor that would earn Nigeria good revenue will avoid the country like a plague for fear of being attacked, kidnapped or killed.

Some of the factors responsible for security challenges in Nigeria are:

**i. Religious Differences and Intolerance**

Out of the aforementioned factors, religious intolerance is, perhaps arguably, the fundamental problem taking the front burner in Nigeria today. It is seen as the driving current, sparking other factors of insecurity into action. Religious intolerance in Nigeria is a foreign missionaries' legacy. The emergence of the two missionary religions (Islam and Christianity) ushered in intolerance and antagonism into the socio-religious landscape of the various communities that constitute Nigerian State (Atoi 46). Religious intolerance in Nigeria occurs both at inter and intra faith levels, that is, between one religious tradition and another and between sects or denominations within the same religion. The Sharia conundrum has generated a lot of religious intolerance in Nigeria since the topic was first raised in the Constituent Assembly of 1978. The newest form of religious intolerance is the activities of Boko Haram Islamic Fundamentalist Sect that is presently threatening the corporate existence of the country. In the words of Onuoha (54), the group seeks political and religious reforms within the country, more especially the adoption of Sharia Law. It is pertinent to state that the Constitution of Nigeria, especially section 10 of the 1999 Constitution prohibits the adoption of religion as state religion. Section 38 equally states that every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, political affiliation and religion. Therefore, religious laws like Sharia are not compatible with civil laws and it cannot override the Constitution.



**Fig. 13**

**Shops destroyed in Michika**

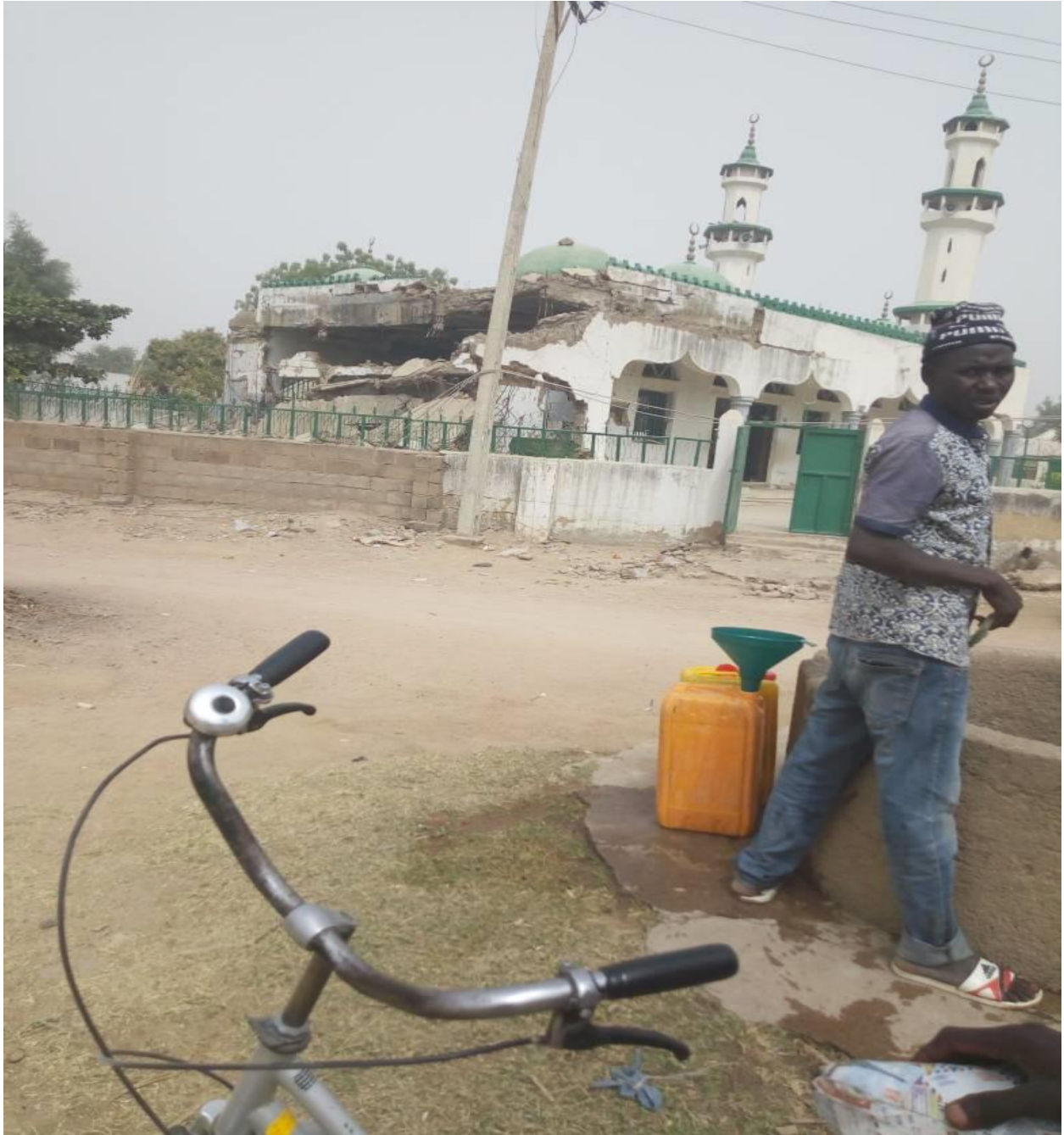




**Fig. 14**

**Church destroyed at Kuburshosho.**





**Fig. 15**

**Mosque destroyed in Adamawa North.**

To a large extent, one can say that Nigeria of the past boasted of religious flexibility and tolerance for many years. However, in recent time, it seems to have been shelved as gruesome

stories relating to religion rearing their ugly heads frequently, causing loss of lives. One can equally submit that a curious feature of today's Nigerian society is religious intolerance most especially in the Northern and Middle Belt regions of the country. Religious intolerance usually originates from the perceived superiority of one religion over the others. In single terms, religious intolerance or fanaticism is the inability of an adherent of a particular religion to acknowledge, accommodate and accept the right of others to live by another faith different from his own. Nigeria as a secular country is governed by her Constitution. Section 38(1) of the 1999 Amended Constitution states that, "every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion..." It is rather unfortunate religious intolerance poses a great threat to the implementation of this law.

## **ii. Bad Governance**

Good governance is the foundation upon which a strong economy and sustainable security are built. Unfortunately, the idea of good governance has eluded the nation. In the opinion of Cesare (21), it is clear that certain crimes are committed as a means of protest against bad governance and leadership. The major problem to development in all facets of life in Nigeria is leadership. Where leaders are not forthright in making productive policies that will contribute meaningfully to the life of her citizens, the end-result will be agitations and escalation of crimes as it is been witnessed in the country. To a large extent, the root cause of the prevalent violent clashes in Nigeria could be attributed to bad governance of the political elite and their collaborators. For instance, in the Niger Delta, the "milking" of the area without a corresponding care for the poor people led to complaints, revolting and rebellion against the government. During that time, there were instances where their farmlands and rivers (their sources of livelihood) were irreparably

damaged by oil spillage arising from exploitation, yet, nobody listened nor compensated them by providing alternative sources of survival, provision of health care, schools, infrastructures among many others. Groups like Niger Delta Vigilante, Niger Delta Frontier Force, Egbesu are of the view that since the Nigerian government is not ready to listen and engage them, perhaps, violent expression of their grievances may be the best option (Akintokunto 28). Although this lackadaisical attitude is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but virtually all African leaders are guilty of subverting the expectations of their citizens.

Bad governance has immensely succeeded in delaying the developmental process and weakening security policies in Nigeria. The political as well as socio-economic well-beings of the citizens are often-time compromised by the ruling class who sing songs of changes that end up in their pockets and that of their cronies (Sheriff 11). Thus, bad governance in every arm and tier of government flourishes like business in the country and this has continued to create a high level of insecurity situation facing the country today.



**Fig. 16**

**Houses destroyed in Adamawa.**

### **iii. High Rate of Unemployment**

One of the major reasons for security challenges in Nigeria is the high rate of unemployment. The unemployment rate saw no significant changes in 2021 in comparison to 2020 and remained at around 9.79%. Unemployment rate in Nigeria increased to 33.30% in the fourth quarter of 2020. At 33% current level, Nigeria's jobless rate is the second-highest on Global List, as more than half of its labour force is unemployed or underemployed (NBS 4). There are millions of individuals, both young and old, graduates and undergraduates that are willing to work but they are being forced to be idle owing to the fact that they cannot secure paying jobs. As a result of idleness, the unemployed youths become easy targets of recruitment by the terrorists who are

ready to entice them financially (Ononoghu 134). They become social menace, perpetrating evil acts in the society. It is also possible that many of them who have joined the various insurgence groups would not have done so if they were gainfully employed. Therefore, the rise in crime rates in Nigeria is a direct result of unemployment.

