

Pontifical University
St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, Republic of Ireland

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN THEOLOGICAL VOICES, INCLUDING
CORNELIUS AFEBU OMONOKHUA, AQUILINE TARIMO AND DESMOND
MPILO TUTU TO A RENEWED THEOLOGY OF PEACEBUILDING**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE CONDITIONS FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE IN THEOLOGY

By

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Mrs. Veronica Egumaye Ali, for her love and sacrifice. May the Lord bless and reward her and those who have died, with peace, happiness and eternal salvation. I also dedicate it in honour of the late Most Reverend Dr. E.S Obot, first Catholic Bishop of Idah Diocese Nigeria; it is for all his immense contributions to peacebuilding and selfless services to the Church in Idah and the Government and people of Kogi State Nigeria in evangelization, education and medical care.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely the right product of my own work. It has not been submitted in fulfilment of degree requirements at this or any other university in the world. Other people's intellectual properties within this work have been acknowledged. No part of the publication may be reproduced or transmitted without permission. The library may lend a copy of this thesis as per the relevant regulations.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Ayegba Ali

Date _____

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	African Conference of Churches
ACRL	African Council of Religious leaders for peace
AECAWA	Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa
AGD	Ad Gents Divinitus
ANC	African National Congress
AWR	Assembly of the World's Religions
BOKO HARAM	Western Education is sinful
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CABICOL	Catholic Bishops' Conference of Liberia
CATHAN	Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria
CBCN	Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria
COMYON	The Council of Muslim youth organisation in Nigeria
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CPN	Catholic Peacebuilding Network
C.R.R.M	Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims
CSN	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
CYON	Catholic Youth Organisation of Nigeria
DH	Dignitatis Humanae
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRC/DDG	Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
GCBC	Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference
GS	Gaudium et Spes
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDFB	Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace
I.D.B	Islamic Development Bank
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ING	Interim National Government
IRF	International Religious Foundation

ISESCO	Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ITCABIC	Inter-Territorial Catholic Bishops' Conference
JBC	Jerome Biblical Commentary
LD	Lumen Gentium
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MISSIO	Catholic Mission Charity
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of Ogoni people
MSSN	Muslim Students Society of Nigeria
NA	Nostra Aetate
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NNDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NDPVF	Niger Delta People Volunteer Force
NDV	Niger Delta Vigilante
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIM	National Institute of Management
NIREC	Nigerian Inter-Religious Council
NWIDLF	Nigerian Women in the Diaspora Leadership Forum
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference/Countries
PAC	Pan Africans Congress
PCID	Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
PDP	People's Democratic Party
RASA.	Receive, Appreciate, Summarize and Ask
RCCP	Resolving Conflict Creatively Programme
RECOWA	Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SNC	Sovereign National Conference
SCC	Small Christian Community
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commissions
UN	United Nations

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCF	World Congress of Faiths
WFIC	World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils
WPR	World Parliament of Religions
YCSN	Young Catholic Students of Nigeria

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The deplorable human rights records of dictatorships around the world in particular from the First World War in 1914, till the wake of this Millennium (2000) and beyond, were matched and even exceeded by the atrocities unleashed by anarchy in failed states or potentially underdeveloped and developing nations of the world. Intolerance of religion, ethnic nationalities and political power tussle leads to violence. Most religious believers are challenged in a special way by the disturbing way religion is being manipulated to serve the cause of violent nationalism and ethnic conflict in many countries.

For Eghosa E. Osaghae “Religion and ethnic based perceptions has become the whipping boy for much of the world’s violence. This is the case in Nigeria and many other countries in Africa and other parts of the world.”¹

Jan H. Boer furthermore maintains that “Ethnic and religious violence are an everyday feature that have created soured relationships in Nigeria and beyond.”² The situation can serve as a lens through which one can “further the study of the problems of democratization and peace-building in divided societies.”³ For Sixtus Njoku, “The active collaboration of all peoples who share a similar vision for peace and harmony in a pluralistic society like Nigeria is the only way to peaceful co-existence.”⁴

This thesis in the first place, will examine the theology of peacebuilding as proposed by the Catholic Church at the local level in Africa and particularly Nigeria. Secondly, it will discuss the contributions of contemporary African and Nigerian theologians. Does their work make a distinctive contribution to the universal quest for peace?

¹Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 24.

²Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria’s Decade of Blood, 1980-2002* (Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003), 7.

³Abu Bakarr Bah, *Breakdown and Reconstruction: Democracy, the Nation-State and Ethnicity in Nigeria* (Canada, Lunenburg: Lexington Books, 2008) ix. See also Osaghae, “Managing Multiple Minority Problems in a Divided Society: The Nigeria Experience,” *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3 (2008): 1-24.

⁴Sixtus Njoku, “The Problem of Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nigeria” *The Nigerian Journal of Theology*, vol. 25 (2015): 115-130.

The chapters aim to show that the theological voices coming out of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, offer new theological insights and pastoral proposals that will enhance the quest for peace and reconciliation in societies worldwide. Finally, this thesis hopes to present a renewed theology of peacebuilding based on the insights of the universal Church and the African scholars considered.

This thesis undertakes such a task through the ‘lens’ of the thinking, theories and life experiences of these theologians: Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua, Aquiline Tarimo, Desmond Tutu, and other Islamic scholars, all of whom are absolutely convinced of the notion that peacebuilding and dialogue is a unique and dynamic human phenomenon that cannot and must not be ignored or mismanaged. It is in the light of their unique contributions to our society then, that this thesis seeks answers to the following questions: What does peacebuilding mean in a pluralist society that is characterised by ethnic and religious violence? What roles, functions or goals do these scholars assign to this study? What is their understanding of it”? How do they relate the need for peace to the wider society and the church? In the inevitable event of such conflicts occurring, what solutions do these scholars proffer in order that they are resolved? How do these scholars relate the call to peace to the concrete living of her people?

AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The thesis aims at evaluating the usefulness and efficacy of theologian’s distinctive approaches to peacebuilding by examining their thoughts in relation to the overall teaching and tradition of the local Catholic Church in Africa and especially Nigeria. This thesis draws inspiration from documents related to peacebuilding and dialogue from the African and Nigerian church. Other important documents to be used include, contemporary African theological enquiry evidenced in the two synodal documents of 1994 and 2009 i.e. *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus*. The works of the Nigerian Catholic cleric, Cornelius Afebu

Omonokhua, the Tanzanian Jesuit priest and moral theologian, Aquiline Tarimo, and the South African Nobel Prize winner and Anglican Archbishop, Desmond Tutu will also be considered. As with two selected Islamic scholars, Abbas Aroua and Irfan Omar and the overall history of the study of peace-studies. The writings of these scholars on the nature and functions reveal distinctive but related theological views they represent. Omonokhua's general approach to the topic could be characterised as being distinctively interreligious or inter faith dialogue, while Tarimo's is driven by an ethical call for a reconstruction and re-education of religious values and principles and Tutu's by the tenets of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis undertakes the tasks of providing peacebuilding models and methods. I will undertake the task of tracing the historical of peacebuilding in Africa and especially Nigeria before eventually arriving at the contemporary era of Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu.

The task of examining, evaluating and comparing the works of the latter three scholars is then undertaken - particularly in terms of their accord or not with each other, and particularly with the teaching traditions of the Catholic Church. This dissertation takes the form of a qualitative research project which seeks to give voice, through their writings, debates and teachings to the three major scholars, Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu, on peacebuilding. A qualitative approach was specifically used because it can more than adequately cater for the depth and insightfulness of the diverse contributions made by these scholars.

THESIS DESIGN

Overall, this thesis is divided into six chapters, with the first and last serving to contextualise and draw conclusions from the contents of chapters two, three, four and five.

Chapter one is divided into three parts. Part one will define key concepts and terms in this study and then give a broad historical background of ethnic and religious tensions in Africa

and especially Nigeria. This will specifically examine the historical background of conflict and peace in Nigeria. Part two of chapter one focuses on the ethnic causes of conflict in Nigeria. While part three will treat the religious causes of conflict in Nigeria.

Chapter two is divided into three parts. Part one traces the background of the religious and ethnic tensions in Africa. Part two will treat the church in Africa and her mission of peace. Two notable documents, *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus* will be discussed. Local African scholars and theologians will also be examined in this chapter. Part three will discuss the National Episcopal Conference of Nigeria, i.e. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) and other individual scholars and theological association in terms of their contribution to peacebuilding further along. Also maintaining and strengthening the magisterial status quo will be discussed.

Chapter three will be divided into part one and two for Omonokua and Tarimo respectively in conversation with other scholars. Part one seeks to describe and analytically evaluate the peacebuilding as outlined in the thoughts, works and teaching of Omonokhua. While part two will treat Tarimo. This chapter draws their insights as elaborated in books, and articles. In addition, the thesis draws on biographies on his works, commentaries supportive or otherwise, which Omonokua's work has contextualised in terms of his Catholic upbringing, his own experiences of living, working and writing and teaching in present day Nigeria and as a Catholic priest. Hence, the importance of maintaining the 'historical' underpinning to this thesis, overall, is well evidenced. The life of Omonokua and the environments in which he lived impacted on his beliefs and teachings on peacebuilding. Part two of this chapter will examine the thoughts of Tarimo. He was involved in peacebuilding in his native country Tanzania for years.

In the case of Tutu, in Chapter four, it shall be divided into four parts. Part one will discuss the life and times of Tutu and the background of apartheid in South Africa. Part two will treat

his theology of ubuntu and interfaith dialogue. Part three will discuss his teachings on forgiveness and the fourfold path and will conclude on selected themes on his work. Part four will make a comprehensive evaluation of his work. By examining his input on peacebuilding, and the great moral debates of the apartheid regime in South Africa, e.g. the pass law, nuclear war, racial segregation, it is to be noted that it was through both contextualising and historicising Tutu's works, in terms of his own life and of his contributions to some of the major moral debates in South Africa, that the thesis managed to garner some rich pickings from his works on ubuntu, interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding and its influence from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

Chapter five treats two selected Islamic scholars on peacebuilding. This is divided into two parts. Part one will briefly discuss the challenge of Islam in relation to Christianity and its message and an overview of Islam and its central beliefs. Part two will treat the works of two scholars on the Islamic faith. They include: Abbas Aroua and Irfan A. Omar in dialogue with other Islamic scholars. Their examination and use of Islamic textual evidence for peaceful interfaith relations makes their reflections very pivotal in this study. Secondly, both scholars represent a seemingly moderate-Islamic tradition.

The final chapter is the sixth, which is the general conclusion. This will evaluate the previous chapters, particularly the core theologian's teachings in the African church context and attempt to critically evaluate and examine the implications and challenges for Church teaching on peace.

Chapter One

Historical Background: Understanding the Root Causes and Impact of Ethnic and Religious Violence in Nigeria

1. Introduction

The world faces no greater challenge today than the challenge to end its relentless conflict and violence. For Douglas Roche, “War causes starvation, deepens poverty, ruins environments, forces migration of peoples, wrecks the rules of law, multiplies the gap between the rich and the poor, and causes prolonged misery for the most vulnerable people.”¹ This remains the quest for peace faced by Nigeria and most African nations in the twenty first century.

The opening chapter presents the background of the study, exploring the developments that led to the present realities of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria.² It looks at the current reality and identifies both the remote and more immediate causes of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria, drawing on the works of a range of scholars, including historians, sociologists and political scientists such as John N. Paden,³ Toyin Falola,⁴ Marinus C. Iwuchukwu,⁵ Jude Umeobi,⁶ Simon Davou Mwadkwon⁷ and Jan H. Boer.⁸ This chapter is divided into three

¹ Douglas Roche, *The Human Right to Peace* (Canada, Ottawa: Saint Paul University Press, 2003), 9.

² The current Boko Haram crisis poses the fiercest challenge to Nigeria’s peace and unity since the end of the three-year civil war in 1970 and the violence in the oil rich Region of the Niger-Delta Nigeria, because of environmental degradation and lack of basic amenities for the population in the region. See Helon Habila, *The Chibok Girls: The Boko Haram Kidnappings and Islamist Militancy in Nigeria* (USA, Columbia: Penguin books, 2016), 22.

³ John N Paden, *Faith and Politics in Nigeria: Nigeria as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2008). John N. Paden is a British professor of international Studies on conflict resolution, peacebuilding public Administration at Ahmadu Bello University Nigeria and Dean, faculty of Social and Management sciences at Bayero University Kano.

⁴ Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2001).

⁵ Marinus C. Iwuchukwu, *Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Dr. Iwuchukwu is Associate Professor Duquesne University Pittsburgh, PA. He has been honoured by the Islamic Centre of Pittsburgh for his work in Christian-Muslim Dialogue.

⁶ Jude Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” PhD diss., University of The West Rosemead, California, 2013, 38. Umeobi throws more light into the definition of these terms linked to peacebuilding in his thesis.

parts. Part one will define key concepts and terms in this study and then give a broad historical background of ethnic and religious tensions in Africa and Nigeria. Part two will discuss the ethnic dimension and part three will analyse the causes of religious tensions and violence in Nigeria before the conclusion.

PART ONE

1.1 Basic concepts

Key concepts used in this study include: violence and conflict; peacebuilding and peacemaking; ethnicity and religion.

a) Violence / Conflict

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica explains the term violence as a type of “behaviour that is intended to hurt other people physically.”⁹ Umeobi describes violence in the words of Nona H. Cannon as those dangerous kinds of conditions that cause physical and psychological harm. The term is used to include any type of harm to people and creatures. It can include force, punishment, humiliation, degradation, injury, hurt, exploitation and pain. Cannon in the words of Umeobi, “Goes further to distinguishing between what she terms direct violence and indirect violence.”¹⁰ Direct violence includes bodily harm such as murder, rape, wars, spousal battering and child battering. While indirect violence involves other types of harm that do not involve physical injury. Indirect violence may include economic, political, governmental,

⁷ Simon D. Mwakwong, “The Role of Religious Leaders in National Integration.” *Jos Studies*, vol. 11, no 4. (June 2002): 12-28.

⁸Jan Boer. H, *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together*. (Belleville, Ont: Essence Publishing, 2009).

⁹ The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v. “Violence.” Violence is also the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. See Mary Yoder Holsopple, et al. *Building Peace: Overcoming Violence in Community* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004), 18. Umeobi throws more light into the definition of these terms linked to peacebuilding in his thesis on ethnic and religious conflict in Nigeria, mentioned earlier.

¹⁰ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 39.

social policies and practices that cause psychological harm and that are incompatible with peace.¹¹ These forms of violence are prevalent in Nigeria today and need to be addressed.

b) Peace and Religious Peacebuilding

What is peace? For Juvenal Ndayambaje, “It is a state in which a society or nation has come to terms with itself.”¹² It is, therefore, a “complex idea but one which is necessary for the advancement of human civilisation.”¹³ Peace is not just the absence of physical harm to persons and property. Neither is it a condition of tranquility where there are no disagreements and disputes and where conflicts are entirely banished. Indeed, peace is “more than just patching of relationships and differences.”¹⁴

Peace, taken in its broad sense, is a philosophy and a paradigm of life. It has its own values and precepts that “provide a framework for understanding and regulating human relationships in order to create an integrated, holistic and humane socio-political and economic order.”¹⁵

Peace is life itself since it is a product of justice and freedom. Individuals, communities and nations desire peace for its intrinsic value as a motivator and foundation for human activities.

The use of the term peacebuilding, as distinguished from peace-making, conflict resolution, and other related but distinct concepts, is of recent vintage. It first came into widespread use beyond the peace community only after 1992, when Boutros-Ghali, then UN secretary-general, announced his Agenda for peace.¹⁶ Since then, as Catherine Morris summarizes the situation, peacebuilding has become “a broadly used but often ill-defined term connoting

¹¹ Nona H. Cannon, *Roots of Violence, Seeds of Peace in People, Families, and Society* (California: Miclearoy Publishing, 1996), 17.

¹² Juvenal Ndayambaje, “Religious Pluralism: Threat or Opportunity?” *African Christian Studies* vol. 30, no. 4 (2014): 71-88.

¹³ Ndayambaje, “Religious Pluralism: Threat or Opportunity?” 71-88.

¹⁴ Juvenal Ndayambaje, “Religious Pluralism: Threat or Opportunity?” 30, no. 4 (2014): 71-88.

¹⁵ Innocent Jooji, *Mending the Cracked Pot: Perspectives on Conflict, Non-violence, Social Justice and Reconciliation in Nigeria*. (Ibadan: Daily Graphics Publishers, 2003), 161.

¹⁶ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peace-making and Peace-building*, Document A/47/277-S/241111, June 17, 1992 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1992); see also *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace: Position paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*, Document A/50/60-S/1995/1, January 3, 1995 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1995. See also www.un.org)

activities that go beyond crisis intervention such as long-term development, and building of governance structures and institutions.”¹⁷ The call for peace at all levels is one of the major challenges facing most African nations today.

For the purpose of this study, we use the term religious peacebuilding according to Innocent Jooji to describe “The range of activities performed by religious actors and institutions for the purpose of resolving and transforming conflict, with the goal of building social relations and political institutions characterized by an ethos of tolerance and nonviolence.”¹⁸ Thus for Jooji, religious peacebuilding “includes not only conflict management and resolution efforts on the ground, but also the efforts of people working at a distance from actual sites of deadly conflicts.”¹⁹ These may include, “legal advocates of religious human rights, scholars conducting research relevant to cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue, and theologians and ethicists within the religious communities who are probing and strengthening their traditions of nonviolence.”²⁰ According to this definition, peacebuilding entails “conflict transformation, the replacement of violent with nonviolent means of settling disputes. This occurs through overlapping processes of conflict management and conflict resolution.”²¹

Conflict management entails the prevention of conflict from becoming violent or expanding to other arenas. Accordingly, it includes the enforcement of existing treaties and peace accords. Within these categories religious actors have played several major roles in recent decades, serving as heralds, observers, and peacekeepers. For David Little and Scot Appleby, “Conflict resolution, or peacemaking, entails removing, to the extent possible, the inequalities

¹⁷ Catherine Morris, “What is Peacebuilding? One Definition” (New York: Peacemakers Trust, 2000), *United Nations General Assembly*, 60/180: “The Peacebuilding Commission” (December 30, 2005), 2.

¹⁸ Innocent Jooji, *Mending the Cracked Pot: Perspectives on Conflict, Non-violence, Social Justice and Reconciliation in Nigeria*, 22.

¹⁹ Jooji, *Mending the Cracked Pot: Perspectives on Conflict, Non-violence, Social Justice and Reconciliation in Nigeria*, 22.

²⁰ Jooji, *Mending the Cracked Pot: Perspectives on Conflict, Non-violence, Social Justice and Reconciliation in Nigeria*, 32.

²¹ Jooji, *Mending the Cracked Pot: Perspectives on Conflict, Non-violence, Social Justice and Reconciliation in Nigeria*, 32.

between the disputants, by means of mediation, negotiation, and or advocacy and testimony on behalf of one or more parties to a conflict.”²² Religious actors for them, “have served as advocates, observers, and mediators, among other roles, in this phase of conflict transformation.”²³

c) Ethnicity

According to *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ethnicity is related to the “race or national group to which an individual belongs.”²⁴ For Umeobi therefore, it can be understood that ethnicity is associated with race, tribe and nationality. Therefore, a discussion on ethnicity or ethnic groups will include tribe, nationality, language, culture; tradition etc. The term ethnicity is a “social factor of importance and plays a major role in human relationships in society.”²⁵ Nigeria has three main ethnic groups, namely Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. In addition, there are around two hundred and fifty minor ethnic groups. In Nigeria, ethnic clashes often lead to religious riots and religious disturbances also often turning into ethnic clashes.

d) Religion

Umeobi observes that, just as there are various understandings, various views and opinions about the word violence, the word religion also shares a similar fate, as it means so many things to so many people. The Nigerian Nation, which is the central focus of this research, practices three major religions namely Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion.²⁶ Religion, therefore, is very much part of Nigerian life, culture and tradition. Nigerians are very passionate about religion and religious issues. There are religious symbols displayed in various places. For example, buses on the streets can have inscriptions such as “God is the

²² David Little and Scot Appleby, “A Moment of Opportunity? The Promise of Religious Peacebuilding in an Era of Religious and Ethnic Conflict” in *Religion and Peacebuilding*, eds, Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith (New York: State University Press, 5-6.

²³ David Little and Scot Appleby, “A Moment of Opportunity? 5-6.

²⁴The New Encyclopaedia Britannica s. v. “Ethnicity.”

²⁵ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria”, 61.

²⁶ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria”, 50.

answer” or “*Allah Nagode*” (God I thank you) written boldly at the front and the back of the vehicles. Religion has influence on so many decisions, positive and negative, in Nigeria. Many people believe that religion gives meaning and purpose to their lives. I now turn to the beginning of the story of Nigeria commencing with the advent of colonialism and the Islamic and Christian religions in Nigeria that brought the nation to where it is today.

e) Theology

What is theology? Theology seems to be an emotive word today. To many it communicates bigotry, arrogance, and exclusivism riddled with impracticality. People will allow you to have your theology; just don’t let it be known with too much conviction that you actually believe it. You can have your belief’s just don’t push those upon others.

Webster’s dictionary defines theology as “The science of God or of religion; the science which treats of the existence, character, and attributes of God, his laws and government, the doctrines we are to believe, and the duties we are to practice. . . the science of Christian faith and life.”²⁷ Augustus. H. Strong, the great twentieth century theologian said that theology is “The Science of God and of the relations between God and the universe.”²⁸ Charles Ryrie, the popular dispensationalist theologian, says theology is “Thinking about God and expressing those thoughts in some way.”²⁹ Millard Erickson, a modern Baptist theologian says that theology is simply “the study or science of God.”³⁰ Most simply put, theology is the study of God. It comes from the word *theos* which is Greek for “God,” and *-ology* which is from the Greek word *logos* meaning “word.” Most literally then the word theology means “words about God” or “the study of God.” If one were to use the term generically, it functions much like “philosophy” or “worldview.” People often use the word this way in secular venues.

²⁷ Webster’s Dictionary s.v “Theology”

²⁸ Augustus. Hopkins. Strong, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Designed for the use of Theological Students*, (Sagwan Press, 2015), 33.

²⁹ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: 1986), 9.

³⁰ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 22.

Many times it is used very specifically, speaking only about God. This is called “theology proper.” But generally speaking theology is a belief system that is built upon intellectually and emotionally held commitments concerning God and man.

Speaking about theology in times past was not thought of ‘taboo’ as it is today. It used to be called “the queen of the sciences.” It was understood to be the first among pursuits of knowledge, since it was believed that all other pursuits were vitally linked to its dictates. Morality was dictated by it. Philosophy was called its handmaiden. Why was it held in such high esteem then? Because theology itself provides a foundation for your philosophy and worldview, which in turn sets inclinations for your heart, actions, and decisions in all situations? Everything is affected by our theology. For example, if theology denies the existence of God, then your morality is going to be affected since its basis is not a personal and timeless being. With a theology of atheism (i.e. belief that there is no God) morals become relative to the time and situation. In this case, what is true for one generation may not be true for another? If your theology denies the sinfulness of man, then a bloody sacrificial death to atone for sin becomes repulsive, since, according to this theology, humans do not need to have their sin atoned for. If theology is polytheistic (i.e. belief in many gods), then you will constantly be trying to figure out which god or gods you should encounter, pray to, and/or appease in order to make whose situation “right.” The implications are endless. In other words, “Theology is a set of intellectual and emotional commitments, justified or not, about God and man which dictate ones beliefs and actions.”³¹ Neither the word itself is irrelevant, nor the concepts which it seeks to articulate. It is the first pursuit of knowledge and wisdom.

³¹ Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 22.

1.2 Nigeria Heritage: Culture, Location and Geography

Nigeria is part and parcel of the sub-Saharan African continent, geographically and culturally. Hence, some of the remarks I make will refer to both the African and Nigerian cultural heritage, sometimes interchangeably. However, Eugene C Ayangaor observes that while “Nigerian cultural heritage does not exhaust the totality of African cultural heritage, it is a product of it and a substantive part of it. In fact, Nigeria could be said to be a microcosm of the African continent.”³²

Ayangaor observed that “It is often said that, out of every four Africans, one is a Nigerian. It is certainly the largest black and Afro-cultural group in the world. Geographically, it is the third largest country in Africa, coming only after Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan, and the largest country in West Africa.”³³

Its territories, which span the whole area from the swampy regions of the Niger Delta touching the Atlantic Ocean in the south, to the fringes of the Sahara Desert in the North, are the largest and most representative of the geo-climatic conditions of the West African region. Ayangaor observes that “The multi-religious and ethnic nationalities in the country range from the coastal fishing communities in the south, through the sedentary agricultural peoples of the rainforest and savannah regions, to the nomads of the semi-deserts areas in the North.”³⁴

According to Toyin Falola, and Matthew Heaton in their book *The History of Nigeria*, cited by Umeobi, “the country is estimated to be roughly twice the size of California and about three times the size of The United Kingdom. Nigeria is bordered on the east by the Benin

³²Eugene C Ayangaor “The Creative Arts and the Projection of Nigerian Personality” in *Nigerian Cultural Heritage*, Ikenga E Metuh and Olowo Ojoade eds. (Jos: IMICO Publishing Company, 1990), 84.

³³Ayangaor “The Creative Arts and the Projection of Nigerian Personality” in *Nigerian Cultural Heritage*, 87.

³⁴Ayangaor “The Creative Arts and the Projection of Nigerian Personality” in *Nigerian Cultural Heritage*, 91.

Republic, on the west by Cameroon, on the north by Niger and on the south by the Bights of Benin and Biafra, which are on the Gulf of Guinea.”³⁵

1.3 Advent and Impact of Religions and Colonialism in Nigeria

There are two major events in Nigerian history and culture which impacted and have profoundly transformed the indigenous Nigerian people today. One relates to religion, commencing with the advent and spread of Islam in Northern Nigeria between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries and the coming of Christianity in the fifteenth century and the advent of Christianity again in the eighteenth century in the present-day Benin, Southern Nigeria.³⁶

The other was the imposition of colonialism and western European culture, accompanied by the second coming and rapid spread of Christianity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Thus, the Nigerian heritage which we have today, both religious and ethnic, is derived from three sources, and in some spheres, has features of an acculturation of the three-the indigenous Nigerian cultures, Arab-Islamic culture, and Euro-Christian culture.³⁷ This is reflected in every aspect of the Nigerian cultural life today arts, literature, religion, law, politics, etc. Thus, the three major religions in Nigeria, Traditional religion, Islam and Christianity, were chiefly influenced locally by Arabic links and Christian European roots.³⁸

Finally, Nigerian literary culture consists of traditional oral literature, Nigerian literature written in Arabic, some of which dates back to the eleventh century, and some more modern Nigerian literature written in modern European languages such as English and French.

Similarly, “sources of Nigerian laws have included the customary laws, the sharia laws, and the British common law, as well as local Nigerian legislation.”³⁹

³⁵Toyin Falola, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2. See also Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria”, 50.

³⁶Ayangaor “The Creative Arts and the Projection of Nigerian Personality” in *Nigerian Cultural Heritage*, 83.

³⁷Ayangaor “The Creative Arts and the Projection of Nigerian Personality” in *Nigerian Cultural Heritage*, 84.

³⁸K L Nwadiolor & B O S Udezo, “The place of the Church in the Rise of Sustainable Nationalism in Nigeria, 1870-1960” in *The Humanities & Sustainable Development* ABC Chiegboka and M S Ogeneeds (Anambra, Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick Printers, 2011), 381-87.

³⁹Nwadiolor & Udezo, “The place of the Church in the Rise of Sustainable Nationalism in Nigeria, 1870-1960” in *The Humanities & Sustainable Development*, 83.

The aim here is not merely to give information about Nigeria's cultural past. Rather, knowledge of Nigeria's cultural past is a necessary tool for building a peaceful, just and fair society and constructing a stable, peaceful and prosperous Nigerian nation. Nigerians must be very conversant with their cultural roots, their strengths and weaknesses, and study their abilities to face the challenges of an ever-changing world. Thus, the scope of this study has been extended to include how to harness and develop, to cultivate and foster, cherished national goals and values.

In the face of westernisation, characterized by its technological, individualist orientation, the African traditional philosophy of humanism, which sees man's dignity and well-being as the highest value, should be retained and promoted as a reference point for redefining and re-evaluating our national goals. Similarly, the three major religions and ethical systems, Traditional, Islamic and Christian, together with all the ethnic nationalities which "form part of our cultural heritage, are studied and used as effective tools of fostering unity, peace and integral development in a pluralistic society."⁴⁰

1.4 The Amalgamation of Old Kingdoms and Empires: A Critical Appraisal

Two principal schools of thought attempt to provide explanations for the ethno-religious diversity, conflict and violence. The first blames the conflict on religious and ideological colonization, founded on the "divide and rule" policy and the hasty amalgamation of various ethnic and religious groups to found the nation called Nigeria.⁴¹

Some scholars have blamed the woes of Nigeria on the British colonial administration. But whether the colonial administration is blameworthy with regard to the problems of the

⁴⁰Nwadiolor & Udezo, "The place of the Church in the Rise of Sustainable Nationalism in Nigeria, 1870-1960" in *The Humanities & Sustainable Development*, 89.

⁴¹Osita Agbu, *Ethnic Militias and the Threat to Democracy in Post-Transition Nigeria*.

present-day Nigeria is still a debatable issue. Eghosa Osaghae argued that “the problems of Nigeria are a direct consequence of the colonial rule.”⁴²

Prior to this date, the Nigerian nation was not a single country.⁴³ It was a collection of kingdoms and tribes, some with quite sophisticated cultures (notably, the Nok, Igbo Ukwu, Bini, and other cultures and civilizations). These various ethnic and cultural groups that make up what is Nigeria today existed as autonomous political entities, such as the Old Kanem-Bornu empire, the old Oyo, Benin kingdom, Nupe, Igala, Kwararafa and many other kingdoms and chiefdoms, to mention just a few. They defined their own political system and religious values before Britain eventually brought them under one colonial authority with administrative areas that corresponded to major tribal divisions.⁴⁴

Nigerian historians, including Fidelis Okafor, Ayodeji Olukoju, and Edllyne Anugwom,⁴⁵ support this partition theory of Africa by European nations. This was championed by Otto Von Bismarck of Germany. Iwuchukwu attests that “The territory round the River Niger in the West African Coast was given to the British at the beginning of the twentieth century.

⁴²Osaghae E. Eghosa, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2005), 1.

⁴² Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decade of Blood, 1980-2002* (Belleville, Ontario: Essence Publishing, 2003), 7.

The "Scramble for Africa" was the invasion, occupation, division, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism, between 1881 and 1914. It is also called the Partition of Africa and the Conquest of Africa. In 1870, only 10 percent of Africa was under European control; by 1914 it had increased to 90 percent of the continent, with only Ethiopia (Abyssinia), the Dervish state, founded in 1897 Somali Sunni Islamic state that was established by Mohammed Abdullah Hassan) and Liberia still being independent.

The Berlin Conference of 1884, which regulated European colonization and trade in Africa, is usually referred to as the starting point of the scramble for Africa. Consequent to the political and economic rivalries among the European empires in the last quarter of the 19th century, the partitioning of Africa was how the Europeans avoided warring amongst themselves over Africa. The latter years of the 19th century saw the transition from "informal imperialism" (hegemony), by military influence and economic dominance, to the direct rule of a people which brought about colonial imperialism. Richard S. Reddie, *Abolition: The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Colonies* (Oxford: Lion Hudson plc, 2007), 227-81. See also Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Asokoro, Abuja: Panaf Publishing Inc., 1972), 246-32.

⁴³ Michael Crowder, *The Story of Nigeria*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), 15.

⁴⁴Ade J.F. Ajayi and Toyin O. Falola. "Nigeria: The Arrival of the British."

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/414840/Nigeria/55316/The-arrival-of-the-British> (accessed 16/05/2017).

⁴⁵Tochukwu J. Okeke, "Cultural Diplomacy and Ethnic Tension in a Multi-Religious Society: An Example of Nigeria" in *The Humanities and Globalization in the Third Millennium*, A. B. C Chiegboka et al (Awka: Rex Charles & Patrick Press, 2010), 254. See also Matthew Nor Zaato, "The Organised Religions in Nigeria and the Culture of Religious Intolerance: A Phenomenological Philosophical Analysis" in *The Humanities and Globalization in the Third Millennium*, 224-39.

Lord Frederick Lugard, a British colonial administrator and the colonial office in London amalgamated the then Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914.”⁴⁶

The amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates was done in the “wisdom” of the colonial power masters to promote national unity and integration. However, the decision to amalgamate the protectorates has been criticized by authors, commentators and researchers, as being ill-advised and self-serving of the British. It is believed that members of the protectorates were not consulted on the planned merger.

This view is echoed in the comment of Obafemi Awolowo (1909-1987) (First Premier of Western Region of Nigeria) who observed that “Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no “Nigerians” in the same sense as there are “English” “Welsh” or “French.” The word 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, Thompson A. Achebe opined that “...the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates, inextricably complicated Nigeria's destiny. Animists, Muslims and Christians alike were held together by a delicate, some say artificial lattice”⁴⁸

Turning to the second school of thought, it states that the tension and conflict predates colonization and religious imperialism. Here it is argued that the problem is rooted in the socio-anthropological nature of the African world view⁴⁹ where tribes and even religious groups in the early part of the 19th century asserted their superiority by dominating and conquering other tribes, even to the point of enslaving them, where possible, as seen during the 19th century trans-Atlantic and Saharan slave trade to the Americas and West Indies.

⁴⁶Iwuchukwu, “Exploring Religious and Cultural Pluralism as assets Towards Muslim-Christian Relationship in Northern Nigeria.” In *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* vol. 26 2014), 29. Iwuchukwu, “Exploring Religious and Cultural Pluralism as assets Towards Muslim-Christian Relationship in Northern Nigeria.” 30.

⁴⁷ Obafemi Awolowo, *Awo: The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 22.

⁴⁸ Thompson Achebe, *Ethnic Conflict in Pluralistic Nigeria: Entrenching Participatory Democracy* (Enugu: Snaap Press, 2004), 32.

⁴⁹John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 22-24.

This diversity was recognized by the composers of the country's first National Anthem which proclaims: "Though tribe and tongue may differ, in brotherhood we stand."⁵⁰ That is why working for peaceful coexistence is paramount in the country. Also "It is important that Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, who are open toward adopting religious pluralism, work together for peace"⁵¹ Given the pluralistic nature of Nigeria, there is a need to build confidence and peaceful relationships in the nation.⁵²

Anugwom Edlyne E notes that, "given the geographical division of Nigeria, i.e. North and South and the domination of each geographical area by a particular world religion and ethnic group, ethnic factors become intertwined with religious issues."⁵³ This is aptly captured by

Dauda Abubakar:

The country's political history reveals an array of disillusion characterized by religious crisis, corruption, lack of accountability and abuse of public office, cut-throat struggle for the monopoly of state power, marginalization of disadvantaged cultural regional groups within the political process and the prebendalization of state power to ensure political control and legitimacy.⁵⁴

Thus, ethnicity can be said to be a major cause of rivalry and conflict in Nigeria, but the most worrisome and the most recurring decimal is the religious conflict which, of course, always has ethnic undertones.

⁵⁰Tochukwu J. Okeke, "Cultural Diplomacy and Ethnic Tension in a Multi-Religious Society: An Example of Nigeria" in *The Humanities and Globalization in the Third Millennium*, 248.

⁵¹Marinus Iwuchukwu C, "Exploring Religious and Cultural Pluralism as assets Towards Muslim-Christian Relationship in Northern Nigeria." In *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* vol. 26 (2014): 29.

⁵²John Ojo, Sunday, "Prebendalism, Socio-Linguistic and Ethnic Politics: The Bane of Nigerian Democracy" *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* Vol. 5, no. 5 (2014): 1-21.

⁵³Anugwom Edlyne E, "Ethno-Religious Violence and politics in Nigeria: Implications for a Nascent Democracy" *Nigerian Journal of Social Sciences*. vol. 2 (December 2003), 31. See also Olukoju Ayodeji, "Nigeria: A Historical Review" *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria* ed. Okafor, F.U. (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1997), 12.

⁵⁴Abubakar Dauda, "The Rise and the fall of the first and Second Republics of Nigeria." In *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*.ed. Okafor, F. u. (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1997), 69.

1.5 Promotion of the Freedom of Religion and Ethnic Integration in a Secular State

In the case of Muslim-Christian relations in Nigeria, Iwuchukwu argues that “freedom of religion is a premier human right that is non-negotiable.”⁵⁵ Although Nigeria, like most modern states, has held and advocated religious freedom as integral to the human rights of citizens and all residents in Nigeria through the constitution, the reality in certain parts of the country, especially in many parts of Northern Nigeria, is far from the constitutional provision. According to Iwuchukwu “Currently, in some parts of the major cities of the north such as Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Zaria, Yelwa, Katsina, Sokoto, etc. it is suicidal to publicly identify oneself as a member of a minority religious or ethnic group.”⁵⁶

Iwuchukwu further elaborated that also, “in many cities of northern Nigeria, it is like pulling teeth to get a building permit for a place of worship if one’s religious affiliation is not the dominant one. This is very unhealthy and unacceptable in a twenty-first century world.”⁵⁷

From the social empirical perspective, it is true that when political and traditional leaders of different parts of the country respect and promote religious freedom, members of the society belonging to minority regions have enjoyed significant exercise of that civil right. But the reverse is the case where those leaders resist or fail to protect such civil rights. Therefore, to achieve a comprehensive application of the freedom of religion in Nigeria, government and traditional institutions must use their resources and legal instruments to promote and defend it.

⁵⁵ Iwuchukwu, “Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Northern Nigeria,” 33.

⁵⁶ Iwuchukwu, “Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Northern Nigeria,” 33.

⁵⁷ Iwuchukwu, “Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Northern Nigeria,” 33.

1.6 Upholding the Principles of Religious Freedom and Tolerance

One of the definitions of religious freedom, as articulated by Professor Diana Eck, is that religious pluralism “is an interpretation of plurality, an evaluation of religious and cultural diversity. And finally, it is the ability to make a home for oneself and one’s neighbors in that multi-faceted reality.”⁵⁸ This calls for adequate respect for all religious affiliations existing in the society.

According to John Borelli, “while it is true that the existence of many religions with their specific differences create a religiously diverse society, religious pluralism refers to a richness that is greater than the sum of the various components. Thus, more precisely, religious pluralism in this sense means engaged religious diversity.”⁵⁹

The thrust of religious pluralism towards effective interreligious dialogue is captured by Paul F. Knitter, who states that pluralists “do not mean that all religions, in their nature as religions and their present condition, are equally valid in all they teach or do, or really say the same thing. Rather, pluralists are stating in order to have a real dialogue, all the religious participants and have to have equal rights.”⁶⁰ The equality of rights is not only a respect of interlocutors, civil liberties but more importantly the equality of the privilege of learning and teaching each other which should prevail in a dialogic environment.⁶¹ I now turn to the causes of ethnic violence in Nigeria in part two.

⁵⁸ Diana Eck, “Is our God Listening? Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism,” in *Islam and Global Dialogue: Pluralism and the Pursuit of Peace*. Roger Boase, ed. (England; Burlington Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 41.

⁵⁹ John Borelli, “Religious Pluralism in the USA today” A Catholic Perspective,” in *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View*, Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli (eds) (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 2006), 46-47.

⁶⁰ Paul Knitter F, “Between the Rock and a Hard Place: Pluralistic Theology Faces the Ecclesial and academic communities,” *Journal of Theology*, vol. 101 (Summer 1997): 80.

⁶¹ Alan Race appropriately tags the process and exercise of dialogue to be constituent of “equal rights” and “epistemological modesty.” This paradigm requires a “giving and taking” from all faith traditions involved in dialogue. See Alan Race, *Interfaith Encounter: The Twin tracks of Theology and Dialogue* (London: SCM Press, 2001), 109.

PART TWO

1.7 Ethnic Violence and Grievances in Nigeria

The following factors are either closely or more remotely related to the causes of ethnic violence in Nigeria.⁶²

1.7.1 Crude Oil Factor and the Nigerian Government

Oil has always been a major bone of contention in the country. Umeobi citing Stefan Wolff observed that, “in Nigeria, ethnic conflict is allegedly about the struggle to control the nation’s vast oil reserves, resources and revenue.”⁶³ According to Donald Horowitz, “Ethnicity is at the centre of politics in country after country, a potent source of challenges to the cohesion of states and of international tension.”⁶⁴ Crude oil is the major source of revenue in Nigeria.

When Nigeria emerged from the experience of the civil war, it was obvious that both ethnic and regional hostilities were still prevalent in most areas. But one of the good results of that era was the growth of the nation’s economy. This growth was mainly due to the discovery and expansion of petroleum. “Located mostly in the Niger delta region, petroleum became Nigeria’s chief export and single-handedly made Nigeria the wealthiest country in Africa during the 1970s.”⁶⁵ Eghosa E. Osaghae observed that the “amazing recovery from the civil war within a short period of time was due to the oil boom which the country enjoyed in the years following the war.”⁶⁶ But the allocation and sharing of the oil revenue, often tagged as the “national cake,” has not been either a smooth sailing or an easy experience. This is

⁶²Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 248. In this section, I will give an analyses of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria using some of the thoughts and reflections of Umeobi that proved very useful to this chapter.

⁶³ Stefan Wolff, *Ethnic Conflict: A Global Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 63. See also Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 248.

⁶⁴Donald L. Holowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) xi.

⁶⁵ToyinFalola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 181

⁶⁶Eghosa E. Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998) 69.

because many hostilities had ensued, especially in and around the Niger Delta region where the vast majority of the oil deposits are located.

1.7.2 Niger-Delta Violence: Oil Exploration and Environmental Degradation

In Nigeria, various groups have arisen and linked to the challenges in the Niger Delta⁶⁷ region. Nigeria's ascent to wealth began with the exploration of the first oil-well in Oloibiri⁶⁸ (1956), in its Niger Delta region. Ever since the discovery, the nation's economy depends largely on revenue from oil and gas exploration in the region. But this has not been without untoward consequences for the area.

Environmental concerns remain a critical cause of anxiety for the Niger Delta region. Environmental degradation poses a major source of concern for many parts of the land. Ecological distress is severe in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Environmental degradation has brought the region to the brink of ecological disaster. Humans suffer greatly, due to neglect and frequent outbreak of epidemics. So far, the focal point of the environmental debate remains the physical environment. The Delta region for Austin Obinna Ezejiofor, remains one of the "poorest and least developed parts of Nigeria, lacking basic amenities. There is little or no provision of electricity or pipe borne water supplies and schools and

⁶⁷ The main groups in the Niger-Delta region include: Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Development Commission (NNDC), Niger Delta Avengers (NDA), Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Niger Delta Vigilante (NDV) Biafra Avengers; Red Egbesu Water Lions; Asawana Deadly Force of the Niger Delta, the Adaka Boro Marine Commandos; the Utorogon Liberation Movement; Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force; and the Joint Revolutionary Council of the Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force. Yet others are the Red Scorpion; the Ultimate Warriors of the Niger Delta; the Niger Delta Red Squad; Niger Delta Vigilante; the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate; See Emmanuel Mayah, "18 New Armed Groups Springs up in Nigeria" *Premium Times*, October 18, 2016. <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/213051-18-new-armed-groups-spring-nigeria.html> [accessed 9/06/2017].

⁶⁸ Oloibiri is a small community in Ogbia LGA located in Bayelsa State, in the South-South Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The inhabitants of this community are mainly fishermen and farmers. It is a historic town to the oil and gas industry in Nigeria because Nigeria first commercial oil discovery was made at (Otuabagi/Otuogadi) in Oloibiri district by Shell Darcy on Sunday 15 January 1956. This town has many firsts to its credit in the Nigeria Oil and Gas industry: Its oil well is the first commercial oil well in Nigeria. It is also the first completed commercial oil well in Nigeria. It was completed on June 1956. Nigeria first crude oil export came from Oloibiri field in February 1958. See Caroline Mbonu, "The Notion of Peace in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:9) A Recipe for Peace Building in the Niger Delta Region" *Journal of Inculturation Theology* vol. 12 nos. 1&2 (2011): 141-56.

hospitals are inadequately funded.”⁶⁹ Ultimately, the Delta had to contend with the burden of environmental degradation. Oil spills from pipelines polluted the land and waterways: gas flaring polluted the air, fishing and farming were contaminated, destroying the livelihood of farmers and fishermen. This is at the centre of this ecological discourse. Caroline Mbonu reflects on the ecological and environmental disaster in the Niger Delta region as follows:

Pollution from oil and gas industries in this region continues to impact on the quality of life negatively. Every feature of the environment: human, animal, aquatic and forest life as well as the material and non-material cultures of the region, demands critical reflection. Justice demands critical attention to the environmental condition in the Niger-Delta region, which if unabated, can lead to more ecological disaster with dire consequences and beyond.⁷⁰

Thus, rather than transform the lives of the host communities, persistent exploitation of natural resources seems to have deformed the lives of millions in the area.

The main grievance of Delta activists was that oil revenues produced by states in the Niger Delta were used largely to benefit Ethnic-majority areas of the country (since the revenue sharing formula favours northern states more because of the high number of local government councils in the north, compared to the south). In contrast, their own region, which laid the golden egg, suffered from neglect. Decades of bitter complaints to the oil industries and the federal government with hardly any recourse, gave rise to militancy in the region. Justice is dishonoured and peace seems to elude the region.

The Niger delta people often accuse the Federal government of not doing enough to help and improve the lives of the people from whose land the vast revenue of the country is being derived. The Federal government is in charge of the oil revenue. This revenue is shared between the Federal government and the states that make up the nation. In July 2002, some

⁶⁹ Austin Obinna Ezejiofor, “Development as a Peace policy in the Niger Delta” in *The Humanities & Sustainable Development*, 369-80. See also Walter G. Emerole, “History and the Nigerian National Questions: A focus on the Niger-Delta Crisis” in *The Humanities & Sustainable Development*, 330-37.

⁷⁰Mbonu, “Ethics of Environmental Restoration (Rev 7:2-3): Biblical and Etche Cultural Perspectives.” *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* vol. 26 (2014), 109.

women in the Niger Delta area occupied the premises of the Chevron oil company to demand employment for their families and investment in the local community. The siege lasted for around eight days. It came to an end according to Elizabeth Harper, “after the Chevron Nigeria firm agreed to the women's demands to hire more than two dozen villagers and to build schools, water systems and provide other social amenities and infrastructure within the area.”⁷¹ I now turn to the major grievances among the ethnic groups in Nigeria.

1.8 Hausa Ethnic Grievances

In Nigeria, Umeobi argues, “Ethnic, religious and political struggles are geared toward the acquisition of leadership positions in the country.”⁷² At the beginning of the transition to civil rule in 1999, the Hausa group had already started to voice their opinion that they were being marginalized.

According to Umeobi, “The Nigerian President came from the Yoruba ethnic group in southern Nigeria, the vice-president come from the Hausa group in the north.”⁷³ The debate then centred on which ethnic group would produce the president of the House of the Senate. This issue generated much ethnic and political wrangling. We have to bear in mind that religion was also involved in this process.

Further, a number of politicians from the Hausa ethnic group were dissatisfied with the reforms being undertaken by the Obasanjo administration. This administration, in the words of Umeobi, was “accused of being in alignment with The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) championing their causes.”⁷⁴ The government was accused of gradually handing over the administration of Nigeria into the hand of CAN, the umbrella organization embracing all the Christians. The people from the Yoruba ethnic group for Mustapha were accused of being in control of federal bureaucratic positions. Also, “they were accused of having more than

⁷¹ Elizabeth Harper, “*Nigeria's Oil Industry: A Cursed Blessing*”? (July 2003). <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/nigeria/oil.html>. (accessed 22/05/2017)

⁷² Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 248.

⁷³ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 248.

⁷⁴ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 248.

their fair share of the national economy.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, “The two zones of the core north, the northwest and northeast, were said to be deliberately disadvantaged by appointments favouring Yorubas and Christian...”⁷⁶ The Hausa/northern region alleged that Obasanjo won the presidency on the strength of the votes of people from the north.

The removing of the military officers from the army, it was alleged, was aimed at crippling the political prospects of the north, the reason being that, in the event of a military takeover of the government; it would be difficult for a military leader to emerge from the north since most of them had been retired forcibly. For Mustafa “There is an accusation also that many heads of parastatals from the north were removed from office.”⁷⁷ This was another reason for the tension between ethnic groups in Nigeria.

1.8.1 Igbo Ethnic Grievances

The Igbos claims, according to Umeobi, that “they have been marginalized.”⁷⁸ Regarding this claim, Daniel Jordan Smith writes: “the Igbo Southeast lost its bid for independence in Nigeria’s civil war”⁷⁹ for Smit, “from 1967 to 1970, the prevailing popular political discourse in south-eastern Nigeria was that of marginalization.”⁸⁰ Many Igbos believe that they have been marginalized in relation to not having important positions in the Nigerian

⁷⁵Mustafa, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization” in *Nigeria Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 47.

⁷⁶Mustafa, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization” in *Nigeria Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 52.

⁷⁷Mustafa, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization” in *Nigeria Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 33.

⁷⁸ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 252.

⁷⁹ Africa is seen today in the world community as a continent of misery. Many statistics trumpet this reality. Ecological disasters, such as flood and drought, warring groups prevent farmers from cultivating fertile land, dictatorships and civil wars uproot women, men and children from ancestral homes to neighbouring countries. Ethnic and religious strife makes it impossible for nations to live in peace. Machetes, Dan guns, automatic rifles, are freely used in the barbaric massacre of hundreds of thousands of children, women, and men. See Elochukwu E Uzukwu, *A Listening Church. Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1996), 1. For Uzukwu, how many charitable organisations sent relief to South-Eastern Nigeria in 1966 when almost half a million of them trooped down from the North following the civil crisis? See Elochukwu Uzukwu, “Missiology Today: The African Situation” in *West African Journal of Ecclesial Studies* (WAJES) vol. 5 146-73. Even today, the present deplorable economic situation in Nigeria and the culture of violence that forms part of the social order because more than twenty years of military dictatorship breed conflicts...see Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008) 192. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 252. See also Uzukwu, *Worship as Body Language. Introduction to Christian worship: An African Support*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: 1997), 286.

⁸⁰ Daniel Jordan Smith, *A Culture of Corruption* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008) 192. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 252.

government. They alleged that, although they have held key positions in the Ministry of Finance, and the country's central bank, yet these are not important positions in the country. Daniel Jordan Smith observes: "While Igbo complaints about marginalization are manifold, Igbo discontent is most powerfully expressed in their perceived exclusion from three institutions: the presidency, the military, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Cooperation (NNPC)"⁸¹ Many Igbos for Umeobi "interpret the reason for their perceived marginalization to be as a result of the fact that Igbo people fought the civil war."⁸² They are of the view that, since the time they lost the civil war, they have been excluded from key positions that are the mainstay of the nation's wealth and power.

The Hausas for Umeobi, "are those who have been constantly in power. The Igbo group alleges that they have not been given their fair share in key leadership positions."⁸³ When the 1999 civilian rule came on board, it was a welcome development within the Igbo bloc. They saw it as an opportunity to gain political powers. But their prominent candidate for the post of the President lost the nomination to the major party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Igbo complained that they were marginalized even in ambassadorial appointments, alleging that their people were assigned to war-ravaged countries of the world. They asked why no Igbo person had been appointed to be in command of any branch of the armed forces, or to be on the Nigerian National Defence Council. To deal with and address these perceived anomalies, the Igbos tried to develop their Pan-Igbo institution known as the *Ohaneze Ndi Igbo*.⁸⁴ This is an organization according to Mustafa "that serves as an umbrella embracing the Igbo people. Its aim is to help the Igbos speak with one voice as they continue their

⁸¹ Smith, *A Culture of Corruption*, 22. See also Mustafa, "Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization" in *Nigeria Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 33.

⁸² Umeobi, "Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria" 258.

⁸³ Umeobi, "Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria" 252.

⁸⁴ Nnamdi Kanu is a leading member of one of several Biafran separatist organizations the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), while Ralph Uwazurike is the leader of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); a group canvassing for the secession and sovereignty of South-Eastern Nigeria.

struggle to achieve what they see as their own fair share of national power and resources.”⁸⁵ Despite the election of Goodluck Jonathan in 2011, as president from the South-South of Nigeria which is a region very close to the east, the Igbos still feel marginalized and isolated in the country because he was not given a second tenure.

1.8.2 Yoruba Ethnic Grievances

This group believed that they suffered during the regime of the immediate past military government in power before the return of democratic rule in 1999. The military government at that time conducted a democratic election to hand over power to the civilians. In the eyes of most Nigerians, the election went smoothly and was judged to be free and fair. The presidency was believed to have been won by a Yoruba politician known as M.K.O Abiola. But the military government annulled the entire election and the army continued to hold on to power. At that time, the Yoruba ethnic group members were at loggerheads with the military. The election that was nullified took place on June 12, 1993. After the annulment of the election, crises and tension continued to mount. Strong opposition to military rule ensued as well. Many Nigerians believed that the reason for the annulment was because the military government, headed by Babangida, a northerner, would not want somebody from the south to win the Presidency. The problem is believed to be connected with the north-south politics. Victor E. Dike notes that “an Interim National Government (ING), headed by Ernest Shonekan, was formed in August 1993 in a mix of public outcry since the candidate of Babangida, Bashir Tofa, did not win the election.”⁸⁶ The Yoruba bloc demanded that the government under the leadership of Obasanjo ought to call for a Sovereign National Conference. According to Raufu Mustapha: “The demand of this bloc is for a Sovereign

⁸⁵Mustapha, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization in Nigeria” In *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 262.

⁸⁶ Victor E. Dike, *Democracy and Political Life In Nigeria* 2nd Edition (USA: Universe Inc. 2006) 21

National Conference (SNC), at which the ethnic nationalities in the country can negotiate the basis of their continued partnership.”⁸⁷

1.8.3 Grievances of Minority Ethnic Groups

Many of the minor ethnic groups reside in the Geo-political zone referred to as the Niger Delta in the south of Nigeria and the Middle Belt in the north and indeed other parts of the country. Their complaints according to Mustafa are that, “despite democratization, they remain powerless in the wider structural workings of the Nigeria state. They remain victims of a long-running neglect in the distribution of facilities, appointments and resources”⁸⁸ I now turn to the religious factors linked to conflict in Nigeria.

PART THREE

1.9 Causes of Religious Tensions and Violence in Nigeria

Religious conflicts like ethnic have various and more remote and immediate causes.

1.9.1 Marriage Law

Another area of constant tension and conflict for Umeobi, among the various religious and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria is the nature of marriage and its law. At the level of religion, between Christianity and African Traditional Religion, for example, legal issues surrounding marriage have been much challenged and discussed. Such issues range from the meaning of marriage itself to conditions for its validity and for its continued existence. Umeobi explains that “For example, in most parts of Africa and especially Nigeria, the traditional religion allows two practices that seem to be contrary to Christian theology and law on marriage.”⁸⁹

These are polygamy and divorce followed by remarriage. The dialogue between Christianity

⁸⁷Mustapha, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization in Nigeria” In *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 33.

⁸⁸Mustapha, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization in Nigeria” In *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 264. Mustapha, “Ethnicity and the Politics of Democratization in Nigeria” In *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 267 Daniel Jordan Smith, *The Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 193.

⁸⁹ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 252.

and African Traditional Religion regarding these aspects of marriage has continued since the two religions encountered each other.

At the level of ethnic affiliation or nationality, Umeobi observe that the “impact of inter-tribal marriage in fostering unity, peace and development among the people of Nigeria remains a huge challenge.⁹⁰” Specifically, for most Nigerians, the existing stereotypes can give rise to considerable tension. Findings show that inter-tribal marriage significantly fosters unity. Therefore, it is recommended that the traditional institutions should initiate policies and programmes to eradicate multigenerational trauma and undue parental or family influence that may exist between tribes. More so, the traditional institutions should implement practices that reflect each other’s diversity in a society which is multi lingual and pluralistic.

1.9.2 The Sharia Law and its Challenges

The Encyclopedia of Religion and Society defines Sharia as “a system of religious laws followed by Muslims.”⁹¹ The Sharia has been in operation in Nigeria since the pre-colonial and pre-independence era. Joseph Kenny observes that “Sharia is as old as Islam in Nigeria.”⁹² He notes that as far back as the 14th century, Islam was already being professed in the Kanem-Borno area of northern Nigeria and during the reign of Mai Idris Aloma (1571-1603) many of the leading people in the Kanem-Borno Empire became Muslims. “Kano and Katsina were two Hausa states on the trade routes between Kanem and the West, and came under the influence of Muslim traders who passed through or settled there.

The Hausas for Umeobi would argue that sharia is part of their culture and belief system. But as far as the rest of Nigerians are concerned, the sharia legal system has generated controversy in the country. The argument is that Nigeria is a multi-religious nation. There are

⁹⁰ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria” 232.

⁹¹Encyclopaedia of Religion and Society, s.v. “Shariah.”

⁹² Joseph Kenny, “Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a Secular State” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 38, no 7 (2015): 338.

Christians, Muslims, traditional worshippers, and agnostics who all live side by side. Even the Hausa area, which is predominantly Muslim, includes people of other religious traditions. While there ought to be a level playing field for all religions, this seems not to be the case since the issue of sharia emerged in the country. Ndiokwere comments that: “No other Islamic imposition of its way of life, culture and creed on non-Muslims has generated as much controversy everywhere as the sharia issue.”⁹³ In Nigeria, the introduction of sharia laws into the country’s legal institution as well as the story of Nigeria’s membership of the organization of Islamic conference, have been opposed with tremendous ferocity by all and sundry Christians and non-Christians, atheists and agnostics.

Muslim leaders in the words of Umeobi “press for the extension of sharia laws into Southern Nigeria.”⁹⁴ Muslims Scholars would respond to observers such as Ndiokwere that the sharia law does not apply to non-Muslims. But acceptance of this explanation by non-Muslims is a different issue.

Non-Muslims argue that Nigeria is a secular state and, by accepting the practice of sharia law, it will have two judicial systems, secular and religious. Paul Oranika opines that “the sharia system has split Nigerians into two camps: those opposed to it, and those in support of the system.”⁹⁵ The practice of sharia law became a bigger issue since democracy was introduced in Nigeria in 1999. It was at this time that Sani Ahmed Yerima came to power as the Governor of Zamfara State.

In January 2000, he launched sharia law in his state. Resistance followed, especially from the Christians. Ignoring the protests and the potential danger of ethnic and religious conflicts that his actions could cause, the governor proceeded to implement it. Niger State and ten other northern states followed Zamfara’s lead. Many of the Nigerian Muslims, according to Julius

⁹³ Nathaniel Ndiokwere, *The African Church Today and Tomorrow* Vol. 1. Prospects and Challenges, 83.

⁹⁴ Ndiokwere, *The African Church Today*, 83.

⁹⁵ Paul Oranika, *Nigeria: One Nation, Two Systems* (Baltimore: Publish America, 2004) 96.

O Adekunle, “who favour the Sharia are Sunni.”⁹⁶ The Sharia in Zamfara and in those states where it was introduced deals with issues such as consumption of alcohol, corruption, adultery and stealing. According to Julius Adekunle the reasons adduced by those who favour sharia are as follows:

First, they believed that because the constitution of Nigeria allows freedom of religion, their action is legal. Second, the Sharia is a fundamental aspect of Islam, is about divine justice and should be adopted to promote Islam. Third, that Sharia would reduce crime, would create a society free of violence, theft, and corruption, and would evolve an atmosphere of peace and progress. Fourth, the adoption of the Sharia is a means of connecting with the wider Muslim world. It is argued that Nigeria’s Sharia states could receive development grants from Arab and Muslim nations. However, these reasons failed to convince many non-Muslims in Nigeria.⁹⁷

Non-Muslims in the twelve Sharia states are uncomfortable with the Sharia, despite the claim that they will not be subjected to its laws. For Christians in particular, the implementation of the Sharia is tantamount to religious terrorism within Nigerian borders. One of the arguments against making sharia the law of the land is articulated by Cardinal John Onaiyekan of Abuja as he observes that acceptance of sharia is to “accept the Islamic way of life, and practically become a Muslim,” a situation that is not acceptable to Christians who cannot accept both Christ and Mohammed at the same time.”⁹⁸ As Onaiyekan points out:

There are some important principles of sharia that Christians can accept and endorse because they coincide with Christian principles. These include the sovereignty of God, the supremacy of God’s law over all other laws and the idea that a believer has both a religious duty and an inalienable right to order his or her life in accordance with the law of God in all aspects of life-social, personal, political and economic. Christians, like their Muslims compatriots, have an equal duty and desire to build a society that respects God’s holy will. Also, Christians, Muslims

⁹⁶ Julius O Adekunle, “Religion, politics, and Violence” In *Religion in Politics: Secularism and National Integration in Modern Nigeria* Julius O. Adekunle ed. (New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc, 2009), 182.

⁹⁷ Julius O Adekunle, “Religion, politics, and Violence”, 183.

⁹⁸ John Onaiyekan, “The Sharia in Nigeria: A Christian View,” *Bulletin on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa* vol. 5, no. 3 (July 1987): 3-4. See also Onaiyekan, *Thy Kingdom Come: Democracy and politics in Nigeria Today: a Catholic Perspective* (Abuja: Daily Graphics Limited, 2003), 34.

and Jews have a basic moral tenet that is founded on or at least inspired by the Ten Commandments.⁹⁹

All three religions recognize a version of the Golden rule. The freedom of individuals to think and behave as they feel is best, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others, will be eroded if sharia law is imposed on all. In other words, the very basic law of human rights is being violated as non-Muslims are being asked to accept Islam and its legal system. For Simon D. Mwadkwon, “This has further deepened the tribal and religious lines of division which nationally minded Nigerians have always tried to close.”¹⁰⁰

1.9.3 Globalization as a Source of Tension and Conflict

Another reason for the apparent rise in interreligious and ethnic tension in Nigeria is the reality of globalization. Ideologically driven religious or ethnic events in some parts of the world can result in devastating consequences for elsewhere. For example, an incident in Denmark regarding the depiction of the prophet Muhammed spurred some Muslims in some northern states in Nigeria to rampage and slaughter those they considered infidels and to burn and loot the property of those who appeared to them to be non-Muslims.

Christians, on the other hand, can demonstrate an alarming sense of triumphalism and total insensitivity to issues of interreligious coexistence. The lack of sensitivity is apparent in some Christian circles in Nigeria today as evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity secure an increasing foothold in the nation. While the older Christian churches have had their struggles, these have taken place in the context of a respectful relationship that normally takes the other side seriously and respects what they are about, even though it does not preclude conversion.

⁹⁹Onaiyekan, “The Sharia in Nigeria: A Christian View,” 4-5.

¹⁰⁰Simon D. Mwadkwon, “Sharia in Northern Nigeria and its Implications on the Security of the Nigerian State.” In *Jos Studies*, vol. 10 (June): 26-40. Nigerian religious adherents should respect their differences and see such differences as part of life. Differences between religions and religious leaders in a pluralistic environment as Nigeria should thus revolve around more fundamental issues, such as ideology, and programmes of government that are meant to enhance human dignity and morality. See also Simon D. Mwadkwon, “The Role of Religious Leaders in National Integration.” in *Jos Studies*, vol. 11 (June): 12-28.

1.9.4 Other Causes of Religious Violence in Nigeria

The causes of violence are always very complex. Students of the phenomenon of violence in Nigeria theorize that religious violence have had negative impacts on Nigerians. Thus, the institutionalization of religious violence and the aggressive competition for dominance by Islam and Christianity continue to have a negative impact on the nation. Jan H. Boer comments, “These riots have had a number of different motives and shapes.”¹⁰¹We now examine other factors responsible for this violence.

1.9.5 The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC)

Since her political independence, most of the Nigerian Presidents have come from the Hausa ethnic group and most of them have been Muslims. Often non-Muslims accuse these political leaders of trying to Islamize all Nigerians. This has been a constant reason for violence. Toyin Falola observes that “Christians usually accuse Nigerian Presidents, usually Muslims, that they have a hidden agenda to make Nigeria an Islamic religious state, that they do not believe that Nigeria should be a secular state.”¹⁰² A case in point, according to Falola, is “the conspiracy by Muslim leaders to make Nigeria become a member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).”¹⁰³Some Nigerian Christians consider this to be religious favoritism. President Ibrahim Babangida was in power when Nigeria became a member of the OIC. According to Joseph Kenny, “Babangida’s ill calculated secret of carrying the nation into the OIC pleased most Muslims, but raised a storm among Christians which has lasted for years.”¹⁰⁴ Falola observes:

The Organization of the Islamic conference was established in 1965 by mostly Arab countries, with the aim of eventually including all Islamic states and any others that wished to join. Its first major meeting, the Summit of Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government of Islamic Countries, was held in Rabat in 1969. ...Between 1969 and 1971, organizational

¹⁰¹Boer, *Nigeria’s Decades of Blood 1980-2002*, 37. Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 227.

¹⁰² Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 164.

¹⁰³Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 164. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 187.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Kenny, “Sharia and Christianity in Nigeria: Islam and a Secular State” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 26. (Nov. 1996). 342.

meetings defined the structure and functions of the OIC, and representatives of thirty Islamic states officially approved the OIC charter in Jeddah in February and March 1972.¹⁰⁵

The OIC issue has been a perturbing problem in Nigeria ever since. Christians continued to protest against it, but with little or no success. Subsequent governments were silent on controversial issues such as OIC. To this day, Umeobi observes, “the government has been walking a tightrope on the OIC issue.”¹⁰⁶ In order to satisfy Muslims, it has not officially withdrawn its membership and, to satisfy the Christians, it has refused to play an active role in the OIC or to advertise its participation in the organization. Its Advisory Council for Falola on Religious Affairs has “met with failure because of deep mistrust among the members and because its Christian members believe that they are being manipulated”¹⁰⁷

1.9.6 Mixture of Religion and Politics

Umeobi furthermore analyzes that “Christians, as well as Muslims, struggle to have more say in the affairs of government in Nigeria.”¹⁰⁸ They “accuse each other of using government money and resources to sponsor and promote a religion.”¹⁰⁹ For the most part, the leadership of the country has been in the hands of Muslims. As mentioned earlier, most of the leaders also have come from the Hausa ethnic group. Some states have governors who are Christians. In such states, Umeobi notes, “governors have been accused of promoting and favoring a particular religion.”¹¹⁰

According to Olayemi Akinwumi and Ibrahim Umaru, “there is mutual suspicion between Christians and Muslims.”¹¹¹ Distancing religion from politics will mean that the religious

¹⁰⁵Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 94.

¹⁰⁶ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,”188.

¹⁰⁷Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 102.

¹⁰⁸ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,”188.

¹⁰⁹ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,”202.

¹¹⁰ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,”202.

¹¹¹ OlayemiAkinwumi and Ibrahim Umaru “Christian Association of Nigeria and Politics” In *Religion in Politics: Secularism and National Integration in Modern Nigeria*, Julius O. Adekunle ed. (New Jersey: African World Press Inc, 2009) 220.

agenda will be removed from public affairs. Many Christians, under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), believe that the “best approach to counter the overbearing influence of Islamic domination in Nigerian politics is to increase Christian involvement in public affairs.”¹¹²

Religious divisions, coupled with ethnicity, for Umeobi, compound Nigeria’s problems. The looting of the nation’s wealth and resources by the political elites is done along ethnic lines. But religious groups see problems there. Christians, especially those from the south, accuse the government of not being fair and of favoring the north even when oil, which, for Falola “is the major source of revenue comes from the South.”¹¹³

The concept of the separation of religion and politics or separation of Church and state, has continued to be an issue in the country as Boer observes:

Political concerns are often based on hidden, deeper and usually unacknowledged religious issues. The 1994 Jos riot centered on a political appointment, the chieftaincy of Jos, that the Muslims wanted to take back. In my estimation, the event was the result of a political attempt to reclaim that chieftaincy, a position of authority to which Muslims, simply by virtue of their being Muslims, the Ummah of Allah, felt they had a right.¹¹⁴

Neither Muslims nor Christians ever tire of accusing the Federal Government and some state governments of being biased. It is perceived everywhere, no matter what the government does or does not do. Boer observes that, “If Muslims do not make the accusation, Christians will. Sometimes both make the accusation in relation to the same situation.”¹¹⁵

1.9.7 The Attitude of the Nigerian Media and Politics

News media plays a central role in peacebuilding worldwide. It can emphasize the benefits that peace can bring, raise the legitimacy of groups or leaders working for peace and transform the images of the “enemy.” However, the media can also serve as destructive

¹¹²Olayemi Akinwumi and Ibrahim Umaru “Christian Association of Nigeria and Politics” Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 202.

¹¹³Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 172-173.

¹¹⁴ Jan H. Boer, *Muslims Why the Violence* (Canada: Essence Publishing, 2004) 91.

¹¹⁵Boer, *Muslims Why the Violence*, 93.

agents in the peacebuilding process. For Fredrick Njoroge, “They can underscore the risks and dangers associated with compromise, raise the legitimacy of those opposed to concessions and reinforce negative stereotypes of the enemy.”¹¹⁶

Some of the problems that cause ethnic and religious tension in Nigeria arise from unguarded public statements and utterances of some fanatical preaches which are judged to be provocative and insulting. In Nigeria, one needs to look at the role of politics in both religious and ethnic conflicts. Because of a long presence of bad governance in Nigeria, the society is unstable and as such, is prone to violence. Rivalry for access to limited resources and feelings of exclusion and injustice here and there, particularly in the Niger Delta region, have caused deep dissatisfaction that has built up over a long period. A small spark is all that is needed for it to explode.

1.9.8 Division and Tribalism in Religious Places

Division and tribalism is also present within religious circles. Emmanuel Abuh cites Anyanwu Christian Ndubueze who considers that “Tribalism as indeed the greatest obstacle to the building of a collaborative community.”¹¹⁷ Abuh argues further that the “struggle for church postings and appointments based on an ethnic divide have continued to generate tensions in the church.”¹¹⁸ For Abuh, “Ethnic identity and difference are employed to gain advantage by almost all members, both clergy and religious.”¹¹⁹

Thus, the slogan “Our own, indigenous and non-indigenous mentality” has led to communities protesting against and rejecting pastors in many parts of Africa. On December 7, 2012, Fr. Peter Okpaleke from Akwa Diocese (Anambra) in Nigeria, was appointed Bishop-elect of Ahiara diocese (Mbaise) and subsequently was ordained some months later in another

¹¹⁶ Fredrick Njoroge, “The Role of the Media in Peacebuilding” *African Ecclesial Review*, vol. 52, no. 4 (2011): 264-282. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 234.