#### **iv. Deception and Insensitivity**

In the words of Ogunkunle (93), the security upheaval in Nigeria today is the product of deception and insensitivity on the part of the elites. He is of the view that the agitation that arose from implementation of Sharia Law especially in the northern region around 1999 was mainly to cause political tension and heat up the polity. The administration of former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was fully aware of the dastard operations of Boko Haram in the northern Nigeria yet nothing serious was done to curtail their activities. Thus, on the part of the government is a sign of deception and insensitivity. Even, the political class and opinion leaders from the north seem to be pretending that they do not know the groups that are involved in the barbaric acts of killing innocent lives and destroying valuable properties (96). This act of deception and insincerity has made Nigerians to realize the unreadiness and unwillingness of the government to take the bull by the horns. Hence, their deceptiveness has only heightened the high level of insecurity in the Nigerian society.

#### **v. Poverty**

Poverty is an impediment to national progress and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria because it has succeeded in raising the level of insecurity. Poverty, according to Odoma (202) is the “greatest of man’s known enemies as it has sent many to their early graves, left many malnourished while

others perpetually remain in hopelessness and misery.” It is on record that over 69.7% of Nigerians are wallowing in abject poverty. Over 80 million Nigerians, based on the 120 million population estimate, survive on less than \$1 per day (Punch 16). While connecting religious violence and security challenges to poverty, the editorial comment of the Nigerian

Tribune of January 13<sup>th</sup> 2010 says that, “since the 1980s, the condition of the average Nigerian has fallen to miserable level. Now, over 70% of the population lives below the poverty line.”

As a rider to the above, one can see the effects of poverty on the nation in the words of Isiramen (334):

Most family hardly finds 3 square meals in a day. Portable water is a scarce commodity, goods are not easy to come by, proper medical facilities have turned a mirage to most Nigerian citizens. Most citizens have lost hope for the next day. These groups of people can easily be lured into perpetrating violent against others. Young people are known to be paid small amounts of money and promised heavenly rewards if they participate in religious violence.

Judging from the above, the high level of poverty in Nigeria is a threat to national security as there are many young people on the streets who are ready and available to do anything to survive in a society that seems not to care for their wellbeing.





**Fig. 17**

**A vehicle belonging to an indigene of Adamawa Destroyed by the Insurgence.**

**vi. Weak Security System and Shortage of Security**

This is particularly the case within the Nigerian Police agency who are responsible for internal security maintenance of law and order. The weakness of these security agencies could be attributed to inadequate funding, lack of modern equipment to meet up with a global standard, lack of personnel training, poor welfare (which often made them to compromise), as well as shortage of personnel. Olanisakin (44) submitted that the ratio of police population in Nigeria is

1:450. According to him, this ratio falls below the United Nation standard. By implication, Nigeria is grossly policed and this explains the inability and continuous failure of the Nigerian Police to effectively nip insecurity and other criminal activities in the bud. Their failure, has therefore contributed to the birth of many criminal activities leading to insecurity in Nigerian nation.

The incessant stories on security challenges in Nigeria, more especially in the northern part is a case of a people faced with tyranny, banditry and insurgency. The people have continually cried for a leader who will stand and speak their minds in defense of peace, truth and justice. Since the hostility started, the prime targets of these attacks have been the Christians and the Church. However, it can be argued that Boko Haram and other militia groups' activities in Nigeria in the recent past have known no religious boundary, as both Christians and Muslims have been on the receiving end of their attacks.

In response to insecurity in Nigeria, the Church has designed several plans aimed at curtailing the attacks on churches in particular and the society in general. In diagnosing the remote and immediate causes of the attack on the Church

and the society, many have suggested that the Church should stand-up in defense of themselves while others highlighted the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in the restoration of peace and healing of affected communities. In the attempt to curb the growing rate of killings in the north owing to its ethno-religious nature, the General Overseer of Living Water Unlimited, Rev. Ladi Thompson (10) opined that both legal and scriptural approaches should be adopted in response to insurgency in Nigeria. He noted that at the initial stage, many Nigerians did not



consider the group as a terrorist organization. At that time, Nigerians did not fully understand what the Boko Haram fully stood for (12).

While reacting on what the Church should do, Bishop Anietie Etukudo of the Living-Proof Bible Church, Ogba, Lagos State, submitted that the Church must not fail to call the attention of the government whenever it notices any misgiving in the society (34). According to him, the Church is well represented by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Hence, CAN's position on insecurity stands. He further opined that since the believers' weapon of welfare is prayer, the Church must not cease in praying for the nation and its leadership and should not in any way support violence. The Church is also expected to speak out and hold the government accountable for the citizenry. In the opinion of Sola Idowu, a Baptist pastor with the Ajayi Dahunsi Memorial Church, Lagos State, he stated that it is important that the Church rise to the occasion by responding appropriately to the ever-growing monster of insecurity in the country (12). According to him, it is unfortunate that Nigeria is today basically defined by insecurity occasioned by the activities of the insurgent. Idowu (17), therefore concluded that the Church must get informed, educate members on the issues of security, avoid retaliation if attacked, engage the government for lasting solutions and then look unto God, urging Christians to pray for divine intervention to keep and deliver the Church and the Nigerian societies from dangers.



**Fig. 18: Mr. Peter Lallai**

Another informant Mr. Peter Lallai suffered the consequences of Boko Haram. Lallai was 67years old when interviewed and lives in Michika. He held so many positions in Michika such as; Principal Kwabapale Government Secondary School, founder of men fellowship in Ekklisiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), Board chairman of John Guli Bible College etc. He narrated that on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 immediately after the Church service, the insurgence stormed Michika and people begin to run for their lives. At that time, he and his wife went and climbed the mountain where they spent the night. But the following morning, the town was quiet and it seems to him that they had probably left therefore, he decided to come down. When he reached home, some members of Boko Haram appeared and started chasing him and he run through a Maize farm

which provided cover for him even as they shoot at him but God saved him. He kept running until he became so tired and could not run again. He spends five days in the bush then he came across some houses. The Punch of September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 reported that he was among killed by the Insurgences.



**Fig. 19: Retired Reverend Dauda Kasiri.**

**Picture by the author.**

Reverend Dauda, another informant is a Spiritual father in Michika Local Government Area. Almost all Christian indigene of Michika knows him because of his popularity. This man spent two (2) days in the hands of the Boko Haram. I asked him ‘how Boko Haram entered Michika

and what was the effect of the insurgence on the life of the people of Michika?’ he answered thus:

The first experience of Michika people was in 2012 when they entered the town and killed some people and looted the banks. After that they left until 2014, but before they entered Michika, we first heard that they are in Madagali and from there they came to Gulak. When we heard that they are there, on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 my wife asked me to run but I refused telling her after our house is surrounded with soldiers and armor tank where will we run too because I thought we were secured until she insisted and on Saturday we run to Mararaba Mubi and spend a night there. On Sunday morning I told them that I am going back home since I have not heard anything that happened, so I left them. On reaching home, I went to the room straight and kept my bag. While I was still inside the house, I heard the sound of cars and motor cycles therefore I came out immediately and saw that the place was full of people in soldiers’ uniform. I immediately realized that they were the insurgence, so I try to run but couldn’t so I decided to turn back run towards another path leading to Kuburshosho. Because of my age, I couldn’t run like other people so I was left behind. One boy came with a motor cycle and picked me and went towards Watu again. Instead of me to tell him that the militant has already occupied every place, I kept quiet. When we get to the main road, we met with the insurgence and the boy jumped down and run leaving me behind. So, the militant came and catch me and told me that my own end has come. They collected my phone and smashed it on the stone but I told them oh no! You could have kept the phone maybe it will be useful to you. On hearing that one of them took his gun and hit me at the back with it and I fell down. Another member of the Boko haram gave an order that let the other person shoot me but their leaders said no do not kill him. So, they tie me with a rope and throw me inside their car where another person whom they caught was. From

there they took us to their commander (Amir) in Bazza. On reaching there, they brought us down before the commander and he instructed them to cut the other persons head whereby they did and placed the head on his chest which they told me to look at him. They told me to look into the eye of that person to know what they will do to me next.

After that, they lost me and told me to come down and I told them that I can't. So, they brought me down and told me to get ready because they will slay my head as they did to the other person. There I told them that I am a Pastor who served God for a long time as a Reverend before I was retired. So, for that as a man of God I said, 'I beg you don't slaughter me with a knife but shot me with your gun because if you slaughter me like a ram, it is not going to be good for you because it is Haram. They now asked me that 'who are you?' I said I am Reverend Dauda Kasiri from Watu where you caught me. One of them mocked me and said ***hahahaha*** Reverend! He said Reverend, are you going to receive Islam as your religion? I kept quiet. He still asked me about four times now I responded 'is it by force or willingly' and again I said look at my head so he looked and I said with this gray hair and as a man of God what am I looking for again that I should change my religion? However, I asked him, do you know the meaning of Islam? He kept quiet and I said Islam means someone who does not kill, who does not commit fornication, who does not steal and who does not tell lie. On hearing that, they all kept quiet, later they said that they will take me back to my house and they did. When we get there, they told me that they will live me at my house but I said to them, since God has laid in your heart to spear my life, you must take me away from this town if not I will not live you. Because if you live me here some of your members may come and kill me, for that take me to Mubi where my people are. But their leader said oh! I can't get there for now because my limit is Bazza. And I said okay take me to where you killed that person and live me there because I know I can find my way.