¹¹⁷ Anyanwu Christian Ndubueze, “Towards a More Collaborative Community in the Nigerian Church: A Communicative Perspective,” *Encounter: Journal of African Life and Religion*, vol. 8 (2008): 116-128.

¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁸ Emmanuel Abuh, “The Church as Family of God in *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus*: Historical-Cultural Context, Theological Dialectics and the Hermeneutics of Elochukwu E. Uzukwu and Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere” PhD diss., Pontifical University St Patricks College, Maynooth, 2015, 69-72.

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Abuh, “The Church as Family of God in, 69-72.

diocese within that province amidst organized high level, massive street protest by priests, religious and laity. One of their statements reads:

That we the people of Mbaise, unanimously, unconditionally, and vehemently oppose the appointment of Fr. Peter Ebere Okpalaeke as the Bishop of Ahiara Diocese. In his place, we demand that a son of Mbaise be appointed and ordained a Bishop from among the more than 500 ordained sons of Mbaise clergies.¹²⁰

The reason for this uncompromising rejection, Abuh states, according to a leading priest figure of Ahiara extraction, is that accepting a priest from Anambra as bishop of Ahiara amounts to the Anambranization of the Ahiara (Mbaise) ecclesial community. He writes: “It is about hegemony, power, control, supremacy, domination, authority, or subjugation. It is about political superiority. In view of this, it is the expressed or unexpressed desire to control and control the Igbo Catholic hierarchy.”¹²¹

Abuh explains that, although Fr. Peter Okalaeke has been ordained a bishop, (outside the very diocese he is appointed to pastor because the people will not accept him) years after his election, he is still not able to assume office as bishop of Ahiara diocese. This is because Can. 382 §1 as cited by Abuh, recommends that the: “One promoted as bishop cannot assume the exercise of the office entrusted to him before he has taken canonical possession of the diocese.”¹²² Can. 382 §3 states that “A bishop takes canonical possession of a diocese when he personally or through a proxy has shown the Apostolic letter in the same diocese to the college of consultors in the presence of the chancellor of the curia, who records the event.”¹²³

¹²⁰Onyema G. Nkwocha, *Vatican saga and the impediment of Rev Fr. Peter Okpalaeke, the Challenge of NdeMbaise – Part 1*, <http://crimefacts.org/opinion-vatican-saga-and-the-impediment-of-rev-fr-peter-okpalaeke-the-challenge-of-nde-mbaise-part-1> [accessed 23/05/2017]. See also Emmanuel Abu, “The church as Family of God.” 71.

¹²¹Amadi-Azuogu, *Anambranization and the Axis of Church Power: The Failed “Coup d’état” in Mbaise*, <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/17378573/2034050161/name/The> [accessed 23/05/2017]. see also Abu, “The church as Family of God.” 72.

¹²² Also Abu, “The church as Family of God.” 72.

¹²³*Code of Canon Law*, English ed., (Washington: Canon Law Society of America, 1983). See also Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.”, 71.

Furthermore Abuh notes that the Ahiara diocesan clergy, anchoring on the provision made in this canon, have vowed not to meet with him or other bishops on this matter, nor to talk of being shown the Apostolic letter. This makes it impossible for him to assume office as their bishop. They simply need “their own son for their own people.”¹²⁴ For Abu, “this is a challenge to the core of our Christian identity that should be characterized by a loving union of all, made one in the Trinity by baptism through which we are united with Christ as his Body.”¹²⁵

Ultimately for Abuh, “this frightening problem of ethnocentrism is identified within the Church, even though She sings at Mass: “*Though we are many, we are one Body. We who come to share this living bread; Cup of salvation, shared among all nations, nourishing us now and evermore.*”¹²⁶ Therefore, *Ecclesia in Africa* calls for “a new evangelization in the continent that will heal these divisions... The challenge identified by the Synod Fathers concerns the “various forms of division which need to be healed through honest dialogue. At times tribal oppositions endanger, if not peace, at least the pursuit of the common good of society.”¹²⁷

1.9.9 Pilgrimages to the Holy Lands (Jerusalem and Mecca)

Hajj (Pilgrimage) to Mecca in Saudi Arabia is one of the five pillars of Islam. Other pillars include: Shahadah (Witness/faith statement), Salat (Prayers), Zakat (Charity), Sawm (Fasting in the month of Ramadan). According to Amir Hussain, “it is enjoined on all Muslims who have the resources to perform the hajj to Mecca during the Islamic month of pilgrimage.”¹²⁸ Nigerian Muslims join the rest of the Muslims all over the world to make the hajj yearly.

¹²⁴ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.”, 71.

¹²⁵ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 72.

¹²⁶ Bernard Sexton, *The official hymn of the 50th International Eucharistic Congress*, Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.”, 72.

<http://www.iec2012.ie/media/IEC2012CDCredits1.pdf> [accessed 23/05/2017].

¹²⁷ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 49. See also Abuh, “The Church as Family of God”, 70.

¹²⁸ Amir Hussain, *Oil & Water* (Canada: Copper-House, 2006) 91-98. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria”, 206.

Same with Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Rome, Lourdes in France, and other Christian pilgrimages.

As the travel can be expensive, the Nigerian government subsidizes it. However, some Nigerians do not want the government to keep subsidizing these pilgrimages. Falola observes that, “While Christians do not contest this duty, they do not want the government to subsidize the pilgrimage.”¹²⁹ The government did not begin to take such a role until the 1950s, when the western and northern regional governments established the Pilgrims Welfare Boards to minimize the hardship associated with the journey. For Falola, “In the years that followed, government support increased to the point that the hajj was a subsidized activity.”¹³⁰

Umeobi observes that “The oil boom during the middle of the 1970s generated large amounts of revenue for the Nigerian government.”¹³¹ During this period, the government organized FESTAC,¹³² a celebration of Nigerian culture, which attracted people from all corners of the world. Some Nigerians who witnessed the events argued that the government simply went overloaded with spending because it had rich resources gleaned from the sale of oil. Umeobi opined that “They believed that such money could have been used instead to develop the country.”¹³³

It was during this period that the government began to sponsor large number of pilgrims to Mecca or Jerusalem. Falola observes that, as the government put more money into the pilgrimages, it also got involved in their management and dealing with associated logistical problems. With the oil boom bringing prosperity, the number of pilgrims rose dramatically, reaching a peak of 106,000 in 1977 when Nigerians accounted for the second largest delegation of any country. For Umeobi, “The increase in numbers, along the logistical

¹²⁹ Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 173. 422

¹³⁰ Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 173. 422

¹³¹ . Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 234.

¹³² FESTAC stands for Festival of Arts and Culture held in Lagos – Nigeria in 1977

¹³³ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 206.

problems associated with the journey, brought two forms of government intervention.”¹³⁴ In order to ensure that only genuine Muslims undertook the journey, people desiring to make the hajj were required to pass basic tests of Islamic faith, answering questions relating to prayer, salat, and the expectations of the hajj. For Falola, “The government sought to curb prostitution by barring single women from making the hajj and to prevent pilgrimage-related deaths by keeping the weak and sick at home.”¹³⁵

19.10 North-East-Nigeria and the Boko Haram Violence

Umeobi analyses that the Boko Haram sect has been operating with militancy since around 2002. This group claims to be an Islamic sect. Chris Ajaero provides some further details:

Boko Haram which figuratively means ‘Western or non-Islamic education is a sin’ is a Nigerian Islamic fundamentalist group that seeks the imposition of Shariah laws in 12 northern states of Nigeria...The term Boko Haram comes from the Hausa word boko meaning ‘Animist, western or otherwise non-Islamic education.’ And the Arabic word haram figuratively meaning ‘sin’ but literally means ‘forbidden.’ Boko Haram opposes not only western education but also western culture and modern science.¹³⁶

This group, believed to have started in the 1960s in Nigeria, started to draw attention in 2002 when Mohammed Yusuf became its leader. Yusuf formed the group in the city of Maiduguri. He set up a religious complex which included an Islamic school and a Mosque. The school attracted students from poor families from the north and its environs. In 2004, it expanded to the city of Kanamma in Yobe State where its base there was named ‘Afghanistan.’ Within a short period, according to Ajaero, “it was believed that students from this base attacked a police station in the area, killing police officers.”¹³⁷ From its activities, it is evident that Boko Haram has both political and religious motives. They were operating through the school system by recruiting children from poor backgrounds and neighbourhoods. Its schools are

¹³⁴ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 206.

¹³⁵ Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 173.

¹³⁶ Chris Ajaero, “A Thorn in the Flesh of the Nation” *Newswatch Magazine* November 21, 2011, 19.

¹³⁷ Ajaero, “A Thorn in the Flesh of the Nation”, 21. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 182.

alleged to be breeding grounds for jihadists. Initially, their activities were taken to be random mob actions by some youths who have no jobs and were engaging in protests in order to drive home their point and make their voices heard. But they proved to be much more than random dissatisfied youths. The members of the Boko Haram have proved to be trained, coordinated and well-funded. An anonymous researcher published an article demonstrating the origin of *Boko Haram* and its ties with the ranks of the radical Islamic movement, *Izala*.¹³⁸ The article argues that, while the leadership of Izala and Boko Haram may disagree on how far and how much violence is required to achieve their objectives, the two organisations have a common mission of both Islamizing Nigeria and establishing a totalitarian and extremist version of Islam in Nigeria, beginning from the North.

The abduction of over two hundred girls from a government secondary school in Chibok, Bornu State, by this Islamic fundamentalist group in April 2014, in the words of Habila Henlon, “has been met with international outrage and condemnation.”¹³⁹ The mental, physical and psychological suffering of these girls and their families and friends is unimaginable. Over two years now, about a hundred of them have been found, due to ongoing negotiations between the federal government and the Boko Haram insurgency, mediated by the Swiss government and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This process is still ongoing.

According to Marinus Iwuchukwu, “This organisation has vowed to achieve a complete Islamization of Nigeria, beginning from the North and to put an end to western cultural and social influences not only in northern Nigeria but also the entire country.”¹⁴⁰

This group, which wants to establish a caliphate in the North East and other parts of Nigeria, has used the sense of injustice engendered by underdevelopment to gain ground in the north.

¹³⁸ See “The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-Radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 42 (2012), 118-144.

¹³⁹Habila, *The Chibok Girls: The Boko Haram Kidnappings and Islamist Militancy in Nigeria*, 32-47.

¹⁴⁰Iwuchukwu, “Exploring Religious and Cultural Pluralism as Assets Towards Muslim-Christian Relationship in Northern Nigeria.” 13.

Boko Haram fighters are usually Ethnic-Kanuris from the North East. They rarely operate outside of their own territory, not even venturing west to the Hausa region, and certainly not further down south to the coastal areas. This means that when the Nigerian military come looking for them, *Boko Haram* are operating on home ground. Much of the local population will not co-operate with the military, either for fear of reprisal or due to a shared resentment of the south.

1.9.11 Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Relationship with Muslims

The political legitimacy to the issues affecting minority ethnicities in Northern Nigeria (including those originally from southern Nigeria) said Umeobi has been promoted and advocated by a Christian umbrella organization known as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). It was established in 1976 to officially represent and speak on behalf of Nigerian Christians on issues of common social and political concerns.

The establishment of this organization for Anthony Oyewole and John Lucas “proved fruitful, with its intense and focused response to perceived Muslim domination of the government.”¹⁴¹

The debate over the inclusion of the sharia law in the constitution was highly controversial. Oyewole and Lucas found the “Nigerian membership in the Organization of Islamic Conference and increasingly violent clashes between Christians and Muslims in the Northern part of the country”¹⁴² very disturbing. CAN made it a priority to sensitize and educate Christians on the indispensability of their active involvement in politics.

In addition to CAN’s political posturing on behalf of Christians, Ousmane Kane saw this a threat: “growing political awareness and involvement that have been building up in the camps of the fundamentalist Christians represented essentially by Pentecostal and charismatic

¹⁴¹ Anthony Oyewole and John Lucas, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Second Edition) (Lanham, Maryland and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000), 128-29.

¹⁴² Anthony Oyewole and John Lucas, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Second Edition) (Lanham, Maryland and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2000), 128-29.

Christianity.”¹⁴³ Rijk A. Van Dijk, “The Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity exist both as independent churches and within or in affiliation with some mainline denominations.”¹⁴⁴

Therefore, members of this brand of Christianity have infused some new dynamics in Christian-Muslim relationship in Northern Nigeria. Since, for the most part, the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians are exclusivists, they have very low regard for Muslims and even for other Christians whom they brand as destined for hell fire because they have not “surrendered their lives to Christ.”¹⁴⁵ They are known to focus significantly on “evangelizing of Muslims and the pentecostalizing of Christians.”¹⁴⁶

From the 1980s, the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians for Ojo, began to be involved in political activities in Northern Nigeria. This development is credited to the “emergence of Northern indigenes as evangelists and leaders of charismatic organizations.”¹⁴⁷ This yielded in the words of Kane a “dividend in the election of a Baptist minister as a local government chairman in Kaduna city in 1988. He was the choice of the Pentecostal Christians, who enjoined other Christians to support his candidacy.”¹⁴⁸ Between 1991 and 1993, “two leading Northern charismatic Christians, S.S. Salifu and Professor Jerry Gana, contested the

¹⁴³Ousmane Kane attributes the rise of Muslim-Christian conflict to, among other agents, “the growth of Pentecostalism and charismatic movements” and the campaign of the Christian association of Nigeria.” See Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Post-colonial Nigeria: a Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 178.

¹⁴⁴Rijk A. Van Dijk, *Christian Fundamentalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Pentecostalism* (Copenhagen: Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen, February 2000), 11-12.

¹⁴⁵ This is a common phraseology used to differentiate what they consider “born again” Christians and nominal Christians.

¹⁴⁶ Rijk A. Van Dijk, *Christian Fundamentalism in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Pentecostalism*, 22.

¹⁴⁷Ojo, “Pentecostal movements, Islam and the contest for Public space in northern Nigeria,” 181.

¹⁴⁸ The refusal of tariqa candidates to support Izala candidates (and vice versa) contributed to some spectacular victories of Christian candidates in Muslim majority areas in the 1987 local government elections. This neutralization of the Muslim vote paved the way for Christian Nigeria,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* (vol. 18:2), 180. Furthermore, as a consequence of these Christian advances, Tariqa and Izala leaders shelved their disputes and agreed in 1988 to form a coalition of convenience in order to better resist the Christian “crusade” in the North. These alliances of convenience may have led to a considerable pacification intra-Muslim disputes. Still, they should be seen as temporary, subject to revocation at any time. Change in the political context may again lead to a redefinition of the religion-political discourse and disputes.” See Loimeier, “Nigeria: The Quest for a Viable Religious Option,” 61. See also Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 180.

primaries of the presidential election.”¹⁴⁹ An Evangelical pastor, Rev. Jolly Nyame, was the first and second civilian governor of Taraba state in the eastern part of the north (1991 to 1993 and 1999 to 2007).

1.9.12 Poverty

There is a saying that a hungry person is an angry person. For Umeobi, “in a situation where many people do not have jobs, they can easily be co-opted to participate in acts of violence with the promise of a small amount of money.”¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, he explains “There is a general recognition that poverty has made people eager for change at almost any price.”¹⁵¹ It has contributed “to the volatile climate, for it has made the people open to anyone promising almost any improvement, anyhow.”¹⁵² Aisha Isma’il, a onetime Minister of Women Affairs and Youth Development in Nigeria, stated that it is the poor and the oppressed who engage in riots due to the fact that they are clamoring for change. This is because for Falola, “they are tired of exploitation and oppression.”¹⁵³ Speaking about the Kaduna religious violence of 2000, the Speaker of the federal House of Representatives at that time, Ghali U. Na’Aba, argued that the level of violence in Nigeria can be traceable “to the prevailing poverty in the country.”¹⁵⁴ One of the issues that encouraged violence in Nigeria in the late 1970s and early 1980s was the decline in the Nigerian economy. Prior to this period, for Umeobi, “the economy had been doing well. Young people could find jobs after high school.”¹⁵⁵

If you attended college you were certain of a good paying job and not much was heard about religious or ethnic violence. But at a certain point in the late 90s till date in 2017, the

¹⁴⁹ See Ojo, “Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria,” 181. However, Ousmane Kane and Roman Loimeier suggest that the success of Christian politicians in the local government elections of 1987 had a lot to do with the existing discord between Tariqa and Izala Muslim in the North. See Loimeier, “Nigeria: the Quest for a Viable Religious option,” 61 see also Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 180.

¹⁵⁰ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 220.

¹⁵¹ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 221.

¹⁵² Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 110. Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria”, 220.

¹⁵³ Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 120.

¹⁵⁴ *New Nigerian Newspaper*, March 2, 2000, 1 cited in Boer *Muslims Why The Violence*, 120.

¹⁵⁵ Umeobi, “Ethnicity and Religious violence in Nigeria,” 221.

economy began to contract. Prices were high for food, building materials and imported goods. This scenario created societal ills and people became vulnerable to rich people, ethnic and religious groups who were interested in exploiting the situation.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has surveyed the historical background to both remote and more immediate causes of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, exploring the thoughts of a range of scholars on the issue.

1.11.1 Fundamental implications of the present study of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria: A Critique.

From the entire first chapter, it is very clear that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi religious nation. These two realities ought to be a gift to the nation and not a curse. However, ignorance of God's, involvement in the creation of Nigeria as a nation and his continuing interaction with the diverse ethnic and religious groups has caused Nigerians to continue to despise one another. This state of affairs hinders a broad understanding of the significance of ambiguity and complexity of the Nigerian situation.

Even though Nigerian society is faced with the challenge of ethno-religious conflict, dialogue and tolerance remain the sure way to peace. It is about right living with God and ones neighbours. In other words, tolerance is not living in isolation of the other. Thus the religious communities and ethnic nationalities as God's glorious inheritance and hope can be truly a game changer in a world of human hostilities. Bearing this in mind, it is important to discuss the teachings of the church on peace at the local church in Africa and especially Nigeria. This task is addressed now in the second chapter.

Chapter Two

Africa and the Nigerian Church in the Mission of Peacebuilding

2. Introduction

The divergent results of peacebuilding efforts in African countries in post-conflict situations suggest that there is no single model for peacebuilding. Some countries have gained peace and stability and achieved sustainable peace after a long conflict that claimed lives and properties, while others have remained in untold hardship and extreme poverty due to perpetual conflict. To this effect, the constant need to seek peace through the church as an instrument and institution of peace must not fail.

This chapter will discuss the teachings of the church at the local level in Africa and especially Nigeria. It will be divided into three parts. Part one will reflect on the situation in African states, church and challenges of evangelisation. This gives the context of peacebuilding in the continent. Part two will discuss two synodal documents in Africa, *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus*. Part three will discuss the Nigerian Church on peacebuilding. It will analyse the teachings of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), and other theological bodies and individual voices in Nigeria.

In this chapter I will reflect on the African Church and Peacebuilding,¹ as it examines the *Lineamenta* and *Instrumentum Laboris* of the 1994 and 2009 African Synods.² We will discuss the outcome of the Synod as it pertains to the following Post Synodal Papal documents: *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africae Munus*.

¹Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar-SECAM, *Governance, Common Good and Democratic Transitions in Africa* (Accra-Ghana: Pastoral letter issued in February 2013), 114-118.

Regional Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (RECOWA) was formally called Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) "The situation of unrest in West Africa" (Kumasi, AECAWA, 2001), 16-14.

² These documents on the synods of the African church which covers the first and second synods in 1994 and 2009 including all the working documents of the *Lineamenta* and *Instrumentum laboris* were systematically unpacked by Emmanuel Abuh in his thesis on "The Church as Family of God" 26-55. This is already cited in chapter one.

Finally, we will discuss the contributions of the Nigerian Church concerning the issue of peace by looking at the teachings of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)³ so as to draw out lessons from the bishops' conference during and after crises in Nigeria.⁴

Besides the bishops' conference, we will discuss the teachings of the following Nigerian bishops, John Cardinal O. Onaiyekan⁵ Ignatius Kaigama and Matthew H. Kukah and the contributions of selected Nigerian theologians to the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)⁶ in peace-building. I will now begin with the first part of this chapter.

PART ONE

2.1 The African Situation: Rampant Conflicts and Disorder

In Africa, people are faced with enormous challenges. They are faced with conflict and violent situations which erupt most times in three ways: political violence, religious violence and ethnic violence. Richard Dowden describes it graphically in these words:

Hell has seized parts of the Continent in recent times. In the mid-1990s, thirty-one out of Africa's fifty-three countries were suffering civil war or serious civil disturbances. Hundreds of thousands of people die, not from bullets, but from hunger, bad water and disease. In such wars, the armies, be they government

³ The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria CBCN is part of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa AECAWA. It is one of the nine Regional Episcopal Conferences of the Catholic Church in Africa and Madagascar. AECAWA, in this case, is made up of: The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC), The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Liberia (CABICOL), and The Inter-Territorial Catholic Bishops' Conference (ITCABIC) comprising The Gambia, and Sierra Leone, and The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). The Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA) also stands in place of this conference.

⁴Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), *Seeking the Way of Peace* (Abuja: Communiqué issued at the end of the First Plenary Meeting, 10th –14th March 2003). Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), *Towards a Just and Peaceful Society* (Lagos: September 10-14, 2001). Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), *Living our Faith in Trying Times* (Abuja: 1st-6th March 2004).

⁵ Ignatius Kaigama, *Peace, Not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis (2001-2011)* (Jos: Hamtul Press, 2012). Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993). See also Kukah, *Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria* (Ibadan-Nigeria: Spectrum Books, 1999). John Onaiyekan, "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: The Imperative of Dialogue" in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*. Vol. 15, (2003): 22-32. See John O. Onaiyekan, *Thy Kingdom Come: Democracy and Politics in Nigeria today, A Catholic Perspective*, (Ibadan: Daily graphic printers, 2003).

⁶Victor Onwukeme, "Muslim-Christian Religious Violence in Nigeria: A Christian Response based on Matt 5, 44." In *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. Proceedings of 22nd Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)*, Cyril Obanure ed. (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2008) 245-261. Cletus T Gotan, "Nigeria's Religious Conflict: A Call for dialogue of Life" in *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. (CATHAN)*, 93-105.

or rebels, live by looting. They target civilians and villages. The direct combat casualty rate is often low; the incidental death and destruction rate is horrifically high. Only a tiny number of these wars have been between countries; most have been internal battles for power and wealth within states; usually between different ethnic groups.⁷

Given the levels of violence in Africa today, we must acknowledge the lack of peace in the continent. Many of the crises are caused by religious fanaticism, ethnic tensions, and the struggle to control natural resources, the challenges of the environment, migration, political power and land disputes.

2.2 Evangelization in Africa: The Nucleus of Violence

The Islamic and Christian religions have a long history of evangelisation in the African continent. These two religions had a long history of conflict in other parts of the world before their advent in Africa. Christians drew swords at each other and did not see eye to eye from the West before and after they evangelised Africa. Thus, missionaries came as different sects, and as Africans embraced the new religions, the continent became a hub of old foes. Africa began to experience new waves of violence as the people embraced the new religions.

For Abuh, “The quest for peace in the second half of the 20th century was characterized by an aggressive call for a new pattern of Christianity that appropriates the religio-cultural and communal heritage of Africans.”⁸ The new evangelization and peace model for Ndwokere was aimed at “giving birth to a ‘native’ form of Christianity,⁹” with a theology that bears the “distinctive stamp of African thinking and meditation”.¹⁰

For Jude Emeka Madu, “The Christian religion began to teach a new peace model that would enable the people feel at home intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and religiously as an

⁷ Richard Dowden, *Africa: Altered States, ordinary miracles* (London: Portobello Books, 2008), 2-3.

⁸ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 27.

⁹ Nathaniel Ndiokwere, *Prophecy and Revolution: The Role of Prophets in the Independent African Churches and in Biblical Tradition* (London: SPCK, 1995), 15.

¹⁰ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 32.

African church.”¹¹ It was a means to let the Gospel and the Church take root in Africa, so that according to Calvin H. Poulin “The African Church can find her voice and be acknowledged as having so much to give and is all too ready to share its riches of faith with her former benefactors”.¹²

The questions that cut across the mind then are: How has the search for peace been pursued by the African Church in a divisive multi-religious environment? What is the African Church doing at the moment to overcome religious and ethnic differences? What are the theological-moral prospects, challenges and choices in their ‘mission’?

2.3 African Church: A Call for Action

Abuh envisages that the sentiments in the ecclesial circles of post-colonial Africa were far from the view that Christianity should be discarded together with other colonial relics. The wave of independence rather prompted one of the then leading African Church figures, Cardinal Joseph-Albert Malula of Zaire, in 1959 to seek “for a truly African Church in an independent Africa.”¹³ This sounded very political, but Cardinal Bernadine Gantin according to Abuh, declared that Vatican II had clarified the notion of particular Churches. Therefore, Bernadine Gantin, said “it is now left for the African Church to conceive of an African Council that will enable her to deliberate on her unique identity and mission as an ecclesial community in union with the universal Church.”¹⁴

The African Church then for Abuh, “began a process of self-identity and mission”¹⁵ by establishing regional Episcopal conferences and a Symposium of Episcopal Conference of

¹¹ Jude EmekaMadu “Honest to African Man: Basis for the Evolution of Authentic African Christianity” in *Ecclesia in Africa: The Nigerian Response*, eds. J Obi Ogujiofor and Innocent Enweh (Nsukka: Fulladu, 1997), 88.

¹² Calvin H. Poulin, “Forward” in Michael IfeanyiMozia, *New Evangelization and Christian Moral Theology: An African Perspective* (Ibadan: Newborne, 1994). In saying this, Poulin makes reference to the materialistic and secularist culture of the “missionary Europe” of today, which needs to be re-evangelized.

¹³ Joseph-Albert Cardinal Malula, cited in Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, “The Birth and Development of a Local Church: Difficulties and Signs of Hope,” in Maura Browne, ed., *The African Synod: Documents, Reflections and Perspectives* (New York: Orbis, 1996), 3. See also Abu, “The Church as a Family of God.” 32.

¹⁴ Bernadine Cardinal Gantin, see Engelbert Mveng, “The Historical Background of the African Synod” in Maura Brown, ed., *The African Synod*, 21. See also Abu, “The Church as Family of God.” 22.

¹⁵ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 32.

Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) which received the imprimatur of Pope Paul VI, who personally inaugurated it in Rugaba Cathedral, Kampala in 1969. The Pope in his speech according to Abuh, called the search for an African Christianity both a necessity and an obligation. In the homily of Pope Paul VI, he said that though we profess one faith:

The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this one faith may be manifold; hence it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius and the culture of the one who professes this one faith. From this point of view a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable . . . a true superior fullness and proven to be capable of a richness of expression all of its own, and genuinely Africa.¹⁶

This speech according to Abu, gave momentum to the continent's quest for an African Christian identity. In April 1983, Cardinal Malula, in the name of the episcopate of Zaire, expressed to the Pope the need for an African Council, "which would allow our Churches to take stock of the present situation of Christianity and to establish, in consultation, an adequate basis for integral evangelization of our continent in the future".¹⁷ In an address to some African bishops from Zaire in Rome on April 23, 1983, Pope John Paul II agreed in principle with the idea of an African Council and stated: "I think that to respond to a desire which you have expressed about the whole African Church, a consultation is also necessary at this level in one form or another, to examine the religious problems facing the whole of the continent, obviously in liaison with the universal Church."¹⁸ The response analysed further by Abuh, energized the Zairian Church who engaged with different Episcopal conferences in Africa on the need for an African Council. The result of this engagement was the meeting of fifteen Catholic African theologians from Zaire, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Benin and Ivory Coast, under the presidency of Monsignor Tshibangu, auxiliary bishop of Kinshasa, to consult on the

¹⁶ Paul VI, Homily at the Concluding Mass of the Symposium of Bishops of Africa, Kampala (Uganda), 31 July 1969, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731_en.html [accessed 25/01/2017]. Also cited by Abuh in "The Church as a Family of God." 34.

¹⁷ Malula, in Mveng, *The Historical Background*, 21.

¹⁸ John Paul II, Address to group of African Bishops, 23 April 1983, in Mveng, *The Historical Background*, 21.

theme of an African Council of bishops. Other subsequent meetings of African bishops and theologians followed.

2.4 The Context of Peacebuilding Mission in Africa

John Paul II lamenting on the African situation, maintained that those in government who are supposed to “protect the *common patrimony* against all forms of waste and embezzlement” are lacking in public spirit, and in most places have continually impoverished their nations to enrich themselves and their cronies locally and internationally.”¹⁹ In doing so, their “governments mortgage the present and the future of the people for personal interest.”²⁰

Abu further explains that the African situation according to *Africae Munus*, is unacceptable because Africa has enough resources capable of providing the basics for every individual and nation of the continent, but “a minority have continued to plunder the abundant goods of the earth to the detriment of the entire peoples.”²¹ For Nathanael Yaovi Soede, “The socio-political order that impoverishes the African population, the majority of whom live below the poverty level provokes violence of all sorts.”²² The Good News of salvation in Africa for Ireogbu should seek to set Africa free “from hunger, disease, poverty, backwardness, underdevelopment, political instability, religious anarchy, social imbalance, cultural duplicity; neo-colonialism, oppression, and international domination.”²³ I will now begin the second part.

¹⁹*Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 113.

²⁰*Africae Munus*, no. 30.

²¹ Abu, “The Church as Family of God.” 22. See also *Africae Munus*, no. 24.

²² Nathanael Yaovi Soede, “The Enduring Scourge of Poverty and Evangelization” in Orobator, ed., *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, 184. Though the socio-economic and political order have improved since the time of the first Synod for Africa and there is relative “peace” (absence of war in most parts of Africa), the socio-political tension and poverty level is still unacceptable, and until this is addressed, many nations in Africa still live on the edge of explosion as seen in the northern parts of Africa.

²³Ireogbu, *Appropriate Ecclesiology*, 218. See also Abuh, “Church as Family of God.”, 33.

PART TWO

2.5 African Synod: Looking back and forward

The Holy See convened a “Synod of Bishops for Africa” in the words of Abuh, with an order to “deliberate on the perilous situations of Africa.”²⁴ The first Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was held from April 10th to 8th May 1994. The Second Special Assembly held between Octobers 4th and 25th, 2009, continued the work of the 1994 Assembly. The Assembly for Abuh, citing Pope Benedict XVI, aimed at seeking ways of transforming its “theology of mission” into “pastoral practice”.²⁵

The fruits of these Synodal Assemblies are two Post-Synodal Exhortations: *Ecclesia in Africa* of John Paul II and *Africae Munus* of Benedict XVI. These two documents for Abu, specifically tasked African theologians “to work out” the profound theological “riches” of the concept of the “Church as Family of God” with other images of the Church” so that this faith understanding can find practical application in the activities of the Africans “in specific times and places.”²⁶

2.5.1 Africa: The First Synod of Bishops (April 10- May 8, 1994)

The theme of the Synod: for Jan P. Schotte, as “The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission towards the year 2000: You Shall be my Witness (Acts 1: 8) reveal the thinking of Pope John Paul II in promoting renewed efforts and activity for the Church in Africa.”²⁷ Two

²⁴ Abuh, “Church as Family of God.” 33.

²⁵ See Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2011), nn. 2-10. See also Abuh, “Church as Family of God.”, 33.

²⁶ This was elaborated in the thesis of Emanuel Abu on the church as family of God already mentioned in Chapter one. Abuh, “Church as Family of God.” 34.

²⁷ Jan P. Schotte, “Preface” in Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Lineamenta: The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000 “You Shall Be My Witnesses”* (Acts 1:8) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993).

working documents, the *Lineamenta* of July 1990 and the *Instrumentum Laboris* of February 1993 were prominent for the eventual First African Synod of April 10 – May 8, 1994.

The *Lineamenta* presented five major tasks for the Fathers of the Special Assembly, namely: proclamation of the Good News of salvation, inculturation, dialogue, Justice and peace, and means of social communication.²⁸ Based on these tasks before the Synodal Assembly, the document outlined a list of eighty-one questions meant to guide the local Churches in their prayerful discussions. John Paul II declared that “the responses to the *Lineamenta* “both within and beyond the African Ecclesial Communities, far exceeded every expectation.”²⁹

The *Instrumentum Laboris* is a summary of the responses to the *Lineamenta* from the local Churches which became the working instrument of the Synodal deliberation. This document was released by John Paul II during his Ninth Pastoral visit to Africa, Kampala (Uganda), February 1993. This document, Abuh maintains citing Schotte, was meant to prepare members of the “Special Assembly by providing them with an authoritative composite picture of the state of Church affairs in Africa in light of the Synodal topic. During the actual Synodal gathering, the *Instrumentum Laboris*' contents will serve as a reference point and an agenda for discussion.”³⁰

The *Instrumentum Laboris* is in two parts. The first part gives a theological framework of the meaning of the Synodal theme which is evangelization. It presents according to Abuh, evangelization as the “sharing in the life and mission of the Triune God who invites all members of the Church to continue His mission of transforming humanity from within, making it new.”³¹

²⁸*Lineamenta*, nn. 25-30.

²⁹*Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 26. See also Abuh, *The Church as Family of God.*” 28.

³⁰Schotte, *Address in Kampala during the Presentation of Instrumentum Laboris*. Abu, “The Church as Family of God.”35.

³¹ Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris: The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000 “You Shall Be My Witnesses”* (Acts 1:8) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993), no. 6-13. See also Abu, “The Church as Family of God.” 44.

3.5.2 *Ecclesia in Africa: Evangelizing for Peace*

Abuh points out that John Paul II stated at the presentation of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*, at Yaoundé, Cameroon, that though the “Synod is turned toward the future”³² it must take account of the socio-cultural and theological situation of the past and present, in order “to show the way that the Church must take in the future, on the African continent.”³³

The document therefore began by historically evaluating the state of evangelization in Africa so as to help determine “pastoral and missionary priorities of the Church in Africa that would make her message relevant and credible.”³⁴ The problems and challenges of the continent, according to the Post-Synodal document call for a new evangelization that should be centred on the person of the living Christ, according to Abuh, “who alone can transform the continent and give decisive meaning to the life of the suffering people of Africa.”³⁵

Abuh maintains that the African Church, in defining her identity in the quest for peace, explored the cultural and traditional role of the family and takes “the Church as God’s Family as its guiding idea for the evangelization of Africa”.³⁶ This image of the Church as God’s Family for Abu, expresses “The Church’s nature particularly appropriate for Africa.”³⁷ For this image emphasizes “care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.”³⁸ Pope John Paul II hopes “that theologians in Africa will work out the theology of the Church as Family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the Church.”³⁹

³² John Paul II, Homily at the Mass in Yaoundé, 15th September 1995.
<http://www.afrikaworld.net/synod/cameroon.html> [accessed 24/01/2017].

³³ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 45.

³⁴ *Ecclesia in Africa*, nn. 1-47.

³⁵ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 45.

³⁶ Abuh, “*The Church as Family of God.*” 45. See also, *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63.

³⁷ Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 45.

³⁸ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63.

³⁹ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63.

2.6 The Second African Synod of Bishops (October 4th -25th, 2009)

The synod for Abuh, addressed the issue of peace on the Continent more than the first. The aim of the Assembly was to address how the African Church, as the “family of God” could give credible witness to the Gospel by being “the salt of the earth and light of the world in a continent afflicted by ethnic, tribal and religious conflicts that seriously hamper the development of its people.”⁴⁰ Louis Ncamiso Ndlovu according to Abuh, demanded that the Synod should challenge the Church in Africa “to contribute to the well-being of society and to be a beacon of hope in the face of many challenges and difficulties” through living an authentic Christian life in commitment and service to reconciliation, justice and peace.”⁴¹

The Fathers of the Synod furthermore Abuh reflects, in pursuant of this mission, taught that the “Church’s ministry of reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa will only be effective if she moves beyond healing the effects or symptoms to confronting and uprooting the causes of the problems.”⁴² Consequently, Nicolas Djomo Lola, says “We need to flay the lies and subterfuges used by the predators and backers of these wars and violence. The tribalism constantly mentioned as the reason for these wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo are just a cover. The ethnic differences are used as an excuse to pillage the natural resources.”⁴³

Abu explains that this was corroborated by Edward Tamba Charles who stated that the:

Multinational extractives are causing so much injustice in Africa that the Church can no longer remain silent about them. In their desire to exploit the continent's rich natural and mineral resources, these companies can do anything, including the fomenting of inter-ethnic conflicts, sale of arms and ammunition, and the overthrow of legitimate governments. The oil-rich Delta States in Nigeria and the

⁴⁰ The interventions of the Synod Fathers of the II Special Assembly for Africa named here, are taken from “summaries of the interventions” in *Synodus Episcoporum Bulletin*, English ed. October 2009. http://www.vatican.va/news_services/press/sinodo/documents/bollettino_23_ii_speciale-africa-2009/02_inglese/b10_02.html [accessed 27/01/2017]. See Kieran O’Reilly, S.M.A., Superior General of the Society of African Mission, Union of Superior General.

⁴¹ Louis NcamisoNdlovu, O.S.M., Bishop of Manzini, Swaziland. See also Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 34.

⁴² Abuh. “The Church as Family of God.” 36.

⁴³ Nicolas Djomo Lola, Bishop of Tshumbe, President of the Episcopal Conference, Democratic Republic Congo. See also Emmanuel Abu, “The Church as Family of God” 44.

eastern and southern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo are clear examples of this.⁴⁴

The Church must therefore, for Abuh, fight against all forms of violence and affliction in the land argues Theophile Kaboy Ruboneka, “By going back to their ultimate cause which is the crisis of governance manifested by the wars, pillage and anarchical exploitation of natural resources, circulation of weapons, the maintenance of militias, the absence of a strong and republican army, etc.”⁴⁵ This crisis of governance, and the “unchecked hunger for power has led to impunity, corruption, manipulation of people and other similar social and political evils.”⁴⁶

For Abuh, Timothee Modibo-Nzockena holds that the path to reconciliation is in God, who alone can transform human hearts in need of conversion. He maintained that:

True reconciliation comes from the heart. Only a person reconciled with God and with himself can in turn reconcile others to Christ and others. This reconciliation is accomplished with Jesus Christ, who, through His death and resurrection, reconciled men with God and with men themselves. To reconcile all men in one family, the family of God, is and remains the first mission of the Church.⁴⁷

Supporting Orlando B. Quevedo, Abuh argues that reconciliation must be rooted in a faith-vision of humanity. The faith-vision of humanity sees Jesus “as the ultimate Reconciler, our Justice and our Peace” who calls us to communion with God and with one another as a Family of God.”⁴⁸

The Church’s prophetic vocation as a “reconciled family” Abuh opined, on a “mission to reconcile humanity with God and one another, should be sustained through deeper and

⁴⁴ Edward Tamba Charles, Archbishop of Freetown and Bo, Sierra Leone. See also Abuh. “The Church as Family of God.” 36.

⁴⁵Theophile Kaboy Ruboneka, Bishop Coadjutor of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. See also Abuh. “The Church as Family of God.” 42.

⁴⁶ John Cardinal Njue, Archbishop of Nairobi, President of the Episcopal of the Episcopal Conference.

⁴⁷Timothee Modibo-Nzockena, Bishop of Franceville, President of the Association of the Episcopal Conference of Central Africa (A.C.E.R.A.C), Gabon. See Abu, “The Church as Family of God.” 33.

⁴⁸ Orlando B. Quevedo, Archbishop of Cotabato, General Secretary of the Federation of Asian Episcopal Conferences (F.A.B.C), Philippines. “The Church as Family of God.” 33.

ongoing catechesis which consistently forms the human conscience.”⁴⁹ This will enable, contends Jude Thaddaeus Ruwa’ichi:

The received faith to become a personal experience and a profoundly lived reality capable of transforming, guiding and providing a sound anchorage for decisions and actions. It requires a sustained inculcation of Gospel values which are made to impact upon the life of the individual, the family, the Basic Christian Communities and society as a whole, enabling each to embrace Christ's gift and call to his disciples to be Salt of the earth and Light of the world.⁵⁰

Jan Ozma holds that “the most immediate place to inculcate and live out the Gospel values of reconciliation, justice and peace is the family.”⁵¹ He consequently invited the synodal assembly to entrench these Gospel values in the African family, so that they may find expression and practice in the homes of believers in the continent. He says:

I believe it is extremely important that this second Synod Assembly for Africa should go through the African family to produce the awaited fruits. Since the formation of a new culture of reconciliation, justice and peace is first of all a family task, before being a social one. If these three values take root and find foundation and meaning within the family, their culture could spread to all levels of African society.⁵²

Following this thinking Almachius Vincent Rweyongeza for Abuh advocates that the search for ways of building reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa should begin “by rightly defining the family as the most complete primary agent of justice, reconciliation, solidarity and peace”.⁵³

2.6.1 The Concept of Family in Africa and its significance for peace

The fact that the concept of family is one of the unifying traditions of the African people is premised on their common understanding of what it represents. This manifests itself in the

⁴⁹ Abuh. “The Church as Family of God.” 42.

⁵⁰ Jude Thaddaeus Ruwa’ichi, Bishop of Dodoma, President of the Episcopal Conference, Tanzania.

⁵¹ Jan Ozga, Bishop of Doume-Abong’ Mbang, Cameroon.

⁵² Jan Ozga, Bishop of Doume-Abong’ Mbang, Cameroon.

⁵³ Almachius Vincent Rweyongeza, Bishop of Kayanga, Tanzania.

“indigenous words or phrases” used in different places among the diverse and distinct people of the continent, in their conceptualization and description of the term “family.”⁵⁴

In the Western part of Africa, the Igbo people of Nigeria designate family with the phrase “eze na uno (ulo)” and “umunna.”⁵⁵ *Eze na uno (ulo)*⁵⁶ literally means “the outside relation and those in the house” and “differs from the English concept of family in that it does not only apply to husband, his wife and children, but also includes, “somewhat vaguely, other relations such as in-laws, uncles, cousins, nephews, or even maids and servants.”⁵⁷ When the Igbo person in this sense says my family, “he means a whole chain of relationship, vertical (direct line) and horizontal (collateral line). He or she includes all those that depend on him or her in one way or the other.”⁵⁸ *Umunna* stands for children of the same father,⁵⁹ and includes all who lay claim “to a common descent.”⁶⁰

The *Moose* people of Burkina Faso also in West Africa have three words to designate the family: “zaka,” “rogem” and “budu.” *Zaka* literally refers to “house.” The term refers to all

⁵⁴ There is need to note and appreciate the limitations of translating these “indigenous languages” into English, “as it gives some concepts a slightly different connotation than contained” in the traditional African thinking. This is because, “the use of language translates ideas from one world-view to another.” See Laurenti Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*, 32-33. Furthermore, the effect of colonization have led most African nations to think, plan and communicate majorly in the language of their former colonizers, such that, one could end up having an African equivalence of a Western concept instead of an understanding born out of the totality of the African world view. Indigenous African languages are playing second fiddle to the languages of the West in most nations of Africa. In nations colonized by the French, French is the central language of communication, and for nations colonized by the British it is English. Most translations in the continent are from German, French or English to the African languages, and rarely from African languages to the languages of the West. This situation according to Samukele Hadebe, “creates a different situation from that which pertains in the developed countries where translation is usually a two-way process, for example, from German to French and vice versa.” See also, Samukele Hadebe, “Translation as Problem-Solving: The Case for Ndebele,” (Paper presented at the University of Zimbabwe Linguistic Society on 30 November, 2004). http://ir.uz.ac.zw/jspui/bitstream/10646/30/3/Hadebe_Translation_Problems.pdf [accessed 04/09/2020]. Consequently, the understanding of the “words and phrases” used to describe the concept “family” in Africa and its’ translation and interpretation should be seen with these important qualifications.

⁵⁵ Emmanuel Oguejio Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family life Among the Igbo People of Nigeria* (Onitsha: Donachuks, 2001), 80-89.

⁵⁶ “House” in Igbo language could be called *Ulo* or *Uno* depending on which part of the Igbo community one comes from.

⁵⁷ F. C. Ogbalu, “Igbo Institutions and Customs” cited in Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family*, 88.

⁵⁸ Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family*, 81.

⁵⁹ “Father” here refers to the ancestor which the *Umunna* is named after, and by which the family is known in the community.

⁶⁰ See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family*, 88-89. Common descent here implies “all who lay claim to a common great-grand ancestor,” and are bonded “in intimate kinship.” The ancestors are also seen as the “living deed members, who constitute the ancestral world of the family.”

those living under the same roof. This includes, father, mother or mothers, their children, servants and visitors as long as they share the same house.⁶¹ *Rogem* denotes “relatives.” The word “connotes close blood-ties whose limits are hard to determine due to the fact that it includes even the in-laws’ relatives. *Rogem* then exceeds the circle of *zaka* to embrace many *zakse* (households).”⁶² *Buudu* is the largest sense of conceptualizing the family. It may be considered as “clan, ethnic group and tribe.”⁶³

The *Dagaara* people of Ghana like many other people in Africa “define”⁶⁴ the family with reference to house. The term they use is *yir*, which means house. However, the primary meaning of house among this people “is the social house. That is the social web of relationships established by paternity and filiation.”⁶⁵ Hence *yir* is also used to refer to people of the same “patrikin.”⁶⁶

The East African region understanding of the family has the same imprints with the people of West Africa. Among the *Banyoro* people of Uganda the word used for family is *eka*. Those “who belong to the same *eka* include father, mother, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and all who belong to the same lineage. It could mean people of the same clan and even people

⁶¹ Jean Etienne Minoungou, “*Church-Family in Africa: Challenging Ethnic Groups for Peace, Reconciliation and Justice*” (STL Thesis, St. Patrick College, Maynooth, 2008), 2.

⁶² Minoungou, “*Church-Family in Africa*,” 22.

⁶³ Minoungou, “*Church-Family in Africa*,” 23. He argues that though this is the English interpretation of the term “*buudu*,” “to equate *buudu* with any of these three terms may be questionable inasmuch as they have pejorative connotations. To use *tribe*, *ethnic group*, or *clan* to speak about families in Africa refers to no significant reality as historically they are associated with past attitudes of the colonialists towards the so-called primitive, uncivilized and indigenous people of Africa, America or India. They are associated with savagery and barbarism. As a matter of fact, the war between *Tusti* and *Hutu* in Rwanda is qualified as ethnic or tribal, while the one between *Serbs* and *Czechs* is nationalist. Besides, common language or nomenclature is not enough to identify people. Let us consider the surnames *Kabore* and *Minoungou*. All *Kabores* speak *Moore* but do not belong to the same tribe or clan, whereas *Minoungous* speak *Moore* or *Bissa*, and yet are *buudu*.” This is the same synergy of translation, interpretation and understanding that that plays out in many Western-African anthropological or ideological interface already noted.

⁶⁴ Moses Awinongya states that the term “definition” in relation to family is almost non-existent among the Ghanaians, because “family in Ghana is rather lived than defined.” This accounts for why there is no “straight forward and distinct categorizations with established anthropological and sociological paradigms” when they talk about family. See, Moses Assah Awinongya, *The Understanding of Family in Ghana as a Challenge for a Contextual Ecclesiology* (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2013), 50.

⁶⁵ Awinongya, *The Understanding of Family in Ghana*, 51.

⁶⁶ “Patrikin” refers to patrilineal kin. It means people who are related by blood on the father side. (We shall be looking at the patrilineal kin and matrilineal kin in the course of this work).

who are not blood relations, but have become integrated into the *eka* by friendship, work or long association.”⁶⁷

The *Kikuyu* people in the central province of Kenya use the word *mbari* to denote the family. *Mbari* “includes households of the same descent coming together to form a homestead called *micci* (extended family), and several *micci* can come together as a clan or even an equivalent of a village.”⁶⁸

The Southern part of Africa has a family tradition that is akin to that of the East-West nations of the continent. The Swazi people of Swaziland call the family *indlu* or *sibongo*. The smallest unit of the family which consists of father, mother and children (household) is called *indlu*, while *sibongo* includes all who trace their lineage to a common ancestry. The *sibongo* “is the fundamental unit of Swazi social organization.”⁶⁹ The *Nnanja* people of Zambia call the family *banja*. The nuclear family of mother, father and children constitute the smallest unit of *banja*. The traditional *banja* consists of several nuclear units (small *banja*), bonded together by a common grandfather, great-grandfather or ancestor.”⁷⁰

The *Maghreb* people of North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco) and Egyptians use the term *a'ila*, which is “translated as the extended family or patrilineal group” to describe their notion of family.⁷¹ *A'ila* is “composed of patriarch, his spouse, and his unmarried and married descendants, these forming a community located at different quarters of the village but strongly bound by a collective norm.”⁷²

⁶⁷ Peter Kaberenge, interviewed by author, Hoima, Uganda, September, 2020. He is a Banyoro in Uganda and a priest of the diocese of Hoima, where he serves as the diocesan education secretary.

⁶⁸ Mary Mburu, e-mail message to author, September 15, 2020. She is a Kikuyu in Kenya and belongs to the religious order of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND).

⁶⁹ J. Rank, *Swazi-Family and Kinship: Countries and their Cultures*, <http://www.everyculture.com/Africa-Middle-East/Swazi-Kinship.html> [accessed 12/25/2020].

⁷⁰ John Bonganga, e-mail message to author, September 03, 2013. He is Nnanja in Zambia and belongs to the Missionary of Africa congregation (White Fathers).

⁷¹ Erina Iwasaki, *Analytical Framework for the Analysis of Kinship in North African Rural Societies: A Case study of Commercial Migration in Southern Tunisia*, <http://www2.econ.hit-u.ac.jp/~areastd/mediterranean/mw/pdf/18/14.pdf> [accessed 14/09/2020].

⁷² Iwasaki, *Analytical Framework for the Analysis of Kinship*.

Family in Africa, therefore, suggests something larger than the household (nuclear family) which is its smallest unit.⁷³ It fundamentally consists of people who lay “claim to a common descent,” which creates a “very strong and intimate kinship” among members.”⁷⁴ In consequence, the African understanding of the family should be seen in the light of the extended/kinship relations of the constituent members.

For Anthony John Valentine Obinna, “The Church-family in Africa should be adopted as a one family-building dynamic.”⁷⁵ The concept of church as family may be contentious and complex in the west because of the long history and experience of the church vs state relationship.

But in Africa, despite the influence of colonialism on Christianity, the church and state relationship remains separate. The concept of “church as family” remains a laudable cultural tool for cohesion and peace. The principles of marriage and sexuality remain sacred and uncontested for now. A good example is the low divorce and separation rates in most African nations. To divorce or separate is almost a taboo, but the influence of western education and civilisation among urban dwellers in cities across sub-Saharan Africa like Lagos and Abuja in Nigeria, Accra and Kumasi in Ghana, Nairobi in Kenya may gradually increase divorce rates in Africa.

The African brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ Jesus becoming the foundation of her mission of reconciliation, justice and peace in the continent for the credibility of the Church’s mission of reconciliation, justice and peace, is dependent on how she lives these “values

⁷³ The nuclear family in traditional Africa may also be different from what obtains in European and American societies. In traditional African societies, some men have two or more wives, because the custom fits well into the social structure and belief that a large number of children increases the immortality of the family and makes such a family great. It also means that a polygamous man may have “as many households, since each wife would usually have her own house erected within the same compound where other wives and their household live.” See Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, 107. Nwabude states that “polygamous family is a nuclear family which in its simplest form is constituted by a man, his wives and children.” See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family*, 91.

⁷⁴ Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family*, 88-90.

⁷⁵ Anthony John Valentine Obinna, Archbishop of Owerri, Nigeria. Abuh, “The Church as a Family of God.” 37.

within herself, i.e. in her members”.⁷⁶ Hence, Francis Cardinal Arinze states that: To give the Church greater credibility and courage in her prophetic mission of preaching reconciliation, justice and peace, care should be taken that reconciliation, justice and peace be lived within Church structures, especially by leading Church workers such as bishops, priests, consecrated people and lay faithful.⁷⁷

Basile MveEngone sustains this argument, according to Abuh, calling the Church to first reconcile her own internal contradictions in order to give witness to her mission of reconciliation and justice and peace in the continent: The Church has the duty to trace the way and live it herself by first resolving her own contradictions, before preaching to others. The more believable she is, the more she will know how to create spaces of truth, justice and peace. For this, it is urgent to reinforce effective communion and collaboration of the pastors between themselves and with the faithful, to guarantee transparency and the responsible management of the Church’s goods, to ensure equanimity between the different members of the ecclesial community.⁷⁸

Abuh maintains that Joseph Ake Yapo equally acceded to the above proposal and held that if the African Church desires to be the salt of the earth and light of the world by playing “an effective role as an artisan of peace, reconciliation and peace” in the continent, “she must start by putting into practice from within what she teaches and pay attention to placing the necessary and essential structures for the formation and education of her faithful.”⁷⁹

There was therefore, a unanimous understanding among the Fathers of the synodal council that the formation and education of Christ’s faithful in the practice of reconciliation, justice and peace must move beyond the ecclesial family, to that of opening our minds and hearts to people of other religions and faith in the continent if it has to be transformative. This calls for

⁷⁶Second Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, no. 45.

⁷⁷ Francis Cardinal Arinze, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, Nigeria. Abuh, “The Church as a Family of God.” 48.

⁷⁸Basile MveEngone, Archbishop of Libreville, Gabon. Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 38.

⁷⁹ Joseph Ake Yapo, Archbishop of Gagnoa, President of the Episcopal Conference, Ivory Coast.

both “dialogue *ad intra*”⁸⁰ and “dialogue *ad extra*” where adherents of African Traditional Religions, Christians and Moslems join “hands” to address common challenges on the basis of commonly shared spiritual and moral values, which we discover, often with joyful surprise”.⁸¹

In this way, the Synod Fathers tap into the teaching of the Second Vatican Council which “urges her sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions.”⁸² This will enable all members of the community, irrespective of religious affiliation, to work together for the good of humanity by preserving and promoting “peace, liberty, social justice and moral values”.⁸³

2.6.2 *Africae Munus*: Reconciling for Peace

According to Abuh, Pope Benedict XVI in *Africae Munus*, admonished the Church in Africa to be reconciled with God and with one another, for only “a Church reconciled within herself and among all her members can become a prophetic sign of reconciliation in society within each country and the continent as a whole.”⁸⁴ The document according to the Holy Father, is “the wealth of documentation that was handed to me after the sessions– the *Lineamenta*, the *Instrumentum Laboris*, the reports drawn up before and after the discussions, the speeches and the summaries prepared by working groups”.⁸⁵ *Africae Munus* calls the African Church to transform “its own idea of the Church as God’s Family”⁸⁶ into a concrete pastoral ministry

⁸⁰ Dialogue *ad intra* invites the individual African Christian to integrate his or her African values with the Christian faith, so as to avoid a crisis of religious personality, by being wholly African and truly Christian. It is therefore, part of the on-going conversion and inculturation that the African Church of today needs.

⁸¹ John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria. See also Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 51.

⁸² Vatican II Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, 1965. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html (accessed 16/01/2017), no. 2.

⁸³ *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.

⁸⁴ Benedict XVI, *Signing Ceremony of “Africae Munus*, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-signs-apostolic-exhortation-Africae-munus> [accessed 24/01/2017]. Abuh, “Church as Family of God” 33.

⁸⁵ *Africae Munus*, no. 10.

⁸⁶ The African Church at the First Synod adopted the model of the Church as God’s Family “as an expression of the Church’s nature particularly appropriate for Africa. For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.” See *Ecclesia in Africa*, nn. 39-40.

that is inspired by faith working through love, in service to reconciliation, justice and peace, by being the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world”.⁸⁷

Africae Munus is divided into two parts. Chapter one of the first part invites the African Church to discern the fundamental structures of mission on the continent that “seek reconciliation, justice and peace and to translate these parameters into resolutions and guidelines for actions.”⁸⁸ The origin of the ecclesial mission of “reconciliation, justice and peace is in Christ Jesus who reconciled us to God and made us a family of brothers and sisters.”⁸⁹ The document then admonishes God’s people in Africa to be “deeply rooted in Christ who transforms us to become just and enables us to build a just and social order in the Spirit of the Beatitudes and in fraternal service for love of truth, which is the source of peace.”⁹⁰

The second chapter considers the “paths that lead to reconciliation, justice and peace. These include authentic conversion.”⁹¹ This is a call to experiencing the truth of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.⁹² And a spirituality of communion that gives us the ability to perceive the light of the mystery of the Trinity shining on the faces of brothers and sisters around us.⁹³ Others include inculturation of the Gospel and the evangelization of culture, which in a way will “remove all forms of hate speeches due to race and xenophobia, the Eucharist and the Word of God, living in harmony with all in the society, protection of life, migrants, displaced persons, refugees, respect for creation and the ecosystem, the good governance of the States, and inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue.”⁹⁴ The document according to Abuh, affirms that Christians, “who draw nourishment from the authentic source,

⁸⁷*Africae Munus*, nn. 1-13.

⁸⁸*Africae Munus*, no. 14.

⁸⁹*Africae Munus*, nn. 15-18.

⁹⁰*Africae Munus*, nn. 19-30.

⁹¹*Africae Munus*, no. 32.

⁹²*Africae Munus*, no. 33.

⁹³*Africae Munus*, no. 34.

⁹⁴*Africae Munus*, nn. 36-94.

Christ, are transformed by him into “the light of the world” (Mt 5:14), and they transmit the one who is himself “the Light of the world” (Jn 8:12),”⁹⁵ by bringing “flavour and brightness that comes from reconciliation, justice and peace to the continent.”⁹⁶

The second part of *Africae Munus* consists of three chapters. The first chapter invites all members of the Church in Africa to “contribute to justice and peace in the Church and society by being reconciled with one another and with God.”⁹⁷ It specifies further how members of the Church: bishops, priests, missionaries, permanent deacons, consecrated persons, seminarians, catechists and lay people should bear witness to Christ in the world by being “the salt of the earth” and light of the world.⁹⁸

The second chapter for Abuh, points out the major areas of the Church’s Apostolate that constitutes her means of accomplishing this specific mission, “the Church as the presence of Christ, the world of education, the world of health care, the world of information technology and communication”.⁹⁹ These means, important as they are, in the fulfilment of the Church’s mission of reconciliation, justice and peace, remain insufficient unless God himself disposes us to cooperate in his work of reconciliation through “our ability to think, to speak, to listen and to act.”¹⁰⁰ So, we must always realise, as a community of faith, that it is through the Holy Spirit, that we become truly “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mt5:13-14).”¹⁰¹

The third and final chapter exhorts the African Church to be united with the person of Christ, so that the people of God in the continent can hear the voice of Jesus that changes everything: “Stand up, take your mat and walk!” (Jn. 5:8). “At once,” the evangelist tells us, the man was

⁹⁵*Africae Munus*, no. 95.

⁹⁶Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 44.

⁹⁷*Africae Munus*, no. 99.

⁹⁸*Africae Munus*, nn. 100-131.

⁹⁹*Africae Munus*, nn. 133-146. Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 41.

¹⁰⁰*Africae Munus*, no. 132.

¹⁰¹*Africae Munus*, no. 132.

healed (v. 9).¹⁰² Hence, “it is this encounter with Jesus which the Church must offer to bruised and wounded hearts yearning for reconciliation and peace, and thirsting for justice. We must provide and proclaim the Word of Christ which heals, sets free and reconciles.”¹⁰³ Evangelization in Africa demands a new presentation of the Gospel, “new in its ardour, methods and expression,”¹⁰⁴ in which it integrates for Abuh, “the intellectual dimension of the faith into the living experience of the encounter with Jesus Christ present and at work in the ecclesial community”.¹⁰⁵

Succinctly, for Abuh, “*Africae Munus* requests the African Church to continue the work of *Ecclesia in Africa*, by translating its adopted ecclesial model for mission: “Church as Family of God” into concrete pastoral practices in service of reconciliation, justice and peace, so that the great perspectives found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition may be fulfilled.”¹⁰⁶ This may find application in the missionary activities of the people of God. The third part of this work on the Nigerian church will be examined now.

PART THREE

2.7 The Catholic Church in Nigeria in Dialogue with Islam and her Messages of Peace

The efforts at peacebuilding in Nigeria by various arms of Christian sects in Nigeria demonstrate the ardent desire for peace. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has on different occasions called for peace in the country. They initiated dialogue among Christians and Muslims and other religious bodies. They have interacted with the

¹⁰²*Africae Munus*, no. 148.

¹⁰³*Africae Munus*, no. 148.

¹⁰⁴*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 21, cited in *Africae Munus*, no.165.

¹⁰⁵*Africae Munus*, no. 165. Abuh, “The Church as Family of God.” 52.

¹⁰⁶*Africae Munus*, 10. The document in talking about “the great perspectives found in Sacred Scripture and Tradition” demands that the new evangelization of Africa should return to divine revelation as the root from which the tree of mission draws life. See also Emmanuel Abu, Church as Family of God.

government from the Local, State and Federal levels to ensure that peaceful coexistence is maintained. But have their efforts yielded fruit?

2.7.1 The Nigerian Church: Building Bridges of Peace

The voices of the Nigerian bishops on peace come through the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) collectively. In 1966, before the Nigerian civil war, that ended in 1970, the Bishops, in a joint pastoral letter titled *Breakdown of Law-Violence*, called for peace among the people through the biblical injunction of the Fifth Commandment "Thou shall not kill." They lamented that "while the church mourns the nation's dead and sympathizes with all, she will not be satisfied with mere words of sympathy."¹⁰⁷

They declared:

We the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, re-state God's fundamental commandment of fraternal love: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' This greatest commandment in practice starts from the conviction that charity begins at home. Violence has been done to Nigeria's ancient and proud reputation for hospitality towards strangers within her gates. Nigerians have become unwanted strangers in their own land.¹⁰⁸

The bishops reminded all Nigerians of this fundamental commandment and called men and women of good will to "join in restoring this nation to peace and stability through the practice of the law of God."¹⁰⁹

In the *Statement on the Nigerian Crisis*, December 1968, the bishops explicitly referring to the teachings of St Paul, made it clear that it is a central belief that there is no distinction of persons, neither Jew nor Greek, so there is no distinction between ethnic groups. "God's fatherhood and our common humanity must again join us across the boundaries of ethnic

¹⁰⁷Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), "Violence" in *The Church Teaches: Stand of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria on Issues of Faith and Life*. Peter Schineller, ed. (Abuja: A Publication of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, (CSN) 2003), 217.

¹⁰⁸CBCN, "Violence" in *The Church Teaches: Stand of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria on Issues of Faith and Life*. 219.

¹⁰⁹ CBCN, "Violence" in *The Church Teaches: Stand of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria on Issues of Faith and Life*. 217-219. See also CBCN, "The Leaders and People of Nigeria, November 1966" in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, ed. Peter Schineller. A Publication of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, (CSN) 2002), 51-52.

differences and enable us to overcome the memories of wrongs done and losses suffered.”¹¹⁰

After the military government of General Sanni Abacha executed by hanging Ken Saro-Wiwa, a social activist and human rights lawyer and leader of the Ogoni People of the oil rich Niger Delta region, which sparked up sporadic violence in the area, the bishops made their position known in two documents titled *Violence Begets Violence* and *We stand for Life: Statement of the CBCN on Recent Happenings in the Country*. In their words: . . . “Violence only begets violence and it creates more problems than it solves . . . We call on the Government to take fully its responsibility to create the conditions for peace and harmony to reign in the land.”¹¹¹ The bishops emphasized respect for the rule of law and the judicial processes and norms as recognised by all civilized nations of the world. For them, “this is necessary in order to ensure that justice is not only done but clearly seen to have been done. Government has the duty to promote reconciliation in situations of conflict, and should resist the temptation to manipulate the people’s differences for political gain.”¹¹²

In February 1996, in another statement, entitled *Insecurity and Violence*, they condemned what they called the spectre of violence at the hands of agents of the State at border posts, checkpoints, police detention, cells and prisons . . . condemned in no uncertain terms any recourse to violence as a way of seeking redress for perceived injustice. For violence begets even further violence.

In *Escalating Violence*, October 1997, the Nigerian bishops drew the attention of the government and people to what they called the culture of violence. They stated:

We condemn, as we have done in the past, every recourse to violence as a means of resolving conflict in the society. We reaffirm our faith in dialogue, carried out in a spirit of mutual trust and openness in truth, as the most acceptable option. We urge the authorities and the general population of Nigeria to follow this path of dialogue in seeking solutions to interpersonal and social conflicts.¹¹³

¹¹⁰CBCN, “The Leaders and people of Nigeria” 14.

¹¹¹CBCN, “Violence Begets Violence” and “We stand for life.”

¹¹²CBCN, “Violence Begets Violence” and “We stand for life.”

¹¹³CBCN, “Escalating Violence” 218 and *Security of Life and Property*, 356.

2.7.2 High Quality Education for Peacebuilding

Education is a key factor to peace as the bishops of Nigeria affirmed in their commitment to peacebuilding thus:

In this regard, we once more call on all State Governments to return to the old tradition by which Church and State collaborated in the provision of high quality education for all our citizens We also enjoin the Federal and State ministries and departments of education to ensure adequate and comprehensive curriculum for Christian Religious Studies (CRS), in such a way that individual right to religious freedom and the right of the Church to teach and disseminate the Christian faith is not infringed upon.¹¹⁴

They also advocated proper media education in this age of social media technology. Such that messages can go viral and if this is not properly managed then it could lead to the root of violence. To this effect, the bishops wrote: “Our nation needs to invest in media education, especially to protect our young generation from the ills of the new social media and equip them to engage the communications technology in a critical manner.”¹¹⁵

They observe that modern media, especially social media, can be an effective means of information, education, evangelization and peacebuilding. The bishops maintained that “rather than tap their great potential benefits for expanding knowledge, many, especially our youth, have become exposed to such negative dimensions of the social media as organs for crime, the dissemination of hate speeches, and slander for peddling outright falsehood and misinformation.”¹¹⁶ They emphasized thus, “In these difficult times, we appeal to our people to be more circumspect and positive in the use of information obtained from and

¹¹⁴ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” n.4. The Church and state in Nigeria can collaborate for peace and proper religious education on the two following premise: firstly, the right of some to act upon their religious principles must be circumscribed by the government’s responsibility to protect the health and safety of all. Secondly, believers should acknowledge the validity of constitutional laws and recognize that officials in the executive or judicial branches of government who enforce or interpret laws take an oath that does not leave them free to override the law in furtherance of their personal beliefs, religious or otherwise.

¹¹⁵CBCN, “Promoting Authentic Development in Nigeria,” n.8

¹¹⁶CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” n.4.

disseminated through the modern media.”¹¹⁷

Co-responsibility with the government in education, nation building, and peace was fundamental in the teachings of the bishops. They said, “We pledge our full support in the fields of universal primary education, especially in the training of religious teachers in the field of moral and religious education.”¹¹⁸ Thus, for the bishops, “the church seeks increased cooperation with the government in restoring discipline and sound moral religious education into the curriculum of our institutions of learning and eliminating unrest, destruction and riots from our schools.”¹¹⁹

The teaching of the bishops on peace education is necessitated by religious, political violence and other forms of events in the country that in turn have shown the importance of morality, of God-fearing leadership and honesty. Affluence puts a special strain on ethical behaviour and right conduct. As the nation moves forward into the future with hope, there is need for more morality and discipline.

2.7.3 Urgent Need to Address Grievances

The Bishops reflecting on the situation in Nigeria noted: “Our country is currently passing through a phase that is marked by tension, agitation and a general sense of hopelessness and dissatisfaction.”¹²⁰ This, they believe is because of “years of injustice, inequity, corruption, and impunity.”¹²¹ Furthermore, they emphasized: “There are agitations in many sectors of the country against the one-sidedness in appointments to key institutions and sensitive national offices, against marginalisation, and unfair distribution of resources and amenities. There are also allegations of cases of selective application of the rule of law.”¹²²

For them, the inability of the Government to address the inequitable situation in the country

¹¹⁷CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” n.4.

¹¹⁸ CBCN, Co-Responsibility in Education, 64.

¹¹⁹ CBCN, Co-Responsibility in Education, 66.

¹²⁰ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 3.

¹²¹ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

¹²² CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

has provided breeding ground for violent reactions, protests and agitations, which exploit the grievances of different segments of the country. They appealed thus:

We call on Government at all levels to urgently address these anomalies, remove everything that smacks of injustice, and give everybody and every part of our country a sense of belonging. We insist that merit and ability should be the primary criteria in making appointments and genuine needs the criteria for the distribution of amenities. We also urge the Government to be always sensitive to the multi-religious and multi-ethnic configuration of the nation.¹²³

They also reiterated, “As Catholic Bishops, we affirm that the legitimacy of every Government derives from its ability to listen to the legitimate yearnings and genuine cries of the people and honestly seek to address them.”¹²⁴ They therefore urge the Government at all levels to engage the aggrieved sections of the citizenry in a conversation worthy of a democracy. “We are concerned that the deployment of soldiers to deal with already restive youths could increase the nervousness among the populace with the potential of igniting a fire that could turn into an uncontrollable conflagration.”¹²⁵

On the other hand, they enjoin all aggrieved persons and groups to employ peaceful means within the framework of the existing laws of the land to express their grievances or even exercise legitimate pressure on the Government. For the bishops, “Care must be taken by all to avoid actions and utterances capable of causing yet another armed conflict in the nation or any of its parts.”¹²⁶

The bishops demand fair treatment from those State Governments in the North that deny some of our Dioceses their rights to own landed properties for mission work by their refusal to issue them with Certificates of Occupancy. For the bishops, “People of different religions

¹²³ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

¹²⁴ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration”, 4.