By 7:30pm on Monday he took me to Bazza and told one of his members to take me ahead to where people are and he did and left me and said that I should go and come back with my wife to Michika because they have already snapped my picture and that anywhere I go to in this Nigeria they knows me because of how I explained myself to them.

Moreover, I met one woman with her children and I can't help her so I went further into the bush and find a river when it was 8:45pm so I laid down there and spent the night till the following day.

Below are the pictures of some banks that were destroyed in Michika LGA;



**Fig. 20**





**Fig. 21**



**Fig. 22**



**Fig. 23**

The above pictures are the Boko Harams inscriptions on the houses of people that they kept their wives inside in Michika. The inscription in Arabic is 'baitul Islam' which means, 'house of Islam'. These marks that they wrote on the people's houses signify that they have captured the place and that it has become their territory. The pictures were snapped by the researcher on 26/9/2017 after an interview with some residence. The person the researcher has interviewed said that they live the writing intentionally to remember what happened to them and for history.

Involving the young people in the peacebuilding process brings a lot of changes to the society. Youth play significant roles in addressing issues of violence to sustain peace. Late Koffi Annan



once said, “You are never too young to lead and you should never doubt your capacity to triumph where others have not”. Young people are often depicted as the leaders of tomorrow, but, in reality, they are already leading an important change today, especially in peacebuilding.

Young people have extremely strong values of tolerance and social cohesion. Youth aspire to a life of dignity for all. Youth are committed to peace. Youth are champions for development and change in communities and societies.

Youth make essential contributors to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is important to create spaces where young people can freely express their voice and debate with peers and policymakers, thus influencing behaviors, ideas, and policies.

The world today is experiencing several greater instabilities and a wider range of threats to peace than we have seen for a generation. In line with this agenda, Youth encourages more plans and strategies including the international laws to establish a safer world for future generations including instrumental in Silencing the guns by 2020 in Africa and help our continent to be the Africa we want peaceful and driven by its youth especially by working with the Regional Economic Communities.

A peaceful revolution is the outcome of peaceful thinking. Peaceful minds make for a peaceful world. A peaceful society is a result of peaceful persons. Therefore, peace can be established only when every single unit of society is ready to live in peace. Only those people can live in peace that is ready to remain patient, regardless of the circumstances.

The fact is that everyone is born with different tastes and everyone is free to follow his agenda. That is the law of nature, due to which it is impossible to establish uniformity in society

Peace is the only religion for both man and the universe. In a peaceful environment all good things are possible, whereas, in the absence of peace, we cannot achieve anything of a positive nature, either as individuals, or as a community, or even at a national or international level.

### **5.3 The importance of Dialogue in Peacebuilding:**

The importance of dialogue in peacebuilding according to Desmond Tutu can be categorized as follows;

***It Fosters Understanding and Empathy:*** Dialogue allows different perspectives to be shared, creating a space for understanding and empathy to develop. By listening to each other, parties can recognize the fears, grievances, and desires of the other side.

***It Builds Trust and Relationships:*** Regular and meaningful dialogue establishes trust and relationships between conflicting parties. When individuals feel heard and respected, they are more likely to cooperate and work towards peace.

***It Facilitates Communication and Negotiation:*** Dialogue provides a platform for parties to discuss issues, propose solutions, and negotiate agreements. It helps establish common ground and identify areas where compromise can be reached.

***Create a Safe Space for Difficult Conversations:*** Dialogue creates a safe and controlled environment where difficult conversations can be held without the fear of violence or retribution. This allows parties to address sensitive issues and explore potential solutions.

***It Promotes Inclusivity and Participation:*** Dialogue ensures that all voices are heard in the peace-building process. It encourages the participation of marginalized and voiceless groups, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

***It Reduces Stereotypes and Prejudice:*** Dialogue challenges stereotypes and prejudices by fostering personal interactions and building human connections. By getting to know each other as individuals, parties can break down negative assumptions and build trust.

***It Strengthens Institutions and Governance:*** Dialogue contribute to the development of democratic institutions and good governance by ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making. It promotes transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance processes.

***It Promotes Long-Term Stability and Reconciliation:*** Dialogue helps parties address underlying issues that have led to conflict and build a foundation for reconciliation. By creating a culture of dialogue, it reduces the likelihood of future violence and fosters sustainable peace.

***It Contribute to Social Cohesion and Harmony:*** Dialogue builds bridges between communities and fosters social cohesion. It creates a sense of unity and purpose, reducing the risk of division and fragmentation.

***Promotes Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation:*** Dialogue between different cultures can bridge gaps and foster cooperation. It helps create a shared understanding of values, beliefs, and aspirations, leading to greater harmony and mutual respect.

#### **5.4 The Role of the Church in Ensuring Peace and Harmony in the Church:**

The church has a vital role to play in insuring peace and harmony among the people. One of the responsibilities of the church is to preach and teach peace to the people. It is its moral and spiritual obligation to ensure that peace and harmony is found among the people.

Through sermons, teachings, and Sunday school lessons, churches can emphasize the importance of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Also, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for its worshippers is what the churches should yearn towards it. People should feel a sense of belonging regardless of their tribes or cultures. By doing this, it can reduce discrimination which sometimes are the root causes of conflict.

Furthermore, church can provide a safe and neutral space for dialogue between conflicting parties. It is the responsibility of the Pastors and church leaders to facilitate discussions, mediate disputes, and help people find common ground. In playing its role, church can also help in addressing the problem of social injustices that contribute to conflict and division.

By advocating for the poor, marginalized, and oppressed, churches can help create a more just and equitable society.

Another role of the church in insuring peace among its members is that it encourages forgiveness and healing. Churches can provide opportunities for individuals to share their stories, forgive those who have wronged them, and seek healing for past wounds.

More so, church can organize interfaith events, community outreach programs and peacebuilding initiatives that bring people of different backgrounds together. By fostering understanding and cooperation, churches can help break down barriers and build bridges between divided communities.

People always look up to their spiritual leaders to offer them pastoral care and support to individuals and families affected by conflict or violence. Through counselling, prayers, and practical assistance, churches can help people cope with trauma and rebuild their lives.

In playing its role, the church should strive to be models of peace and harmony. By resolving conflict peacefully within the church community, churches can demonstrate the transformative power of forgiveness and reconciliation. Also, church can organize prayer vigils, chain prayers, and other initiatives to pray for peace and healing in their communities and around the world.

In addition to the roles that the church can make in ensuring peace, it can partner with other organizations, such as peacebuilding groups, non-profits and government agencies, to work towards peace and harmony.

### **5.5 The Role of the Church Leaders in Peace Reconciliation:**

Laderach in *Preparing for Peace Conflict Transformation Across Culture* (1995) states that the church leaders have a role to play in peace reconciliation such as;

***Moral and Spiritual Guidance:*** Church leaders provide moral and spiritual guidance to their congregations, emphasizing the importance of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. They preach sermons, lead Bible studies, and offer counselling to help individuals understand and apply these principles in their lives.

***Facilitate Dialogue and Mediation:*** Church leaders can play a crucial role in facilitating a dialogue and mediation between conflicting parties. They create safe spaces for communication, help parties understand each other's perspectives, and guide them towards finding common ground and peaceful resolutions.

***Building Bridges and Relationships:*** Church leaders can build bridges between divided communities by organizing interfaith events, community outreach programs, and peacebuilding initiatives. They can foster understanding, cooperation, and relationships between people of different backgrounds and beliefs.

***Advocating for Justice and Equality:*** Church leaders can advocate for justice and equality, addressing the root causes of conflict and division. They can speak out against discrimination, oppression, and violence, and work to create a more just and equitable society.

***Providing Pastoral Care and Support:*** Church leaders provide pastoral care and support to individuals and families affected by conflict or violence. They offer counselling, prayer, and practical assistance to help people cope with trauma, heal from wounds, and rebuild their lives.

***Setting an Example of Peace and Reconciliation:*** Church leaders should strive to be models of peace and reconciliation within their own communities. By resolving conflict peacefully, within the church, they can demonstrate the transformative power of forgiveness and reconciliation.

***Collaborating with Other Organizations:*** Church leaders can collaborate with other organizations, such as peacebuilding groups, non-profits, and government agencies, to work towards peace and reconciliation. They can share resources, expertise, and support to amplify their impact and make a significant contribution to peacebuilding efforts.

***Interceding for Peace:*** Church leaders can intercede for peace through prayer and spiritual practices. They can organize prayer vigils, prayer chains, and other initiatives to pray for peace and healing in their communities and around the world.