¹²⁵ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4. The bishops were also disturbed by the worsening state of insecurity of life and property occasioned by armed robbery, arson, political violence, and assassinations. Religious intolerance and interreligious violence have continued to threaten the peace, unity and stability of the nation. See also CBCN, “Seeking the way to peace”. In *Our Concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak: Communiqués issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria CBCN on the State of the Church and Nigerian Nation from 1963 to 2015. Abuja, 10th-14th march, 2003. No 3.*

¹²⁶ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

need to co-exist, communicate, and be allowed to freely practise their respective religions everywhere in this country.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, they maintained, “the other members of the political class in all the arms of government have, as a matter of urgency, to drastically reduce the immodest cost of running the government in this country. If for no other reason, they have to do this as a sign of solidarity with most of their compatriots, for whom the basic necessities of life – feeding, clothing, shelter, healthcare, energy, quality education – have almost become unrealizable dreams.”¹²⁸

2.7.4 Religious Tolerance for Peacebuilding

In the Communiqué titled “*Towards a Just and Peaceful Society*” issued in 2001, the bishops lamented: “We are disturbed at recent cases of inter-religious and/or inter-ethnic violence in various parts of the country, especially in the Bauchi, Kano, Nassarawa, and Plateau States.”¹²⁹ They further said: “Added to the new eruption of violence are the politically-motivated upheavals in some Southern States. We sympathize with the victims of these disturbances.”¹³⁰

Furthermore, they observed “In some areas, security of lives and property can no longer be guaranteed, as armed robbers and other hoodlums hold the citizens hostage. Given the failure of the law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to effectively deal with rising crimes and other social problems, vigilante groups emerge which often use morally objectionable methods to redress wrongs.”¹³¹

The issue of Sharia Law adapted as States Criminal Laws in many Northern States like Zamfara, Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Bauchi and others in Nigeria, when enforced on the non-Muslim citizens (who are mostly Christians) as against the constitution, has aggravated

¹²⁷ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

¹²⁸ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

¹²⁹ CBCN, “Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration,” 4.

¹³⁰ CBCN, *Towards a Just and Peaceful Society* (St Leo’s Catholic Church, Ikeja Lagos: Communiqué issued at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting, 10–14 September 2001).

¹³¹ CBCN, *Towards a Just and Peaceful Society*, 188.

violence in some States of the country. Religious laws should therefore not supersede Civil Laws in a pluralist country like Nigeria. This has led to terrorist and Islamic fundamentalist (like the Boko Haram, an equivalent of Al-Qaeda), ravaging Christian communities and killing people in the name of promoting Sharia.

The bishops have repeatedly warned that the adoption of the Sharia as a State Law and extension of its scope are a flagrant violation of human rights of non-Muslims in a multi-religious society and a secular state like Nigeria. They consider it an act of gross irresponsibility on the part of some officials – who are elected to defend the constitutional rights of every Nigerian to live anywhere without being discriminated against based on religion or ethnicity – to use religion as a tool to advance their selfish interests and to foment violence among people. They urge all our leaders to refrain from making inflammatory statements that could further aggravate the situation of unrest in Nigeria.

They warned earlier that the adoption of the Sharia would infringe on the rights of non-Muslims. They were shocked that the various arms of Government at Federal and State levels have remained indifferent to this problem which could bring disastrous consequences on our nation. It is wishful thinking for the government to continue to believe that the Sharia problem will fizzle out with time. They warned that it is too costly to create a situation in which the destiny of this nation is left in the hands of fanatics, be they religious or political. Given the explosive nature of religious conflicts as evidenced in other parts of the world, they demanded that the “Federal Government act decisively to uphold and defend the legitimate constitutional rights of all Nigerians.”¹³²

In the communiqué issued in February 2001 at Abuja, the bishops recommended:

In the effort to bring about a more democratic climate and build national unity based on a true federalism, a national conference may prove helpful. Such a conference will succeed only if it is a representative of all the people, from all parts of Nigeria, men and

¹³²CBCN, *Towards a Just and Peaceful Society*, 188.

women, rich and poor, and not another assembly of leaders who have already tried and failed to rebuild the nation. We are convinced that true federalism would recognize diversity in unity, the right of every Nigerian to reside and work in any and every part of the country. It would also guarantee the genuine federal character in all organs and institutions of government, especially the judiciary, military and civil service.¹³³

Convening a national conference would mean that representatives are to find the way to national peace.

2.7.5 Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and Religious Harmony

To promote peace, associations and councils aimed at fostering closer spiritual ties between the two predominant religions in Nigeria, both Islam and Christianity have so far established Councils, but have they made significant impact in Nigeria? Have their statements been implemented in concrete situations?

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council¹³⁴ came into being after the dawn of democracy in 1999 to serve as a platform for high-level dialogue between the leaders of Christians and Muslims in the country, thereby promoting public good. The council is designated to promote understanding, appreciation of one another and the generation of mutual respect between Christians and Muslims.

It was reported on May 23, 2012 that the President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar, and the national president of the Christian

¹³³CBCN, *Call for Dialogue: Towards National Restoration* (Abuja, Communiqué issued at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting, 7–15 September 2001).

¹³⁴ The NIREC is made up of 50 members, 25 from the Christian side and the balance from the side of Muslims. NIREC is co-chaired by the Sultan of Sokoto and president general of the Nigeria supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) and the president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

NIREC has been known to be very active in addressing the challenges of violence not only in Nigeria but even in neighboring countries like Ivory Coast. Among many other issues on the agenda of NIREC are freedom of religion and credible elections in a peaceful atmosphere.

The NIREC on Tuesday October 30, 2012 had advised Nigerians to disregard threats by anyone in the country, meant to intimidate them out of their places of abode. However, the increase in terrorism in the country appears to prove NIREC wrong. Nigerians from all tracks of life expect so much from this body. They urge the leadership of the Nigeria Interreligious council to curb religious violence and ensure that there is peaceful co-existence between Muslims and Christians in the country. Leadership of NIREC should be blamed for the perennial religious violence in the country. It is a minus for them and it is an indication that we are not being led well. It is important that if NIREC is not able to assist in stopping terrorism in the country, the government should look beyond it. Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 198.

Association of Nigeria, Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor led a delegation of some members of NIREC to meet with president Goodluck Jonathan in continuation of the Federal Government's bid to find a lasting solution to the violence by the Islamic sect, Boko Haram. At that meeting, NIREC declared: "We want all the people in this country to know that we are together in this boat and the boat should not be rocked and we should do everything possible to live harmoniously together."¹³⁵ Because "if God had wished, he would have made us a monolithic nation. The plurality of this country is strength and it should be made to be so."¹³⁶

Some fundamental questions that arise include: does God will pluralism? Is it a problem or blessing? Can people of divergent languages and different religions unify? One can argue on the legitimacy of theological and religious pluralism as advocated above in Nigeria. For Dermot Lane, "Pluralism is a self-evident, given reality of life that derives from the uniqueness of every human being, the historicity of human existence, and the diversity of human understanding."¹³⁷ Furthermore, "Not all differences are necessarily conflictual or contradictory. Many differences can be complementary and enriching."¹³⁸

For Paulinus I Odozor, "Terrorism in Nigeria is a global embarrassment. In the last colloquium in the Vatican City, Rome, on November 19-21, 2012 some of our Muslim colleagues from Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran were worried about the terrorism in Nigeria and Africa as a whole."¹³⁹

¹³⁵ NIREC, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 222.

¹³⁶ NIREC, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 222.

¹³⁷ Dermot Lane, *Stepping Stones to other religions: A Christian Theology of Inter-Religious dialogue*, (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2011), 110.

¹³⁸ In my conclusion, I will analyze the dynamics of pluralism and the need for inclusive pluralism in Nigeria. There is an emerging consensus around the need for some degree of flexibility and fluidity between exclusivism, and inclusivism and pluralism. All three contain grains of truth and not a little distortion of each other. For example, it should be recognized that all religions, not just Christianity, see themselves as unique, exclusive and superior to other religions; they would hardly exist otherwise. Equally, religions see themselves as somehow related to other religions, but ultimately they regard themselves as different. Lane, *Stepping Stones to other Religions*, 111.

¹³⁹ Paulinus I Odozor discusses the causes of Africa's predicament. He provides evidence for making his claim. Essentially, though, Africa's destiny lies in its own hands, putting the blame on foreign elements has a limited life span and that developing the continent's limitless potential is a more valuable and life-enhancing option for church and society. He also assessed the role and task of theology that seeks to understand and articulate the church's faith and its implications for life in the world. Theology for him should be at the service of the Church

It will be wonderful if the leadership of NIREC can sincerely come together more often, given the present situation of the nation and look inward without foreign intervention to see if they can identify the sponsors of the terrorist group for dialogue. The government needs both the Christians and the Muslims to solve this puzzle which should not be seen as a conflict between Christianity and Islam. This is a challenge for NIREC to be more united in executing its programme beyond statements, to actualizing its vision, aim and specific objectives. NIREC must strive to reclaim the national unity and peace that can make Nigeria once more a home instead of a battle field.

2.8 Voices of Particular Bishops: Working for Peace in Nigeria

Having discussed the general teachings of the Nigerian bishops it is pertinent that we examine some particular thoughts on peace as it brings to the fore the minds of bishops who speak through the eyes of victims of violence. In this context, Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Kaigama and Bishop Kukah, are well known throughout the country and abroad for their outspoken calls for dialogue and peaceful coexistence.¹⁴⁰

a) John Cardinal Onaiyekan: Religious Dialogue is Central for Peace

As a man of vast experience, Onaiyekan believes that we cannot shy away from dialogue to achieve peace. He reflects thus:

I have found that working together with Muslim leaders in Nigeria to diffuse potentially explosive Christian-Muslim conflicts has made a difference in ways that working alone could not. On a wider, pan-African basis, I have worked closely

and Human Development. While theology remains faithful to revelation and the church faith, the theologians are required to articulate and promote an authentic and integral vision and understanding of human development, by drawing attention to the reality of God and our transcendent relationship with him, addressing the root causes of Africa's anthropological crisis, relating development to our Christian hope and teaching the moral imperative of solidarity towards the poor of the earth. This concept of integral development has to be understood, especially in Africa basically in material terms in contrast to its meaning in the Catholic social teaching. See Paulinus I Odozor, "Africa and the Challenge of Foreign Religious/Ethical Ideologies, Viruses, and Pathologies" in *The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, ed. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 214-225.

¹⁴⁰ Kathleen McGarvey, "Christ among the Religions: The Catholic tradition" in *Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conversation* Cornelius A. Omonokhua, Ann Falola & Kathleen McGarvey eds. (Abuja: The Department of Mission and Dialogue, Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria and The kukah Centre, 2014), 29-52.

with the World Conference on Religions for Peace and the new African Council of Religious leaders to address conflicts, together with leaders of other denominations and faith traditions. In Africa, we have found that interreligious teams have succeeded where political and diplomatic attempts have failed.¹⁴¹

In working with Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CP N) a member of the Africa Council of Religious Leaders- *Religions for Peace*, (ACRL) Cardinal Onaiyekan serves as a Co-Chair.

He attempts to answer the crucial question: what is the specific contribution of our Catholic tradition to peacebuilding? This article “The Church in Africa Today: Reflections on the African Synod” he discusses the strong focus on justice and peace indicated in the African synod. For Onaiyekan, this “portrays a growing awareness of the church’s role in society. This role is captured as it reflects on the existence of Nigeria as an independent nation in 1960 with great hopes and expectations.¹⁴²

He recounts how in December 1993; the Nigerian bishops went to Rome on their *Ad Limina* visit. From Rome they took the unprecedented step of issuing a Christmas message to the nation with the significant title: “Let not our dreams die” which is a call for all to work for justice and peace. They emphasized the fact that the synod reflected on the political arena, showing its conviction that most of the problems facing our continent result from inept or corrupt governments. For Onayekan, “To overcome pervasive injustice with truth and peace requires that a price be paid, otherwise nothing will happen. Since justice and peace embrace all facets of life, the whole society must accept responsibility for the state of the nation, and each one must play his or her part.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹Onaiyekan, “Foreword” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*, vii-ix.

¹⁴² Onaiyekan, “Foreword” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*, vii-ix.

¹⁴³John O. Onaiyekan, “Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: The Imperative of Dialogue” in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*. Vol. 15, (2003): 22-32. Interreligious cooperation may be difficult, but it cannot be avoided. Indeed, we can see clearly that already Christians and Muslims are active in the same political parties. In fact, in order to command a reasonable national presence, all the parties make conscious efforts to include both in their membership and especially in their leadership membership to both religions. See also Onaiyekan, *Thy Kingdom Come: Democracy and Politics in Nigeria today, A Catholic Perspective*, (Ibadan: Daily graphic printers, 2003), 39.

In the same vein, in a Christmas message titled: True peace through true religion affirms: he declared that “Christ and Christianity stand for peace and love.”¹⁴⁴ Our Muslim compatriots likewise declare: Islam is peace. He continues, “True religion does not consist only in prayers, ablutions, sermons, fasts and religious fervour alone. All these are useless . . . if they are not accompanied by a true spirit of justice, honesty, humility and universal love which lead to true peace.”¹⁴⁵ This message is clear, religion is meant to promote peace not violence and conflicts, if such a religion is to remain worthy of the name “True”.

For Onaiyekan, peacebuilding is not only, or even mainly the responsibility of the bishop or the clergy generally as peacebuilding is “integral to Christian faith it is the task of the whole church. In fact, the Second Vatican Council says that it is the vocation of the laity to take the lead in transforming the social order considering the gospel, in other words, the front lines of peacebuilding will mostly be occupied by lay people.”¹⁴⁶

In Nigeria for example, open conflicts have, fortunately, been under control, in part, because people remember Biafra and, in part, because the “Catholic community and others have pursued conflict prevention by confronting corruption, injustice, environmental degradation, and incipient religious conflict at the local level.”¹⁴⁷

The peacebuilding work of the church is most effective when the church is united. Neither bishops nor lay people should work alone. Peacebuilding cannot produce peace if it is a solitary enterprise. A lone bishop trying his best to make peace is of little consequence compared to the united action of an Episcopal conference. And the action of an Episcopal

¹⁴⁴ Onaiyekan, “Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: The Imperative of Dialogue” 33.

¹⁴⁵ Onaiyekan, *True Peace through Religion Christmas Message*. (Ilorin: Diocesan Catechetical Resources, 1988), 24-25. Islam is a major factor in many places, with different types of relationships with the church, ranging from “very good” in Senegal to a delicate equilibrium of forces in Nigeria, a tolerated minority in the Maghreb, a precarious survival in Egypt, and an outright policy of extermination of Christians in the Sudan. There have been and are serious problems of relationship in many places where intolerance, oppression, and at times, even violence and killing are perpetrated by people who claim to be defending or promoting Islam. Such problems become challenges to be faced in faith, humility and love. Onaiyekan, “The Church in Africa Today: Reflections on the African Synod” in *African Synod: Documents, Reflections, Perspectives*, 211-219.

¹⁴⁶ Onaiyekan, “Foreword” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*, vii-ix.

¹⁴⁷ Onaiyekan, “Foreword” in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics and Praxis*, vii-ix.

conference is of relatively little consequence compared to the mobilization of an entire Catholic community in common action for peace.

Nor can a church that is divided build peace. The tragic case is when the Catholic community is split largely along the lines of the belligerents, a common problem in conflicts over national, ethnic, or tribal identity. In that case the local church becomes very much part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

b) Ignatius A. Kaigama: Peace, not War

In his book, *Peace, not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis (2001-2011)*, Ignatius A. Kaigama who has been at the heart of violence narrates his invitation by Catholic Mission Charity (MISSIO) in Germany, in the year 2011 to participate in the World Mission Sunday celebration which was dedicated to the subject of peace and reconciliation in Nigeria. This was aimed at Muslim and Christian youths together to appreciate the merits of living in harmony by accepting one another without the kind of religious prejudice and hostility witnessed today.

For Kaigama, “perceived injustice, intolerance, ignorance, language barriers, a communication gap and selfishness are pivotal to conflict-build-up. These crises come in different forms-cultural, ethnic, technological, political, religious or social.”¹⁴⁸ Peacebuilding is the effort of adopting proactive measures to stop crises and the attempt to neutralize the negative effects of crises where they have already taken place, and this is usually a gradual process. Today many agencies are practically involved in peace negotiations, especially in the United Nations, realizing that “many ethnic or political groups and different religions are yet to find an enduring formula for peace.”¹⁴⁹ Christianity creates no room for violence; it gives no vacancy for a breakdown in inter-personal relationships, and seeks to employ all strategies to bring about peace.

¹⁴⁸ Ignatius Kaigama, *Peace, Not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis (2001-2011)* (Jos: Hamtul Press, 2012).

¹⁴⁹ Ignatius Kaigama, *Peace, Not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis*, 22.

He turned to scripture as the only basis for our quest for peace. Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called children of God (Mt. 5:9). We are also advised to seek the peace and welfare of the city given by God. Pray for it, for in the welfare of the city in which you live you will have welfare (Jer. 29:7) and in Ps 34:14 ...seek, inquire for, crave for peace and pursue it. He makes a proposal for Christianity and its tools for peace-building and crises management thus:

In the past, power and might seemed to be the best ways of resolving problems. The era of just war for the faith is ended. Today we still see countries wage war against each other and proliferate weapons of mass destruction, and so we hear of the 'the axis of evil.' It is surprising that many groups and even governments save for peace, but plan for war.¹⁵⁰

Kaigama also cites Pope John Paul II whom he called the 'Ambassador of Peace' in these words, "Violence and arms can never resolve the problems of man."¹⁵¹ Furthermore, he stressed on the need for peace by citing the message of peace of Pope Benedict XVI in 2012 "The quest for peace by people of good will surely would become easier if all acknowledge the indivisible relationship between God, human beings and the whole of creation."¹⁵² As a farmer has his tools for farming such as hoes, cutlasses, diggers, knives, and other equipment so also Christianity has its tools for building sustainable peace. These include: A. Mt 18. Reconciliation, B. Luke 14: 31 Dialogue, C. *Pacem in Terris* Justice, D. 1Cor. 13:13 Love. He also cites Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* "To love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it."¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰Kaigama, *Peace, not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis*, 127.

¹⁵¹ Kaigama, *Peace, not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis*, 127.

¹⁵² Kaigama, *Peace, not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crisis*, 14.

¹⁵³*Caritas in Veritate*, 7.

c) Hassan M. Kukah: Belligerency to Accommodation

Kukah analyzed Nigerian politics, democracy and quest for peace since 1999. Furthermore, he used the Nuremberg¹⁵⁴ trials as an example of the need for justice and peace. This trial laid the foundation for the evolution of the culture of human rights as an integral part of the architecture of governance. The overbearing weight of the state was gradually reduced, and the welfare and protection of individual freedom given prominence. The history of most post-colonial states like Nigeria was marked by internal civil wars, authoritarian regimes characterized by one-man rule. Authoritarian regimes were often characterized by oppression, assassinations, imprisonment, and massive human right violations. Thus, the end of these regimes often left nations in trauma.

Ultimately for violence and hatred to be overcome, the Church and State ought to have some level of collaboration and cooperation. Justice must be seen to be done to create an environment conducive to authentic peace process.

The first sign that the face of religion would change in the political life of Nigeria, especially among the Christian community, was at the inauguration of the Obasanjo Presidency after he had openly declared himself “born again” in the course of his sojourn in prison. This came to a head with the thanksgiving prayer service which was organized by the leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) a day after his inauguration.¹⁵⁵ For Kukah, “the administration subsequently was characterized by the following achievements to help the peacebuilding and nation building in Nigeria.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴These trials were part and parcel of the larger policies of the de-Nazification project of post war Germany, aimed at restoring sanity to Germany after the trauma of the Second World War (1939-45).

¹⁵⁵ This event took place at the *International Conference Center*, Abuja on May 30th, 1999 and was well attended by the leadership of CAN, senior clergymen, politicians and diplomats.

¹⁵⁶ Matthew Hassan Kukah, “Christian-Muslim Relations: The Nigerian Situation” *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* vol. 25 (2013): 7-19.

d) Opportunities for addressing persecutions of Christians in Africa: Contexts and Contents

For Kukah, the relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have been a source of serious concern since independence, although the strain only became quite noticeable in recent times. The results for Kukah “have been a powder keg of frustration which often explodes at the slightest provocation based on anything from arguments over the results of elections by politicians, students, ethnic groups to any other social formation on the landscape.”¹⁵⁷

Kukah addressed major issues facing the Nigerian nation as a result of the failure of the state. He gave concrete examples of issues that cause violence and persecution of Christians in Nigeria, which include denial of access to land for the building of churches, denial of freedom to embrace Christianity, denial of right of inheritance to Christian women who marry Muslims and remain Christians, denial of access to the state media, denial of access to state employment, denial of access to state patronage, non-payment of compensation for destroyed churches and institutions, skewed location of federal presence in the northern states, kidnapping and forced marriages of non-Muslim girls, lack of access to Christian religious education in schools in the northern states.

What responses might the above listed conflict and persecutions demand from us; how can we form partnerships with people of other faiths to resolve these issues; and what might be the most effective response from the church?

Kukah, firstly advocates the “building of strong institutions which can support and energize our democracy.”¹⁵⁸ Democracy, and its culture of accommodation, collaboration, consensus

¹⁵⁷Kukah, “Persecutions of Christians in Africa: contexts, Contents & Opportunities” in *Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conversation*, 1-20.

¹⁵⁸ For Kukah, there is the need for us to appreciate the opportunities for dialogue opened for Nigerians under a democratic setting. Though the Nigerian democracy is still evolving, we still have the best opportunity for building a new and viable nation. Furthermore, it is important that religious leaders really understand the nexus between religion and politics. With democracy, our role is to be vigilant and focus more on the quality of the democratic outcome. The temptation for compromise is there when members of our faith, religion or ethnic

building and trust, is still in its infancy in many African countries. Corruption continues to deepen poverty and misery in the midst of plenty and various forms of violence continue to haunt our people.

Despite all this, democracy offers us the best chance of fully creating a harmonious, just and peaceful society. Political parties, when they project themselves beyond the limits of religion, region or ethnic group, can serve as a rallying point for men and women of good will in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Kukah insists “We must therefore continue to encourage our politicians to bring the strengths of their religious convictions to the political space and to avoid the constant manipulation of religion for ephemeral political ends.”¹⁵⁹

Secondly, Kukah maintains that the Catholic Church, drawing from its history and universal reach, must seek a greater role in the public space through dialogue. It must encourage its politicians to lead by example while rallying other Christians towards the goals of ecumenical unity. Through the ages, religions have provided the moral foundations for civilization. As our history in Nigeria shows, unnecessary wrangling between Christians and Muslims has diminished the efficacy and the cutting edge of the Christian faith. The persistence of violence in the name of religion has deepened fear and suspicion between Christians and Muslims, the two universal and dominant religions in Africa. For kukah, “It is important that both religions bring their moral weight to help their country grow. In Nigeria, the persistence of these conflicts has continued to erode people’s confidence in both religions. Faced with the increasing and corrosive role of secularism, we must find common ground.”¹⁶⁰

Thirdly, there is the issue of constitutionalism, as an expression of the manifestation of the

groups take power. The real role of the prophetic leader requires offering directions for the attainment of the common good of all. And here, religious leaders should no longer present themselves as defenders of their people, but defenders of the people, God’s children as opposed to the adherents of our faith. See Kukah, “Christian-Muslim Relations: The Nigerian Situation” *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, 18-19.

¹⁵⁹Kukah, “Persecutions of Christians in Africa: Contexts, Contents & Opportunities” in *Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conversation*, 13.

¹⁶⁰Ibid, 13.

ethos of the rule of law, due process and respect for human dignity. For Kukah, we have sunk deeper into crisis and violence, falsely pitching Christians and Muslims against one another, when in reality, what we face is the fact of a country living below the radar of constitutionalism. Democracy in Africa and Nigeria has been weakened by the corruption of the judiciary and the lack of the political will to end impunity and establish the rule of law rather than the rule of men which was encapsulated in its long history of the oppression of big chiefs and series of military dictatorships.

Furthermore, a robust and honest judiciary will punish criminals for their crimes no matter what they claim as the reasons for their violence against other human beings or their properties. This is the only way to heal the festering wounds that have strained the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Finally, the Church must pursue more vigorously the culture of dialogue with Islam. As human beings, relationship between Muslims and Christians has its challenges. However, because Christians have been entrusted with a message whose clarity and urgency are not in doubt, we must never surrender to the temptations of the moment which encourage us to seek revenge or complain of exhaustion with dialogue. We must project the fine principles of our faith as they relate to love, trust, honesty, and our common humanity. We Christians cannot wait for the response of the 'Other' to determine how we shall behave according to the principles of our faith.

2.8.1 Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) and the Nigerian Theology of Peace

When the *Lineamenta* for the synod in Rome was distributed, CATHAN joined other African Christians in an in-depth study of the document. To that end, a special CATHAN workshop was held at the St. Thomas Aquinas Major Seminary in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria, in

July 1991. The outcome of that workshop was duly made available to the Catholic bishops of Nigeria and to Rome.

CATHAN also worked on *Instrumentum Laboris* in a workshop at the Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu, Enugu July 5-8, 1993. For three days, some fifty-five members of the Association pondered on the content of the document, looking at the main theme of the Synod with its five sub-themes, namely, evangelization, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communication.

As an association, CATHAN has been highly involved in workshops with the aim of finding theological solutions to issues and challenges that the church is facing in Nigeria. Prior to the Second Synod for Africa, CATHAN met and deliberated on issues of violence for which a book titled *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolutions in Nigeria*¹⁶¹ was produced. The book is a land mark with different articles attempting to give theological thoughts and analysis on violence and the need for peace.

The following key recommendations were made by the CATHAN on matters of justice, peace and dialogue in the Nigerian church.¹⁶² It is necessary to set up Justice and Peace Commissions in parishes and dioceses, as well as tribunals for settling intra-church disputes and for the arbitration of cases. The justice and peace commission should take a clue from civil rights groups whose aim is to defend and fight for the rights of the marginalized in the society. For CATHAN, “All men and women of goodwill in both Church and state can indeed

¹⁶¹ Catholic Theologians Association of Nigeria (CATHAN, *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: Proceedings of 22nd Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)* ed. Cyril Obanure (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2008), 22.

¹⁶² Religion has been so politicized, militarized and manipulated by unscrupulous politicians to fan the embers of rivalry, political antagonism, and ethnic discrimination that it now poses about the greatest threat to national understanding and peaceful coexistence which are prerequisites for unity, progress and development. The one lesson Nigeria needs to accept as a reality is the fact that Christianity and Islam have come to stay in Nigeria. If Christians and Muslims engage in dialogue with the aim of building enduring bonds of friendship and mutual appreciation between them that will be strong enough to overcome the pressure and tensions. See Cletus T. Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” in *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: Proceedings of 22nd Conference of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN)* ed. Cyril Obanure (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2008), 93-105.

work together to promote the common good, to fight the prevalent social and moral evils, especially those who violate the dignity and rights of others.”¹⁶³ Justice and Peace Commission and other related bodies should serve as pressure groups concerned with dismantling oppressive systems in church and society. We will now look at the works of two selected theologians under the umbrella of CATHAN.

2.8.2 Cletus Tanimu Gotan:¹⁶⁴ Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life

Numerous crises have been rightly or wrongly attributed to religion in Nigeria so that the image of religion as the divinely designated link between mankind and God, the Creator of the universe, has been tarnished worldwide. Gotan believes that if such a crisis has truly to do with religion, then something must be wrong somewhere since such crises have truly contravened the very essence of religion as a promoter of all that is to the absolute benefit of mankind. Gotan focuses on these conflicts, particularly, in the Middle Belt zone of Nigeria, where many Christians and Muslims live to see how dialogue, a serious and unpretentious reaching out to one another, can pave the way for a healthier relationship among Muslims and Christians for the continuous survival of the country not only as one nation, but also as an “abode of contentment and relative happiness, peace, social and spiritual liberation.”¹⁶⁵

For Gotan, the four forms of dialogue, can be understood and aid interreligious peacebuilding. “The dialogue of life is an attitude, a way of acting, a spirit guiding conduct and building a common life with others on the basis of trust, understanding and respect.”¹⁶⁶

Also, “The dialogue of action or dialogue of works fosters collaboration with others for goals of humanitarian, social, economic or political ends, aimed at the common good, peace and

¹⁶³CATHAN, *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, 12.

¹⁶⁴Tanimu C. Gotan is a Nigerian Catholic Priest and the Vicar General of the Archdioceses of Jos, North-Central Nigeria and a lecturer at the University of Jos, Plateau state. He was a former Rector of St Augustine’s Major seminary Jos and President of both CATHAN and Nigeria Catholic Diocesan Priest Association (NCDPA)

¹⁶⁵ Cletus T. Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” CATHAN, *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, 93-105.

¹⁶⁶Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” CATHAN, *Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, 100.

harmony.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the dialogue of experts also called theological exchange is the attempt by specialists or experts to share and deepen understanding of their respective religious heritage, not necessarily with the intention of uniting the religions but to reveal what in “each religion can reason for common action especially in the areas of morals and ethics.”¹⁶⁸ Finally, “the dialogue of religious experience fosters the sharing of prayer, contemplation and learning from each other’s spiritual traditions, not with the intention of worshipping God in the same way but to realize that the same God can be worshipped in different ways.”¹⁶⁹

For Gotan, “if Christians and Muslims engage in dialogue with the aim of building enduring bonds of friendship and mutual appreciation between them that will be strong enough to overcome the pressure and tensions.”¹⁷⁰ Dialogue between members of different religions increases and deepens mutual trust and paves the way for relationships that are crucial in solving the problems of human suffering and violence. It is possible that through dialogue, Nigerians can find solutions not only to religious problems but also to the socio-economic and political problems in the country. Dialogue that is respectful and open to the opinions of others can promote action and a commitment to this noble cause. And the experience of dialogue gives a sense of solidarity and courage for overcoming barriers and difficulties in the task of nation building.

Christians and Muslims have many things in common as believers and as human beings. We live in the same world, and the same country beset by the same socio-economic and political problems. We believe in and worship the same God, the creator of the universe. Both religions teach peace, harmony, tolerance, forgiveness, yet it is difficult to put these into practice in the face of the slightest provocation.

¹⁶⁷Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 100.

¹⁶⁸Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 102.

¹⁶⁹Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 104.

¹⁷⁰ Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 104.

Christians and Muslims must be people of dialogue in view of the importance of dialogue to our common existence. For Gotan, “God is a God of dialogue who has been engaged from the beginning of our history of salvation with humanity which he created.”¹⁷¹ The fruit of dialogue for him, emphasizing the teaching of John Paul II, is “the union between people and union of the people with God, who is the resource and revealed of the truth”.¹⁷² Its spirit guides human kind in freedom only when they meet one another in all honesty and love.

Dialogue of life refers to the friendly or fraternal encounters in real life between Muslims and Christians. It refers to the little joint action among Muslims and Christians which can build trust, confidence and create an environment of mutual acceptance while allowing each to approach God in the best way they think or can. In dialogue of life encounters, “deliberate efforts could be made to interact and demonstrate genuine friendship with neighbours or friends of other religions.”¹⁷³

To ensure a peaceful and prosperous Nigeria, religious leaders must imbibe the spirit of dialogue and concentrate on those teachings that unite and eliminate every divisive element hampering their followership. As followers of different religions, who serve the same God, the adherents of such religions should join in promoting and defending peace. Religious leaders also need to reflect more critically on their own failure to provide more effective leadership and witness to the true fundamental values of their respective faiths. They need to be challenged and encouraged to be more decisive in working to eradicate the influence of the extremist groups that frequently use the anonymity of the larger faith community to disguise their distorted intentions and murderous activities.

¹⁷¹Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 102.

¹⁷² John Paul II, *Evangeliu Vitae*, 4. See also Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 102.

¹⁷³ Dialogue of life does not refer to the usual interaction and exchange of pleasantries among religious leaders in the so-called inter-religious gatherings, but to activities that can bring Christians and Muslims together in real life situations. Two examples show this. The former president of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who though a Christian identified with Muslims during the fasting by joining them in spiritual solidarity. This is a demonstration of religious accommodation and empathy.

For Gotan, “the State must provide the rights of every citizen to freedom of conscience as enshrined in the Constitution. From the economical perspective, governmental creation of more jobs can raise the standard of living of the people, particularly young people, and thus prevent idle youths from joining wandering religious mobs.¹⁷⁴” It must also take steps to address other socio-economic and political inequalities which are catalyst for ethno-religious conflicts knowing that good governance, especially accountability, transparency, and equity would restore governmental legitimacy, inter-ethnic and religious harmony and promote democratic consolidation and peace.

2.8.3 Josephat Obi Oguejiofor¹⁷⁵: Christianity and the Dynamics of Violence in Nigeria: Eucharistic Community as a place of Reconciliation and Peace

Oguejiofor sees the act of “self-preservation of life as the strongest binding moral demand: thou shall not kill. Killing and all forms of violence is seen as an act which contradicts the original constitutive act by which the community is kept in life.”¹⁷⁶

Morality is intrinsically linked with religion. In *Nri* myth of origin, *Chukwu* (God) ordered the land to produce food (i.e. yam) to assuage the hunger of the Igbo people, preserving them from starvation, or protecting them from death. Such patterns are most traceable in myths of origin. But the outflow of morality from religion is clearly seen in the Eucharistic celebration. For Oguejiofor, the “Sacrament of the Eucharist re-enacts the original sacrifice of Christ in which he is both the priest and the victim.”¹⁷⁷ In this sacrifice, unworthy people experience the highest level of vicarious suffering: Christ dying that we may live. In his wounds we have been healed. In the Eucharist, “the community keeps the sacrificial acts of Christ ever in mind, but they are expected to go into the world and bear the testimony to the wonders of

¹⁷⁴ Gotan, “Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: A Call for a Dialogue of Life” 103.

¹⁷⁵ Josaphat Obi Oguejiofor is a Catholic priest and the head of department of philosophy, NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka, South-East Nigeria, and a reputable member of CATHAN.

¹⁷⁶ Josephat Obi Oguejiofor” Christianity and the Dynamics of Violence” in *CATHAN, Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, 10-22.

¹⁷⁷ Oguejiofor” Christianity and the Dynamics of Violence” 12.

Christ's generosity."¹⁷⁸

In abnegation and active charity, they too are to become like Christ, oblation for the sake of their brothers and sisters. They are thus, in imitation of Christ to become priests by giving themselves in sacrifice to their brethren. It is in this sense that the "faithful are priests, in so far as they morally obligated to sacrifice themselves for the wellbeing of their fellow human beings."¹⁷⁹

Fundamental to the balance of social order is the preservation of the sanctity of life. This is imbedded in the tenets of religions. Christianity is heir to Mosaic law which strongly forbids the shedding of blood, and orders benign treatment of strangers: for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt. (Ex 22:21). In the Gospels, the Lord Jesus enjoins his followers to go beyond the dictates of the Law of Moses. They were to offer the wicked person no resistance and they were to turn the other cheek to the violent.

For Oguejiofor, there is a sense in which such principles enjoin on the personal and individual level and may not necessarily be taken as rules of behaviour guiding the ordering of the society. But one must not lose sight of how "individual personal behaviour tailors the general social atmosphere of any society."¹⁸⁰

Christianity holds strongly to non-violence and pacifism. This underlies the challenge of the just war theory, given the supremacy of the command of love in Christianity. Love for neighbours threatened by violence, by aggression, or tyranny, "provided the grounds for admitting the legitimacy of the use of military force. Love for neighbours at the same time required that such force should be limited."¹⁸¹ With this view the essence of the Church is both mission oriented Eucharist which is that work of eschatological ordering of things into

¹⁷⁸Oguejiofor "Christianity and the Dynamics of Violence" 12.

¹⁷⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *Priests and Bishops: Biblical Reflections*, (Toronto: Paulist Press, 2013), 14-15.

¹⁸⁰Oguejiofor "Christianity and the Dynamics of Violence" in *CATHAN, Religion, Violence and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, 14.

¹⁸¹Paul Ramsey, *The Just War: Peace and Political Responsibility*, (Lanhan: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 144-45.

the kingdom of God.

Reconciliation, however, being the primary precondition of the Eucharist, automatically becomes the primary objective of mission, for peace in Africa. Both the Old and New Testaments attest to the fact that reconciliation is the work of God, who through the Messiah, or the Servant of God, in the last days of history would establish his kingdom. The start of the eschatological period will be sounded by the gathering of all nations, and by the descent of God's Spirit upon the sons and daughters of God. It will also include the calling of all the dispersed and afflicted people of God, as well as the Gentiles, into one place, where they will be reconciled to God and become one body united in him (Micah 4:1-4; Isa. 2:2-4; Ps 147:2-3).⁸⁹ In the Gospel of John we read that the high priest prophesied that Jesus should die... not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad (Jn. 11:51-52). In this mind set, Christian mission is not just a proclamation of a set of religious convictions, doctrines and moral commands, but the coming of the kingdom, this is, the good news of a new reality to be established in the last days.

This has as its centre the crucified and resurrected Christ, the incarnation of God the logos and his dwelling among us human beings, and his continuous presence through the "Holy Spirit in a life of communion, in a life of full scale reconciliation."¹⁸² Christ, as the messiah who comes at the eschaton, is actually the centre where the process of gathering all into one should converge into the corporate personality. Therefore, the Eucharist cannot be worthily celebrated where there are factions according to race, ethnic group, nationalism and even worse among the Church members. The missiological imperative of the Christian community stems exactly from the awareness of the Church as a dynamic and corporate body of reconciled believers commissioned to witness to the coming of the kingdom and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as

¹⁸² Petos Vassiliadis, Reconciliation as a Pneumatologically Mission Paradigm: Some Preliminary Reflections by an Orthodox, in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 94, No. 372, January 2005, 38-88

though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5: 19-20).

2.8.4 Eucharistic Community as a place of Forgiveness, Justice and Peace

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus says: therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift (Mt 5.23-24). The logic of Jesus is highly startling because he asks the one who is supposedly offended not to make an offering until she or he has made things right with those who offended him/her. We would all have thought the passage should have read; therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that you have something against your brother... The difference is that we would all have addressed the remark to angry people who need to forgive. But Jesus addressed his remark to people who “need to be forgiven by those they have angered.”¹⁸³ Jesus’s approach is the way of true wisdom. We face the dilemma of forgiveness and justice in this passage as Jesus addresses the offended; is justice a prerequisite to forgiveness or is it that forgiveness does not depend on justice? In this passage we find two essential things which must be fulfilled by those who offer an offering to God: forgiveness and peace with the wrongdoer. I will now give the conclusion to this chapter.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter reflected on peacebuilding in the African Church, the 1994 and 2009 Synods for Africa as they relate to inter religious dialogue and Christian unity. The themes of Reconciliation, Justice and peace are core to the Second Synod. Peacebuilding attempts to address the resolution of conflict and build a culture that includes the prevention of war and the rebuilding of a just society and maintains lasting peace after conflict.

¹⁸³Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz, *The Art of Forgiveness: Theological Reflections on Healing and Reconciliation*, (Geneva, WCC Publications, 1997), 5. See also Ernesto Valiente, *Living as Beings “Risen Beings” in Pursuit of a Reconciled World: Resources from Jon Sobrino*, in *Faith in Public Life: The Annual Publication of the College Theological Society*, Vol. 53, ed. William J. Collinge, (New York, Orbis Books, 2007), 265.

The two synods of 1994 and 2009 show clearly that it is Africa's moments in the world church. Africa has been a vital centre of Catholic life and Catholic witness for decades, and that vitality and witness is now at play at the highest levels of the Church's deliberations. In line with *Ecclesia in Africa, Africae Munus* insists that, if the church is to be a credible and effective agent of reconciliation, justice and peace in the wider society, it must first become a model of a reconciled society.

A frequent criticism of *Ecclesia in Africa* was the failure to implement its directives through an effective plan of action. This time around, *Africae Munus* calls on the local churches of Africa to draw up a detailed pastoral plan to give correct-expression to the directives of the second African synod and the post-synodal exhortations-a plan specifying goals and methods, formation and enrichment of all involved.

Finally, in the Nigerian church, issues of interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding have been handled to a large extent. It is thus clear that religion and ethnicity come into play with the conflict in Nigeria. Other factors like the economy and politics also perpetuate conflicts.

The Church in Nigeria in collaboration with civil authorities and Muslim communities will continue to work to mitigate the current conflicts. The CBCN, NIREC, CAN, NSCIA CATHAN and other institutions in various dioceses, individual bishops and other bodies throughout Nigeria will help mitigate conflict and build a more peaceful country. The lessons learnt might be useful for others engaging in peacebuilding work, both in Nigeria and internationally. Speaking on Catholic approaches to interreligious peacebuilding, the issue of dialogue between Christians and Muslims, the Nigerian bishops in one of their communiques said: "Dialogue between Christians and Muslims is bearing fruit in some areas, leading to greater tolerance, harmonious coexistence and peace."¹⁸⁴ This should be extended, promoted and sustained in every part of the country. Government at all levels should strengthen the

¹⁸⁴Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), *Towards a Just and Peaceful Society*, 22.

Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) as a means towards promoting religious freedom, unity and progress among Nigerians.

The next chapter will explore the African Catholic Theological vision of peace where the contributions of two African theologians, in conversation with others shall be examined.

Chapter Three

Cornelius Afebu Omonokhu's Dialogue of Life and Vision of Peace and Aquiline Tarimo and Religious Peace Education in Conversation with other Scholars in Africa

3. Introduction

The Church, which is a model for peace, is in constant dialogue and promotion of reconciliatory processes for peace in Africa and throughout the world. The previous chapter examined the teachings of the local church in Africa and Nigeria. It explored the major documents and teachings of church authorities and theological organisations in Africa and Nigeria.

This chapter will further treat selected theologians from Africa. It will be divided into two broad parts. In the first part we shall explore how a Nigerian theologian, Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua constructed the theological concept of religious dialogue that provided an intellectual framework for understanding religious diversity in Nigeria. Omonokhua concentrates mainly on his personal life experiences and Catholic social teachings. The second part will focus on the thoughts of Aquiline Tarimo, a Tanzanian Jesuit priest, on religion, social reconstruction, transformation and peace education in Africa.

My criterion for deliberately choosing selected themes from their works is based on their contribution to the peace mandate as African theologians. They made out set of discourses and arguments on the central themes of peace, liberation, reconciliation and incultuation in African theology today. I will now discuss the first part.

PART ONE

3.1 Omonokhua's Life and Writings

Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua was born on 31 of January 1961 at Irekpai in Uzairue, Etsako West L.G.A, Edo State, Nigeria. He was ordained a priest on the 8th September 1990 after completing his seminary formation and theological studies between 1982-1990 in Ibadan Nigeria. He “became a specialist on Islam and studied the Qur’an and other basic Islamic texts for the purpose of understanding his own environment that had a large presence of Muslims.”¹ While living in a mixed society of predominantly Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, he witnessed many instances of animosity between Muslims and Christians. As a result, he chose to develop a theology that would support peaceful co-existence. He has risked his own life travelling to different parts of Nigeria to preach and engage in public debate with Muslim scholars. His teachings reminded church authorities, and even his Muslims listeners, that “Jesus Christ had not established the church by violent means but by demonstrating in his life God’s love and peace.”² This makes him stand out among many Nigerian theologians I mentioned in the earlier chapters.

Omonokhua’s efforts on peace attracted the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) to appoint him as the Director of the Department of Mission and Dialogue in the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, Abuja and subsequently, the Pontificate of Benedict XVI, made him a Consultor and professor of Dialogue in the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims (C.R.R.M), Vatican City. He is also a visiting lecturer at All Saints Catholic Major seminary, Uhiele and Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, both in Edo State, Nigeria.

¹ Omonokhua emphasized the Islamic teaching on repentance as the basis for peace as “*tawbah*” which is as an act of returning to the commandments of Allah. (Qur’an 24:31). It is a transformation of the heart from evil and wickedness. See Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*. (Kaduna: Virtual Insignia, 2015), 188.

² Anne Falola, *Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conversation*, 22.

Omonokhua has expressed his thoughts in two major works: *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience* and *The Joy of Service: Dialogue of Action* and other “articles in edited works and journals on interreligious dialogue, peace building, social and political ethics, intercultural ethics, and on the Church in Africa today.”³ He is a columnist in many national, international and diocesan newspapers which he wrote in response to religious conflict in Nigeria and the need for interreligious dialogue and as a consultant to the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims (CRRM), Vatican City. He recounts his life history and various influences upon him and acknowledges the significance of peace and dialogue as a major factor in both his living and in his way of life. His major theological interest and orientation is the quest for dialogue of life and action for peace in Nigeria.

3.1.1 Omonokhua’s Arguments by selected themes

In this exposition of Omonokhua’s argument, I will follow some selected nine themes and main points in his books, for he developed in his works, what constitute the problems of religious- inspired violence, along with his alternative diagnosis of the problem and proposed solution. He also developed his theory of religious diversity, its origin in God and in human nature.

These nine themes include, firstly, the need for dialogue of faith and life, secondly, the call for the ministry of dialogue and peacebuilding, thirdly, Omonokua’s story and call, as cradle to creed, fourthly, spirituality of service and dialogue, fifthly, who is God in Dialogue and can ethnic Nationalities dialogue for peace? Sixthly, becoming the “Salt of the Earth and Light of the World”: Dialogue and Proclamation of the Good News of Peace,

³ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*. (Kaduna: Virtual Insignia, 2015). See also, *The Joy of Service: Dialogue of Action*. (Kaduna: Virtual Insignia, 2015), *Human Life here and Hereafter: Eschatology and Anthropology in Judeo-Christian and Etsako Religions* (Lagos, Hexagon Press, 2011). *Welcome to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, (Hexagon Information System services, Benin City, 2005) *The Dreams of My Parents, Prose, Drama and Poetry*, Abuja, 2011 *Freedom to Live* (Poems), (Benin: Manla Printing Press, 2000). “Becoming the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World in the light of *Africae Munus*” in *Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conversation* eds. Cornelius A. Omonokua, Anne Falola and Kathleen McGarvey, 114-24.

Theme seven is the dialogue as evangelization toward a theological exchange and promotion of peace, eighthly, The African values in family life: An open door for global peace and ninthly, the formation of conscience: Towards a peaceful continent. I will give a brief background to his thoughts and approach before I develop each of these themes.

3.1.2 Background to Omonokua's thoughts

The people of Nigeria were for the most part, not too confident in the security of their state since independence in 1960 till date. To be sure, they knew that the Muslim-Christian divide is so pronounced. Their country had lost its influence and was clearly influenced by fundamentalists. Religion and ethnic affiliation thus became a new weapon designed for breaking seemingly impregnable walls of family ties and marriage. Omonokua, was born, grew up, studied, and eventually became a priest in the above situation.

His helpful insights and work are seen in his writings and the analysis of the challenges of violence that befell both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, along with other violations of their faith in God. This is the focus and the main point in his works and writings. Christians and Muslims were preoccupied with a horror that appeared to be the result of hostilities generated by religious differences.

3.1.3 Omonokhua's Main Approach: Theology of Inter-Religious Peacebuilding

To discern a solution to the problem of religiously inspired violence, it would not be adequate to limit attention to the conflict between Islam and Christianity; such a solution had to take account of all other religions. This is what Omonokhua delivered through the medium of interreligious dialogue and vision of peace, one that encapsulates the tales of suffering of Christians and Muslims and a dialogic interreligious gathering of Nigerians familiar from their own experience. It also involves other differences which are observed in religions throughout the world that could establish harmony and a lasting peace.

Theology of religion was obviously an ongoing and specialized discipline in the Nigerian Church. By linking this kind of reflection with the Nigerian situation, I do not wish to claim

that Omonokua is a man far ahead of many of his contemporary Catholic theologians in Nigeria. In identifying some of his writings linked with a theology of religions, however, I do claim that the questions he asked, the concepts he used, the religious data he considered and the methods he pursued are congruent with a theology of religion, especially as articulated in the twenty-first century African and Nigerian Church and society.

Interestingly, I interpret him as an experiential-based theologian. Accordingly, his thought exemplifies the themes of life-based experiences and inter-faith dialogue. On the one hand, his thought is consistent with the Christian teachings of the past; on the other hand, his theology of religion is congruent with the work of many contemporary theologians in Nigeria and beyond. Indeed, I would claim Omonokhua to be a promoter of a Christian theology of religion. However, unlike many of his contemporaries, he presented his new theology of religion as a personal witness to the peace of Christ through dialogue of life and action. It was not a witness to the relative equality of all religions. The strongest “evidence of Omonokua’s kinship with contemporary theologians of religion is his use of religion as a generic category. A theologian like Thomas Aquinas, used religion only in the singular, as in *Religio Christiana*.”⁴

Of necessity, any theology of religion requires some kind of generic category that can include the Christian religion with whatever other religions were known. He, thus uses religion as an all-inclusive category. For him, each of the God-fearing faiths was “a religion,” in his context, mainly Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Drawing on these sources, he extended the category of religion, to include African Traditional religion as well. What follows is not a biography, but a sketch of major themes in Omonokhua’s theology of peacebuilding, their

⁴ This was the primary method of Thomas Aquinas. He places religion within the context of a moral relation to God, as a response to God’s initiative through Creation and Redemption. This makes it a singular and personal relationship with every individual to God. See Robert Jared Staudt, “Religion as a Virtue: Thomas Aquinas on Worship through Justice, Law and Charity” Ph ddis; Ave Maria University, South-west Florida, 2008.

origins in his life experience and subsequent development. We will now examine specifically his teachings and themes on peace as they relate to the works.

3.2 Theme one: Dialogue of Faith and Life: The Basis for Religious Peace education in Church and Society in Nigeria

Omonokhua presents “the Church in the joy of service, dialogue of action and life as a viable and effective ecclesiological image for reconciliation and peace in Africa.”⁵ He asserts that the process is “founded on the retrieval of the fundamental African cultural values and morals, and on the practical implication of the moral Christian life with a dignity that is the right of every human person in every part of the world.”⁶ This “retrieval,” according to him, is geared towards peacebuilding and dialogue of faith and life that will “lead to dialogue and conflict transformation of the continent and the world.”⁷ The effectiveness of this model of witnessing, he argues, is predicated on the fact that, the socio-political, cultural, economic, historical oppression and inequality among the people, which calls for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, is the context for the emergence of a society of peace and love. Furthermore, he contends that this method has the force and potential for the stabilization of the African Church and society because it also “adopts a new style of evangelization that makes dialogue indispensable and pays close attention to African socio-[cultural] resources which includes respect for life and support of the weak) as well as to the Christian tradition.”⁸

Interreligious peacebuilding was an important factor for Omonokua, as Teresa Okure attests:

Omonokhua’s book, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian experience*

⁵ See Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, and Dialogue of Action*, see also *Dialogue in Context, a Nigerian Experience*, 23. The hallmark of the new evangelization is “the proclamation of God, who is love, and not just an idea that guides us. He is a Presence within which we are involved as individual believing persons.” This means that our mission is “participation in Trinitarian life,” which enables us to “remain in a dynamism of momentum toward our brothers and sisters who await our witness” of the love of God. This proclamation of divine love must at all times be a witness of “faith truly shaped by culture.” See Marc Cardinal Quillet, “Synod of the New Evangelization” in *The Relevance and Future of the Second Vatican Council: Interviews with Father Geoffroy de la Tousche*, trans. Michael Donley and Joseph Fessio (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 52-54.

⁶ See Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, a Nigerian Experience*, 280. The emphasis on this retrieval of values and morals is evident in the work of Emmanuel Abu on The Church as a family of God already in previous chapters.

⁷Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, a Nigerian Experience*, 69-71.

See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1981); Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2005); and Miroslav Volf, *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998).

⁸Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian experience*, 33. Abu “The Church as Family of God.” 27.

offers a wealth of well informed, life-rooted reflections on a variety of ways by which, in the Nigerian context, we can make dialogue, not merely a talk affair, but a power that can bond us together and move us beyond our artificial boundaries to communal actions for the growth and welfare of our great nation and all its people.⁹

Okure's words demonstrates Omonokhua's perception of the role of dialogue in peace building as it highlights many ways of looking at relations among different groups from political, ethnic, social, cultural, and theological perspectives. Relevant to the subject matter of this thesis, Chidi Denis Isizohalso contends that:

The book, *Dialogue in context: a Nigerian experience*, is about interreligious relations, sharing, understanding one another, tolerance, acceptance, living together, expressing concerns on national issues, guidance. . . the author presents dialogue in the Nigerian religiously pluralistic context, taking into consideration the diversity of cultures, ethnic and political sensitivities...¹⁰

The importance of Omonokua's teaching on dialogue and peace building is, therefore, not only essential to much of his thinking and teaching, but, in the words of John Cardinal Onaiyekan, it displays his "ability to make a real dialogue in both content and form. It shows the need to close ranks with people of other religions with whom we share the same desire for a peaceful Nigeria."¹¹ This chapter will therefore look at Omonokua's life in order to see specifically what informed his thought. We will then examine specifically his teachings on interreligious peacebuilding.

Omonokhua held that Some Muslims and Christians have expressed the need for religious re-education in Nigeria. He tried to enquire if there is anything wrong with the religious education we have had hitherto. H discovered that religious education has been deleted from the syllabus of many schools while it does not even exist in the curriculum of some schools in Nigeria. A further enquiry reveals that many people are afraid of religion because they think

⁹ Teresa Okure, "Forward" in *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, xix.

¹⁰ Denis Chidi Isizoh, "Forward" in *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, xix.

¹¹ John Cardinal Onaiyekan, in *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, xix.

that religion has done more harm than good in many parts of the world. On February 17, 2012, All Africa posted that “as religion grows, so does Inter-Faith Conflicts in Africa. This publication claims that Nigeria is not the only country that is experiencing religious related conflicts. Egypt had a very high record of violence especially the conflict between Muslims and Orthodox Christians. The insurgency of Ivory Coast was given a religious dimension. Some people thought that it was a conflict between the North (with a predominantly Muslim population) and the South (with a predominantly Christian population). The propagandist of Al Shabaab also raised an alarm of religious conflict in Kenya.

For Omonokhua, “The worst indication of the fear of religion for Omonokhua is intra-religious conflicts.”¹² He has been confronted by many people with the questions on the future of Inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria in particular and in the world in general. Some people have expressed total loss of confidence in inter-religious dialogue for unimaginable reasons. Some Christians now find it very difficult to trust their Muslim neighbours whom they have loved and cherished. We do not know the veracity of their claim that some people operate on the adage that “the fact that you love an animal does not mean that you should not kill it”. This is expressed in Hausa as “Sabuwa da kaza bata hana yanka”. Some Muslims and Christians have accused some preachers of both religions for preaching inciting sermons which provoke violence. This has deepened the mutual suspicion from both sides. This is where the demands for religious re-education is very instructive. This would help to debrief and de-radicalize those who have been brainwashed and indoctrinated.

There was a time in the history of the Church when the Holy Bible was quoted out of context by some people who want to do evil for their own selfish interest. A lot of studies, namely exegesis, textual and historical criticism of the Bible have helped a great deal to make the true message of the Bible relevant for all ages. It is time for our Muslim brethren to

¹² Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, a Nigerian Experience*, 69-71.

vigorously expose the contextual power of the Qur'an to reveal to the world that Islam is indeed a religion of peace. It is time to let people know that some war verses in the Qur'an and the Old Testament of the Bible were revealed in the context of war. These verses which were valid in that context and situation may not be relevant in our modern world if we are serious with the promotion of religious coexistence. Religious re-education is an authentic narrative of the sacred texts.

3.2.1 Theme two: The call to Ministry of Dialogue and Peacebuilding

Omonokua narrated the history of influences on his life, more specifically those influences that led to changes in his worldviews and beliefs. He, for example, draws directly from his book, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action* to include his own words as he elaborates on his life at the golden jubilee of his birth:

In my book, *Dreams of my Parents*, I intended to give a brief account of my priestly life. In twenty-five years, my various encounters have led to my confession of faith in dialogue as one of the sure roads to peace, happiness and greatness. For me, dialogue today is another form of evangelization and proclamation of the word of God if it is supported with a sincere witness of life.¹³

His life from birth to his priestly ordination was a witness to the work of peace. He used the silver jubilee year of his priestly ordination as an opportunity for him to “share my missionary experience in the context of dialogue.”¹⁴ For him, he has tried to “proclaim the message of the gospel to all and dialogue with those who already profess faith in God in other religions.”¹⁵ He confesses to the foundations of his faith and belief in dialogue:

Each time I reflect on my assignment as Director of Mission and Dialogue of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria and appointment as Consultor of the Commission of Religious Relations with Muslims (CRRM), my faith in dialogue takes me to the cradle of my life. Each challenge of my earthly life

¹³Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 139. See also Omonokua, *Dreams of my Parents* Abuja: Mac-Pama Press, 2001), 22.

¹⁴Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 139.

¹⁵Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 138.

expands my horizon daily about the complexity of human existence. I am very convinced that dialogue should be an integral part of mission in order to derive joy in serving God and humanity. This I have made consistent efforts to achieve in words and action. I have lived with this gift of dialogue from birth and without a clear knowledge that God was preparing me for a vocation that would make me serve rather than be served.¹⁶

Omonokhua, thus firmly believes that some events in his life have become like an informal school where “God has patiently prepared me for the art and science of dialogue.¹⁷ He emphasized that “I have learnt to dialogue with nature, people and events around me, to make my intra-personal dialogue an assurance of the inner peace.”¹⁸

The interesting dimension of his work is the personal witness he gives. He confesses: “the fullness of my mission of Jesus Christ is my target. It is my hope that this narrative could be a background to understanding the passion I express about dialogue, peacebuilding and the joy of service.”¹⁹

3.2.2 Theme three: From Cradle to Creed: The Joy of Service: Dialogue of Life and Action and Reconciliation: Forgiveness, Healing Conversation and Peace in Nigeria

Omonokhua believes that dialogue has become the expression of the mind of the Church. It is a “sure path to peace and cooperate existence.”²⁰ It is a “sure road to love and not merely an act of tolerating one another. It is a call to non-violence and discipleship.”²¹

The life of Omonokhua can be likened to that of Dorothy Day. Her life shows ironic circumstances and a parallel to him who had a non-Christian background. According to her, “she lived, with an atheist whose ardent love of creation brought me to the Creator of all

¹⁶Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 139.

¹⁷Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 139

¹⁸Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 139-40.

¹⁹Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 40.

²⁰Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 40.

²¹Dorothy Day (1897-1980) gives us an example in practicing non-violent direct action in various contexts. Day understood nonviolence not only as an expression of her discipleship to Christ but also as her commitment to a hurting world. At times, she talked about her life, she seemed engrossed with *His life*, so that a listener felt her passion responding to the Gospels. See Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: Radical Devotion* (New York: A Merloyd Lawrence Book, 2009), 117.

things.”²²Omonokua deliberately recounts his birth and childhood events that transformed him to a peacebuilder:

The last event that took place before my mother conceived me was a dialogue of life and dialogue of religious experience. The prelude of my life is the story of a man who was anxious to have a baby boy from his wife who only had a daughter. He had decided to divorce her when he received a visitor who advised him to be patient and trust in God. He told him that it is still possible for his wife to have a son. Shortly after that, the wife got pregnant. Some people were gossiping about the pregnancy. She eventually gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. Today that boy is my humble self, the result of that dialogue. This boy would be advised later by his father never to fight over land, royalty and title. Things that give true honor naturally come to a sincere person whose heart is in the interest of the common good and the welfare of others without the swing of swords and the boom of guns.²³

He thus, sees his birth story²⁴ as a special preparation for the ministry of interreligious peacebuilding in Nigeria and Africa. Omonokhua also testifies that his mother’s father Ekhaiomhi was a Muslim while her mother, Eshiemma was a traditional herbalist. She was a traditional prophetess whose predictions often times came to pass. This greatly influenced his perception of other faiths. He said “it means so much to me that in spite of the differences of faith of my grandparents, they could still live in peace and harmony.”²⁵

The influence his parents had over him was overwhelming. He said: “I came to know much about my ancestors and other faiths because of the openness of my parents to dialogue. They

²²Dorothy Day was effective because she lived out what she believed. So she lived as though the Truth were true. See “Introduction” Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of Dorothy Day* (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), xxiii. See also Day, *House of Hospitality* (New York: 1999), 49. Robert Ellsberg, ed. Dorothy Day: Selected Writings (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993), xv.

²³Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 40. See also Omonokua, *Dreams of my Parents: My Life* (Abuja: Mac Pama Press, 2011), 15.

²⁴The biblical birth stories of Moses, Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ must have inspired the life and mission of Omonokhua as he engages on the mission of peacebuilding in what he referred to as cradle to creed.

²⁵Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 143.

were magnanimous in telling me so much about the ancient past.”²⁶ Furthermore, he reiterated:

The dialogue between me and my parents was not always formal... my parents imbued in me the art of listening. We were taught not to interrupt a person while talking, “jumping at a person’s throat” was not allowed each time we had conversation. At the same time, we were taught the courage to tell the truth even in the face of death. In my early days in school, this became a gift, to accept people and appreciate the differences that existed among us. I grew up to love different people as friends. The only criterion I needed was the humanity in a person.²⁷

The above story for Omonokhua, are only indications of his belief that dialogue is a divine gift and an integral part of mission. “Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5, 7). For Omonokua, what we need today is an “intra-ecclesial dialogue. The internal organ of the church needs to be liberated from unhealthy competition and rivalry. To make a genuine response to the call to mission, dialogue is imperative.”²⁸

For Omonokua, “if mission and dialogue will promote peaceful existence, it should mean that the lines of communication, through the different structures in the church and society, are respected and open.”²⁹ This would also mean that due process is respected through fraternal dialogue. This will fire our passion for dialogue to kindle from cradle to creed. In affirming our faith and life, we must put our house in such a shape that we are ready to engage people of other denominations and religions in dialogue. With dialogue in mission, all agents of evangelization would remain so credible that the pastoral affairs will make it relevant in our society. Then the Church and society will co-exist, in justice and peace, in such a way that communication would transmit to the world the good tidings of the Church.

Omonokhua opines that “Christian forgiveness is intrinsically connected to working for peace. It implies that human beings are constituted by relationship and a part of one another.

²⁶ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 143.

²⁷ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 144.

²⁸ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 157.

²⁹ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 157.

A Christian shows that he or she is a true disciple of Christ by loving the neighbor, irrespective of colour, race, tribe or religion.”³⁰ Even when relationship breaks down, forgiveness offers a way of restoration with transforming possibilities and new responsibilities. The more “impossible it seems, the more necessary forgiveness becomes, because, without it, people become trapped in dynamics of retaliation and vindictiveness through a traumatic conflict.”³¹ The withholding of forgiveness truncates dialogue and affects peace and freedom, as much as for the sinned-against victim as the sinner or perpetrator. Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, we would remain the victims of its consequences forever. For Omonokhua. “The reciprocity is ineluctable. Forgiveness can neither be merited nor demanded. Even though it is difficult, it can become easy if the person who needs it can remove the mask and confront the situation. It is both costly and free.”³²

The Nigerian historical situation constantly entangles human capability: limits, resistance, the challenge of hurt and hate, the pervasiveness of prejudice, fear and ignorance, the overwhelming scale of evil. All these challenges are faced with the belief in the incarnation and in the cross. The struggle to find forgiveness, peace and reconciliation exemplifies the religious and ethnic complexities in the history of Nigeria at every level of society and the Church.

3.2.3 Theme four: Spirituality of Service and Dialogue

For Omonokhua, “spirituality is the measure of how willing we are to allow grace-some greater power to enter our lives and guide us in all things, particularly in being our brothers and sisters’ keepers.”³³ Spirituality for Omonokhua is “more than external expressions like how long one prayed, the number of spiritual books one could read, and even the way a

³⁰Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 21.

³¹Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 67.

³²Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 104.

³³ Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 161.

person conducts self by talking or even eating.”³⁴ Spirituality for him “is much more than these external expressions. Spirituality is the totality of the human person in loving relationship with God and neighbour.”³⁵ Thus, “spirituality is about being a brother or sister’s keeper.”³⁶

For me, Omonokhua means, this is not only a set of strategies to be implemented-it grows out of a theological vision of reconciliation as a set of spiritual practices. The immediate concern of articulating reconciliation as spirituality is to provide for those undertaking the arduous work of peacebuilding, in all its phases, a way of life that requires great physical, moral, and spiritual stamina. Thus, a “spirituality of reconciliation builds up the importance of not losing sight of those transcendent sources of peace, which leads to a dialogue and conversion”³⁷ and answers the “question why Jesus is our true peace”³⁸

To my mind, living in peace and harmony within one’s community before inviting others to share in their intra community peace defines a truly spiritual person. You can only give what you have. You cannot offer the peace that does not exist in your community to others. For Omonokhua, “Spirituality thus means transformation and a change of attitude. This means dwelling in unity, peace, love and joy, leading to understanding that God is good and great.”³⁹ Spirituality thus means “animating of vital principles, to mean soul, courage, vigour and breathe of a community.”⁴⁰

³⁴ Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 161.

³⁵ Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 161.

³⁶ Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 161.

³⁷ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 77.

³⁸ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 172.

³⁹ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 247.

⁴⁰ Omonokua, *The Joy of Service Dialogue of Action*, 162. Omonokua throws more light on the community nature of spirituality when he poses this question. What can we do together? For him spirituality and service make more meaning when we as human beings try to put smiles on the faces of those who are suffering, to make life worth living for citizens, and to deliver religion from being given the bad name-instrument of violence. See Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 258.

Spirituality for Omonokhua in the life of a community “reflects a people who believe in God and means understanding the value of truth.”⁴¹ For Omonokhua, “The elaboration of a spirituality for peace making and reconciliation is aimed at achieving a reconciliation that is not forgive and forget but opens up the space for a journey towards God, one’s enemies, and the self, a special spirituality, naming events, persons, and things without bringing in religion and tribal sentiments as adjectives and adverbs.”⁴² Whatever we do together that “enhances dignity and value irrespective of our various differences is true spirituality which consists in knowing the truth, doing justice, forgiveness and reconstruction.”⁴³ Furthermore, spirituality for Omonokhua is the “gift of the self to the Absolute God, the conversion of the heart, the necessity of tolerance and hospitality which knows no frontiers.”⁴⁴

For Omonokhua, “spirituality transcends external expressions; it is also the totality of the human person in loving relationship with God and neighbor.”⁴⁵ Spirituality, for him, was used to mean search for meaning in life. In this context, spirituality touches the core of the human person with a sacred and transcendental relationship. It deals with deeper questions surrounding the call to dialogue like, what is the quality of the content of human character. What is my attitude to suffering and violence? How can I make my life relevant to the people around me? Do I love my fellow human beings, irrespective of religion, tribe, and race? Am I a source of joy to others?⁴⁶

To be spiritual for Omonokhua, is to be conscious of God’s presence and be docile to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This divine presence “enables a person to have healthy relationships at the vertical and horizontal levels.”⁴⁷ Christian spirituality has to do with the

⁴¹ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 77.

⁴² Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 77.

⁴³ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 77.

⁴⁴ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 77.

⁴⁵ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 161.

⁴⁶ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 162.

⁴⁷ Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 162.

awareness of God, self, and the world, in the context of love and respect. This is modeled according to the life of Christ, so a spiritual person imitates Jesus Christ.

From the Islamic perspective, Omonokhua reviews previous Islamic teachings and is of the opinion that to be spiritual is to keep the pillars of the faith. These pillars consist of the Shahada (creed), daily prayers (salat), almsgiving (Zakat), fasting during Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). All these involve discipline. It makes them strong “adherents to the principles of tolerance, peace and against any form of violence.”⁴⁸ This involves real reparation of the heart and turning it away from all else but God.

The spirituality of service enables human beings to make the world a better place. A person who has no love for others, but can kill for a “religious” ideology, has no spirituality. This is because a person without the spirit does not accept to discern if things that come from the “spirit of God but considers them foolishness and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit (1Cor 2:14).”⁴⁹ The spirituality of service is how much a person “cares about God through love and care for a fellow human being. Whatsoever you do for the least of your brothers and sisters, you do for me (Matt 25:31-46).”⁵⁰

The spirituality of dialogue is the way and manner a person talks to a fellow human being. Normally, no one will like a gift, no matter how precious, if the gift is accompanied by insults. Food offered in anger and hatred is poison, and no body, no matter how poor and famished, would enjoy such a meal. Abusive language can ever spoil a joyful celebration. This calls for a renewed spirituality of dialogue. No one should claim to be spiritual if what he or she say is offensive to his or her listeners. Paul declares “let no bad or corrupting talk come out of your mouth, but only such as good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give

⁴⁸Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 163. There is the need to be converted to peace for Omonokhua, this means avoiding religious fanaticism and building a community where peace is preached and practiced. See Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context. A Nigerian Experience*, 78.

⁴⁹Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 166.

⁵⁰Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 167.

grace to those who hear you.” (Eph 4: 29).⁵¹ “It is what comes out of a person’s mouth that defiles him (Matt15:11).”⁵² The heart of the wise makes their mouths prudent, and their lips promote instruction (Prov. 61:23).⁵³ Spirituality of dialogue for Omonokhua, demands that we “listen to advice and accept discipline if we want to be wise (Prov. 19: 20).”⁵⁴

3.2.4 Theme five: Who is God in Dialogue and can ethnic Nationalities dialogue for peace

For Omonokhua, “Whatever form of dialogue it is that has become a subject of this clarion call; we need to begin with the clarification of the concept: “GOD”.⁵⁵ Omonokua poses the following questions:

What does God mean to each partner in dialogue? Is the God affirmed in Christianity, different from the God affirmed in Judaism, Islam and Traditional Religions? Is the concept of God the same for Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals? Is the Concept of God the same for all the sects in Islam: the Sunnites, Kharijites (Ibadiyya), Shites (Isma’iliyya), Sufis, Wahhabiyya, Muslim brotherhood, Ahmadiyyah etc?⁵⁶

Omonokhua elaborates further that Today, it is presumed that almost all religions believe in the existence of God who created heaven, earth, human beings and all that exist. The same God is the God of life and judgment; the same God who created the heaven for all righteous people to behold his face on the last day. He said “Sometimes I wonder if some people still believe who God is.”⁵⁷ Though the existence of God is affirmed by many people, the concept and how some people relate to God is quite different.

The name: “God” has gone through a lot of evolution for Omonokhua. Since he is a pure spirit, it took ages for the human mind to arrive at the concept of one God as we believe

⁵¹Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 168.

⁵²Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 168. For Omonokua, nothing is difficult for a willing heart. We must therefore believe in ourselves and witness to our faith traditions without fear of being defiled. This is the door of faith in dialogue. See Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context A Nigerian Experience*, 95.

⁵³Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 168.

⁵⁴Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 168.

⁵⁵ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 23.

⁵⁶Omonokua, *Dialogue in Contexts A Nigerian Experience*, 23-25

⁵⁷ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Contexts A Nigerian Experience*, 23-25

today. Before the call of Abraham, the whole world believed in the existence of many gods. In the Bible, the book of Joshua reports that Yahweh the God of Israel says this, “In ancient days your ancestors lived beyond the River such as Terah the father of Abraham and of Nahor and they served other gods” (Joshua 24,2). The Holy Qur’an testifies to this as follows: “(Also) mention in the book (The story of) Abraham: He was a man of truth. A prophet: Behold he said to his father; “O my father! Why worship that which heareth not and seeth not, and can profit thee nothing” (Suratul Maryam 41- 42).⁵⁸

Omonokua, in setting out his position on God, he reacted to a mail on his article which says that “the time has come for us to move towards the kingdom of God that has no division. “He was asked: are you implying that Muslims and Christians all belong to the kingdom of God at the end of ages irrespective of their beliefs?”⁵⁹

Omonokhua’s answer thus: “the expression of divine realities in human language falls within a limited context in dialogue. In the spirit of dialogue, to be on the same page with other partners in dialogue, the scripture affirms that God created heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1 psalm 146:6 Quran 7, 54; 3;11, 17).”⁶⁰ From his thoughts I deduce that relatively, we become co-creators by contributing to the creation of peace on earth in preparation for the eternal peace we shall enjoy when we meet God after our earthly life. One wondering if this could be the essence of Islam (peace) on earth. The kingdom of God “means heaven for Christians. Muslims express the same concept as paradise.”⁶¹

From what I have seen in Omonokua, thoughts if both the Christians, Muslim and people of other faiths are making a journey to immortality, it can be argued that God cannot be tied to any religion.

For Omonokhua, “God is eternal love, on earth; we profess faith in god hoping that on the

⁵⁸ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Contexts A Nigerian Experience*, 24.

⁵⁹ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Contexts A Nigerian Experience*, 24.

⁶⁰ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 127.

⁶¹ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 127.

last day, we shall behold him face to face. This final exit from the earth and our final union with God is a basic reality that the different religions describe in different categories.”⁶²

The vision of life on earth is heaven, the mission is love of God and neighbour while the specific objective is to find happiness on earth. There can be no happiness without peace and there can be no peace without justice. Justice, respect, peace, doing good and avoiding evil are steps on the path towards our final destiny. (Heaven). Where there is no division. Is God a Christian? Or do Christian and Muslims both belong to the kingdom of God? What about other faiths? For Omonokua, Muslims believe that it is those who do well that will be in paradise. No religion is a licence to heaven without the practice of the teachings of the religion. Any religion that teaches evil contradicts the nature of God who is the supreme God. Every revealed religion calls people to peace. Since there is no evil in heaven, only those who do good deeds would have a space in paradise, a kingdom where God remain the king and ruler of all. The kingdom of God is the same as the paradise for both good Muslims and Christian alike who loved god by loving fellow human beings on earth.

But the big question for Omonokhua lingers: “Is your concept of God a divine violence or divine peace? If God for you is the God of war, I may let you know that my concept of God is a divine transcendence that is so powerful to the extent that he does not need a human being to defend him or kill for him through any form of jihad or crusade.”⁶³

Omonokua position on God was experiential based in his submission: “Perhaps we can begin with dialogue of religious experience, namely the operations and actions of God in the life of each individual.”⁶⁴ At the end of the day, we may discover that all the killings that have been attributed to religion in God’s name have various reasons other than victory for God.⁶⁵

Ethnic nationalities that identify God in various ways can dialogue for peace. Retrieving our

⁶² Omonokua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 17.

⁶³ Omonokua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 127.

⁶⁴ Omonokua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 197.

⁶⁵ Omonokua, *Dialogue in context, a Nigerian experience*, 147.

collective consciousness according to ethnic groups may be a difficult but will help promote peace and harmony. Ethnic nationalities participation in national conferences for peace will help keep the cultural ethics and values of all. It will help identify the ethnic groups that are loyal to their traditional leadership.

3.2.5 Theme six: Becoming the “Salt of the Earth and Light of the World”: Dialogue and Proclamation of the Good News of Peace: Partner Expressions of Evangelization

It is important for evangelizers and ecumenists to stay in active dialogue with one another because the church's reflection deepens and evolves. A prime example of this is the place of dialogue in the evangelizing mission of the church.⁶⁶

In *Dialogue and Proclamation* (D & P), the Church's reflection on the theology of mission undergoes a significant qualitative change in coming to view dialogue as something intrinsic to evangelization. It is part of the working out during the post-Vatican II years, of a broad and comprehensive notion of evangelization in which dialogue represents a constitutive dimension. In this evolved understanding, dialogue is in itself a form of evangelization. How is this so?

⁶⁶ In 1991, Francis Cardinal Arinze (then president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID) and Jozef Cardinal Tomko (Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples) presented to the world a document titled: *Dialogue and Proclamation*. This document for Omonokhua, “responded to the following questions: Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant? Has it not been replaced by Interreligious dialogue? Does not respect for conscience and freedom exclude all efforts at conversion? Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion? Why then should there be missionary activity? (Redemptoris Missio, 4)

In May, 2001, the church marked the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Issued jointly by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, its stated goal was the “further consideration” of dialogue and proclamation in the evangelizing mission of the Church (no. 3). (1)

On September 5, 2000, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued “Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church.” Its stated purpose was “to recall to bishops, theologians and all the Catholic faithful certain indispensable elements of Christian doctrine” (no. 3). (2)

Although issued from different offices and for different reasons, both documents address interreligious dialogue. It is the contention here that they do so in markedly different tones and that “Dominus Iesus” marks a halt in the line of progression in interreligious dialogue that began in “Nostra Aetate,” continued in “Redemptoris missio,” and climaxed in “Dialogue and Proclamation.” These differences are in tone by comparing blocks of text from the two documents, centring around three key points: (1) theological faith and belief, (2) the Holy Spirit and soteriology, and (3) the reign of God and the church. It gives a development of interreligious dialogue as seen in some key documents of the Roman Catholic Church. See Afebu, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*, 22-44.

In D & P, “evangelization refers to the mission of the Church in its totality.”⁶⁷ In the various elements of which it is composed. “Dialogue”, an integral part of that mission, indicates “all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment . . . in obedience to truth and respect for freedom”⁶⁸. “Announcement” or “proclamation” is “the communication of the gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in JC by the power of the Spirit. It is an invitation . . . to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church.”⁶⁹

These distinctive definitions make clear that, while dialogue is already in itself evangelization, evangelization cannot be reduced to dialogue. The two are different in scope. Dialogue does not seek the conversion of others to Christianity but the convergence of both dialogue partners to a deeper shared conversion to God. By contrast, proclamation invites others to become disciples of Christ in the Christian community.

Proclamation and dialogue exist in a dialectical relationship in the dynamic process of the church's evangelizing mission. There is an inescapable tension between them-the tension between the “already” and the “not yet”. As Omonokhua writes, “Insofar as the Church remains on her pilgrimage, together with the ‘others’, towards the fullness of the Kingdom, she engages with them in dialogue; insofar as she is the sacrament of the reality of the Kingdom already present and operative in history, she proclaims to them Jesus Christ in whom the Kingdom of God has been.”⁷⁰

Proclamation for Omonokhua is “the expression of the Church's awareness of being in mission. Dialogue is the expression of its awareness of God's presence and action outside its

⁶⁷ D.P, 8.

⁶⁸ D.P, 9.

⁶⁹ D.P, 10.

⁷⁰ Omonokua, “Becoming the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World in the light of *Africae Munus*” in *Peace and Reconciliation a Nigerian Conversation*, 114.

boundaries.”⁷¹ It then means that Proclamation is the affirmation of and witness to God's action in oneself and in the Church. Dialogue is the openness and attention to the mystery of God's action in the other believer. We cannot speak of one without the other. Thus, interreligious dialogue is a form of sharing, of giving and receiving. Ultimately, “It is not a one-way process. It must really be a dialogue, not a monologue.”⁷²

For Omonokua, becoming the “Salt of the Earth and Light of the World” is a “challenging discussion in the context of peace and reconciliation.”⁷³ The document on Dialogue and Proclamation,⁷⁴ defines dialogue as “mutual communication with an attitude of respect and friendship.”⁷⁵ Proclamation is “the communication of the gospel message. These are authentic expressions of the Church’s mission to all nations and individuals. Dialogue and proclamation are thus both viewed, each in its own place, as “component elements and authentic forms of one evangelizing mission of the Church. They are both oriented towards the communication of salvific truth.”⁷⁶ The conversion that dialogue seeks is not from one religion to the other but a conversion to justice and peace in the world. The church through dialogue and proclamation “respects individuals and cultures and encourages all to live in peace and love.”⁷⁷

The nature of the world today for Omonokhua, imposes on all, the need to “adopt a new style of evangelization that makes dialogue and a culture of peace indispensable.”⁷⁸ The human

⁷¹ Omonokua, “Becoming the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World in the light of *Africae Munus*” in *Peace and Reconciliation a Nigerian Conversation*, 114.

⁷² Omonokua, “Becoming the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World in the light of *Africae Munus*” in *Peace and Reconciliation a Nigerian Conversation*, 114.

⁷³ Omonokua, “Becoming the Salt of the Earth and Light of the World in the light of *Africae Munus*” in *Peace and Reconciliation a Nigerian Conversation*, 114.

⁷⁴ In 1991, Francis Cardinal Arinze (then president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID) and Jozef Cardinal Tomko (Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of peoples) presented to the world a document titled: Dialogue and Proclamation. This document responded to the following questions: Is missionary work among non-Christians still relevant? Has it not been replaced by Interreligious dialogue? Does not respect for conscience and freedom exclude all efforts at conversion? Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion? Why then should there be missionary activity? *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 42.

⁷⁵ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 33.

⁷⁶ Dialogue and Proclamation, 2

⁷⁷ *Redemptories Missio*, 39

⁷⁸ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 33.

mind for Omonokhua, has become so critical that the only argument that can convince the world today is witness of life because action speaks louder than words. To be effective in dialogue of life and proclamation, education is very necessary. We must heal ourselves of the mutual fear of conversion that led to the taking over of schools by government, thereby destroying the standard of education and morals in Nigeria. Dialogue will not make sense if we keep our children at the level of ignorance of other religions. Openness to dialogue can lead to conversion of heart and a change of attitude. A good skill to the awareness of the need for dialogue and proclamation is the “ability to forgive, reconcile and heal wounded memories through dialogue and proclamation that is attended by witness of life.”⁷⁹

Omonokua reaffirms what John Paul II states that proclamation “is not a matter of merely passing on a doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the Saviour.”⁸⁰ The meeting with Christ is not “a mere ‘paradigm’ or ‘value’, but the living Lord: “the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14: 6).”⁸¹ Hence, proclamation “is an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church.”⁸²

The proclamation of the Good News is aimed at leading people to encounter Christ who is our peace, and who transforms humanity and makes it new. For it is in and through the Only Son that the relations of people with God, one another, and all creation will be renewed. For this reason, the proclamation of the Gospel can “contribute to the interior transformation of all

⁷⁹Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 34.

⁸⁰ John Paul II, *Address at the Commissioning of Families of the Neo-Catechumenal Way*, Jan. 3, 1991. http://www.christlife.org/evangelization/articles/C_statements.html [accessed 26/06/2018]. Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 33.

⁸¹ John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the United States of America on their “Ad Limina” Visit Saturday, 20 March 1993. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1993/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19930320_usa-ad-limina_en.html [accessed 26/06/2018]

⁸² Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html [accessed 26/06/2018].

people of good will whose hearts are open to the Holy Spirit's action, and who will in turn transform the world.”⁸³

The act of transformation of the world for Omonokhua, calls us to be light of the world and salt of the earth. Very often, the woes of Africa are blamed on the events of the slave trade and colonialism. Some people have called for retribution and reparation of the pains of the African from the Western World. Today, it is very clear, that the greatest enemy of Africa is Africans. The rate, at which Africans destroy one another violently and otherwise, in the present world, “cannot be compared to the accusations heaped on the Western World.”⁸⁴ The various crises in Africa today need Africans to be light of the world and salt of the earth. This calls for “intra-personal dialogue where the human person can be a reconciled reconciler.”⁸⁵ In other words, the human person needs a “renewal of heart and a change of attitude. The challenge is the need to develop our gifts and actualize our latent potentials to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.”⁸⁶ The Good News should therefore be brought “into all the strata of humanity,”⁸⁷ so that its encounter with humanity will transform and challenge whatever “hinders the true good of the men and women of Africa and of every other continent.”⁸⁸

⁸³Omonokhua, “Becoming the salt of the earth and light of the world:” in *Peace and Reconciliation, a Nigerian Conversation*, 121.

⁸⁴Omonokhua, “Becoming the salt of the earth and light of the world” in *Peace and Reconciliation, a Nigerian Conversation*, 121.

⁸⁵Omonokhua, “Becoming the salt of the earth and light of the world:” in *Peace and Reconciliation, a Nigerian Conversation*, 121.

⁸⁶ For Omonokua, for us to evangelize the world, we must become evangelized evangelizers. For us to reconcile the world, we must become reconciled reconcilers. We must allow our actions to manifest the existence and goodness of God. Omonokhua, “Becoming the salt of the earth and light of the world:” in *Peace and Reconciliation, a Nigerian Conversation*, 121.

⁸⁷To be effective in dialogue, and proclamation, education is very necessary. He believes that we must heal ourselves of the mutual fear of conversion that led to the taking over of schools by government thereby destroying the standard of education and morals in Nigeria. Dialogue will not be successful if we keep our children at the level of ignorance of other religions he opined. How do you know that it is “day break”? You know that it is dawn when you can look at a neighbour’s eyes and see a brother or a sister in his or her eyes. As long as you cannot see your neighbour as a brother or sister, you are still in the dark. A good skill to this awareness is the ability to forgive, reconcile and heal wounded memories through dialogue and proclamation that is attended by witness of life. See Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, A Nigerian Experience*, 34.

⁸⁸Omonokhua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 33.

Evangelization begins with the proclamation of the “Good News of Christ crucified, died, risen, the Way, the Truth and the Life,”⁸⁹ the saviour who “gives our lives a new horizon and direction.”⁹⁰ This implies that the “foundation, core and summit of its dynamism is a clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all as a gift of God’s kindness and mercy.”⁹¹ The proclamation of the Gospel should therefore, “be centred on a transforming encounter with the living person of Christ” through an “overwhelming and exhilarating experience of Jesus Christ who calls each one to follow him in an adventure of faith.”⁹² John Paul II states that proclamation “is not a matter of merely passing on a doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the saviour.”⁹³ The meeting with Christ is not “a mere ‘paradigm’ or ‘value’, but the living Lord: “the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14: 6).”⁹⁴ Hence, proclamation “is an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church.”⁹⁵

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⁸⁹ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 57.

⁹⁰ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), no. 1.

⁹¹ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 27.

⁹² *Ecclesia in Africa*, 57. Proclamation is aimed bringing people to encounter Christ, so that they may become his disciples and in turn make disciples of others by proclaiming him as the Lord and the Saviour of the world.

⁹³ John Paul II, *Address at the Commissioning of Families of the Neo-Catechumenal Way*, Jan. 3, 1991. http://www.christlife.org/evangelization/articles/C_statements.html [accessed 26/10/2020].

⁹⁴ John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the United States of America on their “Ad Limina” Visit Saturday, 20 March 1993.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1993/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19930320_usa-ad-limina_en.html [accessed 26/10/2020]

⁹⁵ Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html [accessed 26/10/2020].

⁹⁶ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 57.

⁹⁷ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, *Deus Caritas Est* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005), no. 1.

salvation is offered to all as a gift of God's kindness and mercy."⁹⁸ The proclamation of the Gospel should therefore, "be centred on a transforming encounter with the living person of Christ" through an "overwhelming and exhilarating experience of Jesus Christ who calls each one to follow him in an adventure of faith."⁹⁹ John Paul II states that proclamation "is not a matter of merely passing on a doctrine, but rather of a personal and profound meeting with the saviour."¹⁰⁰ The meeting with Christ is not "a mere 'paradigm' or 'value', but the living Lord: "the way, and the truth, and the life (John 14: 6)."¹⁰¹ Hence, proclamation "is an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church."¹⁰²

3.2.6 Theme seven: Dialogue as Evangelization toward a Theological Exchange and promotion of Peace

For Omonokhua, "dialogue of theological exchange is also called dialogue of experts."¹⁰³

Dialogue as an integral part of evangelization and peace building, involves listening and having mutual respect. Omonokhua notes that "In dialogue of theological exchange, it is necessary for the religious preachers to be well formed in their own religions and the religion of others so that the experts can talk on the same wave length of theological awareness."¹⁰⁴

Brian Grogan in another way, states that "It is a self-emptying and a standing back in order to give us space to truly hear the words of another in our pilgrimage on earth."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 27.

⁹⁹ *Ecclesia in Africa*, 57. Proclamation is aimed bringing people to encounter Christ, so that they may become his disciples and in turn make disciples of others by proclaiming him as the Lord and the Saviour of the world.

¹⁰⁰ John Paul II, *Address at the Commissioning of Families of the Neo-Catechumenal Way*, Jan. 3, 1991. http://www.christlife.org/evangelization/articles/C_statements.html [accessed 2/10/2020].

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, Address to the Bishops of the United States of America on their "Ad Limina" Visit Saturday, 20 March 1993.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1993/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19930320_usa-ad-limina_en.html [accessed 26/10/2020]

¹⁰² Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html [accessed 26/10/2020].

¹⁰³ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*, 87.

¹⁰⁴ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*, 87.

¹⁰⁵ Brian Grogan, "The Pope's Intentions: That a Culture of Dialogue, Listening and Reciprocal Respect may Prevail Among the Nations," *The Sacred Heart Messenger*, June 2013, 6. Pilgrimage on earth implies "that every man and woman on earth lives in *statu conversionis*: in state of conversion, because we belong to this

The theological foundation of dialogue is rooted in the very nature of God who reveals God's self through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, and thus "God is no lonely and solitary monarch, but more like a perfect family in which all relationships are open and loving. It is because of this dynamism of sharing and loving that our world is created and is called 'good.'"¹⁰⁶ This belief in the only God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit "among whom there is constant interchange and perfect communion," becomes a "model for our relations with our fellow human beings, relations which are to be imbued with respect for the identity of each person and at the same time a strong desire to achieve communion."¹⁰⁷

Interreligious dialogue does not put an end to the Church's unique identity and mission of being a people called and sent to proclaim the Good News of salvation to the whole world. The proclamation of the Gospel and interreligious dialogue "exist in a dialectical relationship in the dynamic process of the Church's evangelizing mission."¹⁰⁸ The Church must always be faithful to the Lord's command to preach the Gospel and to invite all people to become members of the Body of Christ through baptism.

3.2.7 Theme eight: The African Values in family life: An Open Door for Global Peace

The Nigerian theologian and *peritus* to the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria Teresa Okure stated her position which attempts to answer the concerns of Omonokhua on the family and peace: the primary place for practising reconciliation, justice and peace is within the church. Its credibility as the family of God stands or falls on its ability to

present age and carries the mark of this world with its imperfections. Yet, we journey towards perfection and total union with the Trinity." (cf. *Lumen Gentium* no. 48, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 45, and John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia* 1980 http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html (accessed 15/6/2018), no. 13.

¹⁰⁶ Dialogue of theological exchange calls for a structure and mechanism that should be put in place by every denomination and sect to monitor and check religious preachers. Before the reformation and proliferation of Churches, the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith ensued that those who write or preach heresies were called to withdraw their thesis or statements. See Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context, a Nigerian Experience*, 87. Grogan, *The Pope's Intentions*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Grogan, *The Pope's Intentions*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Ryan, *Proclamation and Dialogue: Partner Expressions of Evangelization*, <http://www.tomryancsp.org/proclamation.htm> [assessed 30/06/2018].

“exemplify and practice what it teaches and demands of society, specifically in regard to the leadership roles of women in the church-family of God.”¹⁰⁹

In her analysis of the church-family relationship and its practice, Okure, emphasizes on the need to “review the traditions received from the fathers of the church. Our theological and canonical presuppositions and biblical hermeneutics stand to be reviewed against the backdrop of the socio-cultural, religious, and political contexts from which they emerged.¹¹⁰ She continued this reasoning by saying that, “reviewing these cherished traditions need not necessarily mean discarding them. Fishing remained a constant Peter’s call. What changed was the type and manner of fishing.”¹¹¹ Again she proposes, “the outcome and for Jesus personally was the grace to grow from received human traditions to the complete truth to which God’s spirit leads us. (Jn16:13). His experience in the house of Cornelius (Act10) confirms this. We should not be afraid to tackle these traditions or attempt to clutch at them. (Mk 7:1-3) at the expense of Jesus, God’s gospel (Rom 1:1-2, 16) Ignatius of Antioch saw Jesus as the yardstick for whatever the church does. By courageously undertaking this task, the church will be like a wise scribe who brings out his or her treasure both the new and the old (Mt 13:52).With an inclusive and global outlook. For Omonokhua, “global ethics is consequently spiritualized and localized in our attitude towards the church-family, life and respect for humanity.”¹¹² It will be a contradiction and ridicule of one’s religious ethics if actions contradict human dignity and value. Let us seek a global redefinition of the church-family narrative. For Abuh, “The dilemma that constitutes global morality is a thing of great issue due to relativism. Cultural and religious

¹⁰⁹ Teresa Okure, “Church-Family of God. The place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.” in *The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, ed. Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 13-24.

¹¹⁰Teresa Okure, “Church-Family of God. The place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.” in *The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, 13-24.

¹¹¹Okure, “Church-Family of God.The place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.”*The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, 18.

¹¹²Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 98.

differences should be diverse ways of expressing the common value that leads to happiness.”¹¹³ Common sense is the instrument of global ethics. It helps our church to become a true family to rule the world with ideas, it also helps to always “think global and act local for the sake of peace in our communities, rather than religious and tribal sentiments.”¹¹⁴

3.2.8 Theme nine: The Formation of Conscience: Towards a Peaceful Continent

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines conscience as “a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed.”¹¹⁵ The definition brings out the relationship between conscience, reason and human action. The definition is both direct and concrete for two reasons. Firstly, as catechisms are specifically intended to be used as teaching aids, they are not meant to be long-winded or cumbersome in their explications. Secondly, the directness and concreteness of the Catechism’s definition can assist the authors in demonstrating their certainty that conscience is the definite and recognised means for identifying the moral quality of an action. This certainty or self-assuredness is also highlighted by the Catechism’s attention to detailing every step of the process for identifying the moral qualities of an action. For example, in its explication of conscience, it refers to: (i) *synderesis*, the perception of the principles of morality; (ii) to how these principles are applied in given circumstance by practical discernment of reason and of good and evil; and, (iii) to how judgement is exercised on concrete acts that are yet to be performed or have already been performed.¹¹⁶

The role of conscience and its relationship with dialogue and peace building cannot be over-emphasized. Omonokhua asserts that, “true conscience is the voice of God in a person. It

¹¹³Emmanuel “The Church as Family of God, 44.

¹¹⁴Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 106.

¹¹⁵ CCC, n. 1778. Conscience is here described in very concrete terms, terms which are different from *Gaudium et Spes* which presented an ontological definition.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, n.1780

enables a person to judge between good and evil. It helps a person to identify and respect natural laws and civil laws that are derived from divine laws.”¹¹⁷ Conscience is formed by environment, culture, religion, and education.¹¹⁸ These define the world view and horizon of a person.

The formation of character and conscience for a liberated and transformed continent ¹¹⁹ involves all people.¹²⁰ There are some personality disorders that can appear in childhood and later become obstacles to dialogue. Some of the causes of these personality traits may be attributed to inheritance as in the case of children raised in an aggressive environment. Consequently, we should know that a lot of issues are involved in dialogue.¹²¹

Pope John Paul II singles out the importance of religious education in the child’s formation of conscience. Under the umbrella term of religious education, he refers to the positive influences that the family, the Catholic Church, Christian communities and other religious institutions can have on this process of formation. Even the State is expected to play its part in this process, firstly, by guaranteeing the rights of the above institutions to actively engage in this process and secondly, by making it possible for those institutions to work in this sphere. In the light of such a demand from John Paul II, we are reminded of current campaigns by

¹¹⁷Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 79.

¹¹⁸ The role of conscience in environment, culture, religion and education is evident in every facet of our human existence, for example, election related violence and internal conflicts reduce the level of economic development through the destruction of property, disruption of business activities and economic exchange, loss of life; they also destroy production and health facilities, reduce savings and investments, and bring about a total breakdown of the social order. See Munya, Jennifer K and Mutukaa Samuel K, “The Role of the Church in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa” in *African Ecclesial Review* vol. 58. no. 1 & 2. (2016): 66-96.

¹¹⁹There is an intimate, private, and almost exclusively personal nature attached to the notion of conscience by the Second Vatican Council that must not be overlooked. Note, for example, such deeply personal and intimate images as “the most secret core,” “the sanctuary of the human person” and “there they are alone with God.” The moral theologian, Bernard Häring, who himself was a *peritus* during Vatican II drew from these images in his own work of personalizing the concept of conscience. Applying Vatican II, Häring declared: Conscience is the person’s moral faculty, the inner core and sanctuary where one knows oneself in confrontation with God and with fellow men . . . In the depth of our being, conscience makes us aware that our true self is linked with Christ, and that we can find our unique name only by listening and responding to the One who calls us by this name. See Bernard Häring, *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1982), 224.

¹²⁰Emmanuel “The Church as Family of God, 67.

¹²¹Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 79-82.

certain humanist and atheist individuals and organisations to have all. Religious references or symbols removed from schools and public buildings, to keep religious lessons completely separate from secular ones, and even to have religious schools themselves secularised.

The formation of conscience is compromised if a thorough religious education is lacking. How can a young person fully understand the demands of human dignity if no reference is made to the source of that dignity, namely, God the Creator? In this regard, the role of the family, the Catholic Church, Christian communities and other religious institutions remains essential. The State, in compliance with international norms and Declarations, must guarantee their rights in this field and make it possible for them to exercise those rights. For their part, Omonokhua opines that “families and communities of believers ought to appreciate and ever deepen their commitment to the human person and to the objective values of the person.”¹²²

A mythological philosophy which not only dehumanizes the human person, but also, is responsible for the ethnocentrism and violence in many parts of Africa is the subtle belief that one tribe is superior to another, based on historical narrative of origins.¹²³ In some parts of Africa “a particular group of people have been stigmatized from time immemorial as social outcast-*osu*,” because their lineage is said to be traced to “a person sacrificed to the deity by a community or a group of people or a family” in history.”¹²⁴ These are stereotypes that challenge us to open a space for others to open their hearts. Conflict has never brought

¹²² Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 79-82.

¹²³ This “historical narrative of origins,” for instance among the Igalas of Nigeria have categorized people into four groups. The first is the “*Omane*”-sons and daughters of the land, considered as the superior people, because they trace their origin to the community ancestors. The second group of persons are “*OmaOnobule*,” which though, literally means ‘female child,’ but in this usage, indicates Uterine kin-whereby, a person traces his/her origin in that community through the mother and maternal ancestors. Though “*OmaOnobule*,” is respected in her/his maternal home, the “*Omanes*,” do sometimes discriminate against them. Within this usage therefore, a man or woman could be called “*Oma Onobule*.” The third group is the “*ilowa*”-non-indigenes or foreigners who lack traceable origin in a land they live in. The last is the “*Adu*”-considered as descendants of slaves. The “*Adus*,” are “highly discriminated against and their social status is worst, than the *OmaOnobules* and *Ilowas*. This is because, they cannot inter-marry with *Omane*, but *OmaOnobule* and *Ilowa* can.” See John Musa Aikoye, “*Omane: A Bane to the Igala Socio-Religious society*,” in *The Catholic Diocese of Idah at Twenty Five: A Documentation of the Social and Religious Development in the Diocese 1978-2003*, ed. Philip E. Okwoli (Enugu: SNAAP, 2003), 135.

¹²⁴ See Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere, *Search for Security: Freedom from Sinister Forces that Threaten Life in African Society*, 2nd ed. (Onitsha: Effective Key, 1995), 15.

success or progress to a person, community or nation. It is only dialogue that leads to peace, happiness, conversion, and a genuine formation of African Christian Conscience, that will culminate into a liberated, Transformed and Peaceful Continent. I will now conclude the first part of this chapter.

3.3 Conclusion

The thoughts of Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua presented in this chapter make him a highly practical thinker. His theological-moral and ecclesiological views show his dialogue-oriented thoughts. His thoughts in this chapter will remain long-standing and relevant on dialogue and peace building.

It must be noted that rather than being deferential to the views of academic, civil or ecclesiastical authorities, Omonokhua's thoughts proved not only to be exciting, personally exacting, but truth-seeking. In his theology of dialogue, he presented his thought using different methods, but the most characteristic is his emphasis on dialogue for life. As a twenty first century theologian and scholar, Omonokhua's teaching on dialogue and peacebuilding is a gateway for peace in the third millennium. His teachings and explanations of dialogue are in line with Church documents and teachings, as he affirms and upholds the primacy of dialogue of action without giving in to abandonment of commitment or conviction.

Omonokhua in this section, therefore, calls for a new narrative of the human person that can change the African people from oppression and violence, fratricidal hate, genocide, tribalism, ethnocentrism and dictatorships.¹²⁵ His new narrative is transformation oriented; it is founded on the need for reconciliation, forgiveness and healing conversion. His theology based on personal life and bearing witness to Christ through a spirituality of service and dialogue brings to fore the dynamics of his thoughts. Dialogue for him ought to be based on the formation of Christian conscience.

¹²⁵ See Uzukwu, "Healing Memories: The Church as Agent of Reconciliation in the Service of the Kingdom," 109.

The salt of the earth and light of the world which is the basis of a true proclamation of the gospel of peace is central to his reflections. The African culture and its reception of the Christian faith and how this faith can be harmonized with daily actions is crucial for peace. Evangelization as dialogue, making an engagement and harmonization for peace in the continent is fundamental. His belief that justice and peace are part and parcel of the new evangelization, and communication is central to achieving peace.

The Christological and missiological dimensions of peace as also highlighted are fundamental for peacebuilding among Christians. The Good News that the whole of humanity is made in the image and likeness of God, though divided by sin, has now been restored as a single family to the image of the Triune God in Christ Jesus, our true peace and the master of dialogue. This gives a global dimension to the African Church, which ought to be an open door for heralding African family values to the world, and will ultimately lead to a formation of African Christian conscience that is liberated having been transformed for both peaceful continent and world. I will now explore the works of Aquiline Tarimo in the second part.

PART TWO

Tarimo Aquiline and Religious Peace Education

3.4 Introduction

Having discussed Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua in part one of this chapter, this second segment will focus on the thoughts of Aquiline Tarimo on religion, social reconstruction, transformation and peace education in Africa.

3.4.1 Aquiline Tarimo's Life and Writings

Aquiline Tarimo, was born in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. He holds a Doctorate degree in Sacred Theology from the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara; a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from Santa Clara University; a Bachelor of Theology from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. He is a visiting Professor at Santa Clara University in California and has a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from St. Pierre Canisius in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Tarimo is also an associate professor of Christian social ethics at Hekima College in Nairobi, Kenya, a Constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

He has held administrative positions, including Director of the Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations, Academic Dean and Principal. He also lectured at SJU, where he taught Christian Ethics and Human Rights, this helped him to explore the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its impact on public morality. His major theological interest is the quest for common good, which will enable us to explore the meaning, foundation, evolution, areas of dispute, and practical significance of human rights in the context of cultural, religious pluralism and peace education. His thoughts are to be found in

articles and books which he authored.¹²⁶He has made significant contributions to every day popular concerns. Tarimo's research involves human rights ethics, contemporary theories of justice, foundations of public values, peace building and the politics of land rights and ethical methodology.

3.4.2 Tarimo's Arguments by selected themes

In this exposition of Tarimo's argument, I will follow some nine selected themes and main points in his books and articles, for he developed in his works, what constitute the problems of religious- inspired violence, along with his alternative diagnosis of the problem and proposed solution. The major themes include, one: Religion in Public Life: The Prophetic Voice for Peace Education, secondly: The Extended Family: Means Solidarity with Victims of Conflict, thirdly: Communion, Solidarity and Warmth in Relationship: Family and Church working for Peace, fourthly: Division of Labor, complexities, Complementarities and Collaboration for Peace, fifth: Gender Inequality in the African Family: a challenge to peace, six: The challenges of Small Christian Community (SCC): A Cradle for Life and Foundational for the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation in the African Church, seven: The Common good and Ethnic loyalties in Africa: Quest for peace, eight: The Relationship between the Local and Universal Church: Collaborating for peace, nine: Peacebuilding and Dignity of the Human Person: Towards Liberation and Transformation in Africa, then the final conclusion.

The objective of his investigation from the perspective of the local church within the context of Eastern African countries is to identify ways in which African traditional models could be used to strengthen peace and harmony. He claims that the effort of promoting social transformation largely depends on local intermediaries operating from different institutions.

¹²⁶Aquiline Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2008). See also *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2005). *Ethnicity, Citizen and States in Africa* (Cameroun: Yaoundé: Langaa Press, 2011). ("Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education," *African Christian Studies*, vol. 26, no 1, (March 2010): 34-47."Religion and Civil Society: Challenges and Prospects for Eastern Africa," *African Christian Studies*, vol. 25, no 1, (March 2009): 27-39.

He also developed his theory of peace education, the role of the extended family and social reconstruction. I will give a brief background to his thoughts and approach before I develop each of these themes.

3.4.3 Background to Tarimo's thoughts

Tarimo has been involved with the resolution of conflicts in East Africa, mainly offered his vision and teaching on peace. Religious and ethnic diversity turned out to be a source of hate in his home country, Tanzania, where the semi-autonomous Zanzibar islands have posed the biggest headache for the Tanzanian government because of religious tensions and deep social and economic divisions, and a rise in sectarian violence in the mainly Muslim archipelago region over the years.

Tarimo believes that diversity of religion is not actually the cause of conflict but “because of doctrinal disputes, fundamentalism, and politicization of religious identity.”¹²⁷ Although he believes there are numerous causes of conflict and violence, he argues that religion is a good means for peace education. He remarks that irrespective of the “limitations of religion, there cannot be lasting peace in human society without a constructive involvement of religion.”¹²⁸

Religion is therefore a necessary tool for peace in his thought.

3.4.4 Tarimo's Main Approach: A Theology of Reconstruction, Transformation and Peace Education

For Tarimo, “in order to address fully the African economic, religious and ethnic crisis, from the root causes, there is a need to reconstruct value systems through which African societies can function without external control.”¹²⁹ This is possible by “promoting virtues that enhance mutuality and other public values able to unite people towards the war against poverty, hatred and violence.”¹³⁰ The idea of establishing social cohesion through

¹²⁷ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 26, no 1, (March 2010): 25.

¹²⁸ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 28

¹²⁹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 62.

¹³⁰ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 62.

reconstruction of value systems could be enhanced by widening the horizon of the common good through participation. Such openness must go beyond nepotism, ethnocentrism, and other forms of exclusion and violence that seem to be source of antagonism and impediment to the formation of a coherent social organization¹³¹ We will now examine specifically selected eight teachings and themes on peace as they relate to Tarimo's works and finally discuss three examples of models for Peace-Building in African Traditional societies.

3.5 Theme one: Religion in Public Life: The Prophetic Voice for forgiveness and Peace Education

The Church reminds us of the duty that is ours to arrange and even demand that children and indeed all should be able to enjoy the aid of peace education in the Christian formation to a degree that is abreast with their development in secular subjects. Therefore, the Church seeks out those civil authorities and societies which, bearing in mind the pluralism of contemporary society and respecting religious freedom, assist families so that the "education of their children can be imparted in all schools according to the individual moral and religious principles of the families."¹³²

Tarimo attempts to build on this noble teaching of the Second Vatican Council as he tries to answer questions of religion as a source or a solution to conflict, in what ways are religious community involved in peace education and what resources do religious leaders and communities need in order to become effective agents of peace building particularly in Africa? Can religion promote forgiveness, tolerance, social justice, social transformation and the common good?

The claim that religion cherishes public values like forgiveness and peace education more strongly than any other institution, makes it a credible partner in the process of social reconciliation and peace building. The task of peace building for Tarimo "cannot be left to

¹³¹Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 61-62.

¹³² Vatican II, Schema on the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* on Religious Freedom, no. 5. See also *Gravissimum Educationis*, Declaration on Christian Education by his holiness Pope Paul VI, 1965, no. 7.

political initiative alone; it also requires collaboration emerging from different local institutions, including religion.”¹³³

For Tarimo, “religious practices should be approached as a platform that reinforces any initiative intended to promote forgiveness and peace education. Such possibility derives from the fact that religious activities shape public conscience.”¹³⁴ Furthermore “conflict resolution, as a process of learning, shaping public conscience, and social healing, requires a consideration of interrelated social variables.”¹³⁵

Even though Tarimo purports that religion enhances peace education, he strongly condemns the idea of “imposing one religion on everybody or creating a theocratic state.”¹³⁶ Religion for him, “is an ambivalent reality containing within itself, the power to destroy or liberate human beings. The experience of the sacred takes several forms.”¹³⁷ Religions, “because of the limitation, must be challenged to purify themselves constantly. Inter-religious dialogue that enables every religion to look at itself in the light of another, promotes the process of internal reform.”¹³⁸ Tarimo asserts that:

Beyond inter-religious enmity, religions can and should agree on the defence and promotion of spiritual values, even if each religion justifies them differently. Justice and peace form part of the basic teaching of all religions. The dynamics of economics and politics should retain their autonomy; but such autonomy should not attempt to exclude the role of religion from the public sphere.¹³⁹

¹³³ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 23

¹³⁴ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 26, no 1, (March 2010): 23.

¹³⁵ Aquiline Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 34.

¹³⁶ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,”²⁴ Tarimo insists that a number of religious communities have, in certain situations, served as a source for peace or a source for violence. There is no doubt that many religions reveal exclusionists’ attitudes which result into a lack of respect for other faith traditions. See also Tarimo, “Religion and Civil Society: Challenges and prospects for Eastern Africa.” *African Christian Studies* vol. 25 no. 1 (March 2009): 28.

¹³⁷ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 24

¹³⁸ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 24

¹³⁹ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 25

To buttress his point, Tarimo cites Mark Juergemeyer who remarks that: “Religions cannot be left alone; they need the temper of rationality that enlightenment values give to civil society.”¹⁴⁰

Tarimo is of the view that religion enhances peace and peace education and forgiveness because it “possesses a prophetic voice that must be acknowledged and respected.”¹⁴¹ The prophets of God and Jesus Christ spoke about the need for peace in society. The Church and many religions have not thrown away the message of peace. The voice of peace re-echoes through the scripture and other sacred books. For this reason, Tarimo asserts that “The religious ingredient cannot be delivered by the secular order. It is only the prophetic voice of religion that can challenge oppressive structures in the course of history. Religion alone speaks of repentance, mercifulness and compassion.”¹⁴² George Ehusani in his book *The Prophetic Church* makes this point more elaborate as he states that our society needs a prophetic Church that will act as the conscience of the nation and courageously highlight the evils of the society which constitutes the obstacles on the way to peace and prosperity,¹⁴³ thus, as a common good.”¹⁴⁴ He states further: “The formation of public conscience and the task of influencing the formation of public policy draw religion into the task of promoting peace education.”¹⁴⁵ But for religion to function thus, Tarimo acknowledges that religions must educate their faithful to respect others, foster dialogue, value differences, defend the defenseless, promote friendship among peoples, transcend prejudices, and learn from the past that peace without justice is not true peace.”¹⁴⁶ He concludes that “Religion can play a constructive role in peace-building insofar as we

¹⁴⁰ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 25

¹⁴¹ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 28

¹⁴² Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 28

¹⁴³ George O. Ehusani, *A Prophetic Church* (Ibadan: Kraft books, 2003), 44.

¹⁴⁴ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 28 The common good if sought sincerely, can lead to reconstruction of African value system. It will make a shift from the loss of survival mechanisms that made people vulnerable to forces of manipulation and exploitation. See also Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 61.

¹⁴⁵ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 29

¹⁴⁶ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 32

acknowledge that the role of religion in public life is limited, and as such, it must always be subjected to self-evaluation and critique.”¹⁴⁷ This is very true as it affirms the Socratic saying that “an unexamined life is not worth living.”¹⁴⁸ Religion being ambivalent, and for it to be effective in peace education must be constantly checked because of extremism and exclusionism which lead to conflict. If not, the very value that it tries to promote will be destroyed by it. Christianity for Tarimo “abhors attitudes of intolerance and exclusions which contradict the basic message of the gospel which is to build the kingdom of peace and justice.”¹⁴⁹ For Tarimo, “religion should put an accent on promoting friendship through forgiveness, peace education and dialogue”¹⁵⁰ instead of intolerance.

3.5.1 Theme two: The Extended Family: Means Solidarity with Victims of Conflict

Africa is torn apart by conflicts of different kinds. In this situation, people find themselves in an awkward state of mind through which “to go forward is to abandon the past in which the roots of one’s being have their nourishment, to go backward is to cut oneself off from the future.”¹⁵¹

We can argue that the example of the Rwandan genocide and violence in most parts of Africa, underlines the foreignness, artificiality, and ambiguity of the kind of Christianity found in Africa. This is not a condemnation, but a matter of fair examination of conscience. There is no doubt that the Church has failed to be the conscience of society in Africa. Tarimo does not, however, intend to argue that Christianity is automatically able to overcome the sinful nature of a human being. His argument is that the Church has to do more to create even

¹⁴⁷ Aquiline Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 34

¹⁴⁸ Plato, *Apology*, 38a 5-6.

¹⁴⁹ Tarimo, “Religion and Civil Society: Challenges and prospects for Eastern Africa.” *African Christian Studies*, 29.

¹⁵⁰ For Tarimo, Interfaith dialogue establishes trust only when dialogue partners perceive that they are not being forced into a dogmatic scenario which does not put emphasis on religious tolerance, mutual understanding, and the common good. This means that dialogue partners must try to learn about the various faiths from the other’s perspective and must search sensitively for an understanding of the religious traditions and writings of the partner. They must respect differences and try to understand the reasons for them. There are four initiatives that concentrate on peace education, namely, pastoral letters, localized media, inter-faith collaboration, and formation of youth. Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 29

¹⁵¹ Colin M. Turnbull, *The Lonely African* (New York: Clarion Press, 2009), 15.

a minimum awareness to defend basic human values and rights. This situation has been created by the fact that the Church has built some structures to link its mission with social questions. Furthermore, “the kind of religious knowledge emphasized in Africa remains focused and entangled in theological propositions which concern mostly the nature of God and the salvation of the soul.”¹⁵² This means the Church needs to do more in promoting integral human development which includes awareness of social justice, human rights, the common good, peacebuilding and social responsibility. In brief, the African Church faces the challenge on her “theology of life,”¹⁵³ thus, the need for reconstruction.

The extended family system has to become an ecclesiological construct, according to Tarimo in “the transformation of the family structure and the proposed role of churches, aimed at establishing a more pragmatic approach in addressing the African crisis at the grassroots level.”¹⁵⁴ This system is a network of relationships through which members take care of one another aimed at the reconstruction, liberation and transformation from “the serious situation of misery and oppression”¹⁵⁵ that is “unfavorable for the enjoyment of full humanity by citizens of the continent.”¹⁵⁶ Okure and Abuh recognizes this new way of being church in Africa by making some presuppositions that “to become effective and credible witnesses of God’s reconciliation, justice and peace, the church urgently needs to address the laity clergy divide, the issue of women, and ranks in the church and many others.”¹⁵⁷ She concluded with the recognition that “as church we need to re-examine whether our current way of being church, in terms of interpersonal relationships, organizational structures, and use of language,

¹⁵²Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 60.

¹⁵³Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 60.

¹⁵⁴Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 63. See also Tarimo, “The African Extended Family and the Cycle of Poverty” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 20 no. 2 (June 2004): 5-32. See also Abu, “The Church as the Family of God.” 44.

¹⁵⁵Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 63.

¹⁵⁶Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 23-35.

¹⁵⁷Okure, “Church-Family of God. The place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.” *The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, 22. Abu, “The Church as the Family of God.”

actually mirrors what we claim to be, the church-family of God. This visible tangible witnesses of this divine reconciliation, by relating to one another as divine siblings.”¹⁵⁸

Tarimo like Abuh therefore, sees the “world behind” the family of God metaphor in the historical, cultural and existential situation of the African people.¹⁵⁹ This makes the Church-family model a contextual African ecclesiology.¹⁶⁰

This way of being Church and community, for Tarimo, is to be founded on our common humanity, dignity and relatedness, which is “the most common characteristic of the way humans living in West Africa societies are conceived.”¹⁶¹ In stating this, he aligns his theology of reconstruction with that of Jesse Kanyua N. Mugambi who also argues that:

Reconstruction is the new priority for African nations. . . The Churches and their theologians will need to respond to the new priority in relevant fashion, to facilitate this process of reconstruction. The process will require considerable efforts of reconciliation and confidence-building. It will require re-orientation and re-training. New frontiers of mission will need to be identified and explored.¹⁶²

This is because, for Mugambi, it is through reconstruction that the Church can become “the organizational framework within which a people’s world view is portrayed and celebrated.”¹⁶³ The “world view” in this case, refers to ‘relatedness’, ‘togetherness’ and ‘communion’ which, according to Tarimo, are the “most common characteristics of the people of Africa.”¹⁶⁴ Therefore, Kalemba Mwambazambi states that the purpose of

¹⁵⁸Okure, “Church-Family of God. The place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.”*The Second African Synod: Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace*, 22. See also Teresa Okure, ed, *To Cast Fire Upon the Earth: Bible and Mission Collaborating in Today’s Multi-Cultural Global Context* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000). Teresa Okure, “The Church in the World: A Dialogue in Ecclesiology,” in *Theology as Conversation: Towards a Relational Theology*, ed. J. Haers and P. de Mey Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 393-437.

¹⁵⁹Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 23-35.

¹⁶⁰ The reason for such a contextual ecclesiology according to Mawuto Afa, is that theological “work without a given context, risks degeneration into pure rationalization,” devoid of grip on the life of the theologian and the believing community. See Mawuto R. Afa, “Sidbe Sempore: Spiritual Itinerary of an African Theologian,” in *African Theology: The Contribution of the pioneers*, vol. 1, 85. Abuh, “The Church as the Family of God.” See Stephen B. Bevans, *An Introduction to Theology in Global Perspective* (New York: Orbis, 2009), 165-6.

¹⁶¹Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 33. See also Uzukwu, *A Listening Church*, 36.

¹⁶² Jesse Kanyua N. Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after Cold War* (Nairobi: East African Education Publishers, 1995), 36.

¹⁶³Mugambi, *From Liberation to Reconstruction*, 17.

¹⁶⁴Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 33.

reconstruction “is to bring to emergence a new generation of completely unalienated Africans, able to think about the future on the strength of their own cultural wealth.”¹⁶⁵

On the basis of this, Tarimo supports and argues like Abuh, that the Church-family metaphor is an ecclesiological reconstruction that seeks to “remember, reconcile and recover” the African traditional way of life, founded on relationality, communality and solidarity, so that, it shows “the new prophetic ministry as a way of being Church as a constructive ingredient in Africa and in the world.”¹⁶⁶ This is evident from the fact that activities of churches are closer to the people than other institutions.

The purpose of this ecclesiastical-reconstruction, according to him, is that the Church “may start the transformation of Africa and the whole planet earth from inside.”¹⁶⁷ This is because, for Tarimo “this new metaphor,” Church-family, from this perspective, have the responsibility to engage in all aspects of development. It even builds spirituality as the foundation of such engagement. Furthermore, it “wishes to introduce into the life of the Church, the caring and warmth characteristic of the multiple channels or links of kin relationship grouped under the term “family” in Africa,”¹⁶⁸ so that the Church may display the emergence of an alternative way of living for the liberation, transformation and lasting peace of the continent.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵KalembaMwambazambi, “Kä Mana: Champion of the Theology of Reconstruction,” in *African Theology in the 21st Century: The Contribution of the Pioneers*, vol. 3, ed. Benézét Bujo (Nairobi: Paulines, 2013), 158.

¹⁶⁶Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 182. Abuh, The Church as Family of God.”

¹⁶⁷Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 183.

Teresa Okure agrees with Tarimo on this and holds that if the Church in Africa wants to fulfil her mission of transforming the continent through her proclamation of reconciliation, justice, love and peace, she should be seen as “a body that visibly lives, incarnates, and model [these qualities]. She must begin “from inside.” See Teresa Okure, “Church-Family of God: The Place of God’s Reconciliation, Justice and Peace,” in *Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: The Second African Synod*, 15.

¹⁶⁸Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 183.

¹⁶⁹Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 183. Abuh, The Church as Family of God.” 51.

3.5.2 Theme three: Communion, Solidarity and Warmth in Relationship: Family and Church working for Peace

The extended family according to Tarimo, is fundamentally the “living together” of people in peace, and of the same kin, who basically form “a community of brothers and sisters.”¹⁷⁰ Tarimo describes the African extended family as an expression of her communitarian cultural heritage which she must preserve.¹⁷¹

The peaceful existence of “biological bonds” in the extended family, and of the African philosophy of “interdependent relationships” among members, naturally constitutes the people into a “social train driven by communalism [and solidarity].”¹⁷² This peaceful communion and solidarity manifest in “the relationship of belongingness” is the result of an “initial commonness” in a progenitor.¹⁷³ Consequently, Tarimo argues that when anyone in the family is in pain, the entire family suffers, and “when a member of the family or clan is honored the whole group rejoices and shares in the glory.”¹⁷⁴ He contends that this solidarity is “not only psychological, as one rejoices [or is sad] when one’s local team has won [or lost] a match, but ontological: each member of the group is really part of the honour [or pain].”¹⁷⁵

This ontological “relationship of belongingness” and “commonness” also characterized the early Church who saw themselves as children of the same Father, and members of the one Body of Christ. They “shared a great deal and were significantly bonded together,” as brothers and sisters in the one family of Christ (Acts 4: 32-35).¹⁷⁶ In seeing each other as brothers and sisters, “the Christian community life . . . is corresponding to the mystery of

¹⁷⁰ The “living together” here is not limited to geographical togetherness, but abiding and collective consciousness of the family-community. Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and African Social Reconstruction*, 57.

¹⁷¹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and African Social Reconstruction*, 57.

¹⁷² Columbus Ogbujah, “The Individual in African Communalism” in *Perspectives on African Communalism*, Ike Odimegwu, ed. (Oxford: Trafford, 2007), 133.

¹⁷³ Pantaleon Iroegbu, “Individual-Community Dialectics in Communalism” in *Perspectives on African Communalism*, 145.

¹⁷⁴ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and African Social Reconstruction*, 57. Abu, “The Church as Family of God.” 49.

¹⁷⁵ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and African Social Reconstruction*, 57.

¹⁷⁶ Denise Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Bonded in Christ’s Love, Being a Member of the Church: An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (New York: Paulist, 1986), 38-44.

Christ or to the divine plan for the salvation of man,” namely unity with God and one another.¹⁷⁷ This communion ecclesiology of the early Church “in no way excludes leadership and authority; but authority must be filled with the Spirit, from which no Christian, man or woman, is excluded in principle on the basis of the baptism of the Spirit.”¹⁷⁸ Consequently,

For Abuh, arguing along the line of Tarimo, the baptismal foundation of this “loving union,” is because “concretely the Church proceeds from the one Body of Christ on the cross,”¹⁷⁹ who “by communicating his Spirit to them [in baptism,] made them mystically into his own body.”¹⁸⁰

It is therefore, on the basis of this comparative and dialogical engagement, between the Gospel and the culture that the African family value of communion and solidarity rooted in her common origin by birth, is helpful in the understanding of the mystery of this new family of God that was born by Christ on the cross. Thus, communion, solidarity and warmth in relationship will help the family and Church to facilitate peaceful coexistence in our society.¹⁸¹

3.5.3 Theme four: Division of Labor, complexities, Complementarities and Collaboration for Peace

For Tarimo, “The support and love provided in the African family is guaranteed by various domestic and social functions shared among the constituent members.”¹⁸² The grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, grandchildren and relatives have

¹⁷⁷ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline, 2006), 470-1.

¹⁷⁸ Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church with a Human Face: A New and Expanded Theology of Ministry* (London: SCM, 1985), 39.

¹⁷⁹ Heinrich Schlier, “The Pauline-Body Concept” in *Church: Readings in Theology*, ed. Albert Lapierre, Edward Wetterer, Bernard Verkamp and John Zeitler (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1964), 56.

¹⁸⁰ Francis A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe in: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 13-14.

¹⁸¹ Abuh, *The Church as the Family of God.*” 32.

¹⁸² Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 33.

unique roles into which the culture socializes them. The African “culture therefore structures and determines the way social institutions shape life as well as cultivated and imposed behaviour communally transmitted from one generation to another.”¹⁸³

Tarimo, argues that in traditional African society, “the grandfather is the head of the extended family and governs the entire extended family through guidance, advice, settlement of disputes and leading at family ceremonies.”¹⁸⁴ The grandmother joins him in the role of ensuring peace, unity and love, while taking care of grandchildren and also “supervising” their children’s own nuclear families. They are revered, respected and loved as elders by all members of the family, especially if they play their roles as the uniting and building force of the family. According to Tarimo, “The grandparents are supported and cared for by the father, mother, and children and are celebrated as source of wisdom and “pot of knowledge.”¹⁸⁵

The father is responsible for the food, shelter, education and security of the family with the primary role of mentoring his sons into responsible fatherhood. Therefore, the sons join their father as “apprentices” of fatherhood while functionally supporting the family. The mother in a general sense takes care of the domestic affairs of the family, while mentoring their daughters to become responsible women, wives and mothers. In addition to this, she also supports the father in the provision of food like vegetables. She also sees to the security of the family especially the female-child who is directly under her immediate guidance, and who supports the mother in her own role, while at the same time, preparing to be a mother. Other members of the family like uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews, as already discoursed are

¹⁸³ The Centre for Gender and Social Policy studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, “Culture, Gender and Development,” *A Report Submitted to the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP), Dakar, Senegal, October 2001*, <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/idep/unpan003342.pdf> [accessed 27/6/2018]

¹⁸⁴ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 163-64.

¹⁸⁵ There is a traditional pot used for conserving drinking water which also acts as “natural water coolant” in many parts of Africa. Thus, the phrase drinking from the pot of the elders is symbolic of the spring of wisdom which is believed to gush out from them because of their cumulative experiences over the years and also, the fact that they are closer to the ancestors who are believed can pass information through them to other members of the family. Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 163-64.

categorised into “grandfather,” “grandmother,” “mother,” “father,” “brothers” and “sisters,”¹⁸⁶ and function as such.

Though the traditional African family is seen by some anthropologists as: “viricentric (centred on man), patrifocal (focused on the father) and patrilocal (centred on the man),”¹⁸⁷ the functional exploration of the traditional African family above, shows a “great deal of gender-role relations, complementarity and collaboration for the common good of all in the family.”¹⁸⁸ There are negative aspects of the family life in Africa.

3.5.4 Theme five: Gender Inequality in the African Family: A challenge to peace

For Tarimo, Gender inequality must be addressed for true peace in Africa. This refers to the “unequal stratification of men and women in society. Gender differentiation, in this sense, is beyond roles played by each sex.”¹⁸⁹ It is fundamentally an interiorized presupposition that the male takes priority over the female and that he is entitled to expect subordination and submission from the female. This “interiorized presupposition” is predicated on the fact that human beings are in most cases, clones of their culture. The manifestation of this in Africa, is the “traditional acceptance of male child superiority over the female child”¹⁹⁰ even among African women.¹⁹¹ This “injustice of the construct of

¹⁸⁶ See “The Concept of the African family,” already discussed for details.

¹⁸⁷ See Nwabude, *Preparation for Marriage and Family life*, 92.

¹⁸⁸ This however, is not a dismissal of the presence of the cultural subordination of women in the traditional African family system. This will be examined in reference to the counter values of the African traditional family that need to be transformed by the Gospel of salvation. Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 163-64.

¹⁸⁹ Some people have argued that the issue of gender inequality is a Western misinterpretation of the African family where there a clear and differentiated roles between men and women. They further contend, that despite these differentiated roles mentioned earlier, there is also a dynamic relationship in roles between men and women as both could hold esteemed religious offices as diviners, seers and priests. They also argued that, the fact that God and divinities, are conceived either as male or as female in many parts of Africa shows that womanhood in the African religion and culture is treasured. See Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa social Reconstruction*, 22. See also Mbiti contends that in Africa women “are truly flowers in the garden. They give beauty, scent, and seed to life.” Mbiti, John. 1991. “Flowers in the Garden: The Role of Women in African Religion.” in *African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Society*, 59-72.

¹⁹⁰ Ritchie Ejiofor, “Women Liberation and Empowerment in Africa: Issue of the Day,” *Niger Delta World Congress Blog*, <http://www.nigerdeltaworld.com> [accessed 04/10/2020].

¹⁹¹ See Joseph Akinyele Omoyajowo, “The Role of Women in African Traditional Religion and Among the Yoruba” in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, 74. He states that “women themselves seem to have internalized this image of female inferiority and have therefore somehow taken male domination as the natural order of things.” I have seen several women crying, instead of rejoicing as tradition would expect after

gender relations in many cultures in Africa” has not only restricted the rights and privileges of women,¹⁹² but it undermines the profound dignity and equality of men and women before God. There is, therefore, need to allow the Gospel of salvation to challenge and liberate Africans from such anthropological perception that have subjected many women “to painful and agonizing situations.”¹⁹³ This proclamation is to be founded on the equality of men and women, following their equality in creation, “in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them’ Gen 1: 27; and by their salvation in Christ Jesus “Galatians 3: 28: ‘There is neither male nor female.’”¹⁹⁴ It is based on this, that *Ecclesia in Africa* states: Man and woman, although different, are *essentially equal* from the point of view of their humanity.”¹⁹⁵

3.5.5 Theme six: The Challenges of Small Christian Community (SCC) A Cradle for Life and Foundational for the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation in the African Church

The basic Small Christian Community which has its origin in the Latin American Church seeks to establish a place, where the notion of the Church as family and peacebuilding may be realized and the Christian life founded on the loving union of the Trinity can be better demonstrated and actualized. The Latin American Bishops said that The Christian ought to find the living of the communion to which he or she has been called, in the ‘base community,’ that is to say, in a community, local or environmental, which corresponds to the

child birth, because she has got many girls but no boy. Yet the person who gives birth to only boys is considered a great woman and the pride of the husband and kins, even when it is empirically true that the man determines the sex of the child. Marriages are challenged even today in Africa, because of the absence of a male child in the home. This implies, according to Rose Uchem, that “girls are devalued at birth while boys are preferred in the family; and a woman’s worth is linked to having or not having a child or especially a male child.” Rose N. Uchem, “Overcoming Women’s Subordination in the Igbo African Culture and in the Catholic Church: Envisioning an Inclusive Theology with Reference to Women” (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Foundation, Indiana, 2001), 66.

¹⁹² Bewaji “Narratives of Culture: Toward A Realistic Understanding of the Myths Surrounding Gender, Religion and Science” in *Perspectives on African Communalism*, 291.

¹⁹³ Okeke, *The Christian Pastoral Challenges of Widowhood Practices among the Igbo of Nigeria*, 1-49.

¹⁹⁴ Adrian Hastings, *African Catholicism: Essays in Discovery* (London: SCM, 1989), 38.

¹⁹⁵ *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 82.

“reality of the homogenous group and whose size allows for personal and fraternal contact among members.”¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, “The essential elements for the existence of Christian base communities are the leaders or directors. These can be priests, deacons, men or women religious, laymen [and women].”¹⁹⁷

Based on the nature and mission of the small or basic Christian community, as outlined by the Latin American Bishops in the “Medellin document”¹⁹⁸ cited above, Tarimo argues that “the solution to the problem of the local Churches in Africa” needs a grass-roots mobilization and education, with “the systematic formation of small Christian communities they can play a significant role in renewing the family.”¹⁹⁹ The reason for this is that a small Christian community is the primary place, in the words of Abuh, is the cradle, where the Church-family model as a viable model of liberation and human development can be better “realized, nurtured and the structure of the family can be transmitted and transformed through Christian values by strengthening family education through family narratives to the larger society.”²⁰⁰

3.5.6 Theme seven: The common good and ethnic loyalties in Africa: Quest for peace

How can the common good influence our ethnic loyalties for lasting peace in Africa? Many people consider the problem of ethnicity in Africa to be perennial. Most problems such as

¹⁹⁶Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), *Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Catholic Bishops Conference* (Washington: National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1970), 226. The ‘base Christian community’ is also called in Africa, “small Christian community,” “living Christian community,” “basic Christian Community,” or “basic family community.” See Uzukwu, *A Listening Church*, 112. The input of civic education at the grassroots level guarantees political and religious transformation. They can help the Basic Small Christian Communities to flourish, but churches are urged to participate in development and peacebuilding activities by initiating projects of human development governed by models that are people people-centered, participatory, community oriented and self-sustain. this is a theological vision that puts trust in the peoples’ ability to solve their problems instead of depending on secular aids. Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 182. See also Tarimo, “Religion and Civil Society: Challenges and Prospects for Eastern Africa,” *African Christian Studies*, vol. 25, no 1, (March 2009): 27-39.

¹⁹⁷Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), *Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Catholic Bishops Conference*, 112.

¹⁹⁸ The document is commonly called “Medellin document” because it was produced at the meeting of the Latin American Bishops’ Conference (CELAM) in Medellin, Columbia in 1968.

¹⁹⁹Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 184. See also Uzukwu, “The Birth and Development of a Local Church: Difficulties and Signs of Hope,” in *The African Synod*, 5.

²⁰⁰Abuh, “The church as the Family of God.” Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 184

favouritism, socio-political disorder, manipulation of ethnic identity for selfish gains, ethnic hatred, civil wars, and so forth, are all attributed to ethnicity. Although ethnic hostilities are constantly revealed in politically motivated murders, torture, unjustified imprisonment, disappearances, and denial of human rights for the targeted ethnic groups, a critical evaluation of positive and negatives aspects of ethnicity remains a taboo in public. Even in the Church ethnic tensions are strongly experienced. Yet, for unknown reasons, such a social problem has not adequately become a part of theological reflections. Perhaps, this is because the Church is an integral part of the problem.²⁰¹

Although many people, from the African perspective, speak about ethnicity in its degenerated form only a few scholars have really reflected seriously on its nature, development, and impact on social life. Some of the available literature on this subject, however, lack a critical examination of it in relation to the changing meaning of ethnic identity, ethnic loyalty, common good, political competition, and religion. Consequently, this situation, in a way, has accelerated the process of misinterpreting the whole phenomenon of ethnicity. From the position of Tarimo, the problem of ethnicity in Africa and its relation to peace and the common good can thoroughly be understood if we take seriously the following questions:

How is ethnicity related to the conflict of loyalties? And how has the dynamism of ethnic loyalty fashioned the African understanding of common good and politics? Has the Church managed to stand above ethnic loyalty and the tension it generates? How can we promote a constructive way of approaching the issue of ethnicity in contemporary Africa?²⁰²

For Tarimo, “many people, ethnicity stands as a symbol of communal identity, solidarity, security, familiarity, and cooperation. Be it in rural or urban areas, ethnicity remains a

²⁰¹ The internal administration of Churches has shown that their loyalty often lies more with their ethnic groupings rather than with religious faith. In times of problem, leaders take refuge in their ethnic groups. Many leaders in African churches are fearful and unwilling to raise a voice to denounce oppression. They are slow to challenge themselves, the Christian and the state. See Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 65.

²⁰² Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 64-5.

powerful force, although it varies like temperature, from time to time, depending on prevailing circumstances.”²⁰³

a) Ethnicity and Conflict of Loyalties: The Dynamics of peace

For Tarimo, “The problem of ethnicity in Africa is also linked with the question of competing loyalties.”²⁰⁴ In many parts of Africa, ethnic loyalties have risen above other loyalties. The reason is that during the colonial era there were a few economic or political incentives which ethnicity could offer. Today, ethnic loyalty may mean a quick promotion in one’s status especially in places of work. A good example here is the genocide that happened in Rwanda.²⁰⁵ In this event, Tarimo observed that “Christians could not appeal to their Christian conscience to address the hatred that existed between Hutus and Tutsis.”²⁰⁶ Even those in positions of authority like bishops could not raise their conscience above the criterion of ethnicity. Christianity, for many, is like a coat which can be put on only when it is needed; when it is not, it is forgotten in the wardrobe. This is the sign that Christianity is still on the periphery.

How can we integrate ethnic loyalty within the structure of State? In carrying out this project, the question that we have to struggle with should be: How can we reconcile ethnic loyalty with nationalism? To begin with, we have to acknowledge that a leader has commitments not simply to general values and ideals but also to concrete people. The process of decision-making and the kind of common good that we are committed to are heavily dependent on the persons and groups which claim one’s loyalty. Loyalty can be influenced by interest group, cultural group, religious group, or self-interest desires which use others as a ladder to acquire

²⁰³ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 64-5.

²⁰⁴ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 64-5.

²⁰⁵ Events in Rwanda in 1994 mark a landmark in the history of modern genocide. Up to one million people were killed in a planned public and political campaign. In the face of indisputable evidence, the United Nations Security Council failed to respond. Individuals and government could have prevented what was happening and did not do so. Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide* (London: Zed books, 2009), 32.

²⁰⁶ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 65.

popularity, power and wealth. Consequently, moral conflicts in public life can be fruitfully looked at as conflicts between these concrete commitments to various groups. As a way of demonstrating this point, the analysis of Abner Cohen on the relationship between African cultures and modern politics in urban areas reveals that:

Ethnic organizations camouflage or deny [their] existence in public and its members will adopt a low profile and attempt to fade into the general social landscape. At the same time, however, its members must know about one another and should be able to recognize one another as co-members in order to coordinate their activities in the interests of the group and to avail themselves of the privileges of membership. In other words, they have to be visible to one another, but invisible as a group in public.²⁰⁷

This concern brings us close to the question of the plurality of loyalties which an important clue in is exploring the relationship between ethnic loyalty and the common good in Africa.

A leader can only be just if he or she is able to find a balance between competing loyalties. This is possible by forming social structures that are founded upon the principle of overlapping loyalties. This is the only possibility that can keep leaders from becoming opportunists or persons who advocate interests of a particular group. This project entails weighing competing loyalties and competing goods and to act in a way which attends to their rightful claims. The question of respecting loyalties of ethnic communities is an important part of forming a cohesive political society. As such, the process of harmonizing competing loyalties must be achieved by maintaining a balance between the State and ethnic communities. This demand therefore brings us to the point of examining the relationship between ethnic loyalties and the common good.

²⁰⁷ Abner Cohen, *The Politics of Elite Culture: Explorations in the Dramaturgy of Power in a Modern African Society* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1981), 220.

b) The Relationship between Ethnic Loyalty and the Common Good for peace in Africa

Ethnicity for Tarimo “affects, directly or indirectly, our understanding of common good.

While ethnic sentiments may undercut the nationalistic approach, they may also be a force that enhances any sense of nationhood and common good.²⁰⁸ Despite the rhetoric of national unity, the typical African’s understanding of common good, solidarity, peace and community remains limited to the circles of particular ethnic groups. This situation shows that important issues such as how to form a nation based on traditional values and political consensus were not addressed sufficiently after independence. African leaders remained stuck in the political ideology of Uhuru (freedom). They did not know that the political struggle of Uhuru was a temporary ideology.

Involvement of an ethnic group in a bigger group like a State should be understood from the perspective that enables each ethnic group to develop deliberative powers and a sense of purpose in search for the common good. In this context, Tarimo understands that “access to a multiplicity of groups promotes a diversity of experiences and interests and enables each group to participate fully in the common structure laid down by consensus.”²⁰⁹ The idea of political consensus can articulate new perspectives and preferences which will eventually enter into the balancing process, dissolving political conflicts, and creating local institutions that guarantee fairness. This approach for Tarimo, “gives priority to innovation and change that articulates new perspectives and preferences that eventually seep into the balancing process, affecting the shape of interest groups.”²¹⁰ Pluralism protects rights of individuals, groups, and promotes cohesion and consensus based on consent. A balance of interests achieved by the free bargaining of groups in society creates a comprehensive conception of the common good and is thus a more equitable way of dealing with competition among

²⁰⁸ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 65.

²⁰⁹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 65.

²¹⁰ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 65.

ethnic groups and ensuring equal opportunity for all. Such an understanding, in turn, will enhance cooperation between different groups within the society.

The task of African societies for Tarimo, is therefore collectively to “envision and formulate a new concept of the common good based on ethnic identities, political consensus, and people’s consent.”²¹¹ To develop such a vision does not mean that ethnic differences must be denied. Not at all. What is important is to orient such identities toward an overlapping consensus which fosters the common good. This task entails developing a more profound unity that underlines ethnic differences. It is not a unity that imposes the sameness, but a unity that demands equality, freedom, participation, and creativity in the interest of moral good.

This way of proceeding, as I have mentioned earlier, is important because the African understanding of the common good is still frequently limited to the framework of the ethnic well-being. That is why most city-dwellers, as observed by Goran Hyden, are sensitive to the needs and interests centred on their village of origin and ethnic group. Place of birth and ethnicity are seen as having influence over cities, despite the fact that cities are the seats of power and wealth.

The understanding of the common good follows the same framework. Let me give a few examples to illustrate this point. In Nigeria, most appointments at the federal level are always based on ethnic or religious affiliations. During his reign, Mobutu Seseseko, the former president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (formally Zaire), used State funds to construct an airport in his village, Gbadolite. In the same way, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, the former president of Ivory Coast, built the State House and a basilica in his village, Yamoussoukro. The former president of Kenya, Daniel Arap Moi, constructed an airport in his home town, Eldoret, without considering economic priorities of the nation as a whole

²¹¹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 54.

these three examples show that “ethnic identities often remain the point of departure and basic building-block for the concept of common good that an African nation intends to pursue.”²¹²

c) Politicization of Ethnic Groups and the Abuse of Ethnic Consciousness: challenge to peace in Africa

Ethnicity for Tarimo “acts as a pole around which group members are mobilized and compete effectively for State-controlled power, scarce economic resources, and constitutional protections for peace and development.”²¹³ Ethnicity, as used in this context, refers to a subjective perception of common origins, historical memories, ties, and aspirations. Under the leadership of political opportunists, members of the ethnic group are urged to form an organized political action-group to maximizing their corporate political, economic, and social interests.