***Empowering the laity:*** Church leaders can empower the laity to play an active role in peace and reconciliation efforts. They can encourage and equip members of their congregations to engage in dialogue, build relationships, and work towards peace in their communities and beyond.

***Promoting a Culture of Peace:*** Church leaders can promote a culture of peace within their congregations and communities. They can encourage non-violence communication, conflict resolution skills, and a commitment to peacebuilding as a way of life.

## **5.6 The Threats to Sustainable Peace in Adamawa State:**

Adamawa State is a place that is under the threat of Boko Haram Insurgency, Herder-farmer conflict, Political instability, poverty and unemployment, weak governance and corruption, Religious and ethnic divisions, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, climate change and resource scarcity etc.

These threats can be explained as follows:

***Boko Haram Insurgency:*** Adamawa state has been significantly affected by the Boko Haram Insurgency, which has caused widespread violence, displacement, and destructions. The groups continued presence and attacks pose a major threat to peace and stability. Even though there is relative peace now, but some places like Madagali, Garkida, Michika are still under threat.

***Herder-Farmer Conflict:*** Clashes between herders and farmers over land and resources have become increasingly common in Adamawa State, leading to loss of lives, destruction of property, and displacement of communities. For example, some villages in Numan LGA, Fufore LGA and Maiha LGA lack peace because of their displacement.

***Political Instability:*** Political tensions and electoral violence have contributed to instability in Adamawa State. Contested elections and allegations of corruption have fueled grievances and undermined trust in government institutions.

***Poverty and Unemployment:*** High levels of poverty and unemployment, particularly among the youth, create fertile ground for recruitment by armed groups and criminal gangs. Lack of economic opportunities and social services exacerbates tensions and makes it difficult to sustain peace.

***Weak Governance and Corruption:*** Weak governance, corruption, and lack of accountability have undermined public trust and hindered effective peacebuilding efforts. Corruptions weaken institutions, diverts resources, and perpetuates inequality.

***Religion and Ethnic Divisions:*** Adamawa State is home to diverse religious and ethnic groups. While interfaith and interethnic relations are generally good, tensions can arise, particularly during periods of political or economic stress.

***Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons:*** The availability of small arms and light weapons contributes to violence and insecurity in Adamawa State. Unregulated arms flows and weak gun control measures make it easy for armed groups and criminal elements to obtain weapons.

***Climate Change and Resource Scarcity:*** Climate change and environmental degradation are exacerbating resource scarcity and competition, particularly over land and water. This can lead to conflicts between communities and undermined livelihood.



***Lack of Infrastructure and Basic Services:*** Inadequate infrastructure and limited access to basic services, such as education, healthcare, and clean water, contribute to poverty and inequality, which can fuel unrest and make it difficult to sustain peace.

***External Influence:*** Adamawa State's proximity to conflict affected areas in neighbouring countries, such as Cameroon and the Central African Republic, can draw the state into regional conflicts and instability.

Addressing these threats requires a comprehensive approach that involves security measures, dialogue and reconciliation initiatives, economic development, good governance, and addressing the root causes of conflict.

### **5.7 Promoting Peace in the Society by Christians:**

Peacebuilding is an essential part of human life in many countries today. Conflict has taken over so many communities around the world including the researcher's own, Adamawa.

Religious conflict is one of the issues that have gone deep into the 'bone marrow' of our societies. Structural religious conflict has been sanctioned by some Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It has become a vicious circle that manifests itself in politics and traditional authority. The results of such bias include unequal opportunities for all citizens, domination by either group in the work place and other forms of discrimination.

From my personal experience in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, clergies in both churches and Imams in mosques emphasized that their members should elect only candidates who belonged to their own religious group. This caused rigging in the election and discontent among the respective religion's members.

As religious leaders, it is good to know that we have a task of establishing peace in our societies. The religious leaders are the closest to the citizens at the grassroots. We have closer influence, and should therefore bear the burden of living in peace right from our hearts, our families and communities. We should teach and influence others to be followers of a peaceful life.

From my own background in Adamawa, I have also seen how religions can serve as channels for implementing and sharing such knowledge among the faithful for effective peacebuilding in our communities and even globally.

At the very heart of Christianity, all that it yearns for is how-to live-in peace with everyone. According to Daryl Crouch, “as public policy initiatives of elected officials affect our way of life, our political perspectives soon shape our souls. How we think, the values we hold dear, the convictions we feel compelled to propagate, and the way we treat our neighbors all come from the private place of our soul. That is the reason that although the government cannot establish religion, the religious convictions of the citizenry most certainly influence public policy.”

Perhaps that is the reason the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: “First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Paul knew that peace, a tranquil and quiet life, in the city of Ephesus would make room for the gospel of peace in the hearts of the residents of that city and beyond. So, first of all, praying was the most powerful way for New Testament Christians to love their neighbors and to promote peace in their community.

Now in our present political environment as divisions widen on over public policy, as bickering has become a national past time, and as anger is often the currency of public debate, it could be that the most effective way for us to minister to the souls of our neighbors is to pray and dialogue with everyone, including our neighbors, our leaders, and all who are in authority.

More than persuasive arguments and more than political tactics, it seems God uses our “first of all” praying to influence our conversations over the backyard fence, to direct our political engagement in the public square, and to ultimately make room for policies that promote peace in our communities. For example, the following is very essential for believers to do in order to have peace in the society;

***Pray with a fresh awareness of God.***

Prayer is by definition an invitation for human beings to turn our attention to God. When we pray, we acknowledge that God transcends the time and space we currently occupy. God is eternal with no beginning or end. He is perfectly holy, and he is unlimited in love, power, and wisdom. Very simply, God is greater than we are. His sovereign reign over every created thing means that we can trust him for every issue, big or small, new or systemic, that affects our families, communities, and our nation.

So rather than living anxious and angry, rather than withholding kindness and love from those who hold diverse views and values, and rather than talking past our political rivals, we can fully trust a God who always rightly acts with righteousness.

***Pray with an honest assessment of yourself.***

Prayer reminds us of our personal limitations. If we were self-sufficient and possessed complete understanding, praying to God would be unnecessary. But we have real needs that we cannot

meet. We not only live as fallen, sinful people, we also bear the burden of a certain amount of ignorance. The human experience includes consequences of our personal and national transgressions are beyond our ability to repair.

So, we all need mercy, grace, forgiveness, restoration, and wisdom that only God can provide. As we humble ourselves and ask him for help, he responds not with condemnation, but with generosity and blessing.

***Pray with a genuine interest in others.***

When the prophet Micah called God's people back to God, he called them to care about other people: "Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Additionally, the prophet Jeremiah called exiled Jews to pray for and seek the welfare of their foreign city (Jeremiah 29). And then when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he pointed out the hypocrisy of some religious leaders who used prayer and fasting as an opportunity to promote themselves. They were more concerned about how they were seen by others than how well they served others.

Whatever their political views, background, moral or religious convictions, or usefulness is to us, our neighbors, our leaders, and all who are in authority are created by God and bear his image.

So effective praying comes from the heart of a Good Samaritan who actually stops to help. Our prayers may sound angelic, but without sincere love for neighbor demonstrated by a willingness to listen, understand, and serve people who are different from us, they are only a noisy gong and clanging cymbal.

*Pray with an enthusiastic expectation for the future.*

People of faith who have little faith in God do not serve our neighbors very well. The Bible tells us that God hears the humble cries of his people; that God forgives and restores sinful, broken, wayward people; and that God turns weeping into laughter.

Is it possible, then, that negativity among God's people is the sin that oppresses our neighbors and our nation more than any other? Is it possible that our cynicism toward an unbelieving world reveals our own unbelief that the gospel is really the power of God to turn even the hardest heart into a believing one? Is it possible that our pessimistic view of the world is the attitude God is waiting for us to leave behind? Is it possible our refusal to trust the Spirit to act powerfully through his Church to show and tell the Good News has left our neighbors stuck in the bad news of sin and brokenness? The call to pray is, at the heart, a call to believe God for greater things as he advances his Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Not every Christian is called into politics and not every Christian has a loud voice in the public square, but every Christian is called to love our neighbors. And we do that most powerfully through "first of all" praying the kind of praying that cares for souls, seeks the peace of our communities and our nation, and makes room for the gospel to take root in the hearts of the neighbors across the street and around the world.

### **5.8 The Christians Role in Mending Societal Fragility:**

Some of the roles that Christians plays in mending societal fragility can be discussed under the following sub-headings as noted by Andrew Jacob:

***Promoting unity and reconciliation:*** this emphasizes the biblical call for unity and reconciliation among all people. It improves in facilitating dialogue and understanding between different groups and communities. It also plays the role of building bridges between those who have been divided by conflict or prejudice.

***Addressing Social Injustice:*** this speaks out against injustice, oppression, and discrimination.

It supports policies and initiatives that promote equality, fairness, and human rights. Also, it advocates for the marginalize and vulnerable in the society.