For Tarimo, conflicts involving ethnicity could be summed up as those advocating interests of culturally distinct peoples, [ethnic groups], or clans in heterogeneous societies who are “locked in rivalries about the distribution of or access to power, and in which those concerned have certain regions as their stronghold and tend to follow the strategy of ethno-nationalism.”²¹⁴ Most of the internal and political conflicts found in Africa involve ethnic groups struggling for control of their region (as it is the case in Angola, Kenya, Chad, Nigeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia), or even struggling to control the entire country (e.g., Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

For me, what happens is that ethnic groups engage themselves in a struggle for power and privilege with other ethnic groups within the political frameworks. In this battle, each ethnic group will tend to advocate its distinctiveness in different ways. Bear in mind that this

²¹² Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2005), 67.

²¹³ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 67.

²¹⁴ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 68.

phenomenon does not happen simply because of conservatism. Rather, ethnic groups are also interest groups whose members share some common economic and political interests. It is essential to note that people do not kill one another merely because of the cultural and ethno-regional differences. They kill each other when these differences are used to create divisions, unhealthy competitions and hatred between ethnic groups. The situation does not become explosive until such a climate of social relationship is extended to the socioeconomic and political spheres.

In different ways, ethnicity is often used by elite groups in socioeconomic and political competition. The factor of ethnicity plays a significant role in informal relationships. Ethnicity for Tarimo, “is a live political and economic issue. It is not just a mere cultural identity limited to friendship, marriage, and rituals.”²¹⁵ Some politicians at regional and national levels allocate to their ethnic groups considerable State resources to extend their influence and control. Without scruples, such politicians intend to maximize their support and their access to resources in competition with rival politicians through ethnic groups. Consequently, this practice breeds corruption, rivalry, hatred, and conflict between ethnic groups.

d) Ethnicity and the Church: Working for peace in Africa

The question of ethnic loyalty and ethnic tension for Munya, Jennifer and Mutukaa Samuel, “exist also in the Church and challenges it to do more for peacebuilding missions.”²¹⁶ This situation has robbed of the Church its ability to create a new community. According to D. W. Waruta, “most religious groups and denominations, closely scrutinized, are very [ethnic] in their composition and leadership. Those that happen to be multi-ethnic with a national

²¹⁵ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 68.

²¹⁶ With the failure of government and various NGOs-led peacebuilding strategies the Church is being indirectly invited to play a role and make its contribution of lasting solutions to the problems of conflict in 'Africa. The church is fully equipped to bring about a realization of peaceful co-existence among the different communities in Africa. This much-needed co-existence is a vital precursor to the achievement of sustainable development in the continent. Munya, Jennifer K and Mutukaa Samuel K, “The Role of the Church in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa” in *African Ecclesial Review* vol. 58. no. 1 & 2. (2016): 66-96.

outlook are plagued with internal (interethnic) conflicts”²¹⁷. Such a framework shows that the issue of ethnicity operates and creates tension in the Church as it does in the political arena. In view of trying to understand the operation of this phenomenon one has to find out the real causes of this situation. As far as the history of African Christianity is concerned for Tarimo, “this situation is linked to the method applied by certain missionaries of concentrating their effort of evangelization within a given ethnic group, thus producing a largely one ethnic denomination.”²¹⁸ In the process of maintaining their dominance, such ethnic groups tend to conduct their worship services in their ethnic languages, thus keeping out all others.

Concerning power distribution and administration, leaders such as bishops from the mainstream churches are often appointed and assigned duties basically on ethnic arrangements as more and more dioceses are created along ethnic boundaries. These churches are threatened by the clamour for each ethnic group to have its own bishop! Sometimes such arrangements are justified by language and cultural considerations.

On the same point, Aylward Shorter argues: it would be surprising if the Church were not both a victim and an accomplice of ethnocentrism. Up till now, Catholics have been reticent about the ways in which they have been affected by the “ethnic disease.” Church authorities approached the ethnic problem with extreme caution, creating ethnically encapsulated dioceses, and aligning with ethnically oriented governments. Even so, it was always possible to avoid appointing bishops who were ethnic outsiders, or who belonged to unpopular minority ethnic groups.

²¹⁷ David Waruta, “Tribalism as a moral Problem in Contemporary Africa” in *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity* Jesse N. K Mugambi and Ann Nasimiye-Wasike eds. (Nairobi: Initiative Publishers, 1992), 130.

²¹⁸ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 68.

Christians believe that the Church is “called to promote a multi-ethnic community of faith, where there is no Jew and gentile, but one family of God built on faith, love, and hope.”²¹⁹

This teaching, however, has not yet become a reality in Africa. The reason is that even the Church has not been untainted by (ethnicity) and therefore it too has lost the ability to create the new community . . . The challenge for modern Africa and particularly for the guardians of public morality who include the Church is how to confront this problem and transform it from a negative to a positive reality.

When Augustine Karekezi, a Rwandan Jesuit, was asked in an interview to link the role of the Church in Rwanda with what happened there in 1994 he said:

My faith as a Christian has been affected seriously, in the sense that I cannot realize that such evil could happen in a country where so many people are Christians and where there are so many Catholics (over 65 percent) with such influence in education. What have we been doing as Christians and as priests? How can we preach the love of God, the compassion of God, in this situation? All these questions rise from an experience of the deep mystery of evil, evil that is so consistent and so strong that its power is prevailing.

For me, one may deceive oneself by saying that the conflict of Rwanda was a unique case and that such questions do not apply elsewhere in Africa. The fact is that such questions cannot be limited to the Christians of Rwanda. The experience of Rwanda should be taken as a typical example to all Christians of Africa. The experience of Rwanda reminds us that all Christians from Africa are called to ask themselves serious questions especially about the relevance of their Christian faith in the earthly life. This means we have to scrutinize the kind of evangelization found in Africa—our preaching and celebration of sacraments in relation to social relationships—all these must be scrutinized very carefully. In addition, the question that can guide us in this reflection should be: Does our Christian faith make any

²¹⁹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 68.

difference in our everyday life? There is no way we can avoid confronting this question. To do that will be the same as trying to run away from the challenges of the earthly life.

The challenge of the African Church²²⁰ is how it can appeal to the gospel values to construct a new community with new social relationships. This is a serious challenge because the Church is considered to be a part of the problem of ethnic hatred and as such it has failed to stand above this situation. An expression which reveals this attitude says: “the blood of ethnicity is thicker than the water of baptism.” There are six points for Tarimo which support this attitude. First, for many years the Church has been using the structure of ethnicity for evangelization. Second, the Church has been reluctant to address the problem of ethnic hatred openly. Third, Bishops’ Pastoral Letters have not yet succeeded in transforming people’s consciences. This is because there is no cooperation and active participation of Christians from the grassroots communities as well as an integrated vision. Fourth, an ethnic bias is also held by some Church’s leaders. Fifth, with regard to social problems, the Church has failed to assume its commitment and to be self-critical. Sixth, there is no ecumenical collaboration in dealing with social problems.²²¹

We can conclude that the example of the Rwandan holocaust underlines the foreignness, artificiality, and ambiguity of the kind of Christianity found in Africa. This is not a condemnation, but a matter of fair examination of conscience. There is no doubt that the Church has failed to be the conscience of society in Africa. I do not, however, intend to

²²⁰ Most people generally define the church as the physical building, structures that are used by Christians for the purpose of worship, while others define it using conventional management perspective as an organization or institution. The church, in its broader sense, refers to Christ as Scripture states that he has put all things under his feet, and made him, as he is above all things, the head of the church; which is his body, the fullness of him who is filled, all in all. (Eph 1: 22-23). Moreover, as the husband is the head of the wife, so is Christ the head of the church, and he is the saviour of the body (Eph 5: 23). In Acts 2:41, the bible records that those who gladly received his word were baptized and that day about three thousand souls were added to them and praising God and having favour with all the people and the lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. Therefore, from the above biblical references, the church is understood as the body of Christ. It refers to the universal group of all people who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and saviour throughout the ages. See Munya, Jennifer K and Mutukaa Samuel K, “The Role of the Church in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa” in *African Ecclesial Review* vol. 58. no. 1 & 2. (2016): 66-96.

²²¹ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 68.

argue that Christianity is automatically able to overcome the sinful nature of a human being. My argument is that the Church has not done much to create even a minimum awareness to defend basic human values and rights. This situation has been created by the fact that the Church has done very little to link its mission with social questions. Furthermore, the kind of religious knowledge emphasized in Africa remains focused and entangled in theological propositions which concern mostly the nature of God and the “salvation of the soul.” This means the Church has more practical work to do in promoting integral human development which includes awareness in social justice, human rights, common good and social responsibility. In brief, the African Church ought to promote a “theology of life.”

3.5.7. Theme eight: Relationship between the Local and Universal Church: Collaborating for peace

Tarimo maintains that the need of self-transformation for churches from the local to the universal should be taken seriously for peacebuilding to succeed.”²²² According to him, “autonomy and communion in the Church is rooted in the very nature of the one faith in the risen Lord that has always been expressed differently by the believing community, based on their cultures and contexts as revealed in Scripture and Tradition.”²²³ The International Theological Commission validates this position: “Unity and plurality in the expression of the Faith have their ultimate basis in the very mystery of Christ that, while being at the same time a mystery of universal fulfillment and reconciliation (Eph 2:11-22), goes beyond the possibilities of expression of any given age and thus eludes exhaustive systematization (Eph 3:8-10).”²²⁴

²²² Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 180.

²²³ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 180-12.

²²⁴ International Theological Commission, *Unity of Faith and Theological Pluralism*, (1972), nn. 1& 9. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_1972_fede-pluralismo_en.html [accessed 19/02/2018].

Uzukwu traces the loss of the unity and plurality in the Church to the error, and confusion between unity and uniformity that began at the time of Constantine. He stated that “the Spanish, Franco-German, English, and Irish Churches had autonomous control of their life as the local Church in the eight century while at the same time supporting the primacy of Rome.”²²⁵

There is the fear, for Tarimo that is manifest in the theological debate about the “superiority” or “priority” between the universal Church and the local Churches.”²²⁶ According to him, the fundamental principle of relationship between the universal and the local Church is recognition of “the primacy of the Spirit,” working in the whole body of Christ, local and universal.”²²⁷ This he contends is because the “the local expression of the one faith in the one Church,” is in itself “the action of the Spirit,” who directs “the openness to variety in the realization of the one Church confessing the same faith.”²²⁸ Hence, he argues that the “presence of the Spirit in each local community, is both the basis for its autonomy and the link (communion) with the whole body of Christ.”²²⁹

What resources do religious communities need to become effective agents of social transformation and peacemakers and builders? One key way of doing this is through the small Christian communities. For Tarimo, as far as the formation of the citizen is concerned, the Catholic Church “recognizes the significance of developing practical

²²⁵ Uzukwu, *A Listening Church*, 57.

²²⁶ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 180-12.

²²⁷ Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa's Social Reconstruction*, 180-12.

²²⁸ Uzukwu, *A Listening Church*, 51.

²²⁹ See Uzukwu, *A Listening Church*, 107-8. It is within this understanding that Joseph Bracken holds that “the Spirit is the bond of love and source of interpersonal relations” in the Church. Consequently, the Church, universal and local is called to mutually listen to what the Spirit is saying “to” and “through” them to each other and the world. Bracken holds that through this communion and dialogue, “they are sharing in the never-ending dialogue between the Father, the Son and the Spirit as to the meaning of creation.” In this way, states Gaillardetz, the people of God will appreciate the fact that “each local Church not only receives from the universal Church but also offers to the Church universal its own particular gifts and insights as the geographical and cultural site in which the gospel is always being proclaimed, received and lived out.” See Joseph A. Bracken, *Triune Symbol: Persons, Process and Community* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985), 143-6; Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 107.

structures to help the Church fulfill its mission.”²³⁰ The Church is an effective instrument for raising social consciousness and maintaining a socially active presence. There is no doubt that the Church has been active in the work of conscientization and mobilization of the poor. This approach appears to be motivated by the fact that the Church is called to be more involved in concrete issues of social life. The Church is convinced that if socially responsive groups represent it, it can initiate practical steps in addressing social questions. In this approach, the Church draws its guidelines from the Catholic Social Teaching in search for appropriate method(s) to motivate Christians towards influencing and transforming social structures. In view of promoting social change, this approach encourages “Christians to actualize their gifts by appealing to Christian values and commitment in approaching socio-political and economic issues.”²³¹

The Church for Tarimo primarily teaches that our direct involvement in the effort of transforming social structures must be understood as a process of establishing the kingdom of God of which its goal is to transform all dimensions of human life. As such, “the approach of the Church in evangelization stresses the importance of maintaining a balance between different dimensions of human life.”²³²

Churches, through Small Christian Communities and other Church related organizations, can play a significant role in renewing the family. The structure of the family could be “transformed thorough Christian values by strengthening peace education through family narratives.”²³³ Ultimately, the transformation of the family structure and the proposed role of

²³⁰Tarimo, “Religion and Civil Society: challenges and Prospects in Eastern Africa,” *African Christian Studies*, 28.

²³¹Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 151. See also Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *African Issues: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 18-19. Julius O. Ihonybere, *Economic Crisis, Civil Society, and Democratization: The Case of Zambia* (Asmara: Africa World Press, 1996), 270-71. Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 254.

²³²Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction*, 151. See also Bernard Joinet, *Step by Step Towards Democracy* (Nairobi: St Paul Publications, 1997), 20.

²³³Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa’s Social Reconstruction* 185.

the churches establish a more pragmatic approach in addressing the African call for peace and economic development at the grassroots level.

According to Tarimo, the Small Christian community resumes its responsibility in the tradition of the New Testament Churches “when the community shows concern for the integral welfare of each and every Christian. . . Many Christians feel fully at home and cared for within their communities, [and] their gifts allowed fully developing for the witness of the kingdom and inspiring the idea of civil society operating for the common good.”²³⁴

Though Tarimo sees “ecclesiastical extravagance” as one of the greatest obstacles to economic progress²³⁵ and the entrenchment of the basic Christian community in the continent, it is worth noting that another great challenge is the fear that the “BCC” may become another independent group, within the parish, with a parallel mission. To overcome this fear, James O’Halloran states that the group should always be integrated “as a living cell within the parish,” and seen “as a reduced group in the parish with human warmth, where the gospel can be lived and people minister to one another in love.”²³⁶ The group on its part according to Pope Francis should “not lose contact with the rich reality of the local parish and participate readily in the overall pastoral activity of the particular Church.”²³⁷ He states that “this kind of integration will prevent them from concentrating only on the part of the Gospel or the Church, or becoming nomads without roots.”²³⁸

²³⁴Tarimo, “Religion and Civil Society: Challenges and Prospects for Eastern Africa”, *African Christian Studies*, 41.

²³⁵Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa Social Reconstruction*, 176.

²³⁶ See James O’Halloran, *Small Christian Communities* (Dublin: Columba, 2002), 166-9.

²³⁷*EvangeliiGaudium*, no. 29. The “particular Church” here refers to the parish, for according to John Paul II, “the ecclesial community, while always having a universal dimension, finds its most immediate and visible expression in the parish. It is there that the Church is seen locally.” See *ChristifidelesLaici*, no. 26.

²³⁸*EvangeliiGaudium*, no. 29.

3.5.8 Theme nine: peacebuilding and Dignity of the Human Person: Towards Liberation and Transformation in Africa

Tarimo's theological discourse on the ecclesiastical mission of liberation and transformation in Africa, from the Christian and African anthropology of the human person, whose identity is challenged by the many problems of the Continent, remains the dynamics and challenges to peace in the continent. Using the classical theology of the Fathers and the Scholastics, recovered in Second Vatican Council, he states that the dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1: 27; 2: 7), which though lost by sin (Gen 2: 17), has now been restored to its original beauty in Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.²³⁹

According to Ehusani, the emphasis of the *Imago Dei* doctrine as the foundation of human dignity could be seen in the writings of the early Church. He states that "whereas Paul emphasizes redemption in Christ as the source of human dignity (2 Cor 3: 18; 1 Cor 3: 16-17; 6: 19; Rom 5: 5), Peter dwells on the call of human beings to deification (2 Pt 1: 4), while John focuses on the love of God which made all children of God (1 Jn 3: 1)."²⁴⁰ The implication of this revelation, according to John, writes Ehusani, is that "if God so lavished his love on all human beings without exception, it means that everyone is lovable, and to belong to God is to love human beings (1Jn 4: 1-12, 20)."²⁴¹ This accounts for why James states, as Ehusani argues, that "the practice of religion that is not accompanied by a commitment towards a more wholesome humanity is 'worthless . . . pure, unspoiled religion, in the eyes of God our father, is this coming to the help of orphans and widows in their hardships (Jas. 1: 27; 2: 17)."²⁴²

²³⁹Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 175. Emmanuel "The Church as Family of God", 55.

²⁴⁰ George Omakwu Ehusani, *An Afro-Christian Vision "OZOVEHE!": Toward a More Humanized World* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 51.

²⁴¹Ehusani, *An Afro-Christian Vision "OZOVEHE!"*, 51.

²⁴²Ehusani, *An Afro-Christian Vision "OZOVEHE!"*, 51.

According to Tarimo, the human orientation toward communion with God and with one another, for the good of the earth which characterizes the Christian doctrine of the human person also defines African anthropology. In Africa, he asserts, “relationship is constitutive of the beings of humans,” because they see the human person as “fundamentally ‘being-with,’ ‘living with’ ‘belonging-to—. . .’ Communicability is the very essence of a person—*mothokemothokabethoka bang* (a human person is a human person because of others.”²⁴³ He also argues that in African anthropology “all the gifts or charisms given to the human person, including “the autonomy and rights of the individual subjects are enjoyed in relationship, in communication . . . for the construction of a better community.”

Tarimo contends that the prevalent violence as a result of “tribal and ethnocentrism,”²⁴⁴ the discrimination, oppression and subjugation of the weak and vulnerable, the “situation of misery and oppression,”²⁴⁵ occasioned by economic repression, unacceptable poverty and dictatorship in the midst of abundant resources, is predicated on the loss of the sense of our humanity, made in God’s image. ²⁴⁶ Ifeyinwa Ogbazi affirms this position, particularly in relation to the African values, attributing many outrageous crimes and difficult situations in the continent “to the loss of the essential humanness that is at the core of the predominant trait for which Africans are famous. . . . The inherent humanity of Africa that borders on his propensity to love, cherish and care.”²⁴⁷

For Tarimo, the need for peace is a huge challenge to African religious orientation and life and calls for this to be employed in defining the Church’s nature and mission in the continent,

²⁴³Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 43-44.

²⁴⁴Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and governance*, 44.

²⁴⁵Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and governance*, 45.

²⁴⁶ See Uzukwu, *The Listening Church*, 1-6. The “racial/ethnic divide that produces violence, poverty, and or even genocide as in the case of Rwanda questions the core of humanity: “For if humans reproduce such barbarism as recorded in Rwanda, thereby imitating wild animals, they have failed to imitate God, and consequently, have lost the image of God that they are supposed to be.” See Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, “Healing Memories: The Church as Agent of Reconciliation in the Service of the Kingdom,” *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, 9, no 1-2 (1997): 91.

²⁴⁷Ogbazi, “The African Writer and Her Craft: Aspects of Yvonne Vera’s Peculiar Feminist Vision,” 83.

“if Christ’s message has to be relevant to them.”²⁴⁸ He argues that it is through such a constructive encounter of revelation and culture of peace that the Christian faith “can truly wear an African garb.”²⁴⁹

Tarimo presented the methodology of peacemaking, and education, democratization and governance in Africa as the roadmap for peace in the continent. His work engages relational aspects of social life, awakens public conscience, and motivates public action. It comprehends the dynamics of social reconstruction and the call for common good and peace education in Africa. Tarimo evaluates the prevailing methodology of social reconciliation. It extends further the quest for appropriate methodologies by focusing on the attitude and character formation as an important aspect of addressing social conflict.

The analysis of the role of religion in the society could be recourse for the formation of the public conscience and enrichment to the art of social organization. The resources of the common good seek to empower and “display the Christian community as a credible agent of social transformation.”²⁵⁰ In doing this, Tarimo aims to establish that the theological construct, “peace-making, the care of the common good and social reconciliation,” is concrete and a reconstructive ethical framework “with a social liberating [and transforming] agenda.”²⁵¹

Tarimo’s thoughts are summarily on the need for peace education, and African church social reconstruction. He further dwelt on the need for forgiveness and tolerance, beginning from the family and the use of African models of peacebuilding which extends to the churches and community and leads to reconstruction. The importance of Small Christian Communities as

²⁴⁸Aquiline Tarimo, *African peace making and Governance*, 33.

²⁴⁹Tarimo, *African peace making and Governance*, 32.

²⁵⁰ElochukwuUzukwu, *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf& Stock Publishers, 1996), 141-2.

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²⁵¹Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*,vol. 23-35.

part of the ministry of peace and reconciliation in Africa is central to his work. This cannot be achieved without seeing the need to promote human rights and the common good always.

The challenges facing the extended family system in Africa and the inherent threat to peace were also considered. This ought to be vigorously pursued with human dignity as central and the liberation and transformation of the content for holistic development and peace at the core of peacebuilding initiatives

3.6 General Conclusion on Omonokua and Tarimo

Omonokua and Tarimo and reflections on peace envisages that if peace education is anything to go by, it is necessary that we seek out collaborators or workers of peace that will work towards conciliatory relations from the family to the wider society levels. Our responsibility is to be able to learn from the painful experiences of our cultures and come to the quick realization that in the long run society gains more from freedom of religion. In addition, it is the basis of a free constitutional and legal system as well as the foundation of a social order and peace.

Religion and ethnic affiliation can play integral roles in peacebuilding insofar as we acknowledge that the role of religion in public life is limited, and as such it must always be subjected to self-evaluation and critique. From the structural viewpoint, conflicts are symptoms of deep-seated problems that must be dealt with through the process of character formation and institutional reconstruction and transformation.

Tarimo on the need for on-going re-evaluation emphasizes peace education, human rights and the care of the common good for peace and transformation, while Omonokua advocates for dialogue for globalization, as an open door for heralding African values of peace within the family.

Peacebuilding for both theologians is a process of reconstructing relationships between individuals, social groups and communities. Such engagement involves the process of

integrated roles, functions and activities. Spiritualities of reconciliation and peacebuilding offer what statecraft cannot. Religious communities and leaders can directly support dynamics of democracy, justice, intra-group and community reconciliation processes. Through the paradigm of restorative justice, religion surpasses legal and retributive dimensions of justice. Religious communities can oppose intolerance through dialogue for life and action for Omonokhua and peace education for Tarimo. Education programmes and inter-faith dialogues can establish trust when dialogue partners perceive that they are not being dragged into doctrinal disputes and the fight for religious supremacy. In the next chapter, we shall consider the thoughts of Desmond Tutu of South Africa on peacebuilding.

Chapter Four

Desmond Mpilo Tutu and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Contribution to Peace Building in South African and beyond

4. Introduction

Having explored the works of two theologians from the Western and Eastern parts of Africa, (Omonokhua and Tarimo) in the previous chapter, Desmond Tutu of South Africa will be the focus in this chapter. This chapter will be divided into four parts. Part one will give the historical background to this study. It traces the life and writings and the person of Tutu. Furthermore, it explores the dark ages of apartheid and oppression in South Africa and ends with Tutu the minister his challenges. Part two will discuss the theology of Ubuntu, interfaith dialogue and other themes of Tutu. The third part will dwell on the theme of forgiveness which is very dear to the heart of Tutu. And finally, the fourth part will make a conclusion of selected themes Tutu used.¹

Forgiveness and reconciliation are prominent in politics and international relations in recent decades. One is likely to hear this discourse from both secular and spiritual leaders.² It was Tutu who remarked famously on the significance of forgiveness in reconciliation and peacebuilding. “Forgiveness is one of the key ideas in this world. Forgiveness is not just some nebulous, vague idea that one can easily dismiss. It has to do with uniting people through practical politics. Without forgiveness there is no future.”³ Alex Boraine,

¹Anthony Egan, “Government Beyond Rhetoric: The South African Challenge to the African Synod” in *Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace: The Second African Synod*, Orobator, ed., 95-104.

² Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethics for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 63-72. See also Gregory L. Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: a theological analysis*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995), 73-118) Martha Minnow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass violence*, (Boston: Beacon press, 1998) Luigi Accattoli, *When a Pope Ask for forgiveness: The Mea Culpas of John Paul* trans. Jordan Aumann, (New York: Society of St Paul, 1998). The Roman Catholic International Theological Commission Report, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, in *Origins*, no 48, 16th march, 2000. These books and documents call on both Church and secular leaders, and those involved in tragic conflicts to take on the spirit of forgiveness and resolve their conflicts through dialogue.

³ Desmond Tutu, “Forward: Without Forgiveness There is No Future” in *Exploring Forgiveness* ed. Robert D. Enright and Joanna North (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), xiii-xiv.

corroborated what Tutu said that “Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) in such post-conflict situations across the world are noteworthy, all intent on coming to terms with the past in a way that makes a different future possible.”⁴ Tutu from the beginning makes it clear that “we here in South Africa are a living example of how forgiveness may unite people.”⁵

This work gives a general examination of the meaning, paradoxes, historical and theological analysis of the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation, arguing for its relevance in peacebuilding. We will examine more practical and contextual matters by exploring on the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation in the contemporary post-conflict situation in South Africa, with specific reference to the current lively discussion on whether TRC might offer a space and a way for people there to deal publicly with the wounds of the past.

It was Tutu who remarked on the significance of the family in peacebuilding thus: “we are members of one family, the human family, God’s family. Imagine how much better the world would be, were we all to recognize our common humanity, a decent and stable family life.”⁶Tutu’s consistency birthed freedom from apartheid in South Africa and thereafter launched the unprecedented Truth and Reconciliation process in the country.

⁴Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22.

⁵Desmond Tutu, “Forward: Without Forgiveness There is No Future” in *Exploring Forgiveness*, xiii.

⁶ Tutu sees the Church as a family. The wonderful thing about family is that you are not expected to agree about everything under the sun, but those disagreements, do not destroy the unity of the family. What is needed is to respect one another’s point of view and not to impute unworthy motives to one another or to seek to impugn the integrity of the other. Desmond Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God. The Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 118-21. Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 33. See also Tutu, “What it means to be Human” *Anti-Barbaric Coalition (ABC) in America*, 14th June 1995.

PART ONE

4.1 Tutu's Life and Writings

Desmond Mpilo Tutu is a South African Anglican Archbishop and theologian, Nobel Peace Winner in 1984,⁷ and Social Rights Activist. According to John Allen, in the Authorized biography of Tutu, "He was born on 7 October 1931 in Mokoateng in Transvaal, South Africa's North West province, to Zachariah Zelilo Tutu, and is Xhosa speaker, and Aletta Dorothea Marvoetsek Mathlare, a was a Motswanaha, from the Sotho-Tsawana linguistic group."⁸ Tutu, who adopted Xhosa as his mother tongue, was a child born of diversity; he has celebrated this discovery through a genome project that revealed that his "genetic lineage, primarily from the Sotho-Tswana and Nguni language groups, could be traced back to the Khoi San people."⁹

Tutu has written about the unconditional love that shaped him, but was to recall "the hard tangle of emotions that I bring to the memory of my father's acts of violence"¹⁰ as he tried to "forgive himself for refusing to speak to his father before he died."¹¹ Racist jibes angled at Tutu on the street cut deep, as did the humiliation by whites that he witnessed his father endure, and these wounds would take a lifetime to salve. But in the process Tutu proved

⁷The Desmond Tutu International Peace Lecture was conceived as an annual opportunity to take stock of issues critical to the sustainability of our species and our planet. It is an opportunity to assess our adherence to the values of respect, compassion, fairness, Ubuntu and celebration of diversity. Our family, the human family, is the custodian of an increasingly consumptive and fragile world. The gap in the quality of life between rich and poor is a widening chasm. We are destroying our environment in order to lay our hands on the mineral and fuel riches contained in our soil. We are destroying nations in the quest for power over the resources that we believe will ensure our security. The Peace lecture is intended to stimulate engagement and translate into action the vision and values of Archbishop and Mrs Tutu. The 6th Annual International Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture was held on Archbishop Tutu's 85th birthday, on 7 October 2016. The lecture was presented by award-winning Pakistan Supreme Court advocate and human rights campaigner Ms Hina Jilani. The topic she addressed was: "Talking intolerance: Building a culture of inclusivity in a diverse society". See Ms HinaJilani, <https://www.tutu.org.za/peace-lecture>[accessed 9/04/2018].

⁸ Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 10.

⁹ Gary Styx, 'Archbishop Tutu Gets Sequenced – and Finds a Surprise in His Ancestry', *Scientific American*, February 2010.

¹⁰Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 33.

¹¹ Desmond Mpilo Tutu and Mpho Tutu, 'An Invitation to Wholeness', in *Made for Goodness – and Why This Makes All the Difference*, 151.

indomitable. The Nobel Peace Committee noted that his award renewed recognition of the ‘courage and heroism demonstrated by black South Africans in their use of peaceful methods in the struggle against a racist regime’.¹²

His father was a teacher, and he himself was educated at Johannesburg Bantu High School. After leaving school he trained first as a teacher at Pretoria Bantu Normal College and in 1954 he graduated from the University of South Africa. After three years as a high school teacher he began to study theology, being ordained as a priest in 1960. The years 1962-66 were devoted to further theological study in England leading up to a Master of Theology. From 1967 to 1972 he taught theology in South Africa before returning to England for three years as the assistant director of a theological institute in London. In 1975 he was appointed Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, the first black to hold that position. From 1976 to 1978 he was Bishop of Lesotho, and in 1978 became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. (SACC) Tutu is an honorary doctor of several leading universities in the USA, Britain and Germany. He is the author of some books¹³ and there are also biographies about him. Tutu dwells on Reconciliation as the path beyond violence in his South African context.

4.1.1 Tutu's Arguments by selected themes

In this exposition of Tutu's thoughts, I will follow some ten selected themes which include one: The dark days of Apartheid, violence and political oppression as absence of Peace. Secondly, I will consider Tutu the Minister (Priest) and his challenges. Thirdly, the TRC and Tutu's Theology of Ubuntu as a dimension of African community, culture and humanness

¹² Tutu, 'Nobel Lecture'. 4.

¹³Some of his publications include: Desmond Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving* (London: Happer Collins Publishers, 2014). *No Future Without Forgiveness: A Personal Overview of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (London: Happer Collins, 2001). Tutu, *Hope and Suffering*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 117. *An African Prayer Book*, (New York: Doubleday, 1995). *God is not a Christian: and other Provocations* ed. John Allen. (New York: Harper One, 1992). *The Rainbow People of God. the Making of a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

Desmond Tutu: Rabble-Rouser for Peace ed. John Allen (Chicago: Free Press, 2008). (New York, NY: Harper One, 2011), *In God's Hands* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015). *Crying in the Wilderness: The Struggle for Justice in South Africa* ed. John Webster (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2002).

will be analysed. Fourthly, Ubuntu of Desmond Tutu: Vague or valuable concept? Will be critiqued. Fifthly, the Pleas for interfaith tolerance in South Africa will be analyzed. The Sixth theme will treat the TRC response as dignity and human rights at the centre. I will then turn to a critique of Tutu's TRC in South Africa by Tarimo. The eight theme will discuss Forgiveness as the core of peacebuilding and the ninth will furthermore analyse forgiveness and healing as a gift and call: Requirements for genuine reconciliation and peace. Finally the tenth theme will make a journey with Tutu on the significance of forgiveness and walking the Fourfold Path. I will give a brief background to his thoughts and approach before I develop each of these themes.

4.1.2 Background to the main Approach, Significance and Nature and the person of Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The person of Tutu himself was important, and perhaps decisive, to the outcome of the peace movement in South Africa. Tutu's upbringing was rough. A sewage bucket system was in operation and a candle lit the home at night as his mother cooked on coal or paraffin stoves. Like many other African boys, he played soccer barefooted in the streets with an old tennis ball and was a typical street urchin.¹⁴Tutu looks at the history of the struggle against apartheid through the lens of religious belief, in particular the doctrines of forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption. How did he embody the virtues he sought to evoke and instil in his countrymen and their political institutions? Tutu's theology shaped decisively by an older ecumenical-indeed interfaith-heritage and forged in the vortex of struggle, helped give specificity to themes such as forgiveness, hope and reconciliation, thereby adding to the wealth of theological insight available to the broader peace discourse.

¹⁴Tutu, *The Plight of South Africa's Children*, ed. Paul Alberts, (Pretoria: National Children's Rights Committee and UNICEF, July 1995).Tutu experienced first-hand what it was like to live with inadequate housing, for even after he had been ordained and had his first curacy (in 1960 at St Alban's Church in Benoni), living conditions for his wife and three children were not good. They lived in a garage, which served as main bedroom, children's room, sitting room and dining room, with a small second room used as a kitchen. See Du Boulay, *Tutu, Voice of the Voiceless*, 55.

Tutu deliberately going far beyond human limitations enabled South Africa, torn apart by the wrongs of apartheid, to encompass a new vision for their country. he tried to explore the power of forgiveness, personal and cooperate, to transform the fabric of a society divided by hate. Themes of restitution, remembering, repentance, justice, love, reconciliation and healing are related to the concept of forgiveness. Also examined are the roles played by the majorities and minorities, churches, organisations, involved in the fight for a fairer society.

His thoughts emphasize the principle that “a person depends on other people to be a person.”¹⁵ This understanding preserves an element of inculturation, building directly from a traditional African worldview that speaks of recovering the “primordial harmony” of God’s creation.¹⁶ Tutu also sees reconciliation as retaining a liberative dimension. For him, “black consciousness and black theology had to affirm blackness as a part of God’s creation and restore dignity to the African person before genuine inter-racial reconciliation could be possible in South Africa.”¹⁷

Tutu’s life and the vicissitudes of the TRC have a similar history. Both have been a locus of suffering and have etched on their souls the same marks that afflicted the greater community; both have been the object of rejection born of the suspicion that each served. Both have ultimately known their hour of vindication and created a space that presaged a model of reconciliation. To the degree that the TRC acts as a lens for understanding South Africa, Tutu is also a lens for the religious understanding of the TRC and the broader process of reconciliation in South Africa.

Tutu’s belief in the goodness of the human person still stands as a challenge, and sometimes a reproach, to the thinking about critical issues such as forgiveness, reconciliation that emerged in the post-apartheid era. Despite the acknowledgment of past wrongs in South African

¹⁵ Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu; Theology of Desmond Tutu* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1997),150.

¹⁶ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999), 264.

¹⁷ Michael J. Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu; Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 137. Brian Frost, *Struggling to Forgive: Nelson Mandela and South Africa’s Search for Reconciliation* (Harper Collins Publishers, 1998), 33.

history, Tutu holds on to an optimism grounded in a theology that refuses to put limits on God's grace and is therefore constantly open to being surprised by the power of that grace.

Such optimism holds our hope, expecting the unpredictable to materialize. This refusal to place limits on God's grace seemed to gain greater depth in Tutu's theology during the TRC and was directly related to a fundamental, unshakeable belief in human goodness, as evidenced in Tutu's appreciation of the victim capacity to forgive and to refuse to be consumed by hatred and bitterness. John Allen, one of his biographers observed: "Tutu remained true to an understanding of the idea of the transformative power of suffering."¹⁸

Tutu was not alone in believing that the innate goodness of a critical number of people was enough to hold the country together and to form a base for constructing a radically new social edifice. In a speech to parliament, late president Nelson Mandela remarked:

There are many theoretical debates about the meaning of democracy that I am not qualified to enter. A guiding principle in our search for and establishment of a non-racial inclusive democracy in our country has been that there are good men and women to be found in all groups and from all sectors of society; and in an open and free society those South Africans will come together to jointly and cooperatively realise the common good.¹⁹

Tutu's theology of the prodigality of grace and the saving power of human goodness, especially as manifested in the magnanimous forgiveness by victims of gross human rights violations, gave him the platform to appeal to the perpetrators of abuses. He urged then to allow grace to work its transformation in them. To that end, Tutu refused to give up on the possibility of any individual's conversion.²⁰

¹⁸ Tutu would single out witnesses who embraced forgiveness and made their stories his leitmotif, John Allen, *Desmond Tutu: Rabble-Rouser for Peace* (London: Rider Books, 2006), 342.

¹⁹Address by Nelson Mandela during a joint sitting of Parliament to mark 10 years of democracy in South Africa, Cape Town, 10 May 2004 http://www.mandela.gov.za/mandela_speeches/2004/040510_democracy.htm [accessed 19/04/2018].

²⁰ John Allen notes that Tutu resolutely resisted declaring that those responsible for atrocities were beyond redemption. They were guilty of monstrous even diabolical deeds. But that did not turn them into monsters or demons. To have done so would mean that they could not be held morally responsible for their dastardly deeds. Monsters have no moral responsibility. Allen, *Rabble Rouser for Peace*, 355. Antjie Krog, a well-known

He understands that the forgiveness of the victim offers hope and healing to the perpetrator. It was Tutu who declared that “Forgiving is not forgetting; it’s actually remembering and not using your right to hit back. It’s a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don’t want to repeat what happened.”²¹ This thought was reflected in the TRC’s character as a victim centred process in which victims held the key through their generosity of spirit to humanize the perpetrators. In this Tutu comes close to the understanding of liberation theology as proposed by Gustavo Gutierrez, who reminds us that the victims represent the project of humanity and the quest for the new self, society and history. For Rebecca Chopp “The poor and the victims represent the universal solidarity of all humanity in the historical project of the quest for new ways of becoming.”²²

Tutu’s political and personal experience as chairman of the TRC, kindled by the mixture of religion and government, led him to propose a new political model of religion, one in which faith, truth and reconciliation and political power were sundered from each other for the sake of peace. The TRC of Tutu thus created a political context for religion, which both allowed and required religious communities to live with each other peacefully despite a political and social divide.

As we shall explore his thought later, under Tutu’s leadership the TRC testimonies functioned in much the same way, not only contributing to our understanding by publicizing submerged truths but also by acknowledging the validity of excluded experiences and the

journalist who covered the TRC would call Tutu “the compass of the TRC.” Although his theology and its impact on the commission would be deeply contested by both the political and religious left and right, part of being called the commission’s compass was linked to the fact that he deliberately sought to use the process of truth telling to foment changes in behavior, in outlook and values, and so created the space, through the commission, for victims and perpetrators to meet, for stories to be reconciled, for knowledge to be gained, and to begin a journey of engagement and through that to move towards at least a measure of inner peace and increase the prospects for reconciliation. Allen, *Rabble Rouser for Peace*, 370.

²¹ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 33.

²² Rebecca Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering* (New York: Orbis Books, 1986), 61.

validity of the identities shaped by that suffering. I will now examine the selected themes in Tutu's works.

4.2 Theme one: The Dark Days of Apartheid, Violence and Political Oppression: Absence of Peace

For Tutu, "Our understanding and acknowledgment of the past is a prerequisite for constructing a different type of future. Violence characterized a major period of South Africa and shaped or misshaped its history."²³ Under apartheid, Tutu saw himself as an 'interim leader' in the political arena, providing direction only because many other leaders were in prison, in exile, or under house arrest. After Botha's successor, F. W. de Klerk, unbanned liberation movements and released Nelson Mandela and other leaders from prison in February 1990, Tutu assumed a stance of "critical solidarity" towards them, supporting their demands for democracy but reserving the right to criticize them. As power began to shift towards the liberation movements during negotiations on a democratic constitution, old patterns of influence and privilege crumbled, leading to instability and intra-communal violence in black communities fomented by elements within the apartheid government fighting to retain power. Tutu reflects on the oppressive system of apartheid in these words: "Under apartheid, a small white minority had monopolised political power, which gave it access to all other kinds of power and privilege."²⁴ Tutu continues in much the same vein, "It had maintained its tight control by vicious and immoral means. This white minority used a system of pigmentocracy to claim that what invested human beings with worth were a particular skin colour, ethnicity and race. Since these attributes were enjoyed by only a few, the pigmentocracy was exclusive to a limited number of all human beings."²⁵ Furthermore

²³The violence during the Apartheid regime in Natal, Transvaal, Soweto and other parts of South Africa can be summed up in the words of Tutu as the nadir of despair. For more details of this tragic past see Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 209-19.

²⁴Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 10.

²⁵ Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 10.

Tutu narrated “Laws such as the Group Areas Act,²⁶ and the pass law²⁷ which segregated residential areas racially were enforced in these dark days.”²⁸

South Africa was characterized by a growing number of overt public displays of racism which have prompted a series of national introspection in South Africa around the level of progress made in achieving a non-racist society since apartheid ended.

Tutu recalled the dark days of violence, as he narrated the turning point in South Africa, after Nelson Mandela was released from prison. He also discussed his subsequent election and swearing in ceremony on 27th April 1994 in Pretoria: “the day for which the struggle against apartheid had been waged, for which so many of our people had been tear-gassed, bitten by police dogs, struck with quirts and batons, tortured, banned, imprisoned, sentenced to death and driven into exile is here”.²⁹ It was a country or what he called a sad land whose soil was soaked with the blood of so many of her children. For Tutu “This was indeed a watershed in the history of South Africa, where violence had become endemic.”³⁰

This was a country with a shocking high level of political intolerance that had already cost innumerable lives. It had been brinkmanship of an appalling nature. Tutu reflects on the role and supremacy of God in the scheme of things in South Africa:

There had been so many a moment of the past, during the dark days of apartheid’s vicious awfulness, when I had preached, ‘This is God’s world and God is in charge!’ Sometimes when evil seemed to be about to overwhelm goodness, I had only just been able to hold on to this article of faith. It was a kind of

²⁶Though Tutu was an Archbishop of the metropolitan of the Anglican Church in South Africa, and Nobel laureate, he was told he could not occupy the Bishops court, his official residence with his family unless he had first obtained a special permit exempting him from the provisions of the Group Areas Act. He however refused to apply for such permission. No charges were preferred against him eventually by the apartheid government for contravening the law. See Tutu, *No future without forgiveness*, 2.

²⁷This pass law by strictly controlling the movement of blacks prevented them from selling their labor freely in an open market; thousands of blacks were arrested daily under the iniquitous pass law system, which severely curtailed their freedom of movement. These vicious laws turned the Bantustans (Black homelands) into an inexhaustible reservoir of cheap labor. Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 13-16, 182.

²⁸ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 182.

²⁹ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 1.

³⁰ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2.

theological whistling in the dark and I was frequently tempted to whisper in God's ear, 'for goodness sake, why don't you make it more obvious that you are in charge?'³¹

Tutu voted for Nelson Mandela in a ghetto township in South Africa in these words: "I wanted to demonstrate my solidarity with those who for so long had been disenfranchised, those living daily in the deprivation and squalor of apartheid racially segregated ghettos. After all, I was one of them."³² After casting his vote, he recounted that the atmosphere was wonderful and a vindication for all those who had borne the burden of repression, the little people whom apartheid had turned into the anonymous ones-faceless, voiceless, counting for nothing in their mother land-whose noses had been rubbed daily in the dust. They had been created in the image of God but their dignity had been callously trodden underfoot everyday by apartheid minions, and by those others who perhaps said they were opposed to apartheid but had nonetheless gone on enjoying the privileges and huge benefits that apartheid brought them-just because of an accident of birth, a biological irrelevance: the colour of their skin.³³ Tutu painfully maintained that, "I had kept saying in the dark days of apartheid's oppression that white South Africans would never be truly free until we blacks were free as well."³⁴

Furthermore he emphasized:

I would say we South Africans will survive and prevail only together, black and white bound together by circumstance and history as we strive to claw our way out of the abyss of apartheid, races, up and out, black and white together. Neither group on its own could make it. God has bound us together, that land that had confounded all the prophets of doom by making a remarkable peaceful transition from repression and injustice to democracy and freedom.³⁵

³¹ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2.

³² Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2.

³³ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2.

³⁴ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 2.

³⁵ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 6.

Tutu remarked triumphantly after voting. It was as if it occurred to all of us simultaneously that the war machines that had for so long been ranged against us were now ours-no longer just theirs, that this was indeed now our country in the profoundest possible way. He eulogised Mandela, in these words, recounting the dark days of apartheid. “He invited his white gaoler to attend his inauguration as an honoured guest, the first of such spectacular gestures he made that showed his breath-taking magnanimity and willingness to forgive. He has been a “potent agent for the reconciliation he urged his compatriots to work for and which was central to the purpose of the TRC he appointed to deal with our country’s past.”³⁶ The freedom for Mandela, and the subsequent election was the peak of Tutu’s ministry and calling. He remarked conclusively, “We had been wonderfully blessed in that we had seen what we could only have hoped would happen one day in our lives, to see our land and its people emancipated from the shackles of bondage to racism.”³⁷

Tutu lamented on the level of violence perpetrated in South Africa thus, “An estimated fourteen thousand people were killed between Mandela’s release and his accession to power in 1994.”³⁸ Tutu became best known in this period for what Mandela called “his independent mind”, reflected most eloquently in his sermon at St. George’s Cathedral, Cape Town, he stated quite clearly: “It seems as if the culture of violence is taking root in our society. We are becoming brutalized and almost anesthetized to accept what is totally unacceptable. If this kind of violence that keeps erupting at regular intervals continues, then the new South Africa may dawn-and that is doubtful.”³⁹ But it may dawn and there will be very few around to enjoy it; and those who survive will do so only because they are tough, on the basis of the laws of the jungle: survival of the fittest, eat or be eaten, devil takes the hindmost.

³⁶ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 7.

³⁷ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 7.

³⁸ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 169.

³⁹ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 170.

Understanding the past is the starting point for establishing truth and for any strategies for effective peacebuilding. With violence so large on the nation's landscape and in its psyche, it was wholly appropriate that an investigation into the violence implicit in the gross violation of human rights committed between 1960 and 1994 was the key task of the TRC. In that sense it was recognized almost as a sign of the time, as the defining feature that would ultimately provide a frame of reference for understanding a society at a particular moment. For William Everett, "The TRC's official proposals have been to promote national unity and reconciliation. The foundational legislation prescribed that the commission was to do this through uncovering the truth about gross human rights violations under apartheid and deciding on amnesty and reparations for individuals."⁴⁰ The memories of this violence and destruction framed the history of South Africa for generations."⁴¹

4.2.1 Theme Two: Tutu the Minister (Priest) and his Challenges

Tutu's intimate communion with God was to prove a powerful weapon, used to good effect when he famously warned apartheid Prime Minister John Vorster of "a point of no return before a bloody denouement was reached."⁴² The warning came a month ahead of the June 1976 uprising in Soweto, and Tutu was aware of the Old Testament's Scripture against "false prophets". (1kg: 22 Mtt 24:4-5 He was able to distinguish between God's voice and his own."⁴³ Tutu's mission, like that of the prophet Moses, was to carry the word of God to his people. Casting oneself as a liberation prophet undoubtedly requires a leap of faith. Tutu's African philosophy translates simplistically as love and acceptance, which create the conditions for the realization of a shared humanity. These are the working tools of ubuntu,

⁴⁰William J. Everett, "Going Public, Building Covenants: Linking the TRC to Theology and the Church," in *Facing the Truth: south African Faith communities and the Truth and Reconciliation commission*, ed. James Cochrane, John de Gruchy, and Stephen Martin (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999), 156.

⁴¹Solomon Johannes Terreblanche, *A History of Inequality of South Africa, 1652-2002* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2002), 197. See also Don foster, *Detention and Torture in South Africa: Psychological, Legal, and Historical Studies* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987), 12.

⁴² Desmond Tutu, "A Growing Nightmarish Fear: An Open Letter to Prime Minister BJ Vorster", 6 May 1976, in Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 11.

⁴³ Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 154.

translated from isiXhosa as “a person is a person only through other persons.”⁴⁴ This is Tutu’s essential message. He traces its origins to the Old Testament’s Book of Leviticus, citing the creed of Moses.⁴⁵ Tutu found that after retirement in 2010 he was unable ‘to shut up’.⁴⁶ He discovered that if he did not speak out against injustice, it was ‘as if the word of God burned like a fire in my breast’.⁴⁷ He insisted that he was not confrontational by nature, but instead propelled by circumstances into the combative campaign that he was to continue to wage well into his eighties.

As Chair of the Elders, an independent group of global leaders working for peace,⁴⁸ Tutu pursued a wide range of targets, including nuclear proliferation, sexism and child marriage. In September 2012, Tutu cancelled his commitment to take part in a leadership summit in Johannesburg, refusing to share a platform with former British Prime Minister Tony Blair. He argued that Blair and former US president George W. Bush should face charges of war crimes for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, conducted without a UN Security Council mandate. Tutu raged against the lopsided world order that allows a warmonger such as Blair to be unleashed on leadership summits while recommending, for instance, that Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe should be tried at The Hague and that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden should be killed. Assessing Tutu’s campaign, Nelson Jones in the *New Statesman* astutely probed the nature of his “peculiar sort of soft power’, which he argued ‘owes little to any

⁴⁴ Desmond Mpilo Tutu, ‘Ubuntu: On the Nature of Human Community’, in *God Is Not a Christian*, 20.

⁴⁵ Desmond Tutu, ‘Oh God, How Long Can We Go On?’, speech at Steve Biko’s funeral, 25 September 1977, in Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 20.

⁴⁶ Desmond Tutu, foreword to *God Is Not a Christian*, p. xi.

⁴⁷ Desmond Tutu, foreword to *God Is Not a Christian*, p. xi.

⁴⁸ The Elders is a group that works to promote human rights. The idea of founding a group of elders dedicated to solving global problems was introduced by entrepreneur Richard Branson and musician Peter Gabriel. Nelson Mandela, South Africa’s first democratic president, with the help of Graça Machel and Tutu, brought the group together and formally launched it in July 2007; Mandela remains an Honorary Elder in 2013. The group was chaired by Tutu for six years until he stepped down in May 2013; he too remains an Honorary Elder. The group is chaired by Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General and Nobel peace laureate, and includes Mary Robinson, Ireland’s first woman president; Graça Machel, Mozambique’s first minister of education; Jimmy Carter, former president of the United States and Nobel peace laureate; Fernando Cardoso, former president of Brazil; Gro Harlem Brundtland, first woman prime minister of Norway; Lakhdar Brahimi, former foreign minister of Algeria and UN troubleshooter; Ela Bhatt, pioneer of women’s empowerment and grassroots development in India; and Martti Ahtisaari, former president of Finland and Nobel peace laureate. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 11.

formal position and everything to personality, an image of saintliness and a high media profile”.⁴⁹

Tutu’s Nobel acceptance speech attempted to deal with the position of the Church after the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) declared that they had no option but to carry out an armed struggle:

We in the South African Council of Churches have said we are opposed to all forms of violence – that of a repressive and unjust system and that of those who seek to overthrow that system. However, we understand those who say they have had to adopt what is a last resort for them. The South African situation is violent already, and the primary violence is that of apartheid.⁵⁰

Although Tutu was harassed by security police, he was also shielded by his high-profile position in the Church. Tutu has been accused of hubris, of narcissism, as well as of conservatism. The latter has confronted him, aware of the danger of self-aggrandizement, the insecurity that propels arrogance, and the need to keep his own ego in check. Tutu has confessed to ‘a horrible but human weakness in that I want very much to be loved – this “desire to be loved can become an obsession and you can find you are ready to do almost anything to gain the approval of others.”⁵¹ Accusations of populism leveled against Tutu by South African presidents Nelson Mandela (1994–99) and Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008) did no harm to the prophet’s image; his was the podium of truth. Tutu remains an enigmatic figure, describing himself as “a ventriloquist for causes. He has said that his ideas were largely inspirational, and that he was not a deep thinker.”⁵² However, his writings and speeches belie

⁴⁹ Nelson Jones, ‘Tony Blair v Desmond Tutu: Who Has More Moral Authority?’ New Statesman blog, 3 September 2012, www.newstatesman.com/blogs/politics/2012/09/tony-blair-v-Desmond-tutu-who-has-more-moral-authority. (Accessed 19-1-19).

⁵⁰ Tutu, ‘Nobel Lecture’ 33.

⁵¹ Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams, ‘Seeing with the Eyes of the Heart’, in *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (London: Rider, 2004), 84.

⁵² Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 33.

this claim. They also provide links to the sources of his ideas. I will now discuss his teachings on Ubuntu, interfaith dialogue and other themes in the next part.

PART TWO

4.2.2 Theme Three: The TRC and Tutu's Theology of Ubuntu as a Dimension of African Community, Culture and Humanness

As a culture, “Ubuntu is attributed to the longings of African people for communal bonds that Researchers aspire to explain. Tutu noted that Ubuntu in the community or workplace brings forth images of supportiveness, co-operation and solidarity and tolerance.”⁵³ Furthermore, he proposed that the “culture of Ubuntu reflects both an ontological and an epistemological stance in the African thought of Bantu-speaking people.”⁵⁴

Echoing the words of South African liberation fighter Steve Biko, Tutu proclaims Ubuntu is “the gift that Africa will give the world’ and, along with others, has called for its wider application well beyond Africa.”⁵⁵ Ubuntu is widely translated as “I am because you are”; ‘a person is a person through other people or humanness.”⁵⁶ Further, in defining Ubuntu, Tutu offers:

“A person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we had learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human.”⁵⁷

Ubuntu is a Southern Africa term meaning humanness, is an African philosophy and culture of life that places a primacy on the promotion of the common good of a society or community

⁵³ Tutu, “Our Glorious Diversity” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49.

⁵⁴Tutu challenges the structures in South Africa, if it denied the black people a proper education, fobbing them off with something that the system had designed as an inferior and cheaper commodity than that which is provided for the children of the whites. Thus, there is the need to realize common humanity that belong to, and have one destiny are bound up with one another, then humanity can survive together. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, 121.

⁵⁵ Tutu, “Our Glorious Diversity” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49.

⁵⁶ Tutu, “Our Glorious Diversity” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49.

⁵⁷Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 25.

over that of the individual; however, not at the expense of the individual. “The individual and the community are not radically opposed in the sense of priority but engaged in a contemporaneous formation.”⁵⁸ The two are co-creators, interdependent, and mutually sustaining.

Whether defined as the moral quality of a person, an ethic, or a philosophy, Ubuntu is the life’s blood of African life. It is an intense lived understanding of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all living beings indispensable to the process of being-becoming more human, which compels us toward a code of ethics that reinforces communal harmony, compassion, empathy, tolerance, kindness, and love. The notion of interconnectedness or inseparability is so pervasive that when speaking of the phenomenon of Ubuntu, Archbishop Tutu declares:

The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid’s atrocities was caught up in that of his victim: Ubuntu means that in a real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined. The humanity of the perpetrator of apartheid’s atrocities was caught up and bound up in that of his victim whether he liked it or not. In the process of dehumanizing another, in inflicting untold harm and suffering, the perpetrator was inexorably being dehumanized as well.⁵⁹

For Tutu, “The shared humanity, the enmeshing of being-doing deduced from Tutu’s statement establishes the inseparability of perpetrator and victim.”⁶⁰ Through Ubuntu, human beings are made aware that we belong to one another and are intimately involved in the creation of one another; this intersubjective realization is just one of the great transferable gifts of Ubuntu to the world at large.

⁵⁸ Tutu, “Our Glorious Diversity” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49.

⁵⁹ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 33.

⁶⁰ Tutu, “Our Glorious Diversity” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49.

In this context, the ideal upheld by Ubuntu is that it allows a person to grow and prosper in a relational setting by providing ongoing contact and interaction with others. These authors suggest that Ubuntu as a group culture does not however support oppressive communalism.

This is why Tutu argues that Ubuntu is a conventional wisdom that supports customs and practices that serve only the common good. He added that Ubuntu cannot be considered synonymous with any existing paradigms applied in Western interpretations of individualism or collectivism, noting it expresses a unique African view of the world anchored in its very own person, culture and society which is difficult to define by current empirical Western contexts.

Tutu and Mandela used Ubuntu characteristics in public speeches to encompass a perspective that a person with Ubuntu as a culture sees others as fellow human beings. Tutu described Ubuntu as the essence of practising a culture of being human and a gift that Africa gives to the world. A more practical example of Ubuntu was provided by Mandela during a television interview with a South African journalist. Mandela described Ubuntu with a story, “A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn’t have to ask for food or for water; once he stops, the people give him food and entertain him.”⁶¹ Mandela added that “this was only one aspect of Ubuntu, as the concept can have various meanings as interpreted by each individual.”⁶²

Tutu’s vision on how to bring about reconciliation⁶³ is seen in the values underlying his advocacy, drawn from his faith and the vision of a shared humanity held out by the African spirit in his formulation of *Ubuntu*.⁶⁴

⁶¹Nelson Mandela, *No Easy Walk To Freedom* (Pretoria, Pretoria University Press, 1992), 44.

⁶²Mandela, *No Easy Walk To Freedom*, 45.

⁶³Reconciliation for Tutu meant making peace with evil, immorality, injustice, oppression and viciousness of which they are the victims and, quite rightly, they have rejected such a travesty of the genuine article. How could anyone really think that true reconciliation could avoid a proper confrontation. Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 3. See also Allen, *Desmond Tutu, Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 341.

⁶⁴Central to Tutu’s teachings, forgiveness in Bantu, called Ubuntu which is a term that’s loosely defined as “humanity” or, as the archbishop further explains, ‘the understanding that we are who we are through one another.’The *Ubuntu* is essentially, a quality that includes the essential human virtues: compassion and

Tutu is perhaps the most ardent advocate of Ubuntu in South Africa. To him, Ubuntu is about unifying apparent opposites, joining together instead of separating entities that are seemingly irreconcilable.⁶⁵ Ubuntu offers no room for “us versus them” thinking of rhetoric. Rather, it exacts the realism that ‘my’ or ‘our’ humanity is caught up, inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life.⁶⁶

Therefore, with reference to the hostile divide between blacks and whites, oppressed and oppressors, victims and perpetrators, in South Africa, Tutu boldly asserts: Ubuntu means that in a real sense even the supporters of apartheid were victims of the vicious system which they implemented and which they supported so enthusiastically. Our humanity was intertwined.⁶⁷

For Tutu, “In view of our country’s unhappy past, ubuntu means the people of South Africa are interconnected in this network of interdependence and togetherness, so that what happened to one, in a very real sense happened to them all.”⁶⁸ In other words, “Ubuntu can help South Africans realise that they belong to one another (despite all outward signs of

humanity. It equips you to look at your torturers, to realize that they need your help and to stand ready to enable them to regain their humanity. For Tutu, it is an opportunity to express the spirit of African compassion. In South Africa, Ubuntu is our way of making sense of the world. The word literally means humanity. It is the philosophy and belief that a person is only a person through other people. In other words, we are human only in relation to other humans. Our humanity is bound up with one another, and any tear in the fabric of connection between us must be repaired for us all to be made whole. This interconnectedness is the very root of who we are. Michael Battle, *Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1997), 22. See also Desmond Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2014), 8. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. No one can be fully human unless he or she relates to others in a fair, peaceful, and harmonious way. Anything that pervades or subverts the community is a threat to forgiveness and the absolute necessity for continued human existence. See also Tutu, “Without Forgiveness there is no peace”, in *Exploring Forgiveness*, xiii. In Xhosa, (“Umntungumtungabantu”) If you lacked Ubuntu, which deals with the nature of human community, in a sense you lacked an indispensable ingredient of being human. In Tutu’s mother’s language, Setwana, Ubuntu is rendered as botho, and the quoted phrase as Mothokemo thokamo thoyomongwe”. Tutu, *God is not a Christian: and other Provocations*, xiv, 22, 23, 219.

⁶⁵Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 149.

⁶⁶Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, 34-35. Tutu wrote of Ubuntu-botho as observed in traditional African Society. It referred to what ultimately distinguished us from the animals. The quality of being human and also humane. This definition is almost tautology. The person who had Ubuntu was known to be compassionate and gentle, who used his strength on behalf of the weak, who did not take advantage of others, in short, he cared, treating others as what they were, human beings. If you lacked Ubuntu, you lacked an indispensable ingredient to being human. Ubuntu is greatly admired and to be sought after or cultivated. Tutu, *No future Without Forgiveness*, 33.

⁶⁷Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, 35.

⁶⁸Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, 127.

enmity and division), that they share a common history as well as a common future, and that they are dependent on each other for their collective well-being.”⁶⁹

Tutu’s stature as an exemplar of tolerance and inclusiveness among international religious leaders is rooted not only in his faith but also in his understanding of the nature of human community, to which he brings a uniquely African sensibility. Tutu argued that in the practice of Ubuntu, “we need other human beings for us to learn how to be humane.”⁷⁰

He stated quite clearly his presupposition. “Ubuntu speaks of my humanity bound up with yours. It says, not as Descartes did, “I think, therefore I am” but rather, “I am because I belong.”⁷¹ The completely self-sufficient human being is subhuman. “I can be me only if you are fully you. I am because we are, for we are made for togetherness, for family. We are made for complementarity. We are created for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence with our fellow human beings, with the rest of creation.”⁷²

A more nuanced version of his thought on Ubuntu is the corresponding need to tolerate diversity and gifts. Tutu said “I have gifts that you don’t have, and you have gifts that I don’t have. We are different in order to know our need of each other. To be human is to be dependent. Ubuntu speaks of spiritual attributes such as generosity, hospitality, compassion, caring and sharing. You could be affluent in material possessions but still be without Ubuntu. This concept speaks of how people are more important than things, than profits, than material possessions. It speaks about the “intrinsic worth of persons as not dependent on extraneous things such as status, race, gender and achievement.”⁷³

He continued this reasoning by saying that in traditional African society, Ubuntu was coveted more than anything else—more than wealth as measured in cattle and the extent of one’s land.

⁶⁹Claudia Nolte Schamm, *African Anthropology as a resource for reconciliation: Ubuntu: Botho as a Reconciliatory paradigm* (South Africa: Kwazulu Natal, School of religion and Theology, 1999), 23-35.

⁷⁰ Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 22.

⁷¹ Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 22.

⁷² Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 22.

⁷³ Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 22.

Without this quality, a prosperous man, even though he might have been a chief, was regarded as someone deserving of pity and even contempt. It was seen as what ultimately distinguished people from animals-the quality of being human and so also humane.⁷⁴ Furthermore, these who had Ubuntu were compassionate and gentle, they used their strength on behalf of the weak, and they did not take advantage of others-in short, they cared, treating others as what they were: human beings. For Tutu, “If you lacked Ubuntu, in a sense you lacked an indispensable ingredient of being human.”⁷⁵

Today, Ubuntu is greatly admired, sought after, and cultivated. Only someone to whom something drastic has happened could ever say, as a South African government minister once said, that the death of Steve Biko⁷⁶-the death of a fellow human being-left him cold. That minister had lost his humanity, or was well on the way to doing so.

For Tutu, “Ubuntu is intrinsically likened to forgiveness and peace. Forgiveness is not taken seriously the awfulness of what has happened when you are treated unfairly.”⁷⁷ It is opening the door for the other person to have a chance to begin again. Without forgiveness, resentment builds in us, a resentment which turns into hostility and anger

For Tutu, “A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.”⁷⁸

Availability to others sustains a culture of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not pretending that things are other than they are. Forgiveness in the spirit of Ubuntu must transcend community, national and international levels. We must forgive, but almost always we should not forget

⁷⁴ Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 22.

⁷⁵ Tutu, “Ubuntu” in *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 23.

⁷⁶ Steve Biko was a leader of South Africa’s black consciousness movement, who was killed by police in 1977.

⁷⁷ Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, xiii.

⁷⁸ Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, 33.

that there were atrocities, because if we do, we are then likely to repeat those atrocities. Those who forgive and those who accept forgiveness must not forget in their reconciling. If we don't deal with our past adequately, it will return to haunt us. "Unforgiving tension, unforgiving sin, actually has a deleterious impact on the person and the community."⁷⁹

Receiving an honorary degree in Benin Republic, in West Africa in 1991, Tutu advocated that the values embodied in Ubuntu should be given practical expression in African systems of justice. He opined: "I want to see resurgence, a revival, a renaissance of so many of the wonderful attributes and values that Africa has."⁸⁰ For Tutu, African jurisprudence and penology is not retributive, but restorative. When people quarrelled in the traditional African setting, the main intention was not to punish the miscreant but to restore good relations. For Africa is concerned about relationship, about the wholeness of relationship. That is something "we can bring to the world, a world that is polarized, a world that is fragmented, a world that destroys people."⁸¹

Ubuntu teaches us that our worth is intrinsic to who we are. We matter because we are made in the image of God. Ubuntu reminds us that we belong in one family.-God's family, the human family. In our African worldview, the greatest good is communal harmony. Anything that subverts or undermines this greatest good is ipso facto wrong, evil. Anger and a desire for revenge are subversive of this good thing, Tutu, thus, expressed hope that we could learn to make peace through Ubuntu and nonviolence.

In Tutu's view, besides stressing human beings' likeness to God, "the reality of Ubuntu is bound up in Jesus, who creates new relationships in the world."⁸² Ubuntu is seen as a "metaphor"⁸³ for human participation in the divine life."⁸⁴ The fullness of humanity can

⁷⁹Tutu, *No future without Forgiveness*, xiv.

⁸⁰ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 32.

⁸¹ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 32.

⁸²Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 73.

⁸³ Tutu contrasted the western with the African notion of being human by setting the popular rendition of Descartes- "I think, therefore I am"-against Sotho and Nguni phrases that can be roughly translated as, "I am

become manifest in koinonia in community, indeed, Tutu declared, “God has made us so that we will need each other. We are made for a delicate network of interdependence.”⁸⁵ What this implies is that “human identities are uniquely made to be both co-operative and competitive.”⁸⁶

Tutu ultimately sees Ubuntu as “life in relation to God and neighbour.”⁸⁷ Ubuntu theology has the ability to “restore humanity and dignity to both perpetrators and victims of violence, and of creating a sense of mutuality among humans who are alienated from one another.”⁸⁸

Ubuntu is the force that is able to bridge the terrible rifts created by the injustices and inhumanities of the past. It is in fact the force that ultimately counterbalances the evil of apartheid. South African writer Antgie Krog reflects, “Ubuntu is the most opposite of apartheid, more than forgiveness or reconciliation, more than turn the other cheek. It is what humanity has lost.”⁸⁹

Ubuntu theology, therefore, has many advantages; for one, “out of the confidence of being God’s viceroy, persons in the community of Ubuntu are moved to care for others.”⁹⁰ Ubuntu builds up independent community, cherishes diversity of cultures and encourages transformation into a new identity and integrates culture. Before the commencement of the new dispensation in South Africa, Tutu even argued that Ubuntu theology could be a force to overthrow apartheid through humanizing the oppressor and establishing a sense of all South Africans belonging to one another. As such, Ubuntu theology imparts “a paradigm of

because you are; you are because we are,” or a person is a person through other people. To the western ear, the standard formulation that Tutu developed later on brings to mind Donne’s “No man is an island”: None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings... the solitary, isolated human being is a contradiction in terms. see Tutu, “I think Therefore I am” *No future Without Forgiveness*, 35. See also Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 347.

⁸⁴ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 57.

⁸⁵ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 35.

⁸⁶ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 79.

⁸⁷ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 9.

⁸⁸ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 5.

⁸⁹ Antgie Krog, *A Change of Tongues* (Johannesburg: Random House, 2003), 22.

⁹⁰ Battle, *The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*, 48.

reconciliation which is sorely needed and can be adopted by South Africa. An African sense of community includes rather than separates. Here is a basis for building a common South ‘Africanness,’ a basis for sharing stories that transcends the isolation of the past in the pursuit of reconciliation and peace.”⁹¹

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission⁹² (TRC) was established in 1995, with Archbishop Desmond Tutu as its chairman. By the time it completed its work in October 1998, it had become one of the powerful reminders of South Africa’s perverse past, it had also created a potent space in which to foster hope and reconciliation. It has been a remarkable initiative inspired by Christian principles; the TRC, has made a lasting peace a realistic possibility. Tutu remarked on his position as chairman thus: “As Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I have often been asked how the people of South Africa were able to forgive the atrocities and injustices they suffered under apartheid. Our journey in South Africa was quite long and treacherous proves to be, outstandingly painful and profoundly beautiful.”⁹³

The TRC provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterized by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy, peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South African, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex.

⁹¹ Charles Vila-Vicencio, “Telling one Another stories: Towards a Theology of Reconciliation” in *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenges to the Churches* Greg Baum and Harold Wells eds. (Maryknoll: WCC Publications, 1997), 39.

⁹²The use of these commissions after collective violence has become a widespread practice in the world. See Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 63. A central dimension of the TRC was its religious, spiritual and moral character. Tutu, whose thinking guided the TRC process, was influential in framing the TRC dynamic in a faith discourse. He was able to provide, at least to the religious community, a language through which to understand the difficult step of fostering a genuinely democratic culture in South Africa that would in turn sustain a genuine peace. See Peter-John Pearson, “Pursuing Truth, Reconciliation, and Human dignity in South Africa: Lessons for Catholic Peacebuilding” *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, 191. *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*. Vol.1. South Africa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998. 55.

⁹³Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 2. See also Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 71. Though never banned, nor arrested for long, Tutu and his family used to receive death threats on the telephone, an experience he found almost unforgiveable. See also “Spirituality and Fear” in *Christian Leadership in South Africa*, Elmarie Otto ed. (Durban: The Independent, 1994), 30.

In many ways, the practice of granting amnesty in dubious situations has rendered the methodology of amnesty susceptible to abuse. Who should be granted amnesty? From the perspective of South African experience, as Tutu explained it:

. . . Perpetrators do not qualify for amnesty if they killed because of personal greed, but they do qualify if they committed the act in response to an order by, or on behalf of a political organisation such as the former apartheid state and its satellite Bantustan homelands, or a recognized liberation movement.⁹⁴

From Tutu's explanation, we learn that we have to evaluate conditions that satisfy the requirement for amnesty. To observe the requirement, Tutu writes:

. . . Amnesty is granted only to those who plead guilty and accept responsibility for what they have done. Amnesty is not given to innocent people or those who claim to be innocent. The process encourages accountability rather than the opposite and insists on the cultivation of the new culture of respect for human rights and the acknowledgement of responsibility by which the new democracy wishes to be characterized.⁹⁵

The perpetrator must convince the community that the crime was for the sake of the common good. Instead of blanket amnesty, the applicant for amnesty must prove that the violation was of communal interest and that it occurred within a particular period.⁹⁶ For Richard Wilson, "The ultimate goal of amnesty is not retribution or punishment, but rather healing of breaches, redressing of imbalances, and restoration of broken relationships, that seek to

⁹⁴Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 49. John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Peace Building* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 118.

⁹⁵Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, 54. Desmond Tutu, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission South Africa (TRC)," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/607421/Truth-and-Reconciliation-Commission-South-Africa-TRC>, (accessed, November 29, 2018).

⁹⁶Richard A. Wilson, *The politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2001), 23.

“rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be given the opportunity to be re-integrated into the community.”⁹⁷

4.2.3 Theme four: Ubuntu: Vague or valuable concept? A Critique

What makes a good leader? In some cultures, we might associate a good leader with words like effectiveness and charisma mainly. Someone who knows what needs to happen and effectively knows how to incorporate everyone to get the job done. However, this might not be the case for other parts of the world. In Africa for example, a good leader would go by the concept of Ubuntu; a philosophy that focuses on values such as respect, solidarity, application of rules with restraint and compassion. But could this concept work in other cultures ruled by efficiency and emphasis on the rule of law, or is it just another vague philosophy?

All explanations of Ubuntu focus on its communitarian nature which is often in contrast with the more individualistic way of living in Western countries. African people have historically had to rely on each other in order to survive in harsh living conditions. This still resonates today and has led to a large amount of communities or tribes in which African people share their scarce resources and solve problems through cooperation.

Proponents of Ubuntu include Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu who highlighted all the positivity and humanness it can bring. Businesses in sub-Saharan African countries have emphasized teamwork and a sense of group responsibility stemming from Ubuntu. It leads to unity within a group or team and allows for meaningful discussion between all members.

⁹⁷Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa*, 23. Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God*, John Allen ed. Doubleday, 1994), 21.

4.2.4 Theme Five: Pleas for Interfaith Tolerance in South Africa

For Tutu, “God is clearly not a Christian.”⁹⁸ The parable of the Good Samaritan shows this and does not give a straightforward answer to the question “who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29).⁹⁹ Surely, he could have provided a catalogue of those whom the scribe could love as himself as the law required. He does not. Jesus wanted among other things to point out that life is a bit more complex; it has too many ambivalences and ambiguities to allow always for a straightforward and simplistic answer. Today for Tutu, “we appear to be scared of diversity in ethnicity, in religious faith, in political and ideological points of view.”¹⁰⁰

Setting out his position on interfaith tolerance, Tutu said, “We have an impatience with anything and anyone that suggests there might just be another perspective, another way, of looking at the same thing, another answer worth exploring.”¹⁰¹ For Tutu, then, there is a nostalgia for the security in the womb of a safe sameness, and so we shut out the stranger and the alien; we look for security in those who can provide answers that must be unassailable because no one is permitted to dissent, to question. There is a “longing for the homogeneous and an allergy against the different, the other.”¹⁰² Tutu relies upon the tradition of the Scripture by asserting that:

Now Jesus seems to say to the scribe, life is more exhilarating as you try to work out the implications of your faith rather than living by rote, with readymade second-hand answers, fitting an unchanging paradigm to a shifting, changing, perplexing, and yet fascinating world. Our knowledge of God is in charge, must make us ready to take risks, to be venturesome and innovative, yes, to dare to walk where angels might fear to tread.¹⁰³

⁹⁸Tutu made this statement in a sermon at St. Martin in the Fields Church on Trafalgar Square, London, during a meeting of leaders of the world’s Anglican churches after the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War. Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 3-20.

⁹⁹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 4.

¹⁰⁰Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 4.

¹⁰¹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 4.

¹⁰²Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 4.

¹⁰³Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 4.

Tutu continued this reasoning on interfaith dialogue by saying that the “accidents of birth and geography determine to very large extent to what faith we belong.”¹⁰⁴ The chances are very great that if you were born in Pakistan you are a Muslim or a Hindu if you happened to be born in India, or a Shintoist if it is Japan, and a Christian if you were born in Italy. For Tutu, we should not succumb too easily to the temptation to exclusiveness and dogmatic claims to a monopoly of the truth of our particular faith. According to Tutu, “You could so easily have been an adherent of the faith that you are now denigrating, but for the fact that you were born here rather than there.”¹⁰⁵

Tutu continues in much the same vein. On the need not to insult the adherents of other faiths by suggesting, as sometimes has happened, that for instance when you are a Christian the adherents of other faiths are really Christians without knowing it. He continues this reasoning by saying that we must acknowledge them for who they are in all their integrity, with their conscientiously held beliefs, we must welcome them and respect them as who they are and walk reverently on what is their holy ground, taking off our shoes, metaphorically and literally. For Tutu “We must hold our particular and peculiar beliefs tenaciously, not pretending that all religions are the same, for they are patently not the same. We must be ready to learn from one another, not claiming that we alone possess all truth and that somehow, we have a corner on God.”¹⁰⁶

Tutu further expressed hope that we could learn to make peace and tolerate other peoples’ religion. “We should in humility and joyfulness acknowledge that the supernatural and divine reality we all worship in some form or other transcend all our particular categories or thought and imagining, and that because the divine is infinite and we are forever finite, we shall never

¹⁰⁴Tutu gave this talk from a forum in Britain, where he addressed leaders of different faiths during a mission to the city of Birmingham in 1989. See Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 5.

¹⁰⁵Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 6.

¹⁰⁶Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 6.

comprehend the divine completely.”¹⁰⁷ So we should seek to share all insights we can and be ready to learn, for instance, from the techniques of the spiritual life that are available in religions other than our own. It is interesting that most religions have a transcendent reference point, *amysterium tremendum*, that comes to be known by deigning to reveal itself, himself, herself, to humanity; that the transcendent reality is compassionate and concerned; that human beings are creatures of this supreme, supra-mundane reality in some way, with a high destiny that hopes for an everlasting life lived in close association with the divine, either as absorbed without “distinction between creature and creator, between the divine and human, or in a wonderful intimacy which still retains the distinctions between these two orders of reality.”¹⁰⁸

Tutu also spoke to the heart of the position of interfaith dialogue by maintaining that, when we read the classics of the various religions in matters of prayer, meditation, and mysticism, we find substantial convergence, and that is something to rejoice at. We have enough that conspires to separate us; let us celebrate what unites us, that which we share in common.

Tutu continued his teachings by asserting that, it is good to know God (in the Christian tradition) created us all (not just Christians) in his image, thus investing us all with infinite worth, and that it was all humankind that God entered into a covenant relationship, depicted in the covenant with Noah when God promised he would not destroy his creation again with water. Surely for Tutu, “we can rejoice that the eternal Word, the Logos of God, enlightens everyone not just Christians, but everyone who comes into the world; that what we call the spirit of God is not a Christian preserve, for the Spirit of God existed long before there were Christians, inspiring and nurturing women and men in the ways of holiness, bringing them to what was best in all.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 7.

¹⁰⁸Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 6.

¹⁰⁹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 7.

In setting out his position on tolerance and interfaith dialogue,¹¹⁰Tutu argues that most Christians believe that they get their mandate for exclusivist claims from the Bible. Jesus does say that no one can come to the Father except through him, and in Acts we hear it proclaimed that there is no other name under heaven that is given for salvation (John 14: 6; Acts 4:12).¹¹¹ Those passages seem to be categorical enough to make all debate superfluous. But is this all that the bible says, with nothing, as it were, on the side of inclusiveness and universality, and does the exclusivist case seem reasonable in the light of human history and development?¹¹² Every one of God's human creatures has the capacity to know something about God from the evidence God leaves in his handiwork. (Rom 1:18-20).¹¹³ For Tutu, this is the basis for natural theology and natural law. All human creatures have a sense that some things ought to be done just as others ought not to be done. This is a universal phenomenon, what varies is the content of the natural law. Paul and Barnabas invoke the same principle in their discourse at Lystra, where they were thought to be divinities (Acts 14:15-17).¹¹⁴ In his speech before the Aeropagus, Paul speaks about how God has created all human beings from one stock and given everyone the urge, the hunger, for divine things, so that all will seek after God and perhaps find him, adding that God is not far from us all (not just Christians), live and move and have their being in him. (Acts 17:22-31).¹¹⁵ Talking to pagans, Paul declares that all are God's offspring.

Tutu maintains that the Christian does not have a monopoly on God is an almost trite observation. We would have to dismiss as delusion and vanity the profound religious and ethical truths propounded by such greats as Ezekiel, Isaiah and Jeremiah. "We would have to

¹¹⁰Tutu's most detailed theological arguments for interfaith dialogue and tolerance were made to fellow Christians in a 1992 lecture in memory of the Roman archbishop of Cape Town, Stephen Naidoo, with whom he had worked closely in diffusing conflict in the city in the 1980s.

¹¹¹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 9.

¹¹²Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 9.

¹¹³Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 9.

¹¹⁴Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 9.

¹¹⁵Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 10.

be willing to jettison, for example, the suffering servant songs. and how could Jesus claim to have come to fulfil and not to destroy what had been proclaimed and foretold in non-Christian Scriptures and in the life of a non-Christian community?”¹¹⁶

Tutu further poses another question. “How is it possible for God to have created human beings, all human beings, in his own image and likeness and not have endowed them all with some sense, some awareness, of his truth, his beauty, and his goodness? If the opposite is asserted, it would call into question the capacity of the creator.”¹¹⁷

The Scriptures, as we have seen, asserts what seems to be the reasonable position: that all God’s human creatures in some sense have the divine hunger in search of God and fulfilment. For Tutu, to claim God exclusively for Christians is to make God too small and in a real sense is blasphemous. God is bigger than Christianity and cares for more than Christians only. He has to, if only for the simple reason that Christians are quite late arrivals on the world scene. God has been around since even before creation, and that is a very long time.

For Tutu, “if God’s love is limited to Christians, what must be the fate of all who existed before Christ? Are they condemned to eternal perdition for no fault of their own, as they must be if the exclusivist position is to be pushed to its logical conclusion?”¹¹⁸

Futhermore, “It is no dishonour to God for us to claim that all truth, all sense of beauty, all awareness of and desire after goodness has one source, and that source is God, who is not confined to one place, time, and people.”¹¹⁹ Tutu concludes with the recognition that: isn’t it obvious that Christians do not have a monopoly on virtue, on intellectual capacity, on aesthetic know-how? And wonderfully, it does not matter. Is God dishonoured that Mahatma Ghandi was a Hindu? Shouldn’t we be glad that there was a great soul who inspired others with his teachings of *Satyagraha* who inspired the Christian Martin Luther Kingjr. in his civil

¹¹⁶Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 13.

¹¹⁷ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 13.

¹¹⁹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 15.

rights campaign? Do we really have to be ridiculous as to assert that what Mathma Gandhi did was good, but it would have been better had he been a Christian? What evidence do we have that Christians are better? Isn't the evidence often overwhelming in the opposite direction?

Tutu concluded his reflection with a very important challenge. "Don't we have to be reminded too that the faith to which we belong is far more often a matter of accidents of history and geography than personal choice? It depends on whether we were born in Egypt, India or South Africa. We must not make the mistake of judging other faiths by their least attractive features or adherents. To acknowledge that other faiths"¹²⁰ must be respected and that they obviously proclaim profound religious truths is respect and tolerance. Simply put, the God in me, greets the God in you. The Christian cause for Tutu is revered better by a joyful acknowledgement that God is not the "special preserve of Christians and is the God of all human beings, to whom he has vouchsafed a revelation of his nature and with whom it is possible for all to have a real encounter and relationship."¹²¹

4.2.5 Theme six: The TRC Response: Dignity and Human Rights at the Centre

The challenge to establish a culture of dignity and human rights, which the TRC pointed to, lies at the heart of reconciliation and peace. The work of peace must be about securing rights, basic goods, and the kinds of relationships that allow people to live together as harmoniously as possible. Accordingly, the findings of the TRC, William Everett has noted, were to be used "to formulate government policy and even constitutional changes to prevent such errors in the future."¹²² Having looked the beast of the past in the eye, Tutu exclaimed, "let us shut the door on the past."¹²³

¹²⁰Tutu told students at the University of Khartoum on a visit to Sudan in 1989, that not only does he urge people of faith to practice tolerance and respect; he charges them that their faith requires them to act together in the cause of justice. If you are a believer, you must oppose injustice, whether you are a Muslim, a Christian, Hindu or Buddhist. This is one of the common factors in these faiths: not one of them has allow doctrine of human beings. See Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 19.

¹²¹Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 18.

¹²²Everret, "Going Public, Building Covenants," 156.

¹²³Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 33.

The response of the TRC was not only to the specific, horrendous violence of apartheid itself, but to the enveloping culture of violence that this historical legacy of violent discrimination established in South Africa. The TRC focus on human rights and democratic processes was central to its response and crucial for pointing a way forward beyond the quagmire of violence and discrimination. The bishops were clear in their 1993 pastoral letter, *Towards a Democratic Future*, that the peace they envisaged for a post-apartheid South Africa would have a human rights culture as a foundation to that peace. The state as the first principle for a democratic society: “respect for and protection of human rights likes the right to life, education, to liberty, freedom of conscience, expression.”¹²⁴

The dominant discourses in the TRC centred on the critical notion of human rights. Tutu believed that knowledge of the past was sufficient for a new society. The acknowledged alternative to such an abuse of human dignity and a culture of repression, according to the fundamental legislation, is a society solidly based on the recognition of human rights and accountability. The essential religious idea of transcendent, God-given dignity of each individual, a conviction central to Tutu’s self-understanding as a minister of God-served as the moral, cultural, and philosophical foundation of the TRC’s privileging of human rights discourses. The TRC not only endorsed the building of a new political culture on a foundation of human rights, but also saw itself as one of the key drivers of this process. In this conviction Tutu was not alone; his sentiments were echoed by other faith community leaders. Roman Catholic Archbishop Tihagale commented on this: basic human rights are part of our basic human dignity, given by God. No one has the right to remove our God-given dignity and our human rights, as we have shown in the battle against apartheid. To a new, emerging political culture the TRC thereby bequeathed a discourse of human rights, personal

¹²⁴Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, *Towards a Democratic Future* (Pretoria: Southern African Bishops Conference, 1993), 8.

responsibility for actions, ownership of the democratic project, and accountability.¹²⁵ Thus, the TRC combined an emphasis on both interpersonal relations and structural relations and structural support external to the TRC as necessary ingredients for the national reconciliation and peace process.

Furthermore, the TRC pointed to the need for integrated, synchronized work in the areas of economic justice, constitutional, legal, and judicial protection, and family life, and for redressing wrongs in the aftermath of racism and the indignities suffered by the oppressed. They understood these aspects of our social life to be the content of a “just society and, therefore, of peacebuilding.¹²⁶ If South Africa’s democracy is to prosper, then South Africans must extend legitimacy even to those institutions that do not necessarily advance their short-term interests.”¹²⁷

There is a clear synergy here between the TRC-inspired human rights discourses and laws of South Africa,¹²⁸ on the one hand and recent Catholic teaching on peace, on the other. Both insist that the centrality of a strong human rights tradition is the key requirement of peace. John Paul II clearly states in his World Day of Peace Message, 2004 that “Respect for human rights is the real secret of peace.”¹²⁹

The need to establish consensus on a normative basis for international justice and peace without suppressing the legitimate differences within regions and social systems led both the UN and the Church to a human rights focus. Significantly, Catholic social thought, South African human rights discourse, and the United Nations all adopted human rights as a

¹²⁵Archbishop Tutu understood this ethic of responsibility coupled with forgiveness to be at the heart of the TRC. Allen observes that Tutu advocated an explicitly Christian model of achieving reconciliation, involving three separate successive transitions. Two of them required action from the perpetrators or beneficiaries of apartheid and the third involved a generous response from the victims. Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 342.

¹²⁶ Southern African Catholic Bishops Conferences, *The Things that Make for Peace*, 119.

¹²⁷ Tristan Anne Borer, “Truth-Telling as a Peacebuilding Activity,” in *Telling the Truths*, ed. Tristan Anne Borer (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 42.

¹²⁸For James L Gibson, Truth Commissions have become one of the main mechanisms by which transitional regimes seek to create legitimacy to state institutions still tainted by the legacy of authoritarian rule. James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Apartheid: Can Truth Reconcile a Divided Nation?*(Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004), 290.

¹²⁹John Paul II, “An Ever-Timely Commitment: Teaching Peace,” *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* January 1, 2004.

normative frame work for a pluralistic world. Human rights have become the “moral parameter within which a society must be ordered, there can be many legitimate ways of organizing a government and a society, but all of them have to recognize and respect human rights.”¹³⁰

Upon taking office in 1994, Nelson Mandela announced that “human rights will be the light that guides our foreign policy.” This led South Africa to take stands with regard to vulnerable women, and children and human trafficking in the international arena. It prompted a moral commitment by the South African defence force to peacekeeping missions in conflict ridden areas. The third part dwells mainly on Tutu’s teachings on forgiveness as it relates to peacebuilding.

4.2.6 Theme seven: A Critique of Tutu’s TRC in South Africa by Tarimo

Aquiline Tarimo, in his book, *African Peacemaking and Governance* made some criticism of The TRC in South Africa as a convenient tool for peacemaking during the transition period in South Africa.¹³¹ For Tarimo, “TRC are convenient tools for peacemaking in a transition period since they experience human right violations, they heal the nation by providing therapy for a traumatized national psyche, break a regime of official denial of atrocities by ending the public silence on human rights violations, and expose the excesses of the previous political order to consolidate democratic process.”¹³² In so doing, a platform of this sort helps the victims to overcome emotional pressure, including the attitude of revenge.

Telling the truth as Tutu discussed is also emphasized by Tarimo. The TRC is established to offer a forum for the truth to be told. It offers a chance to disclose what happened as a means to enhance social healing through the truth-telling experience, mutual forgiveness, and participation. It is a process of dismantling the distorted image of the past by promoting

¹³⁰ Michael Himes and Kenneth Himes, *The Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 63.

¹³¹ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 61-71.

¹³² Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 62.

values of mutual trust, reshaping the national narrative through the collective experience, and the formation of nationhood. This commission for Tarimo, could also be “considered as a starting point of the process of social healing after a prolonged conflict because it establishes a process that provides a platform for mutual accommodation and collaboration.”¹³³

For Tarimo, knowing the causes of what happened empowers the victims. When violence has been one-sided rather than mutual, truth-telling validates the victim’s innocence. It is a process of denouncing evil and enhancing mutual trust and safety with the intention of breaking the cycle of mutual victimization. This commission are designed to help people to move from the situation of mistrust to the situation of mutuality. They focus on reconstructing the communal bond and reformulating the communal narrative as a process of renewal. Such a process marks the beginning of the “healing process because it attempts to restore the dignity of the victim as well as reconstruct the memories of violence as a means of truth-finding. A healing process of this sort advocates a hopeful image of the future.”¹³⁴

The TRC is for Tarimo is also limited in bringing social healing. In some cases, for example, there have been unnecessary entanglements with legal procedures. The situation is caused by lack of clear procedures that can facilitate inter-institutional collaboration. With the problem of this sort, one could argue that the challenge of the method is how to bring together contributions emerging from different institutions. The South African experience for Tarimo “failed to be partial, especially when crimes were committed by politically connected personalities.”¹³⁵

For me, part of the challenges encountered in this process includes the question of how to make a distinction between legal and restorative justice. The point is worth of consideration because truth and reconciliation commissions are often caught in legal disputes even in

¹³³ Tarimo, *Africa peace-making and Governance*, 61-63.

¹³⁴ Tarimo, *Africa peace-making and Governance*, 61-63.

¹³⁵ Tarimo, *Africa peace-making and Governance*, 64.

Nigeria. (I recall the Oputa panel in Nigeria¹³⁶). The means of investigating amnesty applications, and taking the emphasis away from victim's narrative was not comprehensive and transparent. The challenge is how to identify effective methodologies that could be adopted in the process of public confessions, apology and forgiveness. There is also a tension between competing forms of justice. Under the influence of this tension, it remains unclear whether TRC are a legal process or a moral instrument of restoring social relationships.

PART THREE

4.3 Theme eight: Forgiveness as the Core of Peacebuilding.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has powerfully made out a case for forgiveness even where there have been gross violations of human rights, communal and government inspired violence, political oppression and racial discrimination. In such situations, there is, he warns, no future without forgiveness. By forgiving the victim may succeed in “opening the door for the other person to begin and may well also enable the wrongdoer to put closure on the psychological effects of the wrongdoing.”¹³⁷

One of the practices that make up an ethic of political reconciliation is forgiveness. “It seems to be rare, surprising, controversial, striking, and potentially transformative. Perhaps the only head of State to have practiced it is South Africa's Nelson Mandela.”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ This panel, set up by president Olusegun Obasonjo, like the TRC in South Africa found it difficult to distinguish between retributive or distributive (legal justice).

¹³⁷Stephen Cherry, “For a Critical Appraisal of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa as a Result of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” in *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics: New Studies in Christian Ethics* ed. Anthony Bash (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 107.

¹³⁸Things may become a little more complicated when the State itself is a party to forgiveness. Imagine if the forgiver was a victim who has now become a head of State like Mandela. He forgave his jailer as a president. This may not exactly have been collective forgiveness. Mandela did not say that he was acting on behalf of the ANC or its members. Still, as president, he was implicitly commending forgiveness to other victims of apartheid. Yet, he also endorsed the TRC, which at least in principle was supposed to punish perpetrators who did not confess, and even those who did were to suffer the punishment of exposure and censure. In fact, prosecutions hardly happened, and one can debate how much public exposure really punished. But for arguments sake, one can ask: was Mandela acting contradictorily? Daniel Philpott, “Reconciliation: A Catholic

Arguably, his presidential forgiveness was justifiable. But it does not require a kind of artificial division of his self into two selves. As a victim and as a leader of South Africans who had been victims of apartheid, Mandela could forgive and carry a special prestige in encouraging others to forgive. In doing so, he relinquished malice. Naming the evil of apartheid, he invited its leaders and its followers alike to become respected citizens in a new South Africa. On behalf of his people he made a commitment not to seek revenge or even a balancing retribution. But as a Head of State, he also had an executive responsibility to carry out the punishment that the law prescribed on behalf of the community, justifiable as restorative justice. Thus, Mandela's two roles are evident, as a leader of victims of apartheid, and as Head of State. In each role, he could carry out the separate practices of reconciliation, each of which has restoration as its purpose.

As the president of the African Conference of Churches, (ACC) Desmond Tutu made a pastoral visit to Rwanda in 1995, just one year after the genocide. He went to Ntarama, a town where hundreds of Tutsis had fled to the Church for safety and sanctuary. But the Hutu power movement had respected no church. Strewn across the floor were the remains of the horror. Clothing and suitcases were still littered among the bones. The small skulls of children remained shattered on the floor. Skulls outside the church still had machetes and knives in them. The stench was beyond anything he could describe. He tried to pray, could not. He only cried.

Rwanda,¹³⁹ like the holocaust and other genocides before it, stands as a testament to our capacity for unconscionable evil, and yet our ability to forgive and heal stands as a rejoinder

Ethic for Peacebuilding in the Political Order.” In *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, 92-124.

¹³⁹In Rwanda, the *Gacaca* traditional community courts established are an extraordinary example of the ability of a nation that was once convulsed in genocidal violence to heal itself through reconciliation and forgiveness. More than twelve thousand community-based courts tried over 1.2 million cases throughout the country. The justice they sought was often restorative rather than punitive. Those who had planned and incited the genocide were punished, but those who were swept up in the internecine conflict were given lower sentences, especially if the perpetrators were repentant and sought reconciliation and with the community. The goal was to rebuild the communities and the country, to heal and prevent further revenge and violence. Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*,

that we are not made for evil but for goodness. These spasms of cruelty and violence, hatred and ruthlessness, are the exception, not the rule of our human lives.

Forgiveness is at the core of peace-making. Tutu remarked on this thus “I have seen this in my own country (South Africa), in Rwanda, in Northern Ireland and in the hearts of so many who travel the long and difficult road to find the peace that comes through forgiving.”¹⁴⁰

4.3.1 Theme nine: Forgiveness and Healing as a Gift and call: Requirements for Genuine Reconciliation and Peace

For Tutu, “reconciliation is the larger soteriological model within which forgiveness operates.”¹⁴¹ For Tutu, if there is to be reconciliation, we who are the ambassadors of Christ, we to whom the gospel of reconciliation has been entrusted, surely must be Christ’s instrument of peace.¹⁴² We must ourselves be reconciled. The victims of injustice and oppression must be ever ready to forgive. This is a gospel imperative. But those who have wronged must be ready to say “we have hurt you by this injustice, by uprooting you from your homes, by dumping you in poverty-stricken home and resettlement camps, by giving your children inferior education and by denying your humanity and trampling down on your human dignity and denying you fundamental rights. We are sorry, forgive us. And the wronged must forgive.”¹⁴³

Furthermore, those who have wronged must be ready to make what amends they can. They must be ready to make restitution and reparation. Tutu gives a simple analogy of forgiveness

213-14. Post genocide Rwanda presents a sharp contrast to post-apartheid South Africa. In the white population in apartheid South Africa, there were few perpetrators but many beneficiaries. Among the Hutu in Rwanda of the genocide, there were fewer beneficiaries and many more perpetrators. See also Mahmood Mamdani, “From When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda” in *Violence in War and Peace*, 468-74.

¹⁴⁰Tutu, *The Book of forgiving*, 214.

¹⁴¹ The issue of confession, forgiveness and restitution for the wrongs committed against South Africans became the central theme of the conference held in November 1990 outside the small town of Rustenburg, Transvaal, when the leadership of the Dutch Reform church (DRC) and the anti-apartheid South African churches met. See Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 221.

¹⁴²Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 222.

¹⁴³Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 222.

and reparation thus: “If I have stolen your pen, I can’t really be contrite when I say, please forgive me if at the same time I still keep your pen. If I am truly repentant, then I will demonstrate this genuine repentance by returning your pen. Then reconciliation which is always costly will happen. When even a husband and wife quarrel, until one of them can say, sorry forgives me; they can’t really restore their former relationship. It can’t happen just by saying, “let by gone be by gone.”¹⁴⁴

Tutu did not spare his own Church and the need for her to forgive too. He admitted, “My Church has to confess too. My Church has to confess its racism. I have to confess as black person. How many times have I treated others in my own community as if they were less than the children of God?”¹⁴⁵ Tutu expressed hope that we could learn to make peace through nonviolent actions:

I have no doubt that if we hold hands with one another, accept God’s grace and remember that Christ is our peace, then we can work together. It is already happening at so many levels; we have people of different races in this country who are working together against injustice and poverty. I pray that one day we will understand fully that we are God’s children, all of us, that we belong to him as one family, God’s family.¹⁴⁶

It is important to insist; however, that one must not simply functionalize forgiveness, as a kind of staging post on the way to reconciliation.

Tutu emphasized the element of forgiveness in the work of the commission, even though many who forgave were not actually reconciled to their perpetrators, who showed neither repentance nor remorse. The commission for Anthony Bash somehow “justified these attitudes, insisting that forgiveness is more in the nature of a pardon and less from the person who receives forgiveness.”¹⁴⁷ The question confronting this approach to forgiveness is

¹⁴⁴Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 222.

¹⁴⁵Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 225.

¹⁴⁶Tutu, *The Rainbow People of God, The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, 226.

¹⁴⁷ Anthony Bash, *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics: New Studies in Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 109.

whether it will guarantee the healing that is equally required for a genuine reconciliation for peace to emerge. Ideally, Tutu believed that perpetrators would repent of their sins and victims would offer forgiveness, leading to reconciliation between individuals and ultimately the nation at large. They found a “justification for the model in Christian theology, which teaches God’s children to forgive their enemies and to reintegrate the sinner back into the family of God.”¹⁴⁸

The restorative possibility of forgiveness is limited when it is unaccompanied by repentance. It is only when forgiveness and repentance come together that reconciliation is possible. This is not to say that forgiveness requires either repentance or reconciliation. Shiver fails to recognise this distinction when he asserts that forgiveness is interdependent with repentance and that, “absent the latter, the former remains incomplete, conditional, in a posture of waiting.”¹⁴⁹ This is not to justify that unreciprocated forgiveness is the ideal. The failure of widespread repentance among South African whites to match widespread forgiveness among South African blacks constrained political possibilities. However, the aggregated acts of personal forgiveness across a political community can bring about a measure of stability that prevents widespread violence, as witnessed in the case of South Africa. Despite the limitations of the commission’s effort to realise genuine reconciliation due to their restricted definition of forgiveness, Tutu cited many examples of people who have forgiven their former oppressors, usually after an apology; as a result, they are no longer merely victims but have discovered peace, freedom and restoration. This was implemented within the context of the Christian theological framework. That Tutu and Boraine’s Christian commitment “led the commission to promote forms of forgiveness and transition to a more just society is praiseworthy.”¹⁵⁰ In addition to the Christian basis for supporting forgiveness over

¹⁴⁸ H. Russel Botman & Robin Peterson, eds., *To Remember and to Heal: Theological and Psychological Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation* (Cape town: Human & Rousseau, 1996), 79-95.

¹⁴⁹ Donald Shiver, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 210.

¹⁵⁰ Anthony Bash, *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics: New Studies in Christian Ethics*, 109-110.

punishment, the traditional African notion of Ubuntu is also a legitimate source. Even though there is no precise definition for Ubuntu, it connotes humaneness, caring and community. It conveys that an environment of right relationships is one in which people are able to “recognise that their humanity is inextricably bound up in others’ humanity. A person who lives in Ubuntu, according to Tutu, is more willing to make excuses for others.”¹⁵¹ Tutu finds in Ubuntu the justification for promoting reconciliation, or as he put it, prioritising the restorative over the retributive. His creative fusion of Christian forgiveness with the African notion of Ubuntu was a great insight that expressed co-existence of Christian values with traditional elements. In this context, restorative justice has been valued for its ability to “incorporate local practices and grassroots methods of social recovery, reintegration, and reconciliation.”¹⁵² John Mbiti confirms that Ubuntu’s emphasis on community is a belief widely shared by all Africans; “what happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: ‘I am because we are, and since we are I am.’”¹⁵³ Ubuntu’s understanding of the indivisibility of humanity creates capacity for forgiveness among Africans. In a human society that is founded on Ubuntu, individual duty precedes individual rights. In South Africa, for instance, people were asked to surrender their rights and face up to the duties that Ubuntu required. The individual right to “prosecute was superseded by societies’ right to live in peace.”¹⁵⁴ Ubuntu meant in the real sense that all who were part of the apartheid system, in whatever capacity, were victims and therefore in need of healing, which proceeds from forgiveness being offered and accepted. This offers a great lesson for those concerned in building community cohesion, because the spirit of Ubuntu plays the role of healing of

¹⁵¹ Louis Kretzshmar & Luke lungileplato, eds., *Archbishop Tutu: Prophetic Witness in South Africa* (Cape town: Human and Rousseau, 1996), 104.

¹⁵² Jennifer J. Llewellyn & Daniel Philpot, *Restorative Justice, Reconciliation, and Peace Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 182

¹⁵³ John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 108-109.

¹⁵⁴ Yvonne Mpokgoro, “Ubuntu and the Law in Africa,” in *African Politics since 1994*, edited by Tom Lodge (Cape town: David Philip, 1999), 52.

breaches, redressing imbalances and restoring broken relations. It helps communities avoid destroying themselves in their search for retribution and punishment of the perpetrators. Tutu argues that the emphasis should be on “rehabilitation of both the victim and perpetrator, and their speedy reintegration into the community.”¹⁵⁵ Finally, Tutu’s vision of Christian forgiveness and Ubuntu are compatible, serving as a reminder of each individual person’s crucial role in bringing about the healing and restoration of society, so as to achieve social progress and human development.

4.3.2 Theme Ten: Forgiveness and Walking the Fourfold Path

Tutu’s reflections on peace and understanding, is encapsulated in embracing and practicing forgiveness using the fourfold path, which includes, telling the story, naming the hurt, granting forgiveness, and renewing or releasing the relationship. It is a healing, transformational journey.

I will now treat the relationship between forgiveness and the fourfold path according to Tutu.

a) Telling the story

This is the step where you come out of the shadow and integrate your memories. This is not a onetime thing for complex events and the story may change as you do. Ideally Tutu sees an exchange of stories (between victim and perpetrator) with total honesty, no justification or rationalization. For Tutu, “stories are not always told from start to finish, sometimes we don’t even know they are stories. We simply begin to assemble the pieces, to make sense out of our experiences.”¹⁵⁶ Families and indeed communities must find shared stories of their experiences, or everyone is left to their private pain and each member of the family and society feels alone and isolated. This happens whenever there is a crisis or cruelty, and calls for meaning to be made.

For Tutu, telling the story is about sincerity and frankness. In his words: “I did not want my children to tell themselves the story of supposed inferiority and justified inequality that was

¹⁵⁵ Hailer, *Ubuntu: A Literature Review: a Paper Prepared for the Tutu Foundation*,

¹⁵⁶Tutu, *The book of Forgiving*, 69.

the master narrative of those bygone days. Instead, I told them about dignity and how one can only be robbed of it if one hands it to a thief.”¹⁵⁷

The journey of telling the story starts with what is it you need to forgive? What happened to cause you pain? How have you been hurt? Whatever it may be, whatever has been broken or lost, can only be repaired and found again by telling the story of what happened.

Telling the story for Tutu, is how we “get our dignity back after we have been harmed. It is how we begin to take back what was taken from us, and how we begin to understand and make meaning out of our hurting.”¹⁵⁸ We can integrate our memories through the act of telling our story. This will form an important part of how we begin to heal from any trauma. This is so for all of us. Telling our stories helps us “integrate our implicit memories and begin to heal from our traumas.”¹⁵⁹

In telling the story, for Tutu, “the truth is the first point of call. It prevents us from pretending that the things that happened did not happen. We let the truth be heard in all its rawness, in all its ugliness, and in all its messiness.”¹⁶⁰

It was Tutu who emphatically said, “if you want peace, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.”¹⁶¹ This depicts the peace movement he championed that earned him the Nobel peace prize. For Tutu, forgiveness and being reconciled are not about pretending that things are other than they are.

Florence Blaxall, who founded a home for the blind in South Africa, influenced Tutu greatly. He once said to her, “Knowing you have made it virtually impossible, I think, for people to be embittered because of how they were treated in this country, because they would recall

¹⁵⁷*The book of Forgiving*, 70.

¹⁵⁸*The book of Forgiving*, 71.

¹⁵⁹*The book of Forgiving*, 72.

¹⁶⁰*The book of Forgiving*, 74.

¹⁶¹ Our glorious diversities are reasons why we should continue to celebrate our differences. We need so much to work for coexistence, for tolerance. It is only when we respect even our adversaries and see them not as ogres, dehumanized, demonized, but as fellow human beings deserving respect for their personhood and dignity, that we will consider a discourse that just might prevent conflict. There is room for everyone, there is room for every culture, race, language and point of view. Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 49-52.

how you had treated them as if they were what they knew themselves to be, human beings made in the image of God.”¹⁶²

Ideally you can tell your story to the person who caused you harm. For Tutu, “there can be no reconciliation between South Africa’s past and future without the truth. Truth prevents us from pretending that the things that happened did not happen.”¹⁶³ How we begin by first letting the truth be heard in all its rawness, in all its ugliness, and all its messiness.

To tell your story start with the truth, letting the truth be heard in all its rawness, in all its ugliness and messiness.¹⁶⁴In the beginning, your memories and your facts, depending on what the trauma is and when it happened, may be fragmented and hard to articulate. “They may not follow a chronological order or be told in a linear fashion. That is okay. What matters is telling the story and acknowledging what happened.”¹⁶⁵

Ultimately for Tutu, “Telling the story directly to the perpetrator and telling it publicly has its pros and cons.”¹⁶⁶ It can be powerfully healing to travel on this difficult path of storytelling in order to gain reconciliation and forgives.

b) Naming the Hurt

This is the step for Tutu, “where you put emotion words on the story to name the hurt.”¹⁶⁷ For Tutu, every one of us has a story to tell of when we were hurt. Once we are done telling our story-the technical details of who, when, where and what was done to us-we must name the hurt. Giving the emotion a name is the way we come to understand how what happened,

¹⁶²Shireley Du Boulay, Tutu, *Voice of the Voiceless*, (Pretoria, Penguin 1989), 26.

¹⁶³ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 73-74.

¹⁶⁴The TRC was structured in such a way that the telling of the truth was an essential means to a greater end. As such it became a forum that provided a platform for story-telling, for revealing the truth, for holding the perpetrator accountable, for reparations, remorse, and forgiveness. What the TRC did was to create space in which victims, perpetrators, and benefactors could encounter one another around the truth for the sake of personal and national healing. Andries Odendaal, “For All its Flaws: The TRC as a Peacebuilding Tool, Track Two” *Constructive Approaches to Community and Political conflict* 6 nos. 3 and 4 (December 1997), 4-10. See John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation Restoring Justice* (Minneapolis: fortress Press, 2002), 147.

¹⁶⁵King, *The Book of Forgiving* Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu www.gifcounseling.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Book-of-Forgiving.pdf [accessed 9/04/2018]

¹⁶⁶For more analysis of the implications of telling the story, see Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*. 22-74.

¹⁶⁷ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 94

affected us. After we have told the facts of what happened, we must face our feelings. For Tutu, “We are each hurt in our own unique ways, and when we give voice to this pain, we begin to heal it.”¹⁶⁸

Tutu furthermore reasoned thus: “as we begin to heal, our relationship to the story loosens and we can choose when and where to share it. Until the healing begins, we may find ourselves stuck, rigidly repeating our story-or pieces of our story-to anyone and everyone, irrespective of the person or the situation.”¹⁶⁹

Tutu now poses a question, “why must we name the harm? We must each be especially courageous and name the hurts that cause us to feel shame or diminish us. When our dignity is violated, it serves no one if we stuff the injury away in the closet of our disowned past.”¹⁷⁰ We do not need to succumb to the temptation to meet such a violation with retaliation.

Primarily, for Tutu “we are not responsible for what breaks us, but we can be responsible for what puts us back together again. Naming the hurt is how we begin to repair our broken parts.”¹⁷¹

Tutu now possess a fundamental question. “When is it necessary to name the hurt? How do I know when a hurt needs to be voiced? How do I know when an injury must be named rather than shrugged off?”¹⁷² The truth is we engage a process whenever there is an injury or violation. We cannot categorize all the different types of hurt and tell you what will take time and what will not. The single most important thing is to share our sorrows, pains, fears, and grief. Furthermore, never naming the hurt can have unimagined and unimaginable consequences in our lives.

Tutu explains the role of grief in naming the hurt. This is how we come to terms not only with the “hardships we have endured, but also with what could have been if life had taken a

¹⁶⁸Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 95.

¹⁶⁹Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 95.

¹⁷⁰ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 96.

¹⁷¹ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 97.

¹⁷² Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 97-8.

different course. We grieve as much for what might have been as for what was.”¹⁷³ When we name our hurts, we have moved out of the stage of denial.

At this stage for Tutu, “You realise you are not alone in your suffering, that others have experienced and survived what you have experienced, and that you too can survive and know joy and happiness again. When you embrace your feelings, you embrace yourself and allow others to embrace you too.”¹⁷⁴

In naming the hurts, Tutu asks again, “with whom do we share? Do we need to tell every single person every single hurt feeling we feel? Of course not. Only you will know the hurts that linger and fester.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, only you can take the measure of your own suffering, and only you will know with whom to invest your confidence. In many cases, the cause of suffering is a group, a government or an institution.

Finding your voice is part of naming the hurt. When we give voice to our hurt, it loses its stranglehold on our lies and our identities. It stops being the central character in our stories. We thus, through forgiveness become the author of our own future, unfettered by the past. When we name the hurt, just as when we tell the story, we are in the process of reclaiming our dignity and building something new from the wreckage of what was lost. One fundamental question in naming the hurt is this. How do I know when a hurt needs to be voiced? How do I know when an injury must be named rather than shrugged off?

A harm felt but denied will always find a way to express itself. When we bury hurt in shame and silence, it begins to fester from the inside out. When we ignore the pain, it grows bigger and bigger, and like an abscess that is never drained, eventually it will rupture. We are not responsible for what breaks us, but we can be turning it round for good. In naming the hurt,

¹⁷³Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 97.

¹⁷⁴Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 105.

¹⁷⁵ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 108-9.

“we also are learning to feel and learning to forgive, which makes us one family that makes forgives transform both our story and our suffering.”¹⁷⁶

c) Granting forgiveness: The Act of True Humanity

Tutu maintains that we ought to cultivate the task of growing through forgiveness; “when we don’t forgive, there is a part of us that doesn’t grow as it should. Like the butterfly, we must become stronger and more resilient, and we will transform. We cannot remain frozen in a chrysalis.”¹⁷⁷ We must choose forgiveness over and over again, and cultivate it as a quality of our character.

Forgiveness is a courageous deed, particularly after the experience of any devastating loss or a heinous crime. People who forgive have known the humanity in others. Tutu expresses it thus: “People have sometimes expressed shock that I prayed daily for the President of South Africa, even during the darkest days of apartheid, but how could I not? I was praying for him to rediscover his humanity, and thereby for our country to rediscover its shared humanity.”¹⁷⁸

For Tutu, We are able to forgive because we are able to recognize our shared humanity. We are able to recognize that we are all fragile, vulnerable, flawed human beings capable of thoughtlessness and cruelty. We discover our shared humanity by seeing our connection rather than our separation. If we look at any perpetrator, we can discover a story that tells us something about what led up to that person causing harm. It doesn’t justify the person’s actions, but it does provide context and perspective.

The guarantee in life is that we will suffer. What is not guaranteed is how we respond, whether we will let this suffering embitter us or ennoble us. Our suffering can ennoble us when we make meaning out of it, and allow it to change us into richer, deeper, more empathic people. We have the ability to write a new story and move forward more whole and free.

¹⁷⁶Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 111-13.

¹⁷⁷Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 137.

¹⁷⁸Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 121.

For Tutu, sometimes, we are able to forgive quickly and sometimes more slowly. If you find that you are still resistant to the idea of forgiving, it is understandable. Many people will carry grudges and resentment for years, believing this will somehow hurt the other person. In truth, it often only hurts the one who carries the grudges or resentment. Tutu furthermore continued this reasoning; “many of us live our lives believing that hating the person who hurt us will somehow end the anguish, that destroying others will fix our broken, aching places. It does not.¹⁷⁹ So many seek this path and it is only when they stand in the aftermath of destruction, amid the rubble of hatred that they realise the pain is still there. The loss is still there. Forgiving is the only thing that can transform the aching wounds and the searing pain of loss. The final step of the fourfold path is renewing and releasing our relationship with the person who has hurt us.

d) Renewing or Releasing the Relationship

What does it mean to renew or release a relationship? For Tutu, “you might think you are not in a relationship with the stranger who assaulted you or the person in prison who killed your loved one . . . but a relationship is created and maintained by the very act of harm that stands between you. This relationship, calls for forgiveness, must be either renewed or released.”¹⁸⁰

Renewing a relationship is not restoring a relationship. We do not go back to where we were before the hurt happened and pretend it never happened. We create a new relationship out of our suffering, one that is often stronger for what we have experienced together. “Our renewed relationships are often deeper because we have faced the truth, recognizing our shred humanity, and now tell a new story of a relationship transformed.”¹⁸¹

Releasing a relationship is how you free yourself from victimhood and trauma. You can choose to not have someone in your life any longer, but you have released the relationship only when you have truly chosen that path without wishing that person ill. Releasing is

¹⁷⁹ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 127-8.

¹⁸⁰ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 144.

¹⁸¹ Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 153.

refusing to let an experience, or a person occupy space in your head or heart any longer. It is releasing not only the relationship but your old story of the relationship. This for Tutu “is also essential for the completion of any healing journey.”¹⁸²

Forgiveness is not the end of the Fourfold Path, because the granting of forgiveness is not the end of the process of healing. Once you have been able to forgive, the final step is to either renew or release the relationship with the one who has harmed you. Even if you never speak to the person again, even if the person is no longer alive, they still live on in ways that can affect your life profoundly. To finish the journey and create the wholeness and peace you crave, you must choose whether to renew or release the relationship. After this final step, you wipe the slate clean of all that caused a breach in the past. No more debts are owed. No more resentment festers. Only when you complete this step can you have a future unfettered by the past.

The choice to release a relationship is a valid choice but should not be taken lightly. When we release a relationship, that person walks off with a piece of our hearts and a piece of our history. On the other hand, renewing our relationships is how we harvest the fruits that forgiveness has planted. The relationship will not be the same as it was before the hurt or insult. “Renewing a relationship is a creative act. Building a culture of life”¹⁸³ will help in the healing process. We make a new relationship. Renewing relationships is how we turn our curses into blessings and continue to grow through our forgiving. It is how we make restitution for what was taken and set right what was made wrong.

¹⁸²Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving*, 153.

¹⁸³For Bansikiza building a culture of life and basing human actions upon the love of Jesus Christ, contributes to the building of a culture of life. This love founded on an encounter and relationship with the Living God of life and love serves as the basis of true peace. A person’s true nature as a human being is fully revealed as he or she carries out any self-giving act. John Paul II has rightly stressed that “making a sincere self-gift...is the most important dimension of civilization of love. This civilization is applicable to building a culture of life as a basis for true peace. Bansikiza, “Building A Culture of Life: The basis of true peace” *African Christian Studies* vol. 24 no. 3, (2008): 28-45.

Renew your relationships when you can and release them when you cannot. When we practice this last step of the Fourfold Path, we keep anger, resentment, hatred, and despair from ever having the last word. The Fourfold Path also applies when you are the one in need. The final path is the need to renew or release the relationship: Forgiveness is not the end of the Fourfold Path, because the granting of forgiveness is not the end of the process of healing. Once you have been able to forgive, the final step is to either renew or release the relationship with the one who has harmed you.

Renewing relationships is how we turn our curses into blessings and continue to grow through our forgiving. It is how we make restitution for what was taken and set right what was made wrong. Even if the relationship was injurious or hurtful, it is still a piece of shared history. Enemies can become friends, and perpetrators can recover their lost humanity.

There are times when renewing a relationship is not possible, such as when renewing the relationship might harm you further or you don't know who harmed you, or the person has died and is not someone you carry in your heart. Releasing a relationship is how you free yourself from victimhood and trauma. You can choose to not have someone in your life anymore, but you have released the relationship only when you have truly chosen that path without wishing that person ill. Releasing is refusing to let an experience or a person occupy space in your head or heart any longer. It is releasing not only the relationship but your old story of the relationship.

4.3.3 A Critical Appraisal of Tutu's Fourfold Path

I find some of the proposals of Tutu problematic. I will highlight a few of my concerns. Firstly, revenge and forgiveness are dynamic. It seems like there are other paths, for example, one might feel pain because one thinks they have been wronged by someone else. On further reflection, you might realize that your hurt was mostly self-inflicted and that the perpetrator

really did nothing wrong. I think Tutu folds this into (self) forgiveness; however, I think another approach would be to treat this as recognizing there was no harm, thus no pain, and then moving on. More generally, for some things perhaps letting go or forgetting is best, or best to some degree. Thus the victim or hero dichotomy limits the possible outcomes: there is also moving on or letting go of pain without forgiveness or revenge.

Secondly, is everyone deserving of forgiveness and unforgivable acts? Do Hitler, Napoleon, Idi Amin, Pol Pot and other dictators and war lords across the world in history deserving of forgiveness? I believe Tutu addresses this example and lands on yes. However, I am less sure. Tutu is coming at this somewhat spiritually. For me, maybe the issue is that putting being hurt or angry because your flower vase was shattered, or your child was spanked at by an angry teacher in school on one hand, and someone committed genocide and crime against humanity on the other hand, all in the same framework may be asking too much of the framework. Further, because Tutu is focused on the forgiveness path, he does not fully describe what he views as appropriate societal punishments for transgressions-though he does agree they should occur.

Thirdly, Tutu's framework of civil society in which forgiveness should operate is unclear and under-defined. It may be that Tutu views a number of crimes as better being addressed in a more restorative justice framework. More generally he does not really answer the question of what types of restitution are appropriate or fair. While Tutu certainly believes both the murderer and the thief deserve forgiveness, without a context for what types of restitution or punishment are appropriate it falls a bit flat for me. Tutu does not concern himself too much with that because he sees a failure to forgive as corrosive to you; but, perhaps like an immovable object against Tutu's irresistible force of forgiveness, I want a sense of the broader universe that my forgiveness is granted in particularly for serious criminal acts. Again, this may be the challenge of a single framework for everything from personal slights to genocides.

PART FOUR

4.4 Conclusion

Tutu work serve as a good basis for interreligious dialogue and critical view on the challenges of apartheid. He provides a wholesome understanding of Ubuntu as human solidarity. The fourfold path frame work towards forgiveness.

Does the discourse of Desmond Tutu have provided pluralistic insight for understanding spiritual others in an interfaith context? These themes provide a foundation for preparing individuals to enter interfaith dialogue with a pluralistic mind-set. It creates a relational dialectics, humility, and identification in the leaders' discourses lead to a better understanding of how spaces for interfaith dialogue are potentially opened up.

In my analysis, I find that Tutu define religion in a unique way that encourages interfaith dialogue. He called for humility and embodies it throughout his discourse in a way that promotes self-awareness, openness, and transcendence among individuals. Dialogue's primary tension, totality, and the same or different contradiction are dialectical themes addressed by Tutu.

Tutu instils pluralistic attitudes that help individuals manage their primary tensions, reflect on their relation to spiritual others through totality, and recognize the similarities and differences between faiths. Finally, identification is prevalent throughout. His discourses aim at revealing the theme of commonality among faiths. I have attempted to analyse how Tutu's discourses potentially function to unite spiritual others towards goals of peaceful interfaith coexistence. I will now briefly assess some of the major themes in his works.

4.4.1 Apartheid as Inhuman

Tutu is well known for having invoked an ubuntu ethic to evaluate South African society and he can take substantial credit for having made the term familiar to politicians activists and scholars around the world. Tutu criticised the National Party which formalised apartheid, and its supporters for having prized discord, the opposite of harmony.

Apartheid not only prevented “races” from identifying with each other or exhibiting solidarity with one another. It went further by having one “race” subordinate and harm others. In Tutu’s words, apartheid made people “less human” for their failure to participate on an even handed basis and to share power, wealth, land, opportunities and even themselves.

One of Tutu’s more striking, contested claims is that apartheid damaged not only black people, but also white people although most white people became well off as a result of apartheid, they did not become as morally good, or human, as they could have.

As is well known, Tutu maintained that, by Ubuntu, “Democratic South Africa was right to deal with apartheid-era political crimes by seeking reconciliation or restorative justice.”¹⁸⁴

For Tutu, “Social harmony is for us the *summum bonum* the greatest good and the primary aim when dealing with wrongdoing.”¹⁸⁵ This will help hold African values, to establish harmonious relationships between wrongdoers and victims. From this perspective, punishment merely for the purpose of paying back wrongdoers, in the manner of an eye for an eye, is unjustified.

4.4.2 Tutu and Interfaith Dialogue

Tutu “voice adds a unique perspective for understanding foundations that may open up pluralistic interfaith spaces for dialogue. As a spiritual leader, he articulated different spiritual identities and his voice rose out of the contextualized violence and oppression of colonial government. Though his actions and words were controversial in a highly polarized

¹⁸⁴ Tutu, *No Future without forgiveness*, 22.

¹⁸⁵ Tutu, *No Future without forgiveness*, 32.

environment, his means of nonviolent resistance against unjust systems gave testimony to his advocacy for peaceful coexistence amongst diversity. Tutu promoted a spiritual response to real world turmoil, using his actions and rhetoric to inspire people's own faith towards equality and peace. Though he had made significant contributions to interfaith relations, the exigency for interfaith cooperation continues to exist. I believe his rhetoric is still valuable in understanding how we can connect with spiritual others in an increasingly globalized world where we must face the boundaries that divide many faith traditions if we are to continue moving towards a pluralistic coexistence.

4.4.3 Controversies regarding Tutu's Ubuntu

Tutu is often criticised these days for having advocated a kind of reconciliation that lets white beneficiaries of apartheid injustice off the hook. But this criticism isn't fair. Reconciliation for Tutu has not meant merely shaking hands after one party has exploited and denigrated another. Instead, it has meant that the wrongdoer, and those who benefited, should acknowledge the wrongdoing, and seek to repair the damage that he did at some real cost.

A major criticism of Tutu is that his interpretation of ubuntu has been distorted through the lens of Christianity. Although Tutu's Christian beliefs have influenced his understanding of ubuntu, it's also the case that his understanding of ubuntu has influence his Christian beliefs. Tutu's background as an Archbishop of the Anglican Church does not necessarily render his construal of ubuntu utterly un-African or implausible.

In particular, Tutu has controversially continued to believe that forgiveness is essential for reconciliation, and it is reasonable to suspect that his Christian beliefs have influenced his understanding of what ubuntu requires, here. I agree with critics who contend that reconciliation does not require forgiveness. But, might not Tutu have a point in thinking that forgiveness would be part of the *best* form of reconciliation, an ideal for which to strive?

4.4.4 A Neglected View of Human Dignity

Tutu's ideas about humanness, harmony, and reconciliation have been enormously influential, not merely in South Africa, but throughout the world. There is one more idea of his that I mention in closing that has not been as influential, but that also merits attention. It is Tutu's rejection of the notion that what is valuable about us as human beings is our autonomy, which is a characteristically Western idea.

In short, what gives us a dignity is not our independence, but rather our interdependence, our ability to participate and share with one another, indeed our vulnerability. This African and relational conception of human dignity has yet to influence many outside sub-Saharan Africa.

I hope that this tribute might help in some way.

4.4.5 The fourfold path frame work

All of these steps are designed to happen sequentially in Tutu's view. However, there is no set pace, and it seems to me there can be some iteration (and even relapse). For example, as you begin to name the hurt, you might realize that you have new memories to integrate and go back to telling the story. Similarly, there can be new insults from a perpetrator (e.g. family member) that you forgave that cause you to have to revisit the process or recognize the nature of your forgiveness. None of these steps are about denying what happened or avoiding restitution/punishment, for the perpetrator, they are all about you personally moving on with your life in a positive way.

Thinking of forgiveness as a process, and a necessary one at that, with a framework is particularly helpful for our everyday lives. If one avoids the hardest corner cases (Hitler or Idi Amin genocide, serious crimes)-the centre of the bell curve of life events-this is an important skill to cultivate. I think I need to reflect harder on how the framework works will fits for me in the long tail of bad acts, and yet I see it the merit in it.

Tutu has been preoccupied throughout his life with the ways in which power was abused. His attacks on the apartheid government were extended to South Africa's black leaders. 'Speaking truth to power' placed Tutu at the centre of the national conversation. South Africa's saintly first democratic president, Nelson Mandela, would not be exempt. Before Mandela was jailed in 1964, Tutu and Mandela had met only once in the long-distant past, with little connection. But the struggle had brought them together. In July 1980, Mandela wrote to Tutu from Robben Island: "Men like you are making an invaluable contribution in feeding that fighting spirit and hope of victory."¹⁸⁶ For Mandela, 'The will to continue fighting and the hope of victory remained one of the most splendid spiritual weapons in the hands of the oppressed people inside and outside prison.'¹⁸⁷ Tutu learned long after the fact that Mandela and the ANC's exiled president Oliver Tambo were among the exceptions in the ANC leadership who had appreciated his contributions. Tutu has said that he hurts less than he did before. But the wounds persist.

Experience shows that the process of social healing, facilitated through the process of truth and reconciliation commission, is limited. In some areas, for example, there have been unnecessary entanglements with legal procedures. The situation is caused by the lack of clear procedures that can facilitate inter-institutional collaboration. With the situation of this sort, one could argue that the challenge of the method is how to bring together contributions emerging from different institutions. The experience in South Africa failed to be impartial, especially when crimes were committed by politically connected personalities.

The challenge is how to identify effective methodologies that could be adopted in the process of public confession, apology and forgiveness. There is the challenge and tension of legal and restorative justice, under the influence of this tension; it remains unclear whether truth and

¹⁸⁶ Tutu, *No Future without forgiveness*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Allen, *Rabble-Rouser for Peace*, 49.

reconciliation commission are legal process or a moral instrument of restoring social relationships.

It appears possible but difficult to experience complete healing through the commission because the process takes place within a limited time framework. Such a limitation justifies the claim that social healing is a process, not an event. In addition to that, the process of social healing cannot be fruitful if the population is not prepared in advance and if the people are not willing to construct new relationships. It is evident that this commission cannot by itself change the future of democratizing nation. They are only able to advocate the spirit of renewal as a required variable for shaping the future. This commission despite its difficulties is an essential stepping stone to a successful transition to democracy, given that it is deliberately formed to reconstruct social relationships after a prolonged conflict.

For Tutu in the name of communal healing, war criminals expect amnesty to be granted. Such an understanding could reduce amnesty to a cover-up paradigm. Because of these flaws, the method of granting amnesty needs clarification. The suspicion over the practice of amnesty is that it could be used as a means to conceal evil. With such a claim at hand, amnesty could become an ideological super-structure that conceals irresponsibly geared to evade the demands of justice. For Tutu, inevitably, therefore, the struggle in politics will be again and again to forgive the imperfections, alliances and temporary arrangements of democratic life, in the face of appalling sorrows and needs.

South Africa for Tutu has demonstrated to the world how to struggle successfully with issues so familiar to them: relations between rich and poor, within and outside nations, between majorities and minorities, whether of faith, race, culture or gender, creative handling of all matters and questions and how to balance within this mix, traditional and enlightenment insights and perceptions.

Tutu knows that this will be difficult for South Africa, for in the past, it has been religion which has played such an ambiguous role in establishing apartheid, both formally and informally. Nevertheless, religion is crucial to the South African experience, for it pervades the country-partly because of the African awareness of the supernatural, partly because a certain theology in particular takes God seriously and seeks to allow God's reign among both individuals and groups. Indeed, over 80 percent of South Africans like most Africans, claim adherence to some form of Christianity and other religions.

Forgiveness of course, is not solely the prerogative of Christianity, though it is pivotal to it, nor indeed is it the prerogative of religious people alone. It is rather a state of mind and heart which recognizes that life on earth can never be utopian, and that the checks and balances which democratic societies have carefully established, sometimes over centuries, are important. South Africans have to wrestle theologically with this experience and interpret it religiously as well as culturally, personally and politically. They will need specially to explore the hinterland between forgiveness and repentance, and which comes first, as well as the vexed relation of justice to forgiveness. They need to ask themselves, too, if there can ever be healing for millions if there is no restitution or reparation for past wrongs and if a more caring society is not created.

For the Christian community in South Africa specifically, forgiveness stems from the teaching of Jesus Christ, through whose life and death God reached out to humanity with forgiveness, demonstrated again and again by Christ in parables and through actions which often involved healing. This came to its inevitable climax in the crucifixion, death and resurrection, and in the Acts of the Apostles; the stoning of Stephen confirms this central fact of Christ's ministry, for Stephen is presented by Christians as dying a martyr's death, like Jesus, with words of forgiveness for his tormentors on his lips.

South Africans are called to practice atonement. This makes God's dramatic action of healing and reconciliation through Christ a reality. That effect is what they are being led to explore in their own histories, as some struggle to repent, others to forgive, or make restitution, and yet more to find liberation through remembering in a new way. They struggle, too, to understand how God's justice and love intermingles in atonement so that God's final act of justice is to forgive which is both the final justice and the end of justice.¹⁸⁸

For Tutu, God blots out our transgressions, but as contemporary South Africans know only too well, memory sears and scars and threatens to ruin both present and future. If however South Africans can seize their destiny and find deep meaning and significance in their experiences, they may well be given the courage to go forward in faith together despite the ambiguities, paradoxes and contradictions of history. Here religious faith becomes paramount, and for the Christian community at least there are theological, liturgical, sacramental and spiritual resources, as well as the wisdom from Scripture itself about the way God acts in history and in both personal and communal living, which can bring new life and possibilities.

One thing is certain, for South Africans as for others: there can be no let up on forgiveness, for when one issue has been dealt with, another inevitably occurs. Forgiveness in politics, therefore, just as in personal life, must continue to be understood as a process, rather than something to be applied temporarily.

Tutu's vision of truth as a means of healing is commendable for peace.¹⁸⁹ His discussion on forgiveness and the fourfold path is laudable. This is why he was crowned with the Nobel

¹⁸⁸Frost, *Struggling to Forgive*, 214-15.

¹⁸⁹Some of the themes associated with South African struggle to forgive after a long period of colonialism can be summarized thus. Reconciliation is an overarching goal, while remembering it is also a human experience, and have been managed by all including those who may be overwhelmed if they do not deal with it. Repentance comes from all, including those who might be silent and sometimes by their active support, cause more division. Love and forgiveness in terms of politics are less easy to discern, but they must always find their pivot in the tension between minorities and majorities, whereby restrained all-powerful groups deliberately do not trample on those who have little significance in their eyes. Healing is the task of both civil and church leaders, this can come through reform, and other manner of activities and therapeutic works, as well as through discerning the

peace prize. He championed the cause of peace through his teachings and physical presence at conflict areas like Rwanda and other parts of the world. He proved himself to be an instrument of peace and nonviolence. He is a living legend and emblem of peace. Here his faith is at work for Jesus says, "Happy are the peacemakers," (Matt 5) which is exactly what he did for South Africa and the world. Tutu no doubt remains a hero of peace in South Africa. For Tutu, God intends that others might look at us and take courage. God wants to point to us as a possible beacon of hope, a possible paradigm. God wants to show that there is life after conflict and repression-that because of forgiveness, there is a future.

Finally, a number of peace initiatives like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, fail to create a significant impact because the local structures of political organisation and religio-cultural traditions are ignored. Such an experience suggests that local conflicts require localized modalities oriented toward the reformulation of political structures based upon the local cultures and involvement of the masses. The strategy of resolving conflicts must have the common good at heart in order to benefit all the parties involved. We can therefore conclude that the truth and reconciliation method of Tutu, like most African peace negotiations, are partially successful due to the lack of clear vision, localized methodologies, participation of the masses, and willingness to receive input from the grassroots communities. Positively, and perhaps in different contexts, South Africa can still offer us lessons in practical human rights through its willingness to explore the complex relationships between justice, truth, forgiveness and reconciliation. The legacy of what had been achieved by Tutu will help others to deal with history in a forgiving way. Here is an opportunity to learn from the recent past.

signs of the of the times. Justice should always be sought even though it may never be fully attained. Yet justice in human rights terms will mean little if economic development fails to materialize and corporate restitution is experienced as a pale shadow of the original intentions of the negotiators of the new future. Ultimately in South Africa, reparation is probably what will open the doors leading to all the other themes, affecting both individuals and communities. Frost, *Struggling to Forgive*, 209-10.

In the sixth chapter, we shall explore selected Islamic scholars and writers on interreligious response to peace-building in conversation with other theologians as it affects the church in Nigeria and Africa and the global community in general.

Chapter five

Islamic Voices in Conversation and Interreligious Response to Peace in Africa

5. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed Desmond Tutu and his theology of Ubuntu, interfaith dialogue, and forgiveness as a transformational journey in the peace movement in South Africa, which culminated in the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by Tutu himself. He explored the nexus of culture, religion and theology in his teaching on Ubuntu, interfaith dialogue and forgiveness as a transformational journey in the peace process in South Africa.

Chapter five treats Abbas Aroua and Irfan A Omar, two selected Islamic scholars¹⁹⁰ on interreligious response to peace-building in conversation with other scholars. It is divided

¹⁹⁰Abbas Aroua is an Algerian medical and health physicist. He is also a human rights defender, peace worker and political activist. He is an adjunct Professor at the Lausanne Faculty of Biology and Medicine. He is also the founder in 2002 and director of the Cordoba Foundation of Geneva (CFG) for Peace Studies. He is involved in research, training and mediation with the CFG on conflict in or involving the Muslim world.

Aroua's reflections on peace are to be found in his book and in the following articles and other online materials. "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" in *Religion, Conflict, & Peacemaking An Interdisciplinary Conversation* ed. Muriel Schmid (Utah: The University of Utah Press, 2018), 168. Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition* (Oslo: Kolofon Press, 2013). Aroua, "Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology" in *Cordoba Research Papers Publications*: posted January 2018, <https://www.cordoue.ch/en/publications-mega/research-papers> (accessed December 14, 2019). Aroua, "Sufism, Politics and Violence" in *Cordoba Research Papers publications*: posted September 2017. <https://www.cordoue.ch/en/publications-mega/research-papers> (accessed December 14, 2019). (Aroua, "Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons" in *Cordoba Research Papers publications* August, 2017).

Irfan A. Omar (Ph.D., is an Indian Associate Professor of Islam and World Religions, Marquette University, Wisconsin, Temple University, 2001), he specializes in Islamic thought with a special focus on inter-religious connections between Islam and other religions. His secondary areas of interest are Islamic mysticism and South Asian Studies.

into two parts. Part one will briefly discuss the challenge of Islam in relation to Christianity and its message and an overview of Islam and its central beliefs. Part two will examine the works of Aroua and Omar, scholars on the Islamic tradition.

I found them appropriate for this study because they show a thorough use and an examination of the Islamic textual evidence for peaceful interfaith relations, dialogue and peacebuilding.¹⁹¹ These two Islamic scholars try to explore the Islamic faith from and its teaching on peace and harmonious co-existence by looking at the core texts of the Islamic tradition.

Aroua and Omar attempt to answer series of questions in the minds of people and scholars about where the Islamic tradition and position stand on key fundamental teachings on interpretation of the Quran on Interfaith Dialogue and peace. Their aim is to encourage solidarity and tolerance between Muslims and non-Muslims.

To examine some of the related questions: are the Muslim or Islamic tradition and its primary texts, the Quran, compatible with and interested in peaceful co-existence, non-violence and conflict transformation with non-Muslims? Is there space for respect and dialogue, peace and tolerance of other religions? Is Islam inimical to interfaith relations? Do they share the common sense of our humanity, harmonious relations, plurality and appreciate the beauty and wisdom in others, including love and mercy? Do they promote defence of universal religious liberty, reconciliation the dignity and essential freedom of the human conscience, truth,

Omar has edited and co-edited several volumes including "Sayyidina Isa: Jesus in the Eyes of a Muslim" in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, vol. 27(2015), 8-47. *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, (London: Routledge, 2006). *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005). *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, (Co-edited with M. Duffey), (Oxford, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2015-256). *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives* (co-edited with R. Taylor), (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2012, 324). and *A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue by Thomas F. Michel, S.J.* (New York: Orbis books, 2011). "Qur'an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God." In *Seeking Communion: A Collection of Conversations*. Ed. Joseph Victor Edwin, S.J. (Delhi: SPCK, 2018). He currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* and the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion*. From 2010-14 he served on the steering committee of the Ethics Section of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Major courses taught include: Islamic Theology, Inter-religious Dialogue and Peace Studies.

¹⁹¹ They also seem to represent the middle-ground moderate Muslim tradition.

fairness, pardon and the obligation of every person to freely choose the truth? Are Muslims peaceful and what does the Quran teach on Jihad, war, aggression, terrorism, extremism, the *kāfir* (non-believer or heathen)? These questions are necessary because of the general Muslim belief by some adherents that Islam alone is the True, uncorrupted religion, that makes some believers non-tolerant and extremist.

Some people may also claim that since Islam is a missionary religion, and since Muslims are commanded to engage in da‘wah¹⁹² Muslims may not be able to work for peace and cannot genuinely engage in dialogue. They may contend that if Muslims believe that other religions are false or corrupted, they are open to conflict and cannot live in harmony with people of other faiths. Some people may say that Islam cannot tolerate other religions, that Islam gives them just two choices: death or conversion to Islam. Hence, they may contend that Islam does not envisage any possibility for dialogue, nonviolence, reconciliation and harmonious relations with people who are not considered by Muslims to be Ahl-e Kitab.¹⁹³

They argue that violence and revenge are not a demand of the Quran, but rather, peacemaking, reconciliation, sense of our shared humanity and solidarity are the requirements of a true Muslim.

They believe there are Muslims who support and encourage others to enter into a genuine dialogue, and closer collaboration based on textual evidence in the Quran and other Islamic traditions. For them, the overarching aim should be to present a shared witness in our world to faith in God and love of the common shared humanity. They expressed hope that we could

¹⁹²*Da‘wah* is an Arabic word which has the literal meaning of "issuing a summons," or "making an invitation." This term is often used to describe how Muslims teach others about the beliefs and practices of their Islamic faith. It appears like coercion or force to non-Muslims. When practiced with non-Muslims, *da‘wah* usually involves explaining the meaning of the Quran and demonstrating how Islam works for the believer. See Bunza, "Neither in the name of Jesus nor Muhammad: A Critical Evaluation of the role of religion in Muslim-Christian encounters in Nigeria" 85. See Aroua, "Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology" 33.

¹⁹³(Arabic: People of the Book) in Islamic thought, those religionists-Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, as well as the imprecisely defined group referred to as Sabians who are possessors of divine books (i.e., the Torah, the Gospel, and the Avesta), as distinguished from those whose religions are not. Aroua, "Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology" 33.

learn to make peace through non-violence in the Islamic tradition. Aroua and Omar will attempt to answer these questions in the course of their reflections.

I will give a background of Islamic relations in Africa with Christianity as co-Abrahamic religions and an overview of Islam and its central beliefs in part one, before I examine these scholars' reflections on peace in part two.

PART ONE

5.1 The Challenge of Islam in relation to Christianity and its Message of Peace

Too often, over the past centuries, Islam and Christianity have been paired in connection with political conflicts, military confrontations, or socio-ethnic tensions. The monotonous refrain has created the impression that both religions are fierce antagonists whose only object is to tear each other to pieces.

Islam, along with Christianity and Judaism, has contributed significantly to the cultural inheritance of Europe and the shaping of the western world and the world at large. But in times and places of dialogue, collaboration and mutual enrichment, suspicion and hostility have mostly shaped the relationship, whether defined by conquest, inquisition, jihads or crusades.¹⁹⁴

In both Christianity and Islam, there is the message that God wants to be made known to us; God wants a relationship that will promote love and peace, and that is why He has sent messengers and revelation to mankind throughout history. The question we need to ask now is, are we willing to take time and effort to seek out God's truth of love and peace? This is the key to fulfilling the purpose of our creation which gives us inner peace in this life and peace

¹⁹⁴ Ataulloh Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Macmillan, 1997), 199.

with our environment and people around us, and in the eternal hereafter.¹⁹⁵ I now consider central themes in Islam and its relevance to this study.

5.2 Islam and Its Central Beliefs in Relation to Christianity

Islam refers to peace and submission to the will of God. In that sense, Islam is the same as Salam, which is the same as the Hebrew Shalom, meaning peace. Peace is so dear to Islam that every Muslim is ordered to greet other person on meeting, peace be with you (Assallam - u-alaikum).