***Promoting Peace and Non-violence:*** it teaches and promote non-violent conflict resolution and peacemaking. it condemns violence and hate speech in all forms. one need to be agent of peace in the community and the world that he/she lives in.

***Building strong communities:*** this fosters a sense of belonging and support within church communities. it reaches out to those who are isolated and disconnected. Also, it creates opportunities for people to connect, build relationships, and work together as a family.

***Providing Personal Care and Support:*** it offers counseling, support, and prayer to individuals and families affected by societal fragility. Moreover, it helps people to be healed from trauma, rebuild their lives, and find hope.

***Advocating for Good Governance:*** it promotes transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership in government and public institutions. Also, it holds leaders accountable for their actions and policies.

***Educating for Peace and Justice:*** it incorporates peace education into Sunday school lessons, youth programs, and other church activities. It teaches about the causes and consequences of social fragility and the importance of working towards peace and justice.

***Living as Examples of Peacemakers:*** Christians are called to be peacemakers in all aspect of life which demonstrates love, compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation in daily interactions. It helps someone to be an agent of change and healing in the community.

***Collaborating with others:*** Partners with other faith-based organizations, community groups, and non-profits to work towards mending social fragility. In doing this, people will respect one another. They share resources, expertise, and support to amplify the impact of peacebuilding efforts.

***Praying for Healing and Restoration:*** it is the responsibility of all the believers to pray for God's healing and restoration in societies affected by fragility. Believe in the power of prayer to transform hearts and bring about positive change is what the believers should strive for.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### **THE IMPACT OF CHURCHES IN PROMOTING PEACE IN THE SOCIETY**

#### **6.1 The Church and the promotion of peace**

The Church is the communion of those who, by means of their encounter with the word, stand in a living relationship with God, who speaks to them and calls forth their trustful response; it is the communion of the faithful.

The Church is a gift from God, who has sent the Son and the Spirit among us. As such, it is a divine reality, a creation of both the Word and the Spirit. Made up of finite persons who are sinful and redeemed, it is a human reality as well. The New Testament does not give us a systematic theology of the Church, but offers up a host of metaphors and images that try to evoke the reality of the Church, at once both earthly and transcendent. Among the most striking images are the Church as the People of God, the “People of the Way” on the move through history toward history’s consummation of all things in Christ; as the Body of Christ, the living presence of the Word among us; as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, where the holiness of God dwells on earth; and as communion, mirroring the communion of the Persons in the Holy Trinity (Thurston 258).

As a creation of the Word and the Spirit, the Church participates in their mission to bring all creation into communion with the Triune God. The Church exists to serve the reconciliation of humankind. The Church is called to heal and reconcile broken relationships and to be God’s instrument in the reconciliation of human division in the world.

The Church is “sign and instrument of God’s intention and plan for the whole world”. It is meant to be a prophetic sign, pointing beyond itself to the gospel, to what God is doing in the world. As an instrument of God, the Church exercises a ministry of reconciliation that has been entrusted to



it by God in Christ (2 Cor 5:18). At the same time the Church is also *Mysterion* or sacrament; a sacrament of the world in holding up the eschatological hope that manifests God's reconciling design for the world, and a sacrament of the divine presence and mission in the world as the Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit.

In Chapter 1 of 1Corinthians, the Church is known as the house of God, where the harmonious relations between the Persons of the Trinity are to be reflected in the relations that should prevail among all members of the Church. Christians are keenly aware how far they often are from realizing this communion with one another and with the Trinity. Yet that acute awareness of how they have fallen short should lead them to repentance and to seeking a new God's energizing grace to draw closer to that destiny to which they are called.

It is clear that the Churches in one way or the other have impacted the society with the promotion of peace through involvement in advocacy for co-existence and inter-faith meetings.

In an interview with Rev. Mathew Yunana, he concurred with the assertion of Dr. Suzan Mark that churches have promoted peace through evangelistic outreach and inter-faith conferences.

Peace is a gift of God. The churches' responding to that gift reveals their vocation to be peace-builders in the ministry. As sign, instrument and sacrament of God's intention and plan for the world, one can see different dimensions of the peace-building vocation of the churches. At the same time, the churches have often mistaken their participation in the reconciling ministry for a narrow ecclesia-centric agenda of aggressive proselytizing and an arrogant destruction of cultures. Arrogance here needs to be replaced with repentance, and with a refocusing upon what God is doing in the world rather than on what the immediate benefit to the churches might appear to be.

In an interview with Dr. Suzan Mark and Rev. Mathew Yunana, they said that some of the examples of how churches have contributed to peace in the community and society is through cooperation and being generous with neighbors during festivities such as Christmas and Sallah celebrations. Mr. Mttaa Ali Benson agreed with Dr. Suzan Mark and added that other examples are internal conflict resolution among members of the community. Also, according to him, justice, fairness and equity are another example. He further stated that some churches do call the village heads and community members together for dialogue. Also, some of the nomadic Fulanis' that rare their cattle in that area do attend the meetings for the dialogue and to see how they can live in peace with one another.

## **6.2 The Church as Sacrament of Peace**

At its most fundamental level, the Church is a sacrament. That sacramental character is centered in its being a sacrament of the Trinity: The Creator's sending the Word and the Spirit into the World, and God's reconciling the world through Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit. This fundamental fact is represented and re-presented in the liturgy, especially the celebration of the Eucharist. The liturgy is an act of memory of what God has already done for us in Christ's Incarnation, life, death and resurrection. It is also the window on the eschatological hope of the bringing together of all things in Christ that has been promised to us. This ritual act where sin is confessed and forgiven, where God's Word is once again heard, where praise of God recalls God's great works, where the needs and the suffering of the present are commended to God, and where the Great Thanksgiving is enacted and shared in the banquet of Christ's presence in our midst – this ritual action draws us back into the Trinitarian life itself, that Life which is the beginning and end of true peace. In the Divine Liturgy as celebrated by the Orthodox churches, peace is named (the peace from on high, peace for the whole world) and extended to one another

again and again. The sharing or passing of the peace is a common ritual feature in many of the Churches. And the injunction to go forth from the Eucharist in the peace of God is a mandate to carry God's peace into the world. So, the Eucharistic benediction of the Syrian Orthodox Church says: "Go in peace, our brethren and our beloved ones, as we commend you to the grace and mercy of the Holy and glorious Trinity, with the provisions and blessings which you have received from the altar of the Lord." This carrying forth of God's peace into the world is what Orthodox theologians have called the *liturgy after the liturgy* and Roman Catholic theologians the *liturgy of the world*. Such expressions remind us that the liturgy and the world are not separate entities. They are both enfolded in God's design for creation. The liturgy, then, is the source and font of peace from which the Church lives, and which it in turn seeks to extend into the world. Indeed, the only peace that it can offer is that peace that has been given to it in trust by God. The mystery of peace in both senses of the term "mystery" as at once surpassing our understanding (Phil 4:7) and a *mysterion* that leads us along a pathway of transformation and illumination is what the Church is enjoined to transmit to the world, despite all the Church's shortcomings and failures to do this adequately (Abahali 562).

The sacramental character of that peace - a manifestation of peace that points not to itself, but to the peace that emanates from the loving relationships of the Persons of the Trinity is to be lived out in the lives of individuals, in families, and in communities. Its manifestation in all those places is always limited and subject to the perversities of the human heart but, as imperfect as it may be, it is offered to others and to the world as an invitation to enter into the peace of God.

### **6.3 The Churches as Prophetic Sign in Peace-building**

As a prophetic sign, the churches are called to speak out against injustice and to advocate peace. In the denunciation of injustice, in the solidarity with those who are oppressed, and in the accompaniment of victims, the churches participate in the ministry of mending the world and bringing it toward the “new creation” of the reconciled (2 Cor 5:17). By preaching Christ crucified and risen, they show the pathway through rejection and suffering to transformation in the newness of life. How the churches choose to live in the world, and where they draw the line in the face of violence is part of that prophetic witness. Here the historic peace churches play a particularly important role. Refusing to condone violence, and following a way of non-violence indicate how Christians are to respond to a world replete with violence. Jesus met his own violent death with nonviolence, and his way remains the model for Christians to follow in overcoming violence.

To add to that, it is good to develop peacemaking skills by promoting and establishing Biblical Peacemaking certification through attending courses on peacebuilding which was supported by the churches. More so, churches do encourage friendship with people of other faiths and being saddled with leadership responsibilities. Most of the pastors do encourage their members to attend workshops on peace-building and inter-faith relationships.