In the Quaran, God refers to Himself as Salam or peace, so as Muslims, the yearning for peace is nothing but yearning for God. Islamic teachings guarantee peace in every sphere of life. They contain many injunctions for settling disputes between people and nations with the aim of establishing peace. When speaking of peace, one should never forget the famous qur'anic verse "He it is who made the divine peace (al-Sakinah) to descend in the hearts of believers."¹⁹⁶Whenever one speaks of Shekinah, the reality emphasized by Islam remains that the source of peace is God who is himself peace and without whom there can be no peace on earth.

5.2.2 Peace-Building through Learning and Dialogue

Christianity and Islam have much in common. Both religions come from related theological traditions and believe in a single omnipotent God, who is concerned with human history and who has sent his messengers-prophets to guide human beings to salvation. Both are proselytizing religions even if different in methodology and intensity.

Islam is a communal religion both in structure and practice. It presents and encompasses a cohesive set of rules, which are legal and ethical for the organization of the collective and individual lives of its members. Islam aims at creating a new socio-political community based on a common faith, the *Ummat-ul Islam*, distinct and different from other communities. The

¹⁹⁵ Abu Zakariya, *Jesus: Man Messenger and Messiah*,(London: Iera Conveying the Call, 2017), 11.

¹⁹⁶ Quaran: (48.4).

principle of one *Ummah* or community and collaborative effort is very important in Islam and among its adherents.¹⁹⁷ The religion presents a system of beliefs, values, and guides for socio-political organisation.¹⁹⁸ In Africa, we are intermingled and live in the same geographical areas. Though different in faith, some Africans might be related by blood and parental ties. The proximity of the two religions can also be a source of competition and conflict on the socio-political level.

Ultimately, the increasing religious pluralism of modern society has brought some Christian churches to appreciate the importance and necessity of tolerance in the civic domain.

Within both Christianity and Islam, there are many groupings, theological traditions, and religious and secular authorities. Both view tolerance of other religions with difficulty. Both are Universalist, appealing to each other and welcoming all human beings. They both decry all forms of discrimination based on gender, nationality, and ethnic origin. Each system has conservative and radical movements. In such similarities and differences, one wonders why black Africans who share the same roots, at times related by blood, should fight each other to the point of elimination.

5.2.3 Jihad and its Challenges

One understands that the Quran makes it a duty for Muslims to promote Islam. According to one prophetic tradition on the value of Jihad (Hadith), the Prophet said that whoever fights to make Allah's words superior fights in God's cause and that even a single journey for this purpose is better than the world and everything in it.¹⁹⁹ It is mainly because of this misunderstanding of the Quran that many illiterate Muslims take it literally. For enlightened Muslims and scholars of the Quran, jihad is not one of the prerequisites of salvation and accession of heaven unlike regular prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

¹⁹⁷ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, "A Framework for Non-violence and Peacebuilding in Islam", Washington DC *Journal of Religion and Law*, American University, 2001), 20-22.

¹⁹⁸Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West, Clash of Civilization or Peaceful Co-existence* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), 11-12.

¹⁹⁹Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West, Clash of civilization or Peaceful Co-existence*, 61.

For others, jihad is considered an ultimate method for Muslims to settle their internal and external differences. It is in this context that we find Islamic fundamentalism and other radical Islamic movements, which tend to use violence to achieve their objective. As a matter of fact, jihad ranks even lower than the pilgrimage to Mecca, as Shireen explains: “jihad means different things to different people. To some, violent jihad does not always imply waging war against others but rather, battling one’s baser instincts and impulses to become a better Muslim.”²⁰⁰ Even if a jihad has to be waged, it should be to defend Islamic teachings, not to expand its dominions.

5.2.4 Peace in Islam

Islam, deriving from the root word ‘silm’, which means peace, is a religion of peace. The Quran puts on record the many names or attributes of God, one of them being ‘As-Salam’, that is, Peace. Islam always lays emphasis on peaceful living. The goal of Islam is the positive intellectual engineering of every human being, and this mission can be accomplished only in a peaceful atmosphere. According to Islam, peace is not simply a moral principle: it is more than that. It is a complete way of life, based on the culture of peace. The Prophet of Islam taught people how to inculcate the culture of peace. God loves peace and security so much that He chose ‘Peace’ as one of His names. That is to say, that God Himself is the embodiment of peace. God has set the highest conceivable standards. That is, when God’s dealings with human beings are based on peace and security, then humans should also deal with other human beings in a peaceable manner, and not with harshness or violence.

5.2.5 Learning in Islam

Learning is also another very important aspect of Islam. According to Islam learning is essential for religious and spiritual development that sets off a process of intellectual and spiritual development that makes individuals peaceful. The Prophet of Islam once said:

²⁰⁰Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West, Clash of civilization or Peaceful Co-existence*, 64.

“Every Muslim, man and woman, is duty-bound to acquire learning.”²⁰¹ This tradition of the Prophet shows the importance of learning in Islam. Learning is necessary for the realization of God. That is why acquiring learning is held to be a duty for all.

Questions now arise: how can we speak about tolerance, dialogue and peacebuilding between Christians and Muslims in Africa? Are Islamic voices, like their Christian counterparts from Africa and Nigeria and other parts of the world really making efforts to work for peace? I will now examine the two selected scholars in the second part.

PART TWO

5.3 Rooting Non-Violence in the Islamic Tradition: An Overview of the thoughts of Aroua and Omar

Several Muslim scholars have attempted to highlight the Islamic basis of the concept of peace and non-violence as in the Quran, Hadith and other Islamic traditions, either by expounding the Islamic precepts advocating non-violence, or by showing practical examples of non-violent attitudes and behaviours from the life of the prophets, particularly the Prophet Muhammad. By focusing our attention on the specific differing characteristics of Christianity and Islam, we often lose sight of what they have in common, which is considerable to reflect upon.

Aroua reflects on peace, conflict and conflict transformation in the Islamic tradition by asserting that the foundational texts of the Islamic religion and practices of the Prophet of Islam and the early Muslim community provide enough teachings to elaborate a comprehensive theory of conflict and peace. Omar like Aroua, based his reflections on

²⁰¹ Jean-Rene Milot argues that the irony and pitfalls of history reveal that Muslims paved the way for the European Renaissance. The idea that Islam or the Muslims are allergic to progress itself nowadays is a stereotype. For more on learning in Islam, see Jean-Rene Milot, *Muslims and Christians: Enemies or Brothers?* Trans Mary Thomas Noble (New York: St Paul's Publications, 1997), 37-76.

dialogue and peace in Islam and like Aroua, backed with textual evidence from the Quran, addressed basic teachings on peace and conflict.²⁰²

Aroua and Omar know that despite it appears that Islam is viewed by many observers to be the fastest growing religion in the world, it is the most misunderstood. This stems from views of some Muslims and non-Muslims, whose limited knowledge and practice of Islam perpetrates their misconceptions. These scholars thus respond to the need for empowering Muslims and non-Muslims to know the basic teachings of peace in the Quran and to share its message with humanity for lasting peace and reconciliation in the world. Aroua and Omar thus, present hope and a new order in Islamic relations with non-Muslims: between legitimacy and solidarity.

5.3.1 Peace, (Salam) Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition And the Imperative of Peace: Abbas Aroua Thoughts.

The historical events Muslim communities went through and particularly the major political conflicts in the first decades of Islamic history prevented the emergence of a healthy approach to conflict. Today there is an increasing awareness for the need in the Muslim world to master the techniques of conflict analysis and transformation. The aim of the contribution of Aroua is to provide peacebuilders with a few resources from the Islamic tradition that can be used when addressing a conflict rooted in the Islamic context.

Aroua works represent a good example of the scholarship that has emerged in light of religiously motivated violence. He is deeply rooted in both Islam and the Arab world, as well as fully conversant with the West. Though an African from Algeria, he lives, in Switzerland. Aroua was a researcher and founder in 2002 and director of the Cordoba Peace Institute-Geneva, for peace promotion, which is now called, *The Cordoba Foundation of Geneva*. He was influenced to work for peace as director of this foundation dedicated to fostering

²⁰² See Mukhtar UmahBunza, "Neither in the name of Jesus nor Muhammad: A Critical Evaluation of the role of religion in Muslim-Christian encounters in Nigeria" *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* vol. 27 (2015): 48-85.

respectful dialogue and peace initiative between groups of different cultural backgrounds and faith traditions. In response to 9/11, Aroua and many other Islamic scholars have been under pressure to portray the true teachings of the faith on peace. He gives a good example of exegetical work. He builds his arguments and reflections with the use of Quranic verses and texts. It shows a detailed reading of Quran, part of the reason why I chose to examine his works. I will now give an overview of his thoughts as reflected in some of his major works before I consider some of his selected themes.

In “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” Aroua asserts that religion is a conversation and is a living faith with a specific tradition and set of beliefs that function as a grounding or inspiration of peacemaking initiatives, strategies and processes. This book revisits the Islamic textual tradition around the concept of peace and conflict transformation.

He dialogues with the Islamic tradition and walks us through various Quranic texts and carefully analyzes concepts that can help sustain peacemaking in the Islamic tradition. Thus, seeking for textual evidence to support peacemaking has become part of an important conversation in faith based peacemaking.

In another book, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition* Aroua seeks to explain the call for peace in, and involving, the Muslim world. It deals with Islam in general; and with peace and war in Islam and with the duty to transform conflict through peace building.(The Big Fitna)²⁰³.

The aim of this contribution from Aroua is to provide peace workers with a few resources from the Islamic tradition that can be used when addressing a conflict rooted in an Islamic context. Using the internal resources and a language understood by the conflicting parties has proven to be effective in conflict transformation.

²⁰³Aroua, “Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology” 37.

Non-Muslims will learn much from basic Islamic concepts like jihād and sharī’a being very often misunderstood. That shared essence guides our relations to our Self, to others and to the Creator Allah.

Basic Islamic concepts are briefly presented in this book; they will guide the discussions of the meaning of peace in the Islamic tradition. The issues of peace and war, conflict and conflict transformation are addressed.²⁰⁴

In another work, “Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology” Aroua, tries to provide some elements that will hopefully contribute to a more accurate definition of the terms used in the context of extremism and violence. For this study, I have divided this work into nine selected themes.

5.3.2 Theme one: Aroua on Respect and Equal Treatment, Mercy and Love and Forgiveness.

In building a culture of peace, Aroua advances for what he called the goals or three core principles which should be learnt by individuals-respect and equal treatment for all, compassion: Rahmat:, mercy and love and forgiveness. It is by learning these principles that individuals can build a culture of peace in them.

a) Respect and equal treatment for all

In setting out his position on respect and equality, Aroua is of the opinion that respect for all is the most important principle by which to build a culture of peace within oneself.²⁰⁵ The teachings of Islam can be broadly divided into two areas – one, the worship of God, and two,

²⁰⁴Mukhtar Umah Bunza is a professor of Social History, Department of History, Usman Dan fodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria. He is the author of *Christian Missions among Muslims: Sokoto province, Northern Nigeria 1935-1990*, NJ, AWP, 2007, Co-editor, *Islam and the Fundamentals of Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria*, SOSG, 2014, *Gwandu Emirate 1805 to present*, 2015, and several other articles related to Islamic movements, Evangelism and Islamism. Bunza provide reflective insights to enhance and promote Christian-Muslim dialogue, not only in Nigeria but also globally.

²⁰⁵Aroua, “Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology” 37.

respect and well-wishing for humanity. Respect for others is an important teaching of Islam set forth in the Quran and in the traditions of the Prophet of Islam.

There is a very interesting story, recorded by Al-Bukhari in this regard. The Prophet of Islam once saw a funeral procession passing along a street in Medina. The Prophet was seated at that time. On seeing the funeral, the Prophet stood up as a mark of respect. At this, one of his companions said: ‘O Prophet, it was the funeral of a Jew (not a Muslim); The Prophet replied: ‘Was he not a human being?’

This shows that every man is worthy of respect, whether he belongs to one religion or another, to one nation or another.²⁰⁶ On no pretext can this respect be withheld from any human being. The truth is that every individual has been created by one and the same God, therefore, everyone is equally worthy of respect. There may be differences among people regarding religion and culture, but everyone has to respect the other. For, according to Islam, all men and women are blood brothers and blood sisters. And all are creatures of one and the same God.

As regards equal treatment for all, according to Islam all human beings deserve equal treatment. The Prophet of Islam once observed that a believer is one who likes for others what he likes for himself. This is a very important principle of social ethics. Everyone knows what attitude he wants or does not want from others. He should behave with others as he wants them to behave with him; he should refrain from such behaviour as he does not want to receive from others. This is a central teaching of Islam. It is only by following this ethic that one becomes deserving of the respect of others.

b) Compassion: Rahmat: Mercy and Love

For Aroua, compassion serves as one of the foundations and is the second principle of building a culture of peace within oneself. If you go through the Quran and Hadith, you will

²⁰⁶ Aroua, *The Quest for peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 45.

find many verses which lay great stress on compassion. For instance, the Prophet of Islam said: “O people, be compassionate to others so that you may be granted compassion by God.”²⁰⁷ Thus Islam makes compassion a matter of self-interest for every man. One’s own future depends on one’s compassionate behaviour to one’s fellow men. In this way, Islam motivates us to be compassionate in our dealings with each other. If one wants to receive God’s grace, one shall have to show compassion to others.

Aroua cited that prophet often uttered such phrases as, “May God bless the man, may God bless the woman.” This goes to show what type of attitude Islam wants to develop in its adherents. This is the culture of rahmat that is, compassion and love. Islam demands that on all occasions human beings should be well-intentioned towards each other; on all occasions human beings should offer the gifts of love and compassion to others.

God’s attributes are given in the Quran as ‘The Compassionate’, and ‘The Merciful’. That is, He is very kind and sympathetic. Similarly, the Prophet of Islam has been called ‘A Mercy to the world’. (21: 107). That is, the Prophet of Islam has been sent as a blessing to the whole world. The greatest distinguishing feature of the Prophet is his being the instrument of universal mercy.

Aroua concluded with the recognition that the Quran, as a matter of divine guidance, urges people to exercise patience and compassion in their dealings with one another. This means that everyone should treat others with sympathy and kindness. Even when one experiences unkindness from others, one should not return unkindness for unkindness, but should continue to behave sympathetically.

²⁰⁷ Quran: (22: 101).

c) Forgiveness

Aroua stated that the third most important principle by which to build a culture of peace within oneself is forgiveness.²⁰⁸ The Quran has this to say of peace-loving people: “When they are angered, they forgive.” There are a number of verses in the Quran which advocate forgiveness. Once a person came to the Prophet and asked him, “O Prophet, give me a masterly piece of advice by which I may be able to manage all the affairs of my life.” The Prophet replied: “Don’t be angry.” What he meant by this was: ‘forgive people even in the face of provocation.’ That is, adopt forgiveness as your behaviour at all times.

5.3.3 Theme two: On peace and war in Islam

For Aroua, there is no peaceful or violent religion, culture, race or nation. All religions call for peace and, at the same time, authorize the use of violence when justified and well controlled. But the followers of religions, the communities which belong to them, are all human beings, complex entities sharing the same inclination to violence and the ideal of peace.

The Arabic word ‘Islām’ comes from the same root as “silm” and “salām”, meaning peace. Therefore Islām may be translated as “Seeking peace near or with God”. In fact, As-Salām is one of the names/attributes of God. According to the Qur’ān, He is the “Source of Peace”²⁰⁹ and “invites unto the abode of peace”²¹⁰. The believers are called to peace: “O you who believe! Enter all of you into peace and do not follow the steps of Satan.”²¹¹ Some Muslim scholars interpret “enter into peace” as “enter into Islam” making therefore a strong association between Islam and peace.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Aroua, *The Quest for peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 45.

²⁰⁹ Quran, Yunus 10:25.

²¹⁰ Quran, Yunus 10:25.

²¹¹ Quran, Al-Baqara 2:208.

²¹² Aroua, “Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons” 33.

For Aroua, Peace is three-dimensional.²¹³ In the Islamic tradition the concept of peace is projected on the three dimensions of the Muslim's life. You therefore have peace with self (inner peace), peace with the Creator, and peace with other creatures (humans, animals and the whole environment).²¹⁴ The three dimensions of peace are interlinked. As pointed out by Algerian academic Omar Benaissa: "The divine name As-Salām is the one by which all the other opposed names are reconciled. One must make peace within self to be able to make peace around. Moses first learned to control his inner 'pharaoh' before triumphing over the external Pharaoh."²¹⁵

To be at peace with God implies necessarily peace with the others, and to be in peace with the others is a requirement for peace with God.²¹⁶ Sheherazade Jafari and Abdul Aziz reflected also on the thoughts of Aroua in these words:

Within an Islamic peacemaking framework, inner personal transformation is connected to societal conflict transformation; peace within oneself and peace in relation to others is linked not only with each other, but to a relationship with God. In particular, Tasawwuf, the Sufi branch of knowledge and mysticism in Islam, understands the purification of one's inner self as a way to peace, which is defined as harmony or equilibrium. [...] The Islamic framework provides a conceptualization of transformation that works from the inside out, addressing what is deeply rooted at the personal level in order to come closer to God's love and, ultimately, peace.²¹⁷

²¹³Aroua, *The Quest for peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 45.

²¹⁴Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 169.

²¹⁵ Omar Benaissa, on Islam in Africa.

²¹⁶*The Quest for peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 45.

²¹⁷Sheherazade Jafari and Abdul Aziz Said, "Islam and Peacemaking," in *Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory*, ed. Susan Allen Nan, Zacgariah Cherian Mampilly, and Andrea Bartoli (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012).

Aroua recognises that peace is a basic need and a human right: It is a pre-requisite to the realization of other human rights.²¹⁸ Two basic needs are mentioned in the Qur'ān in the same verse: food and peace: "Let them worship the Lord of this House (Ka'ba), who fed them from hunger and secured them from fear."²¹⁹ Being considered as a trustee of God, the duty of the human being is to guarantee these basic needs around him/her to his fellow men and women. The duty of the State is to guarantee them at a larger scale to the whole community.²²⁰

As highlighted by Aroua, "Peace is the greeting of Islam: "Peace be upon you!" (AsSalāmu alaykum) is the greeting used by Muslims.²²¹" He developed this point by citing the Quran when the Prophet said: "You will not enter into Paradise until you believe and you will not believe until you love each other. Shall I tell you of something if you do it you will love one another? Spread the greeting of peace amongst yourselves."²²² "Peace be upon you!" is also the formula that closes the formal prayer.

Furthermore Aroua maintained, "Peace is a continuously reiterated wish of the Muslim."²²³ This is expressed in such a way that, after every prayer it is recommended to follow the prophetic tradition and say the following invocation: "Ô my God, You are Peace; the Source of Peace, blessed is the Lord of Majesty and Bounty"²²⁴. Some believers may add: "You are the Origin of Peace, make us live in Peace, and ultimately let us enter the Abode of Peace (Paradise)."²²⁵

Aroua continued to develop his thoughts in these words: "Peace is the language of the righteous."²²⁶ He cites the Quran to support this teaching thus: "The true devotees of Ar-

²¹⁸Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 171. Aroua, "Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons" 33.

²¹⁹ Quran, Quraysh 106:3-4.

²²⁰Aroua, "Sufism, Politics and Violence" 44.

²²¹Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 170..

²²²Quran, Quraysh 106:3-4.

²²³Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 170..

²²⁴Quran, Quraysh 106:3-4.

²²⁵Quran, Quraysh 106:3-4.

²²⁶Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 170.

Rahmān (God, the Loving) are those who walk on the earth with humility, and when the ignorant addresses them [harshly], they say: Peace!”²²⁷ Significantly, this teaching further states that “Peace is also the salutation of God to the righteous: “Their greeting on the day they meet Him will be: 'Peace!' and He has prepared for them a generous reward.”²²⁸

Aroua asserts that, “Peace is the name and the language of Paradise.”²²⁹ The Quran puts it in these words: “For them will be a home of peace (Darussalam) in the presence of their Lord.”²³⁰ It furthermore says: “They shall enter the eternal Gardens of Eden, along with the righteous from among their fathers, wives and descendants. From every gate the angels will come to them, saying: Peace be upon you for all what you have steadfastly endured. How excellent is the final abode!”²³¹ “They will hear no vain talk there (in the Gardens of Eden), but only peace”²³². All things considered, Aroua reflects: “Peace must be the attitude and behaviour of the Muslim.”²³³ As a result, the Prophet said: “The true Muslim is the one with whom the others feel in peace and do not fear his tongue and hand”²³⁴ and “the true believer is the one who is trusted by others for their wealth and life.”²³⁵

5.3.4 Theme three: Harb: The Recourse to War

As regards the place of war and pacifism, Aroua states categorically that “If Islam may be considered as a religion of peace, as shown previously, it certainly does not advocate pacifism.”²³⁶ Equally, that is because “Even if war is considered as a disliked enterprise, it is authorised in certain circumstances and under certain conditions.”²³⁷ In like manner, the

²²⁷ Quran, Al-furqan 25:63.

²²⁸ Quran, Al-Ahzab 33:44.

²²⁹ Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 170.

²³⁰ Quran, Al—Anam 6:127.

²³¹ Quran, Ar-Rad 13:23-24.

²³² Quran, Maryam 19:61-62.

²³³ Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 47.

²³⁴ Quran, Maryam 19:61-62.

²³⁵ Quran, Al—Anam 6:127.

²³⁶ Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 173.

²³⁷ Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 173.

Quran says “You have been enjoined to go to war, and you dislike it.”²³⁸ Thus for Aroua, therefore, a war cannot be holy and there is neither such a concept as “Holy War” in the Islamic tradition, nor such a thing as a war of religion aiming to convert people to Islam; this is simply because in matters of faith no constraint or coercion is acceptable.²³⁹ “There shall be no compulsion in religion,”²⁴⁰ states the Qur’ān. Prophet Muhammad was ordered by God to “say: ‘This is the truth from your Lord. Let whosoever will, believe, and whosoever will, disbelieve.’”²⁴¹ With this intention, Aroua asserts that “Jihād, has nothing to do with a “holy war” as it is often mistranslated in Western languages. Even the Crusades were called by Muslims the “Wars of the Franks” (Hurūb al-Firinja), since they were perceived more as wars of occupation than as wars of religion.²⁴²

Aroua furthermore observes that the first time the early Muslims were allowed to take arms to defend themselves was when the following Qur’ānic verses were revealed: This clearly states that “Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged; God has indeed the power to grant them victory.”²⁴³ Aroua identifies and highlights this point elaborately, “Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they said: Our Lord is God. If God did not repel the aggression of some people by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is much invoked, would surely have been demolished.”²⁴⁴ He continues, “Muslims are also enjoined to defend others’ rights when they are spoiled by an aggressor or an oppressor. This is all about smaller jihād: to fight against all forms of injustice.”²⁴⁵

Other Qur’ānic verses identified by Aroua set the conditions and limits of war:

²³⁸Quran, Al, Baqara 2:216.

²³⁹Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 174.

²⁴⁰Quran, Al, Baqara, 2:256.

²⁴¹Quran, Al, Kahf 18:29.

²⁴²Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 174.

²⁴³Quran, Al-Hajj 22:39-40.

²⁴⁴Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 174.

²⁴⁵Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 174.

Fight in the way of God those who fight you, but do not commit aggression. God does not like the aggressors. Kill them wherever you may catch them and expel them from the place from which they expelled you. Fitna (religious persecution) is worse than killing. Do not fight them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight you there. If they do fight you, slay them, this is the due punishment for such disbelievers. But if they desist, then verily God is Forgiving, Merciful. Fight them until there is no more fitna (religious persecution) and revenge belongs to God alone. If they desist, then let there be no hostility, except towards aggressors. [Fighting in] the sacred month is for [aggression committed in] the sacred month, and for [all] violations is legal retribution. Thus you may exact retribution from whoever aggresses you, in proportion to his aggression, and fear God, and know that God is with the pious.²⁴⁶

As an illustration, Arou analyzes that once Muslims are engaged in the disliked enterprise of war to fight aggression, oppression or religious persecution then they are ordered by the Qur'ān to be firm and steady in applying violence.²⁴⁷ And since war at that time was about crossing the swords, several Qur'ānic verses address the behaviour at the battle field and are about smiting the necks of those who fight for the sake of aggression, oppression and persecution.²⁴⁸

Aroua gives a historical basis for his argument thus: The first Caliph Abu Bakr addressed his army before leaving for a battle, and advised them with a number of rules for guidance in the battlefield, and asked them to keep them in mind. “Do not betray; Do not misappropriate any part of the booty; Do not commit treachery; Do not mutilate dead bodies; Do not kill a child, an old man, or a woman; Do not uproot or burn palm trees; Do not cut fruitful trees; Do not slaughter a sheep, a cow or a camel, except for food; You will pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone.”²⁴⁹ It is worth noting according to

²⁴⁶ Quran, Al-Baqars 2:190-4.

²⁴⁷ Aroua, Aroua, “Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons” 33.

²⁴⁸ Quran An-Nisa 4:56, 89; Al-Anfal 8:39, 60; Muhammad 47:4.

²⁴⁹ Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 175-6..

Aroua that in old days, the principle of target discrimination could be followed somehow; however, today's war practices do not comply with it. He gives a case for this, "Not only non-conventional weaponry, be it atomic, biological or chemical, but also some "conventional" arms such as strategic bombers, drones and long-range missiles kill massively and indiscriminately."²⁵⁰ Moreover, the warrior in ancient times had at least one quality: the necessary courage to confront death in a one-to-one fight. Today, the operator of an unmanned aerial vehicle or an intercontinental ballistic missile is in a control room thousands of miles far from the target; the pilot of a military jet aircraft sits comfortably in his cockpit and shells thousands of people from an altitude of ten miles. Aroua sums up his thought on aggression and terrorism by maintaining that there is no courage, no chivalry in war. This distance creates an emotional shield that prevents the modern warrior from feeling what it is to kill. For these reasons, if for no other, modern war must be banned.²⁵¹

5.3.5 Theme four: Silm: Back to Peace

Another key point to note is Aroua's emphasis that in Islam, even in times of violent conflict, the preference must be for peace.²⁵² This is clearly stated in the following Qur'ānic verse: "If they incline to peace (silm), then you too incline to it and rely upon God. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. If they seek to cheat you, God is All-Sufficient for you. It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers."²⁵³

Aroua in the long run is of the opinion that from what precedes, one can conclude that peace is the norm in the Islamic tradition. The Muslim community has the duty to protect it, basically by building capacity in order to face any aggression/oppression that could compromise and undermine it. This is dissuasion or deterrence. In the case of aggression/oppression, the community is enjoined to react, even by violent means, respecting specific

²⁵⁰Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 176.

²⁵¹Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 176.

²⁵²Aroua, "Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons" 33.

²⁵³ Quran, Al-Anfal 8:61-2. See also Aroua, "Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition" 176.

condition, in order to re-establish peace. If the aggressor shows a desire to make peace, then it becomes mandatory to accept it. At the end, the Muslim must rely upon God who will deal with the cheater.²⁵⁴

5.3.7 Theme five: Conflict, a Human Phenomenon and the virtue of non-violence: Positive or Negative?

For Aroua, one way of defining conflict in modern conflictology is to consider it as “a dynamic relation between two or more parties (individuals, groups, states, civilizations) with (apparently) contradictory goals.²⁵⁵ Identically, the goals may be at the level of positions (what you say you want), interests (what you really want), or needs (what you must have), or values (what you believe in).”²⁵⁶

If making fitna is forbidden, as mentioned earlier, Aroua maintains that disputing is recognised as a human phenomenon.²⁵⁷ But it should be dealt with in a proper manner. In the Islamic tradition, conflict is recognized as a normal social phenomenon and a sign of God who could have created all human beings according to the same “blueprint”, but instead preferred to make every human being a singular entity with a unique intellectual and emotional character and own goals and aspirations in life.²⁵⁸ Aroua furthermore states that “similarly, the cultural specificity of communities is not viewed negatively and is recognized as an attractive prerequisite for communication, exchange, and mutual knowledge.²⁵⁹ Additionally, the Quran maintains, “O you mankind! We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes so that you may know each other.”²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 176.

²⁵⁵Aroua, “Non Violence is the Response to Hate Cartoons” 33.

²⁵⁶Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 176.

²⁵⁷Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 179.

²⁵⁸Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 179.

²⁵⁹Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 179.

²⁶⁰Quran, Al-Hujurat 49:13.

Aroua also highlighted that, “to have different opinions and views is in the human nature.”²⁶¹

According to the Qur’ān, this characteristic came late in the evolution of humanity: “All mankind were once one single community, and only later did they begin to hold divergent views.”²⁶²

Dispute, difference and disagreement are acknowledged and the Qur’ān orders the Muslims to handle them by referring to the orders of God and His Prophet: “Whatever you differ/disagree upon, its ruling is to be referred to God. The word used here is *ikhtalaftum* (related to *khilāf*). “By your Lord (addressing Prophet Muhammad), they will not have faith, until they let you arbitrate their disputes:” In this verse the word *shajara* (related to *shijār*) is used.²⁶³

Regarding the Virtue of Non-Violence, Aroua reflects on the dynamics and challenges of non-violence in these words:

There is no peaceful or violent religion, culture, race or nation. For instance, some time ago Christianity and Islam were associated in the public discourse to violence and Buddhism to peace. The bloody events in Sri-Lanka, Tibet and Myanmar, and the persecution of religious minorities, particularly Muslims, by Buddhists came to demonstrate that Buddhism is not less violent than other religions. All religions call for peace and, at the same time, authorise the use of violence when justified and well controlled. But the followers of religions, the communities which belong to them, are all human beings, complex entities sharing the same inclination to violence and on the ideal of peace.²⁶⁴

5.3.7 Theme six: The dynamics of conflict and conflict transformation in Islam

Aroua recognises that the word commonly used in Arabic for conflict is ‘*nizā*’. But this term does not convey literally the meaning of conflict. In fact, *nizā*’ (or *naz*’) means removing,

²⁶¹Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 179.

²⁶² Quran, Yunus 10:19.

²⁶³Aroua, “Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology” 37.

²⁶⁴ Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 59.

stripping, taking off, tearing out, sloughing, extracting, plucking out, eviscerating, expropriating, spoiling other's rights.²⁶⁵ It refers to an offensive behaviour focusing on the object (an idea, an opinion, a good, a right, etc.). To engage in nizā' is to engage in a conflict with a non-legitimate goal. Nizā' is disliked in the Islamic tradition: "Obey God and His Messenger, and do not engage in nizā'²⁶⁶ one with another, for you will lose courage and strength, and be patient and persevering, for God is with those who patiently persevere."²⁶⁷

In opposition to nizā', there is the concept of difā' or daf' which means pushing, boosting, pressing, giving, repelling, repulsing, protecting, defending own or others' rights. It is a defensive behaviour focusing on the object. The Quran reflects on the significance of difa²⁶⁸ in these words: "By the will of God they defeated them, and David killed Goliath, and God gave him kingship and wisdom, and taught him whatsoever He willed. Had God not repelled the people, some by the means of others, the earth would have surely been corrupted; but God is most bounteous towards the entire creation."²⁶⁹ And "Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is being wrongfully waged; God has indeed the power to grant them victory. some have been expelled from their homes unjustly, only because they said: 'Our Lord is God'. God will certainly aid those who aid His cause; for verily God is Strong, Almighty."²⁷⁰ For Aroua, there is the duty of conflict transformation in dealing with conflict.²⁷¹

In the same fashion, dialogue and diapraxis for Aroua, are exchange between the conflict parties, by words or by actions, agreed by them, for inter-knowing and in order to reach a shared understanding. There is a process of negotiation which is a discussion agreed by conflict parties that seek an agreement between them. When dialogue and negotiation are

²⁶⁵ Aroua, "Sufism, Politics and Violence" 44.

²⁶⁶ Aroua, "Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology" 47.

²⁶⁷ Quran, Al-Anfal 8:46.

²⁶⁸ Aroua, "Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology" 47.

²⁶⁹ Quran, Al-baqara 2:251.

²⁷⁰ Quran Al-Hajj 22:39-40.

²⁷¹ Aroua, "Sufism, Politics and Violence" 44.

difficult to reach by their own initiative of the conflict parties, a third party may (should) intervene to help them transform the conflict.²⁷² This could take one of the following forms: Facilitation for Aroua is a non-structured support – usually limited to logistical assistance – to negotiation, by a third party, with the consent of the conflict parties. And mediation is a structured support to negotiation, by a third party, intervening in the process and the content, with the consent of the conflict parties. While arbitration makes an arbiter decide after listening to the conflict parties, with their consent.

5.3.8 Theme seven: The Good Intervention: Achieving and the timing of reconciliation

In the light of the need for conflict transformation, Aroua maintains that good intervention plays a major role.²⁷³ In the case where bond mending is hampered by one side considering that the power asymmetry plays to his advantage, the community should then engage in a good intervention (attadakhul al-hassan) for bond mending.²⁷⁴ For this reason, Aroua cites this verse from the Quran thus: “If two groups of believers come to fight one another, then amend (aslihū) the relation between them. But if one of them oppresses the other, fight the oppressor until it submits to the command of God. If it complies, then amend (aslihū) the relation between them with fairness and be just. God loves those who are just.”²⁷⁵ Aroua presents successive steps of a process: 1) Try mediation between the two fighting groups; 2) If one group refuses mediation, rejects conflict settlement and persists in oppressing the other group, taking advantage of power asymmetry, you (the community) have the duty to intervene until the oppressor reconsiders his position; 3) If the oppressor gives up oppression and inclines to peace, then you (the community) must cease the intervention; 4) Resume the mediation with fairness and do not be unjust with the group who ceased oppression.²⁷⁶ For Aroua, if these steps had been followed by the international community in WWI, particularly step 4 in

²⁷²Aroua, “Peace, Conflict, and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic Tradition” 182.

²⁷³Aroua, “Sufism, Politics and Violence” 44.

²⁷⁴Aroua, Peace, *Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 184.

²⁷⁵ Quran, Al-Hujurat 49:9.

²⁷⁶Aroua, Peace, *Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 182.

dealing with Germany at the end of the war, the world would have avoided WWII. In conflicts occurring in the Muslim world, good intervention should be the duty of the Muslim community, through its organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States.²⁷⁷ These institutions must endeavour to convince conflicting parties to negotiate, and exert pressure on the party that resists a peaceful solution. Unfortunately, in the absence of such an active role by these Arab and Muslim organisations, the void is filled by others such as the UNSC and NATO who intervene, by and large militarily, in conflicts related to the Muslim world.²⁷⁸

For Aroua, reconciliation can be achieved with a timing of reconciliation also called “positive peace.” This can be achieved only when the hidden aspects of violence are removed through conflict resolution and reconciliation. Aroua maintains that under those circumstances, conflict settlement may be the fastest step in conflict management, compared to both conflict resolution, which seeks to remove all the structural obstacles to peace, and reconciliation, which aims at healing both superficial and deep “collective injuries or trauma” caused by the conflict.²⁷⁹

5.3.9 Theme eight: The Pillars of Reconciliation

The pillars of reconciliation according to Aroua are: (1) Truth, (2) Memory, (3) Fairness, and (4) Pardon.²⁸⁰ World precedents showed that if one of these pillars is by-passed, the whole process of reconciliation is undermined, and violence is highly likely to recur. The four pillars go in pairs: “truth or memory”, “fairness or pardon”, because memory has to be built on truth and fairness must be governed by pardon, otherwise it will turn into a mere retributive justice.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 184.

²⁷⁸ Aroua, “Sufism, Politics and Violence” 44.

²⁷⁹ Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 33.

²⁸⁰ Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 16.

²⁸¹ Aroua, *Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology*, 32.

a) Truth

Aroua teaches that it is important for the community in transition to know what exactly happened and who did what in the dark period; the truth has a relieving effect and contributes to healing the wounds. If the truth is a right both for the individual, particularly the victim and his family, and the community, it is also a duty for every member of society.²⁸² In the Islamic tradition, everyone is expected to contribute to uncovering and discovering the truth. Hiding it is considered a major sin.²⁸³ The Qur'ān says: "Do not confuse truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth knowingly."²⁸⁴ "Why do you mix the false with the true, and hide the truth knowingly?"²⁸⁵ A wise man said "The one who keeps the truth is a dumb devil and the one who spreads the lie is a speaking devil."²⁸⁶ A number of mechanisms and tools are used today to safeguard the right/duty of truth: truth commissions, fact-finding missions, forensic anthropology, official and public acknowledgement and possibly apology, access to archives, protection of evidence, etc.

b) Memory

For Aroua, every community has the right and the duty to safeguard its collective memory.²⁸⁷ Maintaining this memory to recall the violent episode in its history is useful in order to avoid the recurrence of the violent events.²⁸⁸ It is well known that "those who forget their past are condemned to repeat it."²⁸⁹

Aroua builds his case on the content of the Quran and the Islamic tradition when he opined that memory is important because it is closely linked to the process of recalling, whose educational virtues are recognized and highlighted in the practice of Islam. God regularly

²⁸² Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 123. Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 27.

²⁸³ Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 81. Aroua, "Sufism, Politics and Violence" 44.

²⁸⁴ Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:42).

²⁸⁵ Qur'ān, Āl Imrān (3:71).

²⁸⁶ Qur'ān, Āl Imrān (3:71).

²⁸⁷ Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 82.

²⁸⁸ Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 123.

²⁸⁹ This quote is attributed to philosopher George Santayana.

attracts the attention of the Prophet in this regard: “And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers.”²⁹⁰ “Therefore do remind, surely reminding does profit.”²⁹¹ The fact to remember is seen in the Qur’ān as a sign of intelligence: “Only the men of understanding are mindful.”²⁹² To learn from their own history and the history of others is an obligation for Muslims. The Qur’ān contains many stories of ancient peoples, so that Muslims ponder their fate and experiences and draw lessons: “In their stories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding.”²⁹³ And the Qur’ān insists that these stories rich in lessons are based on truth, not the falsification of history: “We relate to you their story in truth.”²⁹⁴ Aroua concludes this rich Quranic heritage by asserting that, here again, a number of mechanisms and tools can be used to safeguard the right or duty of memory: collecting testimonies, documenting and archiving, specialized museums, memorial shrines, national and local celebrations, use of literature and art, adapted school curricula aimed at making full use the memory in conflict management and transformation.²⁹⁵

c) Fairness

Equally important, Aroua explains that “Fairness, as key concept in the Islamic tradition is a requirement for any reconciliation process. It is a right for both the victim and the community and prevents impunity which leads to the recurrence of violence.”²⁹⁶ In Islamic law there is a distinction between “individual rights” and “collective rights”, and while civil authorities may intervene in the case of “collective rights” and grant amnesty for those who abused them

²⁹⁰ Qur’ān, Adh-Dhāriyāt (51:55).

²⁹¹ Qur’ān, Al-A’lā (87:9).

²⁹² Qur’ān, Az-Zumar (39:9). See also Al-Baqara (2:269) and Āl Imrān (3:7).

²⁹³ Qur’ān, Yūsuf (12:111).

²⁹⁴ Qur’ān, Al-Kahf (18:13). See also, Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 27. 123.

²⁹⁵ Aroua, *Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology*, 32.

²⁹⁶ Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 27.

(with prior consultation of the people, through a referendum, for instance), it cannot intervene in the case of “individual rights”.²⁹⁷

Aroua continues in the same vein that the person who suffered a violation of his/her private rights is the only party who can grant pardon to the perpetrator. In transitional societies fairness needs more symbolic, restitutive and restorative than retributive (punitive) justice. This gives victims a sense of justice by recognizing – verbally or through symbolic acts – that an injustice has occurred and that harm was suffered. The focus must be on the recovery of losses and compensations and reparations for the damage. Aroua maintains that, obviously this approach requires the voluntary involvement of the victim, the perpetrator and the community with the common goal to restore the broken relationships, heal the wounds and prevent the recurrence of violence. In the light of all the need to safeguard the right to fairness, Aroua maintains that the responsibilities in the committed crimes must be established and the perpetrators identified, those responsible for crimes deemed serious in international human rights law must be prosecuted, while the others must be excluded (permanently or temporarily) from positions of responsibility, and the victims must be compensated, rehabilitated and reintegrated into their professional and social position.²⁹⁸

d) Pardon

Another key point to note is Aroua’s reflections on pardon as an essential tool in any reconciliation process.²⁹⁹ This is because it “enables restoring the broken link between the victim, the offender and society in general. It can bring about a sort of moral conversion and frees both the perpetrator and the victim.”³⁰⁰ For Aroua, forgiveness is a core value in all cultures and religious traditions.³⁰¹ Aroua cites the Islamic tradition to show how several beautiful names and attributes of God are related to forgiveness: “The Loving, The Merciful,

²⁹⁷Aroua, *Peace, Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 13.

²⁹⁸Aroua, *Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology*, 32.

²⁹⁹“Sufism, Politics and Violence” 54..

³⁰⁰Aroua, *Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology*, 32.

³⁰¹Aroua, *The Quest for Peace in the Islamic Tradition*, 83.

The Forgiving, The Clement.”³⁰²For Aroua, Muslims see the attributes of God as absolute references and guiding asymptotic limits for their quest to approach perfection, they conceive human forgiveness as a way to reflect God's forgiveness and move closer to Him. Moreover, to pardon is an act of the prophets who are exemplars for the believers to follow.³⁰³The Quran throws light on this in these words: “After the persecution he had suffered from his people, Jesus Christ spoke to God saying: “Forgive them, for they do not know what they do”³⁰⁴ and these are the same words used by Prophet Muhammad in the city of Taif where he had gone to seek shelter. Snubbed and received by stone throwing, the face and the feet bleeding, with some teeth broken, he raised his hands to heaven and said: “O God! Forgive my people because they do not know”.³⁰⁵Aroua maintains that the Qur'ānic verses that encourage pardon are numerous. For example, “Pardon and forgive!”³⁰⁶ “And hasten to the forgiveness of your Lord and to a paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious, those who spend whether in prosperity or in adversity and those who restrain their anger and forgive others. Aroua cites numerous Quranic verses to support the Islamic teaching on forgiveness and pardon. “God loves such good doers.”³⁰⁷ “They should pardon and forgive. Don’t you love that God forgives you? God is Forgiving, Love-Giving.”³⁰⁸ “If you pardon and forgive, then surely God is Forgiving, Love-Giving.”³⁰⁹ “If you do good openly or do it in secret, or pardon an evil, then surely God is Pardoning, Powerful.”³¹⁰Aroua holds on to these verses by asserting that, in the Islamic tradition, forgiveness is a choice that must be made freely, voluntarily; it cannot be ordered by a decree or elicited by pressure or threat. The right of the victim to the criminal sanction is warranted, even if s/he is encouraged to adopt a more

³⁰²Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:109).

³⁰³Aroua, Peace, *Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 13.

³⁰⁴ Qur'ān, An-Nūr (24:22).

³⁰⁵ Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:109).

³⁰⁶ Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:109).

³⁰⁷ Qur'ān, Āl Imrān (3:133-134).

³⁰⁸ Qur'ān, An-Nūr (24:22).

³⁰⁹ Qur'ān, At-Taghābun (64:14).

³¹⁰ Qur'ān, An-Nisā (4:149).

restorative than retributive approach.³¹¹ The Qur'ān states: "The retribution for an evil act is an equivalent evil act, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from God. Indeed, God does not like the unjust."³¹²

Aroua elaborates that, the Qur'ān also points to the law of retaliation, prescribed in the Torah, accompanied by an invitation to forgiveness: "We prescribed for them [in the Torah]: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth, and a wound for a wound. But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, this shall be for him expiation."³¹³ Other verses cited by Aroua mention the law of retaliation, tempered by encouraging forgiveness: "O believers, retribution is prescribed for you in cases of murder."³¹⁴ "Do not kill the soul whom God has forbidden except by right. If anyone is killed unjustly, equally, "We have given his heir authority [to demand retribution or to forgive]."³¹⁵ In addition, the offender who has obtained a pardon must still make a gesture of reparation to the victim or his family, as recommended by the Qur'ānic verse: "He who is partly forgiven by his brother, should deal with equity and courtesy and compensate in proper manner; this is a relief and a mercy from your Lord."³¹⁶ Ultimately, for Aroua, based on these Quranic and other Islamic traditions, there are prerequisites to pardon: the victim must first know the truth and understand what happened and why; the offender must show signs that s/he is ready, willing to receive pardon, and acknowledge his/her wrongdoing and regret it.³¹⁷

³¹¹ Aroua, Peace, *Conflict and Conflict Transformation in the Islamic world*, 13.

³¹² Qur'ān, Ash-Shūrā (42:40).

³¹³ Qur'ān, Al-Māida (5:45).

³¹⁴ Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:178). Aroua, *Addressing Extremism and Violence: The Importance of Terminology*, 32.

³¹⁵ Qur'ān, Al-Isrā (17:33).

³¹⁶ Qur'ān, Al-Baqara (2:178).

³¹⁷ Abbas Aroua. "Moral requirements for international partnership: Towards an Islamic Charter of the work of goodness." *Second Gulf Conference on Charitable Action*. Doha, 21-22 February 2006.

5.4 Conclusion

Despite the mainstream media often associates Islam with extremism and violence, Aroua maintains that the fundamental texts of Islamic religion elaborates on peace. His contribution will provide peacebuilders with some relevant texts and sources to work for peace. It views conflict as a human phenomenon and a corrupted relation between individual groups. It favours non-violent means to deal with conflict and considers bond making a religious duty and a work of goodness.

5.5 Sayyidina Isa³¹⁸: Jesus in the Eyes of a Muslim: The Reflections of Irfan A. Omar

Introduction

Omar critically and constructively unpacks the theological understanding of peace and dialogue from the perspective of Islam. He lays out what he considers as the Qur'anic understanding of the identity and mission of Jesus Christ as well as what Islamic theologians dating centuries back have understood Jesus to be. Omar also reflects on peace-making and the challenge of violence in the Islamic Religion.

He builds his arguments and reflections like Aroua earlier with the use of Quranic verses and texts. It shows a detailed reading of Quran in his works. In "The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective" Omar claims that The Quranic declaration of the oneness of God (*tawhid*) comes with a startling revelation that God is the source of and indeed belongs to all of creation."³¹⁹ For Omar, "The Qur'an further makes it clear that differences in human societies with respect to culture, language, nationality, gender, and

³¹⁸Isa is the Qur'anic name for Jesus, and this is how he is known in Arabic speaking world and remembered by Muslims in general. Jesus is also known by other names such as "al-masi" (the messiah) and "Ibn al-Maryam" (Son of Mary). Sayyidina is an honorific term which loosely translates as "our master". Practicing Muslims use the term for prophet Muhammed to denote their devotion and discipleship to his teachings. See Omar "Sayyidina Isa: Jesus in the Eyes of a Muslim" *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*.8

³¹⁹Omar, "The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective" in Irfan A. Omar (ed)- *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essays on Dialogue* by Mahmoud Ayoub
[https://www.icrjournal.org/icr/index.php/icr/article/view/218Islam and Civilisational Renewal](https://www.icrjournal.org/icr/index.php/icr/article/view/218Islam%20and%20Civilisational%20Renewal), vol. 2, no. 1
2010 (Accessed 21 December 2019). 22.

religion (among others) are divinely instituted, and should be seen as a blessing.”³²⁰ In his works, Omar will explore these and other similar Quranic teachings that implore us to consider the plurality of religions as a necessary foundation for personal, spiritual, and communal growth, as well as for mutual learning. Seven themes will be considered in his thought.

5.5.1 Theme one: Islam in the context of Dialogue and Jesus a Prophet in Islam

For Omar, Islam arose in a milieu where Christianity and Judaism were also present. Naturally, people who became Muslims at that time were aware of many of the figures, saints and prophets that were part of Jewish and Christian heritage, such as Abraham.³²¹ Islam’s view of itself is that it is a continuation of these earlier religions. It recognized them, sought to engage with their adherents and even referred to them as part of the family of religions (ahl-i-kitab). This refers to Judaism and Christianity. This is the context in which one must locate Islam’s position on dialogue. Islam has been dialogical from its very inception. There have been and are differences between people, and the Quranic formula is to see the differences and diversity of peoples as strength, rather than as a problem.³²²

Omar recognises that “The ideology of the “other” usually divides human groups into “them” and “us”, where “them” seem quite different from “us”. This is a false dichotomy.³²³ Even though Islam acknowledges differences, it gives the most positive spin on it by calling it a mercy from God. In other words, differences and diversity are seen as a blessing, rather than as a problem. So, the Quran says, “And one of His signs is the creation of heavens and the

³²⁰ Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 24. Are all religions divinely instituted, divine blessing? This is the challenge of radical religious pluralism today.

³²¹Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

³²²Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

³²³Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

earth and the diversity of your languages and your colours; most surely there are signs in this for the learned.”³²⁴

Omar continues his teaching that God constituted human beings into communities and nations so as to enable them to recognize one another and, in fact, to learn from one another.³²⁵ This is a very strong suggestion that people should engage with each other in most respectful ways to learn about one another and their faith traditions. The aim is common: to get better at being human and living righteously. Each person, whatever his or her faith, can help himself or herself as well as others in becoming a better person.³²⁶

Omar furthermore refers to Mahmoud Ayoub, a Lebanese-American scholar of Islam and interfaith dialogue, who mentioned that diversity is a “divinely instituted law” of our world and no one can change that even if we tried our best to.³²⁷ The Qur’an says: “Had your Lord willed, He would have made humankind one single community”³²⁸ Therefore, the differences between people are there so that each human being will see “us” in “them” and “them” in “us”, so to speak. In a way, diversity is humanity’s best measure of itself because it allows one to keep things in perspective. Once the realization occurs that in fundamental terms “they” are no different from “us”, the particularities of each become less significant and the common core of being human can be appreciated. This appreciation is understood in the Qur’an as a sort of competition to do good works.

³²⁴Quran. 30:22. Does this verse simply mean that God wills all diversity as good? The affirmation of diverse cultures and religion finds clear expression in Scripture in its doctrine of the universality of the church. Multicultural and religious diversity, then, is not to be spurned by the Christian community. Rather, Religious communities have a special obligation to demonstrate the reality of God’s culture-transforming love. In obeying the twin mandates of the Cultural Mandate and the Great Commission, we will discover more and more of the creational blessedness of multicultural diversity as human beings are reconciled to God and to each other despite different tribe and creed. *A Christian view of Diversity*. <https://www.geneva.edu/about-geneva/diversity> <https://www.geneva.edu/about-geneva/diversity> (accessed 06/10/2020)

³²⁵Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 31. Diversity is seen as not necessarily good but ought to be tolerated. Differences are real in a practical world. Only an ideal world you will find no differences. It is a challenge for co-existence, not a problem. This is the challenge of interreligious relationships. The younger generation in the west now truly understand the reality of diversity and multi-culturalism faced by most African and Middle East nations.

³²⁶Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

³²⁷Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 33.

³²⁸(Q. 49:13).

He furthermore asserts that another verse repeats the message humankind! “We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other, (not that you may despise each other). Verily,” If dialogue is very important in Islam, then it is equally very important to look at Jesus who is at the centre of Christianity in the eyes of a Muslim. For Omar, Jesus is an important figure in Islam and to be a Muslim requires a belief in the teachings of Jesus as conveyed through the Quran.

For Omar, Jesus commands high esteem among Muslims; however, respect for Jesus should be properly seen within the context of the prophetology of Islam.³²⁹

The Quran says that God speaks to and through selected human beings, some of whom are considered prophets and messengers. Mary and Jesus were two such individuals who were given an important task to help others on the path to God.³³⁰ Although Mary is not seen as a prophetess, Jesus is counted among the five-key prophets, those who were steadfast (Uluw al-azm), as referred to Q. 46: 35. The other four are Noah (Nuh), Abraham, (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), and Muhammed. The Quran thus, identifies many prophets of Judaeo-Christian figures also with Arabic-Islamic background.³³¹

Prophets perform the major tasks in the Islamic tradition of communicating the message from God to their people and secondly, the tradition describes the overall role of prophets as that of

³²⁹ Jesus as a prophet in Islam is not contentious. Christianity is rooted in the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, so is Islam’s version of Christ a source of tension, or a way of building bridges between the world’s two largest faiths? Jesus, or Isa, as he is known in Arabic, is deemed by Islam to be a Muslim prophet rather than the Son of God, or God incarnate. He is referred to by name in as many as 25 different verses of the Quran and six times with the title of “Messiah” (or “Christ”, depending on which Quranic translation is being used). He is also referred to as the “Messenger” and the “Prophet” but, perhaps above all else, as the “Word” and the “Spirit” of God. No other prophet in the Quran, not even Muhammad, is given this particular honour. In fact, among the 124,000 prophets said to be recognised by Islam - a figure that includes all of the Jewish prophets of the Old Testament - Jesus is considered second only to Muhammad, and is believed to be the precursor to the Prophet of Islam. Jesus the Muslim Prophet <https://www.newstatesman.com/religion/2009/12/jesus-islam-muslims-prophet> (accessed 06/10/2020)

³³⁰Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 22.

³³¹ A Nabi is general term for an emissary of God who is to remind people of the path of God; a *rasul* however is a person who also introduces a sacred text. Therefore Moses (who brought the Torah), David(the psalms) and Jesus (The Gospel) and Mohammed (The Quran) are considered both as *nabi* and *rasul*. See John Renard, *Islam and Christianity: Theological Themes in Comparative Perspective* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 93.

bringing their peoples from darkness to light.³³² In their performance of these tasks, they are generally seen as exemplary human beings. The significance of all these prophets for Muslims lies not in the doctrinal aspects of their teachings, but rather in the ethical and moral standards they represent, and which Muslims are expected to uphold.

Doctrinally speaking, Jesus is not centrally important in Islam as he is in Christianity. Therefore, it is the ethical and moral aspects of life and teaching stories that dominate the themes associated with Jesus in Muslim discourse. Relationship with people, on the other hand, are of seminal importance, how one conducts oneself in relation to the other in this world deeply impacts one's life and destiny.

For Mona Siddiqui, in terms of Christian-Muslim polemics, it is reasonable to state that both faiths meet and part with the discussion of Jesus.³³³

An eminent scholar, Khaled Abou El Fadl remarks thus: "The dialogue will theologially, aesthetically, culturally, and indeed personally enrich the participant, only if they will theologially, culturally, and personally enrich the dialogue."³³⁴

5.5.2 Theme two: Islam and the place of dialogue, tolerance and peace from the Hadith: Responding to Evil with goodness.

Omar in setting out his position on dialogue and tolerance in Islam emphasizes that the Qur'an is not on requiring from a believer to first and foremost make claims of superiority of the religion but, rather, something very different. The Qur'an asks its reader to take the task of cultivating and practicing humility towards God with utmost seriousness. This is done through pilgrimage, prayer, fasting and also by showing kindness towards people, which is

³³² Renard, *Islam and Christianity*, 93.

³³³ Mona Siddiqui, "The image of Christ in Islam: Scripture and Sentiment" in *Images of Christ: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Stanley Porter, et al. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 161.

³³⁴ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Place of Tolerance in Islam* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002), 15.

the product of humility. This allows the believer to give of oneself and share resources with others. This message is made plain in numerous Quranic verses.

He continued his reasoning by saying that, suppose one understands the Quranic message to be one of superiority over other religions, it becomes even more imperative that a believer in the Qur'an would follow the central teachings of the Quran which is basically asking one to be humble on earth, which would make the belief in superiority somewhat unnecessary.³³⁵

The Qur'an is clear on the subject of making judgments of this kind: "God will judge on the day of resurrection on matters that you [people of different religions] differ."³³⁶

Based on numerous verses in the Qur'an which speak of our responsibility, Omar contends that one can say that for each believer and each human being (no matter their religion) the task is to live righteously, which includes refraining from judging others and their religions.³³⁷ Omar reveals that his reading of numerous Christian scholars and practitioners has promoted interfaith dialogue while remaining true to their Christian faith. Some of them believe that there is no conflict between mission and dialogue. Here one has to refer to interpretation of the sacred scripture to discern what it means by the word "mission". Does it mean scoring points with other faiths over who gets more converts? Or does it mean practicing one's faith in the best way one can? If "mission" means to "live our faith" in an

³³⁵ Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 36.

³³⁶ Q 22:69) Are we forbidden to judge other religions at all? One of the difficulties with the contemporary public conversation about religion, in religious studies and legal circles, is that these two options are viewed by many people as being the only possible scenarios.' Is this the choice? Is the choice between trying to sell religion and trying to sell out religion? Or are there other options? Many writers in religious studies are trying to do a third thing which neither promotes religion in general-or any specific religion, in particular-nor attempts to dismiss religion as either irrelevant or evil or as reducible to other human social or cultural phenomena. This third thing talks about religion as a distinctive but varied and shifting human social and cultural product. It strives to avoid privileging certain religious traditions. It respects the integrity of the material while maintaining enough critical distance to advance human understanding of religion and its relationship to other cultural and social events. This third thing is an interdisciplinary and global comparative academic project that is in conversation with anthropology, sociology, history, and theology. Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *Judging Religion* vol. 81 Issue 2. Winter 1998.

³³⁷ Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 22.

exemplary way, then I think that dialogue should be part of that life. Hence, there is no contradiction between “mission” and “dialogue”.³³⁸

Da‘wah and dialogue, Omar argues, are not mutually contradictory as explained above. Da‘wah in the Qur’an is not the same as the notion of “mission” as understood by many Christians. Again, in both religions, these terms can be interpreted inclusively and exclusively. Even among Muslims there are different ways in which they understand the notion of da‘wah. One of the most plausible is to share one’s faith with others. Conversion is not up to us—that is a matter of the heart, and only God has control over hearts. Therefore, one can share one’s faith and still engage in respectful dialogue.³³⁹

Omar sets this position by saying that the key is to be honest and clear about one’s intentions with those whom one engages. If I attend an interfaith dialogue with a person of another faith but in my heart I am convinced (even if I do not say it out loud) that this other person is going to hell and that I must save him or her by converting him to my faith, then I am not engaging in dialogue, but, rather, in deceit. Interfaith dialogue requires one to be present and to listen and to learn from the other. This does not mean one has to change one’s religion or even to agree with the other person. Dialogue only requires two things for each dialogue partner: to respect each other and to listen to each other. This way, each person gets the same respect and the same opportunity to present his or her view of faith.³⁴⁰

Even the Qur’an argues Omar, conversion is not our business; we can only tell others about the teachings of the Qur’an.³⁴¹ But one would have to first know and also put into practice in one’s own life what the Qur’an teaches in order to tell others about it in a convincing way. If one practices what the Qur’an teaches, one would be less worried about others’ “incorrect” practice, and more interested in being ethical and respectful towards them. Da‘wah is not

³³⁸Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 32.

³³⁹ Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 42.

³⁴⁰ Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 42.

³⁴¹ Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 44.

antithetical to dialogue if one understands it to be primarily coming through one's own example.

Omar states quite clearly, the Quran states: "Good and evil cannot be equal. (O Prophet), repel evil with what is better, and your enemy will become as close as an old and valued friend."³⁴² Similarly, the Quran presents a challenge for the believer: (true believers are those) who shun great sins and gross indecencies; who are willing to forgive when (provoked) angry."³⁴³ The ideals include freeing oneself of hate and by being patient in the path of God and recognizing that people are basically good. In the end what converts people to act righteously is not impressive doctrines or rational discourse but love and patience, both of which require perseverance and reflection. More importantly, such stories show that it is possible for anyone to realize these very ideals. If we are patient enough and are willing to reach deep down and awaken the opponent's good nature, even an enemy can become our best friend. Such an experience can indeed be a transformative one for everyone involved.

5.5.3 Theme Three: Dialogue, plurality and harmonious relations: the challenge of Islam

Omar is of the opinion that, as far as Islam is concerned, the following resources may help us understand the call for dialogue and plurality as an imperative for Muslims.³⁴⁴ In the Qur'an, first comes the acknowledgement of the previous scriptures. Thus it reads, "if you are in doubt concerning that which We (God) have sent to you then enquire of those who have been reading the scriptures before you."³⁴⁵ This is a confirmation of the previous messages and as such acknowledges the close relationship that exists between the Jewish, Christian and the Islamic messages.

³⁴²(Q. 41: 34). Omar, *The Oneness of God and the Diversity of Religions: A Muslim Perspective*, 44.

³⁴³(Q. 42: 37).

³⁴⁴Omar, *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 22. Omar, "Qur'an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God." 22.

³⁴⁵Q. 10:94

Omar asserts that the Qur'an notes that all of the messages from God are united at the core of their teachings and no distinction should be made between them; they are expressions of the "primordial truth" and are all from the same divine source.³⁴⁶ While each of these prophets and messengers came from their own peoples and spoke in their own languages, they nevertheless upheld the same core principles as Prophet Muhammad, who was the recipient of the revelation that became the Qur'an. This means that other religions which are not mentioned in the Qur'an may as well be divinely "revealed". But we must not impose this terminology on these religions and develop language and lexicon to study and refer to other religions in the way they want to be referred to and how they see themselves. The Quranic acknowledgment helps Muslims maintain a respectful attitude towards other religions.³⁴⁷

In this regard, Omar refers to Mahmoud Ayoub's book, *A Muslim View of Christianity* published in 2007 where he mentions that the divine religions were brought by countless messengers since the creation of humanity. They contained a "revealed scripture" or a "way", or, loosely speaking, law (Shari'ah). These religions maintained the unity of the divine, believing in the oneness of God (Tawhid). They upheld the principle of accountability, or what Abrahamic religions would call the "Day of Judgment" (Yawm al-Qiyaamah). These religions provided a moral framework for living (Ihsan).³⁴⁸

An important Quranic, verse which is repeated twice addresses this very issue of the criteria for acceptance by God, reads: "surely those who have faith, the Jews, Christians and Sabians,

³⁴⁶Q. 2:285) Are other religions outside Islam divinely revealed? Reference to Islamic views on religious pluralism is found in the Quran. The following verses are generally interpreted as an evidence of religious pluralism: Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 48 states: If Allah so willed, He would have made you a single People, but His plan is to test each of you separately, in what He has given to each of you: so strive in all virtues as in you are in a race. The goal of all of you is to Allah. It is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute. (Quran 5:48)

Surah Al-Ankabut verse 46 states: And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, "We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."

³⁴⁷Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 18.

³⁴⁸Mahmoud Ayoub *A Muslim View of Christianity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis books, 2007), 22. See also Omar, *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 22.

and those who have faith in God and the last day and perform works of righteousness, will have their reward with their Lord. No fear shall come upon them, nor will they grieve.”³⁴⁹ It appears again with slight variation (reverses the order of two groups, “Christians and Sabians”).³⁵⁰ According to a number of Muslim scholars, including Ayoub, the first of these was revealed at the beginning of Prophet Muhammad’s career in Madinah and again towards the end of his prophetic career, which suggests that its message is an overriding one, that it defines Islam’s attitude towards other religions and their adherents.

The position of Ayoub as an acknowledgment of other religions is followed by an “invitation” to other peoples of faith. “Do not dispute with the People of the Book (*Ahl-I Kitab*) except in the fairest manner . . .and say, ‘We have faith in that which was revealed to us and that which was revealed to you. Our God and your God is one God; to Him we are submitters (Muslims)’.”³⁵¹

Omar also states that Ayoub argues that the Qur’an envisions an ideal relationship between Muslims and Christians which includes accommodating and co-existing with each other and even more-having friendship and mutual respect.³⁵² Addressing Muslims, he says: “You shall find the nearest in amity to those who have faith to be those who say we are Christians. This is because there are among them learned persons and monks, and they are not arrogant. . . .” Furthermore, the Qur’an calls both the Torah and the Gospel as “sources of guidance and light”. These verses show that the Qur’an unmistakably recognizes the plurality of religions and hopes for their unity on the basis of faith. Here is one other verse which speaks even more clearly on the matter: “Say you: We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and

³⁴⁹Q. 2.62

³⁵⁰Q. 5:69

³⁵¹Q. 16:125).

that given to (all) prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them, and we bow to God (in Islam)”.³⁵³

5.5.4 Theme four: The dynamics and purpose of interfaith dialogue, Respect and Agreement in relations to other Religions in Islam

Omar maintains that, one cannot respect a person without respecting his or her religion.³⁵⁴

From the answers above it is clear that Muslims are asked by the Qur’an not to judge others and their religions. Muslims are asked by the Qur’an to respectfully engage in dialogue in order to exchange and learn; Muslims are not asked to agree with anyone’s religious beliefs or to seek to try and change others. Muslims are asked to maintain the beliefs as outlined in the Qur’an and to practice them. Thus, according to the Qur’an, Muslims must respect (and, if necessary, respectfully disagree with) other religions and their followers and even those who do not follow a religion such as secularists, agnostics and atheists.³⁵⁵

Omar used a phrase he heard from the New Delhi-based Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan say: “Follow One, Respect All”. Please also note that “respect” does not mean “agreement”. Agreement/disagreement with another is a great opportunity to engage in dialogue.³⁵⁶

The Quranic view is given above: the basis for dialogue is simply that we are asked by God to seek knowledge of God and of ourselves. We cannot do that without collaborating with others-which is dialogue. So, the basis for dialogue is our common humanity and our call from our respective religions to learn and live righteously and work together to create peace for all.³⁵⁷

³⁵³Q. 29:46 see also (Q. 2:136)

³⁵⁴ Omar, “Qur’an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God.” 22.

³⁵⁵Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 18

³⁵⁶Omar, *On Islam, Muslims and Interfaith Dialogue*, 24.

³⁵⁷ Omar, “Qur’an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God.” 32.

The purpose, in addition to what I mentioned, is that one should consider the Quranic view that our main task is to live righteously, and we cannot do that until and unless we learn to live for more than just ourselves, our family, our clan. We must consider others' rights on us. In Islam, it is one of the key basis for "salvation" that we must not violate the rights of others, including their right to expect and even demand help from us if they are in distress. So, one of the basic purposes of dialogue is to collaborate with each other in doing good works, which includes working to promote peace and justice non-violently.

The Qur'an for Omar makes a strong case for dialogue across religious, cultural, national and social boundaries.³⁵⁸ It further identifies the primary modality for interaction-that is, collaboration between religious communities toward a common goal of establishing peace and justice. A cursory look at the history of dialogue between Muslims and Christians and also between Muslims and Jews will reveal that we have come a long way in building a foundation for dialogue.³⁵⁹ But with the kind of world we are living in today, it is also obvious that we have a long way to go.

In the context of our troubled world today, the Quranic acknowledgement of, and invitation to, other religions discussed above may be viewed as a way to create a true unity of difference in this otherwise homogenizing globe. As globalization seeks to erase differences, Islamic principles can be seen as seeking to safeguard them.³⁶⁰ The religious and other kinds of differences are real and they are a blessing from God. What we need is not eradication of differences but even greater acknowledgement and respect for them. In this, believers and activists from different religions may find strength and inspiration to work together for justice and peace, which every humanistic and religious tradition seeks to uphold. It can be argued that the cause of justice is greater than any other cause in this world. The Qur'an instructs

³⁵⁸ Omar, "Qur'an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God." 32.

³⁵⁹ Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 18

³⁶⁰ Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 25.

Muslims to uphold justice at all costs.³⁶¹ A verse reads: “O you who believe, stand up firmly for justice as witnesses to God even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be against rich or poor - for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts) lest you swerve, and if you distort or decline to do justice, indeed God is well-acquainted with all that you do.”³⁶²

The Qur’an imply that universal principles are greater than communal and even family interests. There is a clear injunction here to collaborate with all those who stand up for justice and peace. The lines are drawn here along the path of principles, rather than along communal and religious lines. It might be interesting to note that in regard to justice, the Quranic distinction is not made between people of one religion against another but, rather, between those who are oppressed (*Mustad’afun*) and those who are the oppressors (*Mutakabbirin*). A Muslim is one who upholds justice regardless of his or her religious and even familial loyalties, as noted in the above cited Quranic verse (Q. 4:135). Therefore, in order to work for justice, Muslims must make alliances with all those who, likewise, are called towards peace and justice by their respective traditions.³⁶³ They must search for common ground and work with them to strive for these important goals. As mentioned above, the reference to a common word found in Q. 3:64 invites the “People of the Book,” to “come to an agreement between us and you, that we shall worship none but God, that we associate no partners with him, that we erect not from ourselves lords and patrons other than God. . .” In the spirit of the Qur’an’s intent, this invitation should by no means be limited to Jews and Christians but should be extended to all people of faith and those who share a common vision of establishing peace. Any such common alliance against injustice and violence requires dialogue with, and understanding of, others. For Omar, dialogue helped maintain the idea that

³⁶¹Q. 4.135

³⁶²Q. 4.135

³⁶³Omar, *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives*, 27.

for God, external ways matter little and that the real point is to “surrender” the inner self to Him. The Qur’an says so in many different ways and in almost every passage, through phrases such as “God knows what is in your heart”, and “God is All-knowing” and wherever it explains what a true believer is like. Dialogical interaction is part of interaction. The diversity of the ways of “dialogue” is strength and not a weakness.

Benjamin Nde Van writes of a teenager reflecting on an encounter with “the other” which captures the point of interreligious tolerance well: He prayed, it wasn’t my religion. He ate, it wasn’t what I ate. He spoke, it wasn’t my language. He dressed, it wasn’t what I wore. He took my hand, it wasn’t the colour of mine. But when he laughed, it was how I laughed. And when he cries, it was how I cry.³⁶⁴

Omar concludes with the recognition that humanizing the other is a beginning of the journey to becoming human. For a true seeker, the journey may continue for a lifetime. Christians and Muslims who are serious about reflecting on what their faith calls them to do will surely realize the importance of dialogue today. In a globalized world, as our lives become increasingly entangled, the need for engagement with a religious “other” in matters of faith and praxis is more urgent than ever before. In the final analysis, what is important is not what Christians and Muslims believe about Jesus but whether they can act in the way he did and commanded all to follow: You shall love your neighbour³⁶⁵ as yourself. (Matt 22: 39).

³⁶⁴ Benjamin B. DeVan, “How Christians and Muslims can Embrace Religious Diversity and Each other: An Evangelical Perspective,” *Journal of Religion and Society* 16 (201): 3-4.