To be a prophetic sign of peace in a violent world takes commitment, courage and consistency. These are virtues that the churches have not always displayed in the face of violence. Here the churches must confess their sin if they are to be credible vessels of the prophetic message of peace. Churches have at times allied themselves so closely with violent policies that they have legitimated them. When the churches have embraced the banner of nationalism or ethnicity and have blessed the oppression and extermination of “enemies”, they have wandered away from

their true purposes. When they have adopted violent apocalyptic beliefs that legitimate violence as a way of cleansing the world or as a purported instrument of the wrath of God, they have betrayed the vocation God has given them. When they have casually turned away from suffering, either to seek or protect their own prosperity or not to get “involved”, they are like those who left the wounded man in the ditch (Lk 10:31-32). And the very disunity on central elements of identity within the churches themselves such as witness to the sacraments has undermined the churches’ credibility to others as true signs of peace. Churches must be ready constantly to examine their actions and their inaction in the vocation of peace-building to see if they can serve as credible voices for God’s work in the world (Thurston A. 315). They must repent and seek forgiveness, not only to make themselves worthy vessels of God’s work but also, as a prophetic sign, of what wrongdoers must come to do as well if they are to enter God’s Reign. To that end, the service of the churches must show the disinterestedness in self, the willingness to embrace vulnerability, and the unwavering commitment to the poor and marginalized that marked the ministry of Christ. It is in such service that the churches’ witness as prophetic sign of the peace of God gains credibility.

#### **6.4 The Churches as Instruments of Peace-building**

The churches are also called to be instruments of God’s purposes in the world. That calls them to very concrete actions in the service of peace-building. In the medieval Western church, the just war theory was developed as a way of trying to curb the predatory activity of a warrior class. Proclaiming the “Peace of God” as days on which fighting could not take place was another way of containing violence. The understanding of the church building as sanctuary, where violence could not be perpetrated is yet another (Shalom 337).

A common way of speaking about peace-building today is to see specific tasks in pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict situations. These tasks can be seen in the light of the vocation to peace-building as well. The meaning of conflict here focuses upon armed and violent conflict. There are social conflicts such as those that arise between individuals and within or among communities that are nodes of tension that may form around deeply held values. Such conflict is not something that needs to be avoided or repressed, but is rather an invitation to grow in one's humanity and in human relationships. These kinds of conflict must be engaged. What follows here will focus rather on armed, violent conflicts.

In the pre-conflict situation, the tasks of peace-building are especially aimed at preventing violent conflict and at making peace education possible. The churches have important roles in both of these. Violent conflict can be prevented if attention is drawn in a timely and consistent fashion to oppressive and unjust structures and practices that build the resentment that leads to violent confrontation. Religious leaders must also draw attention to and deflate ethnocentrism, racism, and the demonization of outsiders as ways of fuelling passion against those different from the people they serve. In that process rumour control and dampening inflammatory rhetoric in the media and on the streets are of crucial importance. Debunking ideological twisting of Christian teachings (such as: suicide bombers claiming to be "martyrs" or erroneous claims to have discerned "God's will"), and the use of Christian faith to legitimate aggression against those of other faiths must be confronted head on. Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2025.

Education for peace is more than mere instruction in the strategies of work for peace. It is a profoundly spiritual formation of character that happens over a long period of time. Growth in the biblical understanding of peace, learning about the temptations that lead people away from peace into violence, examining our narratives about how we describe to ourselves those who

may be our potential enemies, learning to engage in practices of peace (especially for children and adolescents), learning to care for the earth as a way of cultivating peace, and making prayer for peace a prominent part of our worship: all of these things promote peace. Peace education is not simply acquiring certain items of knowledge; it is about formation of character and building reflexes into behaviour that will respond non-violently in the face of provocation.

Peace education needs to be part of religious instruction in the churches at all levels. It needs to begin with children, but must be extended to adolescents and adults as well. The formation to be agents of peace begins by looking to models of those already engaged in peace-building. For children, parents must be the first agents of peace they encounter, who serve as signs of peace not only in what they say, but in what they do. As children grow and mature into themselves being agents of peace, the churches must provide space, encouragement, and active support in this formation.

That involves introspection of all members of the church, into how their choices, their actions, and their lifestyles do or do not make them servants of peace. It means also giving special support to those who have special gifts for promoting specific pathways of peace - for these are gifts of the Spirit of Peace within the churches and for the sake of the world. Some will have distinct capacities for accompanying victims of violence; others, for settling disputes; still others, for caring for the earth.

When people find themselves in the midst of violent conflict itself, peace-building has two tasks: protection and mediation. The responsibility to protect those directly endangered by conflict has begun to receive greater attention than in the past. It is something that women in conflict situations have known for a long time, since it usually falls to them to protect the young, the aged, and the ill. Churches need to explore how networks of congregations can become havens

of protection in the face of violence. This needs to involve not only armed violence or urban violence, but must include domestic violence as well. Churches that sponsor emergency relief agencies must be prepared specially to engage in the work of protecting most openly those exposed to harm and abuse.

Mediation of armed conflict is an important and often delicate task that can fall to the churches. It can take place at various levels. At the grassroots level's local leaders, both lay and ordained, are called upon to interpret the insights and perceptions of their congregations to those involved in the mediation process. Regional and national leadership of churches may be called upon to serve in mediating roles, especially in settings where Christians are in the majority or effective interfaith councils are in place. Here respect for the spiritual and moral integrity of the churches, focused now in their leadership, can be a significant player in ending conflict. Such positioning is often delicate, a balance between gaining and maintaining the trust of the parties on the one hand, and maintaining the perceived disinterestedness that makes mediation possible on the other.

Especially in civil conflicts when all other social institutions have been discredited or destroyed, churches may be called upon as the sole surviving institution with enough credibility to be able to speak on behalf of the people (Shalom 385).

The post-conflict situation serves up a host of tasks for the churches as peace-builders: truth telling, pursuit of various kinds of justice, helping bring about forgiveness, and longer-term reconciliation all figure into the agenda.

Getting at the truth about what happened during the conflict and what were its causes is often an important step in the building of peace after overt conflict. The churches have been called upon in a number of instances in recent years to take leadership roles in truth-telling processes.



Truth telling is important in the rehabilitation of those who had been deemed enemies by a powerful state, but especially in allowing victims (or their surviving families) to tell their stories and witness to the pain and loss they have endured. Truth telling can be an important part of establishing a new regime of accountability and transparency where oppressive ideologies, arbitrariness and secrecy have prevailed. Truth telling is a many-sided and delicate process that, in deeply wounded societies, may not always be possible or even advisable. But without truth (not just in the sense of veracity, but also in the Biblical sense of trustworthiness and reliability), a new society cannot build on a firm foundation.

For the churches to accompany truth-telling processes, they must first be able to tell the truth about themselves.

Of the different forms of justice in which the churches may engage in the peace-building process, restorative justice and advocacy for structural justice stand out especially. In restorative justice, focus is upon the victims' rehabilitation. (In punitive or retributive justice, focus is upon the wrongdoers; this should be the prerogative of the legitimate state.) Special care for victims is the natural expression of the work of God that focuses upon those who have been marginalized. As its name suggests, restorative justice seeks what has been wrested away from the victim in terms of material goods, but also the restoration of their human dignity.

Structural justice, the changing of those structures of society that have contributed to injustice and the conflict that has arisen, is often necessary to assure that conflict does not happen again. As a moral voice, the churches are called upon to advocate for these structural changes and have them embedded in the legal system of the land. Writing new constitutions, developing the policies of political parties and governments, and seeing to enactment of the structural changes are part of the work that will lead to a lasting peace (Barrett 234).

Promoting forgiveness, at both the personal and the social levels, is a task pre-eminently suited to the churches. The teachings on forgiveness central to Jesus' own preaching and ministry form the basis for this. Forgiveness, as it is also for peace, is a gift of God. Without forgiveness, there is no way of coming free from the past. Christian forgiveness is not cheap forgiveness, but a change of heart and perception that allows for a different kind of future. Forgiveness does not erase the past but remembers the past in a different way. Moreover, forgiveness can help create the social space in which wrongdoers may be able to come to forgiveness. Promoting forgiveness, accompanying people on the long road to forgiveness, and providing a public ritual framework where especially social forgiveness can be enacted are all things that fall especially to the churches. To the extent the churches can live up to the praxis of Jesus, they can be effective instruments of God's forgiveness.

Along the path to forgiveness, the healing of memories is of special significance. The healing of memories aims at being able to remember the past in a different way that will make forgiveness especially possible. Here the accompaniment of victims by the churches, of finding a way through their suffering by looking to the sufferings of Christ, is one of the most important ways of preaching the gospel in the reconciliation of all creation.

Reconciliation is both a process and a goal. The process is likely to entail exercises of truth telling, the pursuit of justice, the healing of memories, and the extending of forgiveness. Individual forgiveness focuses upon the restoring of the humanity of the victim in the image and likeness of God. Social reconciliation may focus upon healing the memories or building a common future together: it may involve making sure that the deeds of the past cannot happen again, or building an alternate future. Whenever reconciliation is achieved, the experience of it as a gift of free grace from God can be the most moving and effective way of speaking about God's

design for the world, of how the world is being drawn back into God, its Creator. As instruments of God's peace, the churches are indeed vessels of clay. When peace does occur, it becomes clear that "the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor 4:7). But it is usually also clear that, in most instances of conflict, the churches do not live up to their great and challenging vocation. Particularly in conflicts that happen within countries rather than between them, churches will find themselves to have been complicit in many different ways. At times church leadership will have failed to speak out against injustice or have even blessed the violence that occurred. Members of the churches are likely to find themselves on both sides of the divide. In longstanding oppressive regimes, there will be those in the churches' ranks - both as leaders and as members who have been hidden accomplices in maintaining the oppression by spying upon others or regularly reporting their actions. Some have done this out of fear; others may have been forced or blackmailed into it. Unless the churches have thrown themselves completely into siding with and abetting the aggression, they may still have some role in the post-conflict peace-building process. At the very least, they can model the repentance that will be needed in the wider society. More often, especially in the case of protracted conflicts where everyone at one point or another has been both victim and wrongdoer, they mirror the ambivalences that evil and violence create. They might be able both to accept punishment but also advocate forbearance in a situation where no one's hands have been utterly clean.

## **6.5 Challenges of promoting peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The rise and escalation of insecurity and terrorism, organized and official or formal terrorism locally and internationally have become the major challenges that the church is facing in promoting peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Also, the exposure of the youths in social vices through the

use of social media and institutions of higher learning has become one of the challenges that the church face in promoting peace.

In addition, funding and human resources are other challenges of promoting peace for the church. On the other hand, false prophets' teachings, political influence and tribalism can also be termed as some of the challenges.

But there are some opportunities that exist for churches to enhance their peacebuilding efforts which includes;

- School settings organization for peacebuilding advocacy
- Adult education
- Create awareness and skill acquisitions on peacebuilding
- The church should improve its teachings and revivals for its members
- The non-retaliation acts
- Organize seminar for the group of people that are displaced
- The church should practicalize the character of Christ in all ramifications.

Meanwhile, an individual and communities can support churches in peacebuilding work through the following:

- Participating in any seminar that support peacebuilding
- Through donations
- By living a peaceful life
- Through government interventions
- Engaging in activities that promote peace
- Being active in tolerance and active engagement in communal peaceful co-existence

In the researchers understanding, the 21<sup>st</sup> century churches have been involved in maintaining peace in the communities through worships, seminars, dialogue etc. also, it has buttressed the love and character of Christ. The church always obeys the law and order of the society. It has continued to be tolerant in the face of provocation. Sometimes, the church has been on the defensive rather than being offensive and provocative.

## **6.6 The Spiritual Practices of Peace**

The church can evaluate the impact of peace-building through the four pillars that hold peace together which are; justice, peace truth and mercy. Also, through the attitudes of the members in the community, it can be evaluated. In addition, through the reduction of war and conflict in the community peace-building can be evaluated. For example, looking at the increased number of converts to Christianity as the results of peaceful disposition, the impact of peacebuilding can be evaluated.

Peace is not simply assenting to a set of ideas about God's design for the world. To be agents of God's peace require putting on the mind that was in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5): the emptying of self, the embracing of vulnerability, the walking with the wounded which marked the Second Person of the Trinity's entry into our world. It requires being led by the Holy Spirit in the healing and sanctifying of the world. The Incarnation and the sending of the Holy Spirit are an extension of the embrace of the person of the Trinity to enfold into itself those who have been broken by sin, oppression, and injustice. In order to have that mind of Christ, peace-building requires entering regularly and deeply into communion with the Triune God, along the ways that Christ has set out for us. It is that presence in God that makes it possible for us to come to discern God's working

in our world. It allows us to see those glimmerings of grace that may come to flash forth the love of God that heals and reconciles.

Putting on the mind of Christ, being formed in Christ, involves spiritual practices and disciplines that embody peace in our own bodies:

- Making prayers of intercession as part of our mindfulness of being formed in Christ.
- Seeking and extending forgiveness, so as to create truthfulness in ourselves and to forge the space for others who need to seek repentance.
- Washing one another's feet, so as to learn the ways of service.
- Engaging in times of fasting, to review our patterns of consumption and relationships to one another and to the earth.
- Consistent and sustained acts of caring for others, especially those most in need of healing, liberation, and reconciliation.
- Consistent and sustained acts of caring for the earth.
- Communal acts of worship in order to be nourished by God's Word and by the Eucharist.

Peace is not just a view of life. It is also a way of life. In a world beset by violence and threatened by all kinds of destabilizing forces, it means cultivating a spiritual posture, a spirituality. By spirituality is not meant a pick-and-choose of preferred elements to craft a unique or distinctive lifestyle. Spirituality here means deepening a mind-set and engaging in those spiritual practices, especially communal ones, that lead one deeper into the mystery of Christ.

An important task of this spirituality is sustaining hope. Building peace is often a difficult task, marked by disappointments, failures, and setbacks. How do we find the reserves of strength to remain faithful and to keep forging on in the midst of adversity? Hope is not the same as optimism.

Optimism is our assessment of how we can change the present and forge the future by dint of our own resources and strengths. Hope, on the other hand, is something that comes from God, who is the author of peace and the one who brings about reconciliation. Hope is something that we discover, drawing us forward into the mystery of peace. It manifests itself at times in unexpected places and in surprising ways. It can be perceived thanks to our communion with God glimmerings of grace in the midst of adversity, acts of kindness in the face of ruthless self-seeking, moments of gentleness in the hardness of relentless aggression.

A spirituality is something that agents of peace share, a web of practices and attitudes that bind a community together. In its own finite way, a spirituality mirrors the relationships of Trinitarian life - sustaining, transforming, and sanctifying a broken world.

Reduction of violence and participation of youths in church program/activities can also be the measure and through the way that different faiths interact peacefully.

The church should also be involved in dialogue that will not compromise the Christian faith. Organizing workshops and seminar on peacebuilding can also be of good help. Another way of promoting peace by the church in collaboration with other organization is through empowering and joining hands together in helping people.

Another way is by supporting with prayers, advertising or using slogan, jingles and poster cards/hand bills.

Besides, the church can make unique contributions in global peacebuilding by taking deliberate steps in organizing peace talks at all the tiers of the government internationally. The church should continue to do what she has been doing before, namely;

- ✓ Preaching the gospel

- ✓ Social actions in needy communities
- ✓ Organizing peace talks, interfaith conference, symposiums etc.
- ✓ Act of forgiveness
- ✓ Bearing with one another in love (Colossians 3:13)

Also, the church should lead by examples, to say no to hostility and armed confrontation by laying down arms for peace to prevail. To condemn and detest all forms of violence and injustice. They should restore normalcy and promote peace initiatives in their domicile community and place of primary assignment. Also, the church should have the hearts to accommodate and accept other faith regardless of their way of life.

Some of the measures can be taken through a multifaceted approach that involves individuals, community and societal efforts. Some of these measures are:

***Inner peace:*** Cultivate inner peace through meditation or other mindfulness practices. This helps to reduce stress and anxiety, making it easier to interact with others peacefully.

***Conflict resolution:*** Develop effective conflict resolution skills, such as active listening, empathy, and constructive communication.

***Volunteer Work:*** Engage in volunteer work that promote peace and understanding, such as conflict resolution initiatives, community service etc.

***Community Engagement:*** Organize community events, workshop or conferences that focuses on peace-building, conflict resolution, and social cohesion.

***Education and Awareness:*** Provide education and awareness programs on the importance of peace, conflict resolution and social harmony.



**Community Service:** organize community service project that promote peace and understanding, such as clean-up initiatives, food drives or volunteer days.

**Policy Changes:** Advocate for policy changes that promote peace, justice and equality, such as fair laws, effective governance, and inclusive decision-making process.

**Economic Development:** Promote economic development and job creation to reduce poverty and social inequalities, which can lead to social unrest and conflict.

**Cultural Exchange:** Encourage cultural exchange programs that promote understanding, tolerance, and respect among different cultures, religions and communities.

**Restorative Justice:** Implement restorative justices' practices that focuses on repairing harm, rather than punishing offenders, to reduce recidivism and promote community healing.

Addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting peace requires a comprehensive and sustained effort from individuals, communities, societies, and governments. By working together towards the common goal. We can create a more peaceful and harmonious world.

## **6.7 Community Awareness**

Communities do create awareness to the people through a variety of strategies and initiatives. Some of the effective methods are as follows:

**Education and Workshops:** Hosting workshops, seminars, and training sessions that educate community members about the importance of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and non-violent communication

**Community Dialogue:** Organize forums or town meetings where community members can discuss local issues, share experiences, and collaboratively seek peace solutions.

***Involvement of Religious Leaders:*** Engaging religious institutions and leaders to promote peace messages and integrate peacebuilding teachings into their sermons and community outreach efforts.

***Peace Campaign and Advocacy:*** Launching campaigns that focus on peace messaging, using posters, fliers, social media, and local media to reach broader audiences and raise awareness about peace issues.

***Art and Cultural Activities:*** Utilizing art, music, theater, and cultural events to convey messages of peace and unity, making them more relatable and impactful for community members.

***Youth Engagement:*** Involving youth in peacebuilding activities through clubs, sports events, and programs that encourage leadership and promote positive interactions among diverse groups.

***Partnerships with NGOs:*** Collaborating with non-governmental organizations focused on peacebuilding to access resources, training, and support when amplifying their outreach efforts.

***Conflict Resolution Programs:*** Implementing conflict resolution training for community leaders, mediators, and members to equip them with skills for handling disputes and fostering peaceful resolutions.

***Community Projects:*** Initiate community service projects that promote collaboration and unity among diverse groups, helping to build relationships and trust within the community.

***Use of Technology:*** Leveraging technology, such as social media platforms and online workshops, to spread peacebuilding messages and engage more community members.

By employing a combination of these strategies, communities can effectively raise awareness about peacebuilding, foster a culture of dialogue, and encourage proactive participation among their members.

Dialogue with the community leaders is essential for fostering cooperation and addressing local issues. To facilitate these dialogues, below are some points to be considered:

1. ***Schedule Meetings:*** Arrange one-on-one or small group meetings with community leaders to discuss specific issues. Ensure the meetings are well-prepared with an agenda and clear objectives.
2. ***Collaborative Workshops:*** Conduct workshops that allow community leaders to collaborate on problem-solving strategies. These workshops can be focused on specific themes relevant to the community.
3. ***Utilize Local Media:*** Use local newspapers, radio stations, and social media to invite community leaders to discuss pressing issues, share updates, and solicit feedback from the community.
4. ***Participatory Action Research:*** Involve leaders in action research projects that engage the community in identifying challenges and implementing solutions collaboratively.
5. ***Engagements Through Cultural Events:*** Organize cultural or social events that bring community leaders and residents together in a relaxed setting, allowing for informal dialogue and relationship-building.
6. ***Leverage Existing Network:*** Work with existing local organizations and associations that engage community leaders to facilitate dialogue and create a platform for discussion.
7. ***Feedback Mechanisms:*** Establish feedback channels that allow community members to express their views, which can then be discussed in meetings with leaders.
8. ***Invite Leaders as Speakers:*** Invite community leaders to speak at events or forums regarding their experiences and insights on community issues, prompting a dialogue with participants.

- 9. Collaborative Problem-solving Groups:** Form groups comprising community leaders and residents focused on addressing specific problems the community faces, encouraging collective input and decision-making.
- 10. Technology Platforms:** Use online platforms (e.g. Zoom, WhatsApp group) to facilitates discussions, especially when in-person meetings are not feasible. These platforms can expand reach and participation.
- 11. Follow-Up Actions:** After dialogues, ensure to follow-up on discussions, implement agreed actions, and keep lines of communication open for ongoing engagement.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **7.1 Summary**

This research has solely centered on the topic “The Impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church in the Maintenance of Peace in the Society: The Study of Adamawa State, Nigeria”.

The background of the study has been stated where the researcher has vividly explained that Adamawa State was a subordinate kingdom of the Sultanate of Sokoto which also included much of northern Cameroon.

Adamawa State is noted for its rich cultural heritage which reflects in its history, i.e., dances, dress patterns, craftsmanship, and music. The three main religions are Islam, Christianity and Traditionalism.

Adamawa state is the home of a large number of Christians, forming the largest minority religion in the predominantly Muslim state. Christian communities in the state have been heavily attacked by Boko Haram which had caused conflict between the indigenes. However, these attacks have reduced in recent years due to the Nigerian military's efforts to combat terrorism in the region. So, this research has tried to look at the effects that it has in the society.

It has also been noted in the research that Christian leaders have always publicly stand for societal peace and harmony and against violence. Peace is a universal phenomenon that everyone desires and wishes to enjoy endlessly. Traditions, cultures, religions and societies do have different prescriptions to attaining and enjoying peace. This concept has been addressed in the paper.

The research has covered some selected Areas in Adamawa State. The method that the researcher has used in carrying out the research was analytical research method. This was chosen in order to investigate, explore, and explain the purpose of the research. This method that was chosen allows the researcher to discuss the phenomenon under study as it exists at the time of the study.

The information gotten was analyzed using analytical method. Each of the information gotten by the researcher was analyzed using sub-headings in order to delve into the matter properly which has determined the impact, effect or consequences and perception of people towards the impact of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church in the maintenance of peace in the society.

The research has discovered that dialogue fosters Understanding and Empathy, builds trust and relationships, facilitates communication and negotiation, create a safe space for difficult conversations, promotes long-term stability and reconciliation

## **7.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, Peacebuilding is an essential part of human life in many countries today. Also, religions can serve as channels for implementing and sharing such knowledge among the faithful for effective peacebuilding in our communities and even globally.

At the very heart of Christianity, all that it yearns for is how-to live-in peace with everyone. Perhaps that is the reason why the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: “First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

Paul knew that peace, a tranquil and quiet life, in the city of Ephesus would make room for the gospel of peace in the hearts of the residents of that city and beyond. So, first of all, praying was the most powerful way for New Testament Christians to love their neighbors and to promote peace in their community.

### **7.3 Recommendations**

The researcher wishes to recommend the following for further research and action:

1. The church should focus more in preaching the message of peace and harmony rather than prosperity message.
2. Interfaith dialogue should also be embraced by the religious leaders so as to maintain peace.
3. The researcher recommends that more research should be conducted by other researchers to augment what has not been touched.
4. Church leaders should approach politicians and teach them the importance of good governance and encourage them.
5. Church leaders should preach and promote ethno-religious tolerance and to accommodate opposing views as part of deepening peaceful co-existence and harmony in the country.
6. Inter-faith training of the youths should be encouraged by the church leaders so as to enlighten them about the faith of others.
7. Church leaders should ensure the protection of religious freedom of the citizens.
8. There is need to promote a human rights-based approach to the protection of religious freedom in Nigeria.

9. The church should redouble its efforts as facilitator of dialogues and mediators of conflicts between conflicting parties.
10. The church should setup their advocacy by sensitizing and orientating the people about their rights and the rights of others.
11. Religious leaders must denounce all forms of fanaticism and racial discrimination based on religion, race, class, ethnicity, or descent.
12. It would be good for the church to be proactive in social action, holistic mission works and simple presentation of the gospel. Involvement of the youths in designing church programs can also be helpful. The church should make peacebuilding the key role and responsibility, let it be their primary responsibility to improve peace in the society.
13. More so, the church should involve Government and NGOs in improving peace in the communities and society at large.
14. The Church must teach biblical truth and ensure that the rights of the citizens which include freedom to worship and associate are protected.
15. The security agencies in Nigeria must be well equipped, constantly trained, sufficiently funded and adequately motivated for better performance.
16. Church leaders can also help to reduce security challenges by cautioning their followers against disobeying the laws of the land and taking the laws into their hands.
17. The Nigerian government should intensify more efforts in its quest towards ensuring the security of its citizens. It is expected of them, where necessary, to recruit more security personnel to complement the efforts of the over-burdened personnel. This should be based on competence rather than meritocracy.



18. The community can also help law enforcement agencies to identify challenges, issues and concerns that might emerge within or outside the community. Once the community is involved in the security matters, it will help reduce the growing rate of crimes in their neighborhood.

#### **7.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

In recent times, scholars have made an attempt to fill the gap occasioned by the intention accorded to the contributions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century churches in peace building process in the society. Thereby, embracing themselves with the opportunity to provide in-depth analysis of the churches as an important instrument that can influence factors responsible for peaceful co-existence among people. The presence of religious body in peace building has helped in promoting peaceful co-existence among the people. These religious body have performed in the transformation in the lives of its followers. Besides, the immediate roles of the organizations to post violent conflicts areas is to initiate an interfaith dialogue in the society in supporting the emotional and physical healing of the traumatized persons. Secondly, the preaching of reconciliation in the violent communities in different areas is one of the greatest achievements that this research has done in Adamawa state. Thus, the involvement of faith-based actors in the process was capable of facilitating cohesion, protection, and mediation that allows for peaceful co-existence.

In addition to the above, the researcher wishes to highlight that this work has also contributed in the following ways:

**Awareness:** the research provided an awareness that was created among the people which has helped in changing the minds of some individuals towards their wicked plans.

**Teachings:** teachings were conducted in different places of worship to the residence which has helped them to understand some things for themselves. For instance, in some northern part of Adamawa State, the NGOs have done their best in organizing teachings for different group of people on how-to live-in peace with one another in some places that they have never visited which the researcher informed them of.

**Dialogue:** This work has it that people that refused to be reconciled for some years ago has been reconciled with each other, and now they are living in peace. On the other hand, the effort of the religious leaders also helped in discouraging abuses and promoted peace.

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