³⁶⁵ Accounts of Mohamed’s conduct with a female neighbor in the face of adversity and persecution are well known but often do not receive the mention they deserve. This particular anecdote from the life of Muhammed illustrates the teachings of tolerance and love of neighbor. When Prophet Mohammed entered Mecca, he was in a crowd mixed up with several of his companions. He was simply dressed like others in his entourage. He saw an elderly non-Muslim woman, a polytheist, carrying a heavy sack on her head; she was also limping and so she appeared to be in some difficulty. Muhammed volunteered to help her, she agreed, and they proceeded towards her house, with the sack now on his shoulders. Not knowing who her helper was, on the way to her house, the woman spoke rather disparaging about Mohammed based on the negative propaganda she had been hearing from the leaders of Mecca. She even referred to Mohammed as a blood-thirsty person without knowing she was facing him. She later on asked him who he was before he left her house, reluctantly, he opened up and told her, I am that Mohammed about whom you spoke on our way here. See Omar, “Sayyidina Isa: Jesus in the Eyes of a Muslim” *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, 34.

5.5.5 Theme five: Peace-making and the Challenge of Violence in Islamic religion.

Omar's study of peace-making and the challenge of violence in Islam have led him to believe that peace is at the heart of Islam. The word "Islam" means surrender in peace to the will of God. Since the Islamic tradition has been generally characterized as violent in Western/Christian accounts, he examines the charge that the Qur'an promotes violence. His admonition is that texts must be read without ideological agendas in order for them to be efficacious to a reader in achieving basic objectives of faith.³⁶⁶

This leads him to a careful analysis of jihad in the Qur'an and Islamic history, explaining its various meanings and applications. Omar argues that it does not make sense to understand jihad as a violent enterprise, as the Qur'an sees it primarily as spiritual struggle. Even justified armed struggle or just war-at least from the Qur'anic perspective may not be termed a jihad. He questions the wisdom of religious extremists being given a "loudspeaker" by the media, in the form of excessive coverage of their views and activities. The extremist groups welcome this attention and are eager to take advantage of the air time and print space to broadcast their message of violence and hate. He also analyses a very rich examination of Qur'anic teachings on the attributes of peacemakers: reconciliation, forgiveness, patience, and nonviolence. The challenge is to recognize that violence-even when it is "permitted" by the Qur'an for self-defence only and as a last resort in increasingly unnecessary and even counterproductive in achieving peace.³⁶⁷

Omar provides a concise description of Islam's position on violence, nonviolence, and peace-making. Although analysis is not entirely absent, the emphasis is placed on explaining the ideas on the subject found in the primary texts of Islam. First, I include a brief introduction to the faith tradition, its founder, Muhammad, and beliefs and practices most Muslims hold. The

³⁶⁶ Omar, *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 33.

³⁶⁷Irfan A. Omar and Michael K. Duffey, *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, eds Irfan A. Omar and Michael K. Duffey, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. 2015), 3.

following section deals with ways of understanding violence and contextualizing “religious” violence. Here I have outlined the way the Qur’an speaks of and condemns violence while permitting it in exceptional circumstances as a last resort. The section on jihad considers the Qur’anic understanding of this much misunderstood notion, and its subsequent ever expanding meanings.³⁶⁸ The next section provides select sources for peace and nonviolence in the Qur’an and the Prophetic tradition. I have considered Omar’s and his contributions to Islamic nonviolence including his role in creating the discourse and providing models for nonviolent activism in the way of peace.³⁶⁹

5.5.6 Theme six: Ways of Understanding Violence and Nonviolence

Two main questions are addressed by Omar. First, how to understand violence carried out in the name of religion from an Islamic perspective? Second, what role might the Islamic religious tradition, its texts, and those who interpret these texts play in “transforming” the societies we live in, both locally and globally by producing, adopting, and promoting other legitimate ways of understanding? One of the questions that is implicit in this kind of inquiry is to ask whether, because sacred texts include violence and the followers of faith traditions have historically (and/or are presently) engaged in violence, we should simply discard these traditions or perhaps explore the possibilities – inherent within these traditions – to “rethink” the ways of articulating and practicing them.³⁷⁰ This in fact is key to the argument for the relevance (or otherwise) of religious traditions in the twenty-first century. Evidently the very existence of this anthology gives away the positive biases of the editors and authors; they wish to not only address the question but respond to it as honestly as possible with the help of their traditions’ texts and historical application of meanings. Acknowledgement of the

³⁶⁸ Omar, *Peacemaking and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 33.

³⁶⁹ Omar, *Peace-making and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 10.

³⁷⁰ Omar, “Qur’an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God.” 32.

presence of violence in texts and in history is a step in the right direction. However, the focus of inquiry here is not the past per se but the present and the future.³⁷¹

Omar seeks to show that the primary sources of the Islamic tradition are primarily concerned with peace and peace-making. While many examples of religiously inspired violence can be found in Muslim history and in the present, one can also find examples of peace-making and the practice of nonviolent spirituality, as well as an acknowledgment of common humanity. The Islamic tradition, based on the Qur'an and the prophetic example, contains ample sources for peace-making and nonviolent activism for justice. Although not focusing on the past, many events from history may be cited to support the enormous potential for religious peace-making.³⁷² Furthermore, like any sacred text, the Qur'an, can be, and indeed has been, interpreted in a number of ways. The problem of violence is less that of the text comprising or containing violence and more that of an interpretation of the text. More often than not, religiously inspired violence is forced upon the text rather than the other way around. In other words, texts give us meaning as they are interpreted; hence the role of the interpreter is critical. Any interpreter's own historical, cultural, and social context will inevitably be visible in the meanings drawn from the text. Since each interpreter is bound by such influences despite claims to objectivity, no interpretation may be considered absolute; that is, for all times and all places. The principles (such as ethical and moral ones) and acts of faith and spirituality remain the same (which is what makes a religion a "tradition"); however, how these are applied and practiced changes over time (an example of this would be Thomas Jefferson's phrase that became part of the Declaration of Independence "all men are created equal"). A Muslim "fundamentalist" may choose to see the text in a particular way that lends itself to intolerance of other faiths even leading one to commit violence against them in the name of Islam. However, not all forms of fundamentalism would be explicitly exclusive

³⁷¹Omar, *Peace-making and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 13.

³⁷² Omar, "Qur'an Upholds Plurality as the Will of God." 43.

and/or violent in their outcome. They may be “literal”, “conservative”, “holistic” and “absolute,” or any combination of these.³⁷³ (Another problematic proposal in this regard is the argument that violence is considered “divinely accepted” because of and due to the extent, the text is considered divine.³⁷⁴ If this were so, how are we to explain the text’s injunctions for establishing peace and justice? In fact, the same texts (the Bible, the Qur’an, the Bhagavad Gita and texts and teachings of other religions) also speak about a moral framework of life, our responsibility to the other, and accountability for our actions, spelled out very clearly and without ambiguity. If violence is only one part of the picture, then why would these other aspects be left unheeded if the text’s influence is indeed so important in motivating human behaviour vis-à-vis violence? With respect to Islam, this is especially problematic because injunctions for peace in the Qur’an are identified as “general” or “permanent” commands, while verses that ask a believer to “fight” are always placed within a restricted framework. It will become evident from the discussion below that the Qur’an permits (not mandates) defensive violence.³⁷⁵ The question to ask is how it regards and defines this violence? What are the limits, if any, of this Qur’anic violence? The popular “wisdom” in the world today labels violence that is committed in the name of Islam as “jihad,” which is now part of the English language. There are several derivatives of this as one may have noticed in the media and other pseudo-scholarly literature. In the present, we have become accustomed to what Esposito calls, “seeing Islam through explosive headline events.” This is because it is easy for us to mistake the narrative advanced by the radicals as the only narrative due to the overwhelming exposure it generally receives in the media, when in fact there are multiple narratives today – always have been – all competing for the hearts

³⁷³Lawrence Dulkee, *Peace in Islam*, 27).

³⁷⁴Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Service in Faith*, 106–107).

³⁷⁵Omar and Duffey, *Peace-making and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 13.

and minds of both Muslims and non-Muslims. But many of the peaceful narratives are not given the same exposure (or not given any at all) as the radical voices tend to receive.³⁷⁶

5.6 Conclusion

For Omar, Jesus is an important figure in Islam and to be a Muslim requires a belief in the teachings of Jesus as conveyed through the Quran. Omar explains the notion of Jesus as a guide, a moral example, and a model for believers and spiritual seekers. He has provided some representative ways in which Muslims think about the experience of Jesus in their lives. Thus, respect for Jesus is seen properly within the context of the prophetology of Islam.

This is a window into the Islamic view of Jesus. Omar thus highlighted the importance of the figure of Jesus in relation to non-violent activism and peacebuilding, to allow for a deeper reflection on the common themes shared by Christians and Muslims.

Nonviolent activism assumes a posture of humility, which is also the hallmark of a pious person. Nonviolent activism for peace requires patience, restraint, and self-discipline. While violent activism is predicated on the assumption that change must begin outside of oneself, nonviolent activism involves personal commitment for self-transformation, becoming resilient, and cultivating courage, standing up for justice, not remaining silent, and, most important of all, controlling one's anger and hatred toward others. Numerous resources both theoretical and practical are available and circulating even as the rise in violence continues. One of the main tasks of our time is to reclaim and reframe the notion of jihad as nonviolent struggle for justice, which may be regarded as the greatest form of jihad in Islam. As noted above, Jihad's true meaning is inner struggle; it provides a credible path for believers in the Qur'anic message to work for justice through collaboration and in solidarity with others. It

³⁷⁶Omar and Duffey, *Peace-making and the Challenge of Violence in World Religions*, 15.

falls upon Muslims to liberate the notion of jihad from the bondage of mistranslation as well as misappropriation by terrorists and Islamophobias alike.

Working across religious, cultural, and ethnic lines provides the optimism that nonviolence as a religious imperative can be established. Such interfaith collaboration may be our best hope to curtail the spread of the culture of violence that surrounds us today.

5.6.1 Aroua and Omar: Way forward

Aroua and Omar have contributed significantly to give Christians and Muslims in Africa and globally a textual reading and understanding of the perspective of Islam on peace and dialogue. They have also presented a clearer view of how Muslims perceive and understand the person of Jesus and his mission. Their contributions have a major impact toward effective Christian-Muslim dialogue both in Nigeria and the rest of the world.³⁷⁷

These theologians remind Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and worldwide of their responsibility to critically engage with their religions and cultures from the prism of religious pluralism, so as to promote and support the human rights of all and sundry, including those of religious liberty and the right to life.

Patience, respect for all, compassion and forgiveness are the pillars on which a peaceful society can be built. Islam lays emphasis on these principles by adherence to which a culture of peace can be built within individuals. Wherever these values are to be found, the result will undoubtedly be a society of peace and harmony.

One cannot do better in one's efforts to ensure peace than to follow the example set by the Prophet of Islam in every facet of his life right throughout his career from beginning to end.

³⁷⁷ Is it necessary to hold some form of religious relativism in order to work effectively and authentically for peace? Relativism and fanaticism do not exhaust the possibilities of moral and religious and political positions. There is a vibrant middle position. It is the position we would be well advised to occupy as we confront the fanaticisms of our own time. Peter Berger, *Between Relativism and Fundamentalism: Is There a Middle Ground?* <https://www.pewforum.org/2008/03/04/between-relativism-and-fundamentalism-is-there-a-middle-ground/> (accessed 06/10/2020)

The golden rules for the carrying out of the ideal of peace into effect are set forth with the greatest clarity in the Quran as systematically unpacked by Arou and Omar. These rules are brilliantly illustrated by the thoughts, words and deeds of the Prophet of Islam, as recorded in the Hadith. I will now make a proposal and some recommendations based on practical and bold peace initiatives before the final conclusion.

Chapter Six

African Church Teaching: Synodal documents, and other Theologians in Africa, including Cornelius Afebu Omonokua, Tarimo Aquiline and Desmond Mphilo Tutu:

General Evaluation Comparisons, Insights and Conclusion

6. Introduction

The previous chapters made attempts to examine how the African and Nigerian Church and theologians particularly Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu and the two Islamic voices Aroua and Omar have examined Christian and Islamic teachings on peace.

Earlier in Chapter One, we presented the background of the study, exploring the developments that led to the present realities of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. We looked at the current reality and identified both the remote and more immediate causes of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria.¹ The lack of management of the religious and ethnic challenges and diversities facing Africa and especially Nigeria are chiefly the reasons for conflict triggered by a political and greedy elite fighting for the commonwealth of the people. Then in chapter two we discussed the need to reconsider *Ecclesia in Africa*, the *Lineamenta* and *Africae Munus* in the light of dialogue and peacebuilding. This will be analysed in this final chapter in the shadow of the Nigerian civil war and the Rwandan genocide.²

This chapter examined, in the first place, the 1994 and 2009 synods and their post synodal Exhortations *Ecclesia in Africa* (which I themed evangelizing for peace) and *Africae Munus* (as reconciling for peace).

¹Scholars and historians like Falola, Paden and Izuchukwu among others gave the historical background to the ethnic and religious conflict in Nigeria explicit in chapter one of this study.

²The Rwandan genocide, also known as the genocide against the Tutsi, was a mass slaughter of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda which took place between 7 April and 15 July 1994 during the Rwandan Civil War. Félicien Kabuga, now 84 years old, one of the perpetrator of this genocide was caught on 16-05-2020 and detained near Paris, where he had been living under a false identity. He is alleged to have been the main financier of the ethnic Hutu extremists who slaughtered 800,000 people in 1994.

In the contemporary life of the African Catholic Church, two events of April 1994 were very significant. Firstly, the convoking of the unprecedented synod of African Catholic bishops in Rome and secondly, the onset of one of the worst humanitarian tragedies of modern times, the 100 days Rwandan genocide, in which upwards of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutu were killed by their mostly Christian Hutu neighbours. Fifteen months later, Pope John Paul II agreed to summarize and engage the African synods reflections in his apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*.

Firstly, although no explicit mention is made in this document that was analysed in chapter two concerning the African tragedy that shadowed the synod throughout its duration, this was highly insensitive and unrealistic to the African community at the universal church level. The Church in Rome did not read the signs of the times (as a teaching in *Gaudium et Spes*³) in Africa, ravaged with war and violence.

The primary themes of the Second African synod 15 years later, Africa *Munus* the Church evangelizing Mission in the 21st Century, Reconciliation, Justice and Peace reflects the challenges of a Catholic Church still recovering from the legacy of genocide.

Secondly, “priorities”⁴ were not established during these synods. Any document on understanding of the proper relationship between Church and State must be pragmatic, dynamic and impacting today. For example, the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970 is still part of the grievances of the Igbo people today. Millions who died were not accounted for and there seems to be no genuine reconciliation till today.

Thirdly, the challenges of enacting *Ecclesia in Africa* and *Africa Munus* models of confessing and reconciliation in a post war Africa Church is demanding today.

³*Gaudium et Spes*, 4.

⁴ JJ Carney, Reconsidering *Ecclesia in Africa* and the Lineamenta in the shadow of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide (The Catholic University of America Washington DC USA *Ecclesial Review (AFER)* vol. 50. 1-2 March-June 2008.

The documents respective presentations of Christian ethics and national identity in Africa are not pragmatic enough. It is too church centred. No community and social contract oriented. I argue that while the emphasis on Universal Catholicity, baptismal identity and the poor of embodied Christian witness offer commendable lessons for a Church coping with conflict in Africa, the document overlooked the Church's legacy in further legitimating constructed political and ethnic identities in Africa.

In addition, while *Ecclesia in Africa* and the *lineamenta* present an inspiring vision of a prophetic church of servant-leaders, the document offers largely prescriptive solutions to Africa's problems of war, poverty, sickness etc...that overlooked the Church's crucial role of studying the signs of the times as the voice of the voiceless. And by not sufficiently engaging the ethnic question in Africa, specifically how supposedly natural ethnic and national identities are imagined and institutionalized both documents fall short of offering the robust vision of Christian identity needed for a Church still coming to terms with the meaning and lessons of the Nigerian civil war, the Rwandan genocide and conflict across the African Continent.

6.1 Counter Values of the African Traditional Family: as challenges to peacebuilding

Still on chapter two, while appreciating the positive elements in the African family and culture that could be adopted in the building up of the "family of God" working for peace in the continent, I shall not hesitate to examine its negative elements. Within this context, I shall argue that in order for the African Church to be true to her identity as a people working for peace and made one in the Trinity, a "family of God," the counter value⁵ of

⁵ The African family kinship system is based on the "loving union" of a people who either have a common ancestor or have been incorporated into a lineage group called the clan. When these kinship-based bonds exclude others, it leads to clan sentimentalism. Clan sentimentalism is manifest in the indigenous and foreigner syndrome that pervades African communities including the Church. This is rooted in the mentality of the average African Christian, whose lineage bond is prior to any other bond, including that of baptism. One can see this in the way people employ tribal or ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in a situation of competition, conflicts and cooperation in many nations of Africa.

the African family and culture, like gender inequality, must be challenged and transformed by the Gospel of salvation.

6.1.1 Selected Bishops and Theologians in Nigeria

Furthermore in this second chapter, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) dwelt on peace and dialogue in most of their teachings and communiqués. Some of them include: building bridges of peace, high quality education for peacebuilding and the urgent need to address grievances for religious tolerance and peacebuilding.

Ralph Madu, former Secretary-general of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria observed that the bishops “condemned the insecurity, exemplified in the atrocious war of religion inflicted in the countries that have led to homelessness, vandalization, kidnapping.”⁶

The bishops have remained persistent and consistent in the protection of the integrity of Nigerians as well as ensuring justice, equity and fairness in all matters. They have from 1963

The implication of this is that African noble virtues of communality, solidarity and hospitality are vulnerable in an extended situation. The reason is that, veiled in this communality and solidarity, is the attachment to one’s own clan or tribe which excludes the foreigner in practical situations. It also raises the whole question of the elasticity of the African hospitality. It is based on this, that Ecclesia in Africa sees this exclusive family bond, clan sentiments and mutual hostility as a great challenge towards building the African Church as a community of brothers and sisters. It consequently holds that it needs to be healed by the Good News. *Africae Munus*, in like manner, calls the African people to look beyond differences of origin or culture, so as to discern in the human person, loved by God, the basis of communion and relationship. In this way, men and women in the variety of their origins, cultures, languages and religions will be able to live together in harmony and peace. It further challenged the African Church in particular, to realize that the blood which Jesus shed for us becomes, through baptism, the principle and bond of new a fraternity which is the very antithesis of division, tribalism and [clan sentimentalism]. See Abu, *Church Family of God*, 22-40.

On gender inequality, *Africae Munus*, on the same note, invites the African Church to foster the safeguarding of the rights of women through condemnation and combatant witness against many practices that debase and degrade women in the name of ancestral tradition. It further states that it is the duty of the Church to contribute to the recognition and liberation of women, following the example of Christ’s esteem for them (cf. Mt 15:21-28; Lk 7: 36-50; 10: 38-42; Jn. 4: 7-42). In this way she will not only be propelling, the evolution of ways of thinking in this area (cultural reorientation and conversion), but will be reinforcing their worth, their self-esteem and their uniqueness that would enable them to occupy a place in society equal to that of men-without confusing or conflating the specific character of each person-since both men and women are the “image” of the Creator (cf. Gen 1: 27). It is by acknowledging their equal dignity with men, that African women can be liberated from marginalization, conflict, tensions and servitude, which will result in their increasingly playing their part, in the words of John Paul II in the solution to the serious problems facing [Africa and humanity as a whole]. It is through the active witness to this equality and mutuality, that the faithful manifest to others the mystery of the Trinity and the true nature of the Church, a community of love and peace. Abu, *Church as Family of God*, 33-53. See also Tarimo, *African peacemaking and Governance*, 33-50.

⁶ Ralph Madu, “Forward” in *Our concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak*, (Lagos: Gazub prints, 2015), vii-ix.

to date, inspired the nation justice, love, peace, protection of the dignity of the human person entrenchment of human rights, societal and communal equality.

Zacharia Samjumi views the bishops as men concerned for Nigeria. They have remained consistent and fair in the defence of Nigerian masses, especially their “rights in the affairs of the nation like rights to religious freedom, education of children and equality, which addresses grievances.”⁷

6.1.2 Individual Bishops

(a) *John Cardinal Onaiyekan*: advocated that religious dialogue is central for peace. Paulinus Odozor, calls him an ecclesial giant on the African Continent and says he will be remembered as a kind man with a heart for the poor, as a pastor who knew how to “bridge religious and ethnic divides in a culture where such differences easily can turn deadly.”⁸

Many questions are left to be reflected upon by Cardinal Onaiyekan in his attempt to encourage dialogue and peacebuilding. How can we, especially the victims of the most brutal violence forgive? He calls for solidarity in the Continent and the need to live up to our call as children of God.

(b) *Ignatius A. Kaigama* is a major proponent of interreligious dialogue, Archbishop Kaigama sees platforms as a means to engage youth and women and address systemic violence within Nigeria. Peace, not War is his major theme.

Experience shows that dialogue platforms need to engage at the grassroots level – with the unemployed, women and youth. Archbishop Kaigama believes “that interreligious dialogue platforms should be replicated in more grassroots communities with ordinary people actively participating, rather than the usual elitist and intellectual gatherings.”⁹

⁷Zacharia Samjumi, “Acknowledgment” in *Our concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak*, x-xi.

⁸“Cardinal John O Onaiyekan Mission of Peace” in *Crux Taking the Catholic Pulse* in <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-africa/2019/03/cardinal-who-unified-a-fissiparous-nigeria-readies-to-step-off-stage/> (accessed 14-06-2020).

⁹Kaigama, *Peace, Not War*, 21.

He is certain that “if the young boys who are on the street, the young fellows who have lost orientation, those unemployed and have nothing, and the women, are engaged, we would get good results. This is not that I think that scholarly discussion is unimportant.”¹⁰

Archbishop Kaigama says peacebuilding needs to include all segments of society to succeed: “We have the adult men, women and then the youth. If you remove one of the three, there is an imbalance and it will not stand. Do all the analysis, proffer solutions and so on; it won’t work because the balance is not there.”¹¹

(c) *Mathew Hassan Kukah* wrote on Addressing Christians and Muslim relations in Nigeria through accommodation: Opportunities for addressing persecutions of Christians in Africa. He analysed the traumatic recent force in Nigerian life, the rise of the terrorist group Boko Haram, Kukah had said it is not motivated primarily by anti-Christian prejudice only. He believed that Boko Haram, at least at its origin, did have a mission to purify what they regard as the traditional Islamic leaders of Northern Nigeria as a whole, cluster of emirs and sultans who now hold largely ceremonial but still important posts-whom Boko Haram members had come to see as corrupt. While acknowledging that Christians have a limited right of self-defense, he says the resort to force should also be “ad-hoc”, and that the State should be the party that ensures security.

Kukah passionately believes that Nigeria’s fundamental problem is not Boko Haram only, and is not even the jaw-dropping level of corruption that leaves Africa’s largest producer of oil in the humiliating position of having to import refined gasoline. It is failure of leadership at all levels. For Kukah, “if you have an absentee mother or fighter and the kids are fighting

¹⁰You are leaders beginning from today, <https://www.kaiciid.org/news-events/features/archbishop-kaigama-%E2%80%9Cyou-are-leaders-beginning-today%E2%80%9D> (accessed 21-05-2020).

¹¹Archbishop Kaigama believes strongly that women can be effective instruments of dialogue and harmony and should be given more time in a society and culture like Nigeria’s, where women can find themselves marginalised compared to men. However, engagement is just the first step in addressing structural issues in Nigeria such as breakdowns in security. Nigeria must develop better early warning systems where precursors to violence can be identified before conflict breaks out. Interreligious dialogue platforms can help with this, he added. But solutions will not emerge overnight. Kaigama, *Peace, Not War*, 52.

over ice cream, order can only be restored when the mother or father takes responsibly.”¹²

6.1.3 Two theologians of the Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria (CATHAN) on peacebuilding and dialogue

(a) *Cletus Tanimu Gotan* in his book *Nigeria’s Religious Conflicts: a call for a dialogue of life*, advocates for dialogue as an effective tool to consensus building that will lead to cultural, political and religious tolerance. These processes and relevance to the resolution of social conflicts, particularly religious conflicts with a focus on Nigeria in Africa, ought to be taken more seriously.

(b) *Josephat Obi Oguejiofor* analysed Christianity and the dynamics of violence in Nigeria as a Eucharistic community and a place for reconciliation and peace.

For *Oguejiofor*, The Eucharist as a sacrament of communion in the Trinity offers us a strong foundation on which to build and fulfil Africa’s insatiable need for reconciliation, justice and peace. Reconciliation is about the restoration of justice, the renewal of relationships, and the transformation of the whole human society into the presence of the supreme God. I now turn to the three core theologians.

6.2 More Insights Perspective and Contributions from Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu to the Peace Tradition and Teaching in Africa

It is against this broad introductory background that the work furthermore, evaluated how three major African theologians responded by making their contributions to a renewed theology of peacebuilding in the third and fourth chapter.

The result of this evaluation is the discovery that their reflection and interpretation of peacebuilding in the African context was undertaken in dialogue with other theologians along two dominant theological currents in African theology, i.e. liberation and peace and

¹²Kukah, *Religion and Politics in Northern Nigeria*, 33.

inculturation.¹³ The central focus of their analysis was how to offer greater understanding and relevance to this contextual, liberating peacebuilding ecclesial concept in a way that finds meaning and application in the daily life for peaceful coexistence in the African Continent.

It is also pertinent to observe that the style of Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu are in a sense a contextualization or even a reinterpretation and re-presentation using African symbols of existing ecclesiological images in Scripture, Tradition and other theological writings.

Each of them brought to the understanding and development of the concept of peacebuilding something that was not only unique, but also indicative of the religious, cultural, political, social and academic environments they inhabited.

6.2.1 Omonokua: Interfaith Dialogue of life, forgiveness and service

Firstly, his emphasis was on the need to make dialogue of faith and life a holistic peace mandate. He believed strongly that his birth stories from non-Christian and Islamic background seriously influenced his call for dialogue, tolerance and the spirituality of service in dialogue. He also saw the need to promote that God is in himself, despite our different perceptions of him: key to the civilization of solidarity in a pluralistic society.

In the context of this thesis, for example, Omonokua's background greatly influenced him. From Islam within which he was reared and educated to Roman Catholicism, which he learned as an adult, is a very practical demonstration of a transformational journey and action. Omonokhua also testifies that his mother's father Ekhaismhi was a Muslim while her mother, Eshiemma was a traditional herbalist.

¹³Omonokhua calls for dialogue between faith and culture, harmonisation of African values in relation to global peace, and the formation of conscience for a liberated and peaceful continent. Tarimo sees peace education as central to peacebuilding. Tutu's theology of Ubuntu sums up his call for peace in the spirit of liberation and contextualisation. For further reading on liberation, inculturation and peace in Africa, See *African Theology: The Contribution of Pioneers*, vols. 1 ed. Bénéze Bujo and Juvénal Ulunga Muya (Nairobi: Paulines, 2003); vol. 2 ed. Bénézet Bujo and Juvénal Ulunga Muya (Nairobi: Paulines, 2006); vol. 3 Bénézet Bujo (Nairobi: Paulines, 2013). See also, *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversation* ed. Diane B. Stinton (London: SPCK: 2010).

He observed: “No one can have a more unfavourable view than I of the present state of Roman Catholics.”¹⁴ With reference to the concrete event, which transformed Omonokhua into a follower of Roman Catholicism, Catholicism was . . . more taken by the necessity to obey recognised truth, that is to say, even against his own sensitivity and bonds of friendship and ties due to similar background.”¹⁵ Thus, in the following extract, Omonokhua, himself, describes how, having become convinced of the truthfulness of the Roman Catholic position, he had to decide to commit to choosing the good by becoming Catholic.

For Omonokhua, therefore, working for peace is actualised when the individual firstly commits to the conviction that there exists a personal encounter may be just in his or her conscience, and then concretises that conviction by deciding to act or refrain from acting in light of the Truth that emanates from this Being. He calls this stimulus “conscience the voice of God in a person and in spirituality, it is a Guardian Angel that directs a person to know the differences between virtue and vice.”¹⁶

Omonokhu’s thought were inspired and impacted by the deliberations and teachings of Vatican II and post Conciliar Teachings on interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding. His impact in the Nigerian and African Church so far has given him the niche as one of the more forceful spokespersons for the centrality of dialogue of life and action in Nigeria.

6.2.2 Tarimo: Prophetic voice for forgiveness and peace education

Tarimo, is a strident, unapologetic and unquestioning proponent of the supremacy of peace education of the church in conflict management and peacebuilding. He emphasized the prophetic voice for forgiveness and peace education in peacebuilding. The emphasis on the significance of the small Christian community as cradle of peace was crucial in his work. Furthermore, the common good and ethnic nationalities as veritable tool for peace was

¹⁴ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*. 79.

¹⁵Omonokhua, *Dialogue of Life and Action*, 44.

¹⁶Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*. 79.

emphasized by Tarimo. He also saw the important role the extended family will play in Africa for peace despite its limitations.

6.2.3 Tutu: Ubuntu, Interfaith tolerance and forgiveness as core to dialogue.

Tutu's main points centres round Ubuntu and its necessity for cohesion and peace in Africa. Closely linked to this was his teaching on interfaith tolerance. Tutu also made emphasis on the TRC as a tool for peacebuilding. Finally forgiveness as core to peace building and the fourfold part was emphasized.

Tutu's contribution to the "peacebuilding" debate centres on the fact that he enters under the "Anglican Tradition." Hence, in keeping with the tenets of that tradition, chapter four finds him insisting that the personal autonomy and responsibility of the community (Ubuntu) in moral matters be prioritised; the role of interfaith dialogue in peacebuilding as the mediator of the divine moral law be emphasised; any account of ethics should be for the common good and that every moral theory be required to acknowledge the role of the community and ethnic loyalties in moral decision-making.

6.3 A Juxtaposing of the theologians

Thus, while Omonokua may be a teacher of interfaith dialogue in Nigeria, and Tarimo a lover of religious peace education, Tutu may be considered a theorist of those who demand that the community have the ultimate say in their own moral decision-making for peace and harmony.

In light of these generalised findings, this concluding chapter undertakes an assessment of the work of these three moral scholars in terms of their contribution to a "theology of peacebuilding" that is consonant with the teachings of the Catholic magisterium.

6.3.1 Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu on Dialogue in peacebuilding missions

For Omonokua, Faith is a gift from God. Many people did not choose the particular religion they practice. There are so many religions in the world but these religions are united in the belief in one God. However, their concept of God may differ in the way they relate to God.

Freedom of religion is not a call to disunity and division of humanity. That we worship God in different ways must not stop us from common social actions in the form of dialogue of social engagement.

It is only dialogue that leads to peace, happiness, conversion, and a genuine formation of African Christian conscience, that will culminate into a liberated, transformed and peaceful continent.¹⁷ Dialogue which leads to the formation of character and conscience for a liberated and transformed Continent involves all people.¹⁸ For Theresa Okure, Omonokhua's perception of the role of dialogue in peacebuilding is soul searching, as it highlights many ways of looking at relations among different groups from political, ethnic, social, cultural, and theological perspectives. Dialogue is a "power that can bond us together and move us beyond our artificial boundaries to communal actions for the growth and welfare of our great nation and its entire people."¹⁹

For Tarimo, "dialogue begins from the family unit. The need for communion, solidarity and warmth in relationship will enhance family and Church working for Peace."²⁰

It is therefore, on the basis of this comparative and dialogical engagement, between the Gospel and the culture that the African family value of communion and solidarity rooted in her common origin by birth, is helpful in the understanding of peace.

For Tutu, The TRC Theology of Ubuntu as a dimension of African community, culture and humanness summarizes what dialogue entails. "A person is a person through other persons."²¹ Tutu and pleas for interfaith tolerance in South Africa brings out the need for dialogue too. For Tutu, "God is clearly not a Christian."²²

¹⁷Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, 79-82.

¹⁸Emmanuel "The Church as Family of God, 67.

¹⁹ Teresa Okure, "Forward" in *Dialogue in Context: A Nigerian Experience*, xix.

²⁰ Tarimo, *African peace-making and Governance*, 22.

²¹ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other provocations*, 22.

²²Tutu made this statement in a sermon at St. Martin in the Fields Church on Trafalgar Square, London, during a meeting of leaders of the world's Anglican churches after the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War. Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 3-20.

For Tutu, the Christian cause is revered better by a joyful acknowledgement that God is not the special preserve of Christians and is the God of all human beings, to whom he has vouchsafed a revelation of his nature and with whom it is possible for all to have a real encounter and relationship.²³ In Omonokhua's teaching, peacebuilding as process is a dialogue of life and action and involves listening first in communication with the human person. In Tarimo's thought, this involves division of labour for effective peace and forms the basis for small Christian community and peace in Africa.

Insofar as Tutu's model of peacebuilding seeks to elaborate an understanding of it in terms of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), his thought provides an apt way for not only understanding peace as an imperative, but also the nature of the person who engages in that undertaking.

Like Omonokua and Tarimo, Tutu cannot hide his role as Minister and Chairman of the secular TRC movement. What is interesting in Tutu's account is his observation that not only is moral failure of the apartheid regime in South Africa an actual part of the human being's history, but so is the inevitability of its becoming a reality for the post-apartheid era.

It can be said that the one sure area of unanimity in the debate surrounding peace as a principle, is that Omonokua, Tarimo, Tutu and the Church are united in their assertion that the proper "peacebuilding" is an imperative in our world.

6.3.2 Peacebuilding: A Transformational Journey

Omonokua and Tarimo believe that formation of public conscience and the task of influencing the formation of public policy draw religion into the task of promoting peace education.²⁴ But for religion to function thus, Tarimo acknowledges that religions must educate their faithful to respect others, foster dialogue, value differences, defend the defenseless, promote friendship among peoples, transcend prejudices, and learn from the past

²³Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 18.

²⁴ Omonokua, *Dialogue in Context a Nigerian Experience*. 79. See also Tarimo, "Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education," 29

that peace without justice is not true peace.”²⁵ This level of the event must correspond with the moral teachings of the church; that is, a person’s convictions, decisions and commitments to act or refrain from acting must not differ from what the teachings of the church designate as being good or evil. In fact, this is where there exist some fundamental differences, not only between the teachings of the three scholars in this thesis, but also between some of their teachings and that of the Magisterium. Tarimo, for example, would have little difficulty with those who point to the Church’s admonition that individuals must follow their conscience and have the freedom to do so, as long as these same individuals also accept that the individual conscience must “conform to the objective standards of moral life. Religion must look at itself and promote internal reform asserts Tarimo.

In Tutu’s view, on the other hand, the human person has at his or her disposal a communitarian “collective” of moral wisdom and practical information in conjunction with their own “community or ubuntu nature” as they seek peace. Accordingly, the communal moral wealth and experience of the community are deemed to exist to serve the moral educative needs of the individual human beings as they embark on the task of Ubuntu. Hence, it is obvious from Tutu’s account that such a formative task will involve the community integrating the knowledge acquired from multiple sources of moral wisdom with their own innate or personal insights so that, in the context of each specific act of moral decision-making, they will ultimately achieve that state of knowing what to do, how to do it, and when to do so, for the good of the community or humanity.

In Tarimo’s perspective, however, there is much more to peacebuilding. The acquisition of knowledge and peace education plays a major role, and the clarification of norms and the appropriate selection of moral choices. For him, this task also includes an act of faith, that there exists a personal relationship between the individual and God, a belief that, in turn,

²⁵ Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 32

validates the Church's call that its moral teachings be internalised as part of the formation process. Such an ecclesiastical call can be trusted, according to Tarimo, because "the Church's teaching authority . . . is endowed with an unfailing gift of truth would have legislative authority in moral matters."²⁶ It can also be trusted because it is his belief that Jesus has willed that "it is part of the Church's duty to state authoritatively 'those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself.

Tutu asserts that the community can play a major role in shaping people. That it invariably can help to create the ubuntu spirit which he defines as the constant "disposition or orientation to desire good and is the culmination of a life lived consistently in the pursuit of virtue."²⁷ For Tutu, therefore, "the proper community of peace does work for peace in context of some superficial adherence to rules and laws but in working toward goodness rather than evil or indifference in every context, no matter how trivial."²⁸ Such an approach represents a move away from considering the morality of acts in isolation to a community based fellowship and humanness and from the traditional preoccupation with established norms and principles. More importantly, however, Tutu's approach also confirms the human person, integrally and adequately considered, as the source of community membership and action. It is for this reason that he describes the community as being "Ubuntu" which "involves the integration of the intellectual and emotional capacities of the individual, together with a commitment to confront one's limitations and weaknesses as a community."²⁹

The three scholars are clear in their faith based teaching. Omonokhua is clear and unambiguous in his moral teaching on interfaith dialogue. But then, so is Tarimo in his call to believers to follow the teachings on peace education and Tutu that Christians and Muslims should recognise the link between ubuntu and interfaith dialogue and human dignity.

²⁶ Tarimo, "Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education," 32

²⁷ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 33.

²⁸ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 37.

²⁹ Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 37.

Basically the point that we have analysed in this work can be summed up as an enquiry into the understanding of peace in the teaching of Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu in relation to church teaching.

Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu all agree on the understanding of peace as summed up as the need for society. A major point of difference is Omonokhua's life birth stories. That gives him an all rounded historical understanding to his mission for peace like a narrative event. While Tarimo believes that peacebuilding should define your behaviour personally or concrete decisions or events must conform to objective truth as taught by the church, Tutu's community teaching emphasizes a stand because it embraces community living.

Peacebuilding thereby encourage Muslims and Christians and all the ethnic nationalities to yield to external moral authority other than the self. Omonokhua's contribution on the other hand is very theocentric and christocentric.

The primacy of peace was central in their thoughts. From different perspectives, the fact is that its presence, role in the human person and the constant need for formation cannot be denied or overlooked. Various terms may be used to refer to peacebuilding in different cultures such as: peacemaking, interreligious dialogue, and interreligious peacebuilding, reconciliation and forgiveness. The "most secret core and sanctuary of the human person" and the role of the Church as a moral teacher in enlightening it cannot be over emphasised. I now make a deliberate critique of these scholars on certain themes in their thoughts.

6.3.3 A Critique of the dynamism of peacebuilding as Dialogue, peace education and Forgiveness in the thoughts of Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu

I now make a critique of the following themes of the core theologians in this study which includes, firstly, Tarimo's six categories in critique of Tutu's teaching on forgiveness, secondly, I will address Tutu and the dynamics of forgiveness, thirdly, Tarimo view on reconciliation and its relationship with religion and Tutu's Ubuntu will be discussed.

Fourthly, On Reconciliation and forgiveness: Humanity, God and the Eschaton, fifthly, the challenge of who God is and the legitimacy of theological and religious pluralism, the views of Omonokua and Tutu will be criticized. Sixthly, I hope to explore and analyse the God of Christianity as inclusive pluralism. The seventh theme will discuss ethnicity and loyalty from the view point of Tarimo and Tutu. The eight themes make a critique of Tutu's TRC of South Africa. The ninth theme is a critique of Ubuntu and the tenth is a vision for peace education and finally, eleventh the Islamic scholars in a synthesis on reconciliation and dialogue in the Islamic tradition. Then the final synthesis and proposals of this study based on the insights of all these theologians.

6.3.4 Forgiveness: A critique of Tutu by Tarimo six categories

Tutu's position on forgiveness can be evaluated using Tarimo's thoughts. The victim, for Tarimo is expected to forgive not because the perpetrator deserves it, but because the victim does not want turn into a bitter and resentful person. In this way, the victim releases pain in a constructive way instead of allowing oneself to be consumed by drives of hated and revenge. Tutu's position is similar to the focus. On renewing and releasing the relationship. On the other hand Tarimo differs when he said "Forgiveness cannot replace justice. Instead, it strengthens the cause of justice. By transforming the hearts of the victim and the perpetrator."³⁰ For Tarimo, "Forgiveness releases the perpetrator from their burden of guilt.

³⁰ Tarimo, "Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education," 32

The process liberates the victim from the prison of victimhood and the perpetrator from the burden of guilt for the sake of the common good.”³¹ However important the dimension of forgiveness can be in the process of reconciliation, it cannot replace justice.

For Tarimo, Forgiveness cannot be isolated from justice, this is lacking in Tutu’s thought. Forgiveness is a gift of the heart that goes beyond the natural instinct of paying back evil with evil, pride, and self-interest. In affirming the mutual interdependence between forgiveness and justice, Tarimo writes: “forgiveness without justice trivializes responsibility and can lead to the repetition of crime.”³² On the other hand, “justice without mercy can easily turn into a vengeful display of power, which reduces the other to one moment of his existence.”³³

There is an attempt to introduce the concept of forgiveness into the political sphere. Forgiveness embraces human capacities to transform the political cause by making political agreements genuine and operative. Forgiveness is not necessarily a private transaction between an individual and God as presented in traditional theology. Rather, it is a civic virtue that brings perpetrators and victims to reconciliation.

This is done for Tarimo by building trust and collaboration across individual and communal boundaries as a reliable path in search of a lasting reconciliation and peace. That is to say “forgiveness brings together dimensions of moral responsibility and commitment to repair broken relations.”³⁴

In a critique of Tutu, Tarimo advocates for six categories to prosecute or leave those who commit violence. The first category deals with public education as it relates to any crime. This approach puts an accent on the need to repair social relations through education rather than concentrate on retribution and punishment. For Tarimo, “only education can help victims and perpetrators go beyond anger, revenge, and powerlessness. This how to reform a

³¹ Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 32

³² Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 86.

³³ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 86-7.

³⁴ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 86-7.

society torn apart by conflicts.”³⁵

The second category argues that prosecution and retribution are indispensable because they “enhance awareness and reveal the truth about what had happened in order to prevent repetition of the same crime in the future.”³⁶ They opt for prosecutions of the past atrocities believing that such prosecutions deter potential lawbreakers and inoculate the public against future temptations to participate in organised violence.

For Tarimo, the objection that may rise against this approach is that retribution and punishment “imposed against identifiable perpetrators can open the wounds of the past and thereby perpetuate sentiments of revenge.”³⁷

The third category is against prosecution and punishment. This category prefers silence rather than proposing anything concrete to address the situation. They argue that punishment is not the most appropriate instrument for reforming collective moral conscience. A clear objection that arises against this category is that silence over past atrocities “locks perpetrators and victims in the cruel pact of denial and vengeance.”³⁸ If we allow hatred to continue without unlocking its continuous patterns, there will be no guarantee for a peaceful future.

For Tarimo, the attitude of maintaining silence after the experience of massive violation of human rights is unacceptable. It could be reinterpreted as though perpetrators succeeded, and the pain of the victims does not matter. Therefore, silence over the past atrocities cannot be a genuine solution. A society that insulates the traumatic past from conscious memory blocks all possibilities of reforming unjust social conditions.

The fourth category put an accent on the public confession and psycho-spiritual healing. Those concerned would prefer spiritual healing and forget about the demands of legal justice. This way of thinking is highly theological. Such a pious understanding of forgiveness claims

³⁵ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 91.

³⁶ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 92

³⁷ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 92.

³⁸ Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, 17.

that evil attitudes reside in the heart; and, once ways of the heart are reformed, improved social conditions will automatically follow. The objection that may arise against this approach is that this practice alone cannot overcome conflict of interests. What spiritual healing does is only to build a starting point of addressing a conflict.

The fifth category advocates legal justice and multiplication of laws. This approach is common among lawyers. The objection that may arise against this way of thinking is that legal response alone in reforming social conscience is insufficient. For Tarimo, “An approach of legal justice can be limited when courts of law become instruments of partisan politics, corruption and vengeance.”³⁹ The truth is that laws alone cannot transform the heart of a human person. The attitude and behaviour of a human person are changed through persuasion, conviction, willingness and personal engagement. The power behind laws is found within moral agent’s sense of values and commitment to promote them.

The sixth category claims that social conflicts are usually caused by the lack of economic growth and as such what we have to do is to eradicate poverty. An objection that may arise here is that conflicts based upon unequal distribution of material goods are not limited to the poor countries. Prejudice, greed, and selfishness as the source of social conflict are also found among the rich countries. Another point for Tarimo is that “social conflicts based on economic reasons may springboard into religious and ethnic dimensions as well.”⁴⁰

Such a diversity of opinions shows that whatever response is given to overcome violence, all institutions must inform reconciliation initiatives, this is an appropriate way to evaluate painful memories, educate human conscience, and renew social relationships. I now turn to the second theme.

³⁹ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 93 see also Luc Huyse, “Amnesty, Truth or Prosecution? In *Peacebuilding: A Field Guide* Luc Reyckler and Thania Paffenholz, eds. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 322-30.

⁴⁰ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 93

6.3.5 Must we forgive? Revisiting the limits and possibilities of forgiveness as a pastoral, ethical and theological problem: The dynamic of Tutu's vision of forgiveness

Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu all consider the notion of forgiveness as a virtue. How can forgiveness be a response to evil, a way to renounce resentment, and a means of creating a positive self-narrative? Might we look at those who are, as Joseph Butler says, “meek, forgiving, and merciful...ready to pass over offenses against himself” as morally irresponsible? How can we forgive all evils unilaterally? Must not we discern what evils can and cannot be forgiven? What happens when a sense of moral responsibility is impossible to reconcile with Butler's imperative of forgiveness? Is it ever not virtuous to forgive?”⁴¹

I am critiquing unconditional forgiveness as understood through Divine Command Theory, a meta-ethical theory, which proposes that an action's status as morally good is dependent on whether it is commanded by God. What is moral is determined by what God commands, so to be moral is to follow God's commands. In one reading of the notions of forgiveness, Divine Command seems to say that forgiveness is unconditional. So Divine Command theory has provided the foundation for the belief in unconditional forgiveness that I will argue has trickled out into popular culture. As Meirlys Lewis has claimed, “there is a logical dimension to forgiveness where it is not just an occasional requirement, but where it is an absolute requirement...structured and defined by certain beliefs about God, about the love of God, the mercy of God, divine grace and compassion.”⁴²

Lewis presents a particular analysis of Christian love and likewise Christian forgiveness with secular love and forgiveness. The uniqueness of Christian forgiveness lies in its “unconditionally and in that it maintains a constant unchanging relation between the believer and the trespasser.”⁴³

The process of forgiveness for Lewis, involves perceptions about the relationship between

⁴¹ Joseph Butler, *Sermon IX. Upon Resentment and Forgiveness of Injuries*.

⁴² Meirlys Lewis, *On Forgiveness*, 242.

⁴³ Meirlys Lewis, *On Forgiveness*, 263.

God and the world which colour how one perceives relations with other humans. There is no consideration of the moral conceptions about “sin, primordial evil, the distance between what is worthless, insignificant and what is infinitely good and perfect, which are inseparable from the language of prayer and confession.”⁴⁴

I agree with Tutu that forgiveness is also given serious consideration in terms of its therapeutic benefits. It is viewed as a goal in psychotherapy, marital counselling, and group interventions. The notion of “letting go” has been of interest to psychologists, who take forgiveness to be a means of healing. Letting go implies that the victim’s life is no longer dominated by thoughts, memories, and negative feelings, and this escape from the negative emotions that linger after the injury is central to the weight placed on forgiveness

The notion that God is Omni-benevolent, loves every person, and has allowed Christ to be the ultimate figure of graciousness and forgivingness seems to give Christians a firmly rooted worldview through which they can approach questions of forgiveness. While the morality of forgiveness certainly is not diminished in Christian theology, it is supplanted by a doctrine of unconditional love and grace as one strives to emulate Christ, *imitatio Christi*. The idea that we are created in the image of God has inspired Tutu’s advocacy of forgiveness. He has expressed a long tradition of Christian thought when he argued, “Monstrous deeds do not turn the perpetrators into monsters. A human person does not “ultimately lose his or her humanity which is characterized by the divine image in which every individual is created.”⁴⁵ The common Christian phrase, “Love the sinner, hate the sin” echoes in Tutu’s claim. The theological framework for Tutu’s argument is clear: because we are created in God’s image, all human beings have the capacity for transformation and reconciliation—no person is reducible to his or her wrongdoings, and thus no person is beyond forgiveness. It is important to note that God does not just spare sinners the consequences of sin. Rather, the sin is

⁴⁴ Meirllys Lewis, *On Forgiveness*, 263.

⁴⁵ Meirllys Lewis, *On Forgiveness*, 242.

separated from the sinner, and this is made possible by Christ's unity with God and with humanity.

One criticism employed by Trudy Govier in her discussion of religious traditions and forgiveness is that to ground an ethic and conceptualization of forgiveness on theological footing is difficult. She claims, "Although religious teachings offer rich resources for reflection, their variety and uncertainty mean that they cannot eliminate the need for secular reasoning, judgment, and reflection about the topic."⁴⁶ What she is arguing here is that theological doctrines and parables cannot provide adequate guidance in practical, human affairs-not least because of the variety of possible theories from different religious traditions.

The notion of God's forgiveness again arises in thinking about the expulsion or persistence of guilt after one has been forgiven. Even after we forgive, is guilt removed, or just anger? One could argue that someone is still guilty before the wronged person and/or God because thinking about forgiveness through a theological lens does not (and perhaps cannot) address the practical problem of guilt and blame. In other words, it is not clear that to forgive is necessarily to remove blame.

a) What forgiveness is not?

Tutu could not tell what forgiveness is not. He was seemingly too apologetic on what it is. If we can concede that unconditional forgiveness (and forgivingness as the propensity to forgive) is popularly held to be a virtue-that is, something to which we attribute moral worth and regard as being tied to one's character, we have only done part of the work in defining forgiveness. Forgiveness is a way of addressing problems caused by the wrongdoings of others and moving forward, but there are similar attitudes with which it might be confused. It should not be conflated with condoning or forgetting the wrongdoing. When I will suggest later that forgiveness is not virtuous in some particular cases, it will not be because I have

⁴⁶ Trudy Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge*, 159.

equated forgiveness with condonation or forgetting. I agree with the proponents of forgiveness who would say that there is a critical distinction between forgiving an injury and justifying an injury. The very act of forgiving requires recognition of the act as wrong. Further, my argument against unconditional forgiveness is not based on a belief that to forgive is always to condone. My argument is against the idea that simply because one recognizes an injury as wrong, that in turn, forgiveness is unconditionally necessary or virtuous. On the contrary, it is not only unnecessary, but in some cases, dissolute and immoral. Yet in either case, the difference in the characteristics of what it means to forgive as opposed to what it means to forget or condone is worth explicating.

Certain instances of forgiveness may resemble condoning, particularly when the person being forgiven cannot or does not articulate what his or her transgression was. Just because the wronged person and the offender recognize and understand the injury between them does not mean forgiveness should necessarily follow. As Trudy Govier points out in her book *Forgiveness and Revenge*, “we can understand acts without fully [forgiving] them.”⁴⁷ The danger, I think, is when we forgive acts without fully understanding them. The danger of pardoning, condoning, absolving, and excusing evils committed against us comes when forgiveness is approached as a necessary or compulsory act—not as a conditional one.

b) Unconditional forgiveness

Tutu also did not define the type of forgiveness he meant. The type of forgiveness that I will argue is not and cannot be a virtue is that which diminishes our morality or the moral community. Forgiveness might not yield this kind of result; only when it is unconditioned and unilaterally held to be a virtue is there a danger that it will compromise moral principles because there are no limits to its appropriateness. Unconditional forgiveness is understood here in the sense that it lacks limitations and stipulations about when it is the right moral

⁴⁷ Govier, *Forgiveness and Revenge*, 55.

choice. Very few virtues or traits can be understood categorically, or unconditionally; it is difficult to say anything is a “good” across all possible situations. Kant’s categorical imperative—that one could will his or her own maxims to be universalized—could be considered at this point. In order for unconditional forgiveness to be a virtue (under virtue ethics) it would be that which will always benefit the person who possesses forgivingness. I will argue this cannot be the case with unconditional forgiveness because in some cases, the forgiving attitude is morally wrong and not beneficial to the victim (or the moral Community), and thus one should not will it to be a universal quality.

My argument against unconditional forgiveness is that despite the forgiving attitude’s virtuous reputation, it cannot count as a virtue if it is morally problematic. There are times when it is appropriate to forgive, and times when it is appropriate to withhold forgiveness, and I cannot account for all possible situations where the decision between resentment and forgiveness is relevant, these will vary immensely. Given its nature as a deeply emotional and personal process, scenarios involving forgiveness and resentment will be nuanced. Nevertheless, I want to argue that in any case, it is not moral to forgive if in the process we negate our own moral rights, or deny the moral rights of others. If forgiveness is unconditional and unquestioning—if it requires no consideration of principles of morality then it cannot be said to be a virtue. What is in question for my evaluation is whether or not unconditional forgiveness is a virtue.

c) Conditional Forgiveness

The understanding of forgiveness is the notion that giving forgiveness is at the discretion of the person who has been wronged (or those affected by the injury), and its suitability is conditioned by the principles of morality: this is conditional forgiveness. But not explained in Tutu work. When forgiveness can be aligned with self-respect, and respect of others and the integrity of the moral community, forgiveness is indeed a virtue. But the virtuosity of

forgiveness is dependent on the conditions having been met. This is why unconditional forgiveness-which may or may not meet these conditions-cannot always ensure that forgiveness is a moral choice; forgivingness cannot be universally adopted as a positive, virtuous attribute. Because forgiveness always is put side by side with resentment one can either adopt one attitude or the other-when the conditions for forgiveness cannot be met, then embracing resentment, rather than overcoming it, is a more virtuous response. It should now be clear that I am not suggesting that forgiveness should never be issued, or that it is never virtue. Rather, my position is that a more morally responsible approach to the subject would be to condition forgiveness upon certain principles, so that we can say only when these principles are met that forgiveness is moral or virtuous, and when they are not, the attitude is not a virtue. I now turn to the third theme

6.4 Religion, Social Reconciliation and forgiveness of Tarimo and the common good⁴⁸: Any relation with Tutu's Ubuntu?

Activities of some religious movements and commitment of some religious leaders demonstrate that there can be a constructive integration between faith and the public good. A good example is seen from the struggles of Tutu who promoted reconciliation in the post-apartheid South Africa. For Tarimo, "When suspicion overshadows goodness, examples of good works can easily be overlooked."⁴⁹

For Miroslaf Volf, the struggle against injustice is part of the "fundamental pursuit of reconciliation. Artificial models of reconciliation set justice and peace against each other as

⁴⁸ There is difference between spiritual reconciliation and social reconciliation. The former is the reconciliation with God's redemptive love which moves the sinner to repentance, thus mending the conflict that separates the individual from God and restoring harmony with God; while the latter is reconciliation with ones' fellow human beings. Social reconciliation, involves one's recognition of the injustices done to other human beings and thereafter seeking a sincere way to promote social justice. This argument suggests that the process of restoring peace and justice, as a means to heal the whole person, requires initiatives of reconciliation, both at the spiritual and social levels. There cannot be true reconciliation with God without seeking reconciliation with human beings at the social level. What is expected from the process of reconciliation is to establish the necessary conditions required for collaboration of social institutions and transformation and social conscience. See Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 75-76.

⁴⁹ "Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education," *African Christian Studies*, 31.

alternatives. To pursue cheap reconciliation means to give up on the struggle to renounce injustice and disorder.”⁵⁰

For Tarimo, a comprehensive process of reconciliation brings together constitutive dimensions of human experience and social relationships. With such background, the process of reconciliation ought to be seen as part of a broader process of reconstructing social relationships. It leads to “transformation of attitude and character. It ends in transformation and healing.”⁵¹

For reconciliation, those concerned, are introduced into the process of acknowledging that both sides have legitimate interests, and that both sets of interests cannot be met without “radical transformation, a process which involves a change in attitude and character.”⁵²

Reconciliation appeals to the process of restoring trust, while conflict resolution and conflict management are limited to the external conditions of social organisation. The process of reconciliation renders opportunity for the fractured society to examine itself in view of discovering possibilities that can reconstruct social relationship like Ubuntu.

What makes reconciliation more than programmes of conflict management is that it draws people to the spiritual level, what human beings believe to be, and the capacity to overcome evil through self-transformation. To support this argument of Tarimo, Ervin Staub claims that reconciliation is more than the co-existence of formerly hostile groups living close to each other.⁵³ The dynamics of reconciliation put an accent on the need to appreciate the humanity of the other and prepare a way for in-depth healing for the sake of securing a better future.

⁵⁰ Miroslaf Volf, “Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice: A Christian Contribution to More Peaceful Social Environment,” in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Resolution* Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Patersen eds. (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), 27-50 and 35-36.

⁵¹ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 72.

⁵² Robert J Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, (New York: Orbis books, 1998), 25.

⁵³ Ervin Staub, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1990), 20.

Religious teachings, when applied properly, contribute to the process of building the social fabric of the common good. It is therefore not true that all religious activities suppress ideals of democracy, freedom and pluralism. A number of religious activities strengthen values of participation and common good. This is pursued by strengthening public virtues, raising the spirit of mutual concern and mobilizing communal action. The role of “religion in society is not only priestly but also prophetic insofar as it is able to raise issues of public interest that have eluded other institutions.”⁵⁴

Religion maintains the balance of power in society by challenging state hegemony, proposing alternative models of moral formation and preserving group identities and sanctity of human life. Religions are able to “identify overlooked social questions by pointing out inadequacies within the framework of political organization, leadership and governance.”⁵⁵ They can motivate as well as mobilize people to focus on certain issues at hand by identifying social problems and the needs of the poor. Such situations make religions political since their activities create political impact. If civility is a learned value, then, the contribution of religious virtues cannot be taken for granted.⁵⁶

Religion for Tarimo, can either be constructive or destructive depending on the direction it takes in forms of the common good. Ubuntu of Tutu is closely linked to the common good. In the spirit of Ubuntu, certain features that will make the common good of prime importance are upheld. Some of them include: the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances and the restoration of broken relationships. Ubuntu, like the common good, cares for the majority of the wellbeing of the people, not undermining the pains and frustration of the minority.

In support of the constructive role of religion, Cardinal Avery Dulles argues that religious groups, because of their authority over the consciences of the faithful, can give powerful motivation for humanitarian reform. Most religions agree on the importance of prayer and

⁵⁴ Tarimo, “The Role of Religion in Peace education” in *African Christian Studies*, 27.

⁵⁵ Marty, M.E. *Politics, Religion, and the Common Good*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2000), 130.

⁵⁶ Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, 31.

worship.⁵⁷ They encourage the pursuit of holiness and speak out against socially harmful vices such as dishonesty, greed, exploitation and discrimination. In a society riddled with selfishness, the harmonious voices of religious leaders can propel the tone of public morality. This means religions have to commit themselves to the task of challenging intolerance and violence which seem to be incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion; and as such religions must be open in condemning any recourse to war in the name of God. This goal could be achieved if religions educate their faithful to respect others, foster dialogue, value differences, appreciate cultural diversity, defend the defenceless, promote friendship among peoples, transcend prejudices and learn from the past that peace without justice is not true peace. Religious teachings must aim at healing the wounds of the heart and restore damaged social relationships. Whoever uses religion to spark violence contradicts religion's deepest and truest inspiration.

For Tarimo, no matter how much criticism could be advanced towards the role of religion in the public sphere, the point is that religion makes a significant difference. The presence and witness of religious communities in society carries a distinctive role that cannot be ignored. Religions play a prophetic role of promoting fundamental values. These values build foundations of public values. Religions share key principles regarding life-centeredness, respect for nature, and option for the poor, solidarity and mutual sharing. Religion disregards the culture of individualism, selfishness, complacency and indifference. From the public viewpoint, religious activities promote public values through the process of promoting an alternative opportunity for participation as well as rendering services required for social development. The task of religion is to tell the Good News of God's liberation and saving power at the centre of history.

⁵⁷ Avery Dulles, "Christ among the Religions," *America*, 186, 3 (February 04, 2002), 8-15.

The task of religion in public sphere is prophetic,⁵⁸ which involves informing and forming public conscience, denouncing injustice and encouraging self-examination. Religious function and impact are juxtaposed to ethical motifs that guide the sense of responsibility. Such a power of self-transcendence enables religion to selectively embrace, reject or refine aspects of the culture of which it is a part, in accordance with the deep presuppositions and framework of self-regulation.⁵⁹ In this way it shapes held values, influences institutions, and establishes in the mind of the people, various ideals of the right and good,⁶⁰ hence its close link with Ubuntu. The fourth them is next for consideration.

6.5 On Reconciliation and forgiveness: Humanity, God and the Eschaton

Some of the principles according to Robert J Schreiter, that guide a practical theology of reconciliation and forgiveness that can modify our understanding of it, and the analogues in non-Christian and secular approaches to peacebuilding, to my mind were not considered by the three theologians.

Firstly, God is the author of reconciliation; for Schreiter we “participate in the work of God.”⁶¹ Those principles clearly are linked to the central insight into forgiveness and reconciliation: it is God who brings about reconciliation and forgiveness, and we participate in that process.

This belief is corroborated by much of our experience in rebuilding societies after conflict, oppression, and violation of human rights; the magnitude of the damage is such that the implications of what had happened and what will be needed to overcome the suffering endured and beyond the reach of human comprehension.

⁵⁸ The prophetic task of realign involves informing public conscience, denouncing injustice, and encouraging self-examination. The key values and principles regarding the good life, including life-centeredness, respect for nature, option for the poor, justice through sharing, and the recognition of people as subjects of their own lives. See Opocensky, “Theology between yesterday and Tomorrow,” 343.

⁵⁹ Stuckhouse, M.L. “Theologies of War: Comparative Perspectives,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, 23,1 (September 2001), pp. 15-27.

⁶⁰ “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, 33.

⁶¹ Robert J Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation” 366-97.

Secondly, in reconciliation, for Schreiter, “God begins with the victim. While it may seem counterintuitive to focus first on the victim and not on the wrongdoer or perpetrator who have wreaked so much havoc on individuals and society, Christian reconciliation first turn to the victim.”⁶² This is built upon the message Israel prophets and the ministry of Jesus: go first to the orphan and the widow, the prisoner and the stranger. It finds its most clear expression in catholic social teaching in the preferential option of the poor.

Thirdly, in forgiveness and reconciliation, God makes of the victim and the wrongdoer a “new creation.” This new creation is evident in 2 Corinthians 5: 17. God’s reconciling work does not restore us to some *status quo ante* but takes us to a new place. This new place for Schreiter, “is usually not something that victims, wrongdoers, and those working for reconciliation would have projected on their own.”⁶³ The moment of a new creation is met with amazement. That South Africa could move from decades of state of state policy of violation of human rights to its “rainbow” society without further violence and death is one of those amazing stories. For Christians,, it is evidence of God’s graced action in the world. For those of other faiths or no faith, it may be ascribed to an inscrutable act of God or to the deep mysteries of humanity.

Fourthly, Christians lodge their sufferings in the story of the suffering and death of Christ. Peacebuilding after conflict and oppression and violations inevitably entails dealing with the consequences of suffering. This in itself is destructive to the human spirit and can lead to the disintegration of the human person. Suffering can be overcome or even positively transformed only if it can be situated in or attached to some cause or reality larger than the person suffering. For Christians, placing their suffering in the story of the suffering and death of Christ is a way of making suffering a means of forging something better and stronger than was there before.

⁶² Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation” 366-97.

⁶³ Schreiter, “A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation” 338.

Fifthly, Forgiveness and reconciliation will not be complete until God is “all in all.” This is referring to the eschatological character of forgiveness: complete reconciliation will happen only when all people and all things have been reconciled in Christ at the end of time (Eph. 1:10 Col 1:20), at a point when God will be all in all (1Cor 15: 28). If indeed everything and everyone are interconnected, the ultimate reconciliation is a cosmic event. That in turn entails that we are unlikely to see full reconciliation in any situation in our own lifetime as seem to the thoughts of Tutu in particular. This again is corroborated in the experience of working for reconciliation. It is always incomplete and uncompleted. Ultimately, we find hope in in sources outside ourselves, whether God or the concept of humanity or something else. It is those outside sources that draw believers and those of no particular faith forward. We see this fifth principle returning us “full circle” to the first: the source of forgiveness and reconciliation lies outside us, but we are drawn intimately into reconciliation. The fifth theme is discussed next.

6.5 God is truly not a Christian: A Critique and commentary of the legitimacy of Theological and Religious pluralism:

Omonokhua’s and Tutu’s position on who God is raises the question of religious pluralism. Tutu maintains that God is not a Christian and Omonokhua refers to this as debriefing mutual suspicion with frankness.

For Omonokhua, the “expression of divine realities in human language falls within a limited context in dialogue.”⁶⁴ In the spirit of dialogue, to be on the same page with other partners in dialogue, we do not need to be fixated on who God is. The name: “God” has gone through a lot of evolution for Omonokhua. Since he is a pure spirit, it took ages for the human mind to arrive at the concept of one God or who he really is.

⁶⁴ Omonokhua, *Dialogue in Nigerian Context*, 33.

Tutu maintains that the Christian who claims to have a monopoly on God is an almost trite observation. We must not make the mistake of judging other faiths by their least attractive features or adherents.

On a general note, one of the principle difficulties with religious pluralism is radical pluralism. It reduces all religions to some none script, lowest common denominator or universal essence which has no direct relationships to the particularities of historical religions. For Stephen Duffy, “this radical pluralism melts down all religious differences and filters out the dense particularities of religions which have fired passions and energised the wills of believers down through the centuries.”⁶⁵ Gavin D’ Costa notes that the logic of this radical pluralism is ironically the creation of a new kind of exclusivism because it depends on tradition specific criteria taken from the enlightenment.”⁶⁶ David Cheetham argues that the real problem with this pluralistic theology of religions is that it “lacks personal passion, feeling of commitment in the name of objective detachment whereas it is precisely these elements that make realign something worth living and dying for.”⁶⁷

According to Lieven Boeve, the problem with radical pluralism is that it makes relativism the particular truth-claims of Christianity and reduces the historical incarnation of God in Jesus to the level of ‘a myth ‘in the pejorative sense of that word. In effect, the incarnation is absorbed into or reduced to a general religious truth “determined by pluralism such as the unbridgeable gap between the ‘noumenon and the phenomena’. The historical specificity of the Christ-event is subordinated to a more universal view of religion.”⁶⁸

A distinction therefore must be made between radical religious pluralism which ends in relativism and the theological pluralism that is grounded in the underlying unity of God’s

⁶⁵ Stephen J Duffy, “Christianity in Dialogue: Jesus at the Circumference or Centre? *The Living Light*, winter 1995; Mission and Dialogue in a Pluralistic Global City, *Ecumenical Trends*, 25, April 1996, 11.

⁶⁶ Gavin D’ Costa, “The Impossibility of a Pluralistic view of Religion”

⁶⁷ David Cheetham, “Religious Passion and the Pluralistic Theology of Religions” *New Blackfriars*, May 1998, 222-40.

⁶⁸ Lieven Boeve, *God interrupts History: Theology in a time of Upheaval*, New York: Continuum, 2007), 168-72.

revelation in history and the living tradition of Christianity. This latter pluralism is a pluralism-within-unity, or as some prefer, diversity-within-communion. There is a difference between relativism and pluralism. Relativism, often invoked in the name of tolerance, does not require people to know anything or to do anything new; it leaves the human situation as it finds it and frequently leads to indifferentism. In contrast, pluralism demands an understanding and appreciation of differences and otherness within the praxis of dialogue. Pluralism, in contrast with relativism, challenges people to struggle with otherness and differences.

In certain circumstances, the invitation of dialogue on a level playing field is hardly an invitation to dialogue for some people, but rather the imposition of one particular view of religion—a view which seems to ignore the history, theology and sociology of religions. The only reason participants want to be on the same playing field is because it contains such increasing religious valleys and theological peaks—and not because it is level, which would be a rather dull place to be. I now discuss the sixth theme.

6.5.1 Christianity, God and inclusive pluralism

An argument on multiplicity and diversity of God will be based on revelation and incarnation based on the thoughts of Jaques Dupuis. He insisted in his works that he holds together in unity the action of the Word of God in creation and history alongside the action of the Word incarnate in Jesus, and these two actions belong to the unity of the one economy of salvation revealed in Christ. He further insists that the “work of God” continues to be active in creation and history after the revelation and incarnation—but always in virtue of the word Incarnate in Jesus.”⁶⁹ He is prompted to see pluralism as “part of God’s plan of salvation. It is the word pluralism within inclusive pluralism that gives concern to more critics.”⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Jaques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions*, 95. See also Dupuis, 372-4. Gerald O’Collins, “Christianity and the Religions, *Gregorianum*, 84 2003.

⁷⁰ For more on the dynamics of pluralism see Lane, *Stepping stones to other Religions*, 96-132.

In striving to answer that question, I am going to be talking about the God of the Scripture, the one of whom Moses wrote when he penned these words, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... (Genesis 1:1). This powerful Person – for He is a Person, not ‘an it’, a thing, or a power – chose to reveal Himself to man, and He did so in two ways:

First, nature reveals the fact that our world was created. It did not evolve from lower forms of life, nor did the order and precision of our universe result from chance any more than a dictionary would result from an explosion in a print shop. The book of Romans, chapter one, tells us about this as it says, For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so they are without excuse: (Romans 1:20).

The revelation of God in nature-in the world about us-isn't enough. It tells us that there is a God, and surely we need Him, but to know what God is like, God chose to send His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the express image of the Father. “Like Father, like Son.” The hard thing for us to understand is that Jesus was not created and did not just happen to come into existence, as your baby brother was born. He always was, and always will be. How do I know this? Confirming His revelation in nature, God told us more about Himself in the Scripture.

Christ is the definitive revelation of God according to St Paul. In other words, the fullness of revelation is Jesus Christ. That’s the clear teaching of Scripture. For example, the Letter to the Hebrews begins; In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. (Heb. 1:1-3a).

Scripture and Tradition tell us about God. Jesus Christ is God, and “is the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15). If we have seen Him, we have seen the Father (John 14:9): what

further revelation could we want or hope for? For this reason, while we can speak of Scripture and Tradition as the (lowercase-w) *word* of God, Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-5):

Jesus Christ is indeed the fullness (personification) of God's revelation (of Himself). But there is so much contained in Him (God) it is impossible for anyone on this side of heaven to fully grasp the things of God (Truth, Beauty and Goodness) which have been revealed. Even Christ's simplest words, actions and prayers were multi-layered in significance and wisdom – which we (corporately and individually) must continually delve into by contemplation, Humanity's search for and knowledge of God is unending. God has given us the wit and reason to question and find him. We experience God as Christians not from a position of superiority or arrogance, but from a spirit of humility and total surrender and abandonment of our will. Because we raise our hands and hearts in thanksgiving to him for the revelation of his son Jesus Christ, we thus have a God we can connect with. We have found what we have been looking for in Christ Jesus. We leave judgement to God who has given us an example of humility-which reaches out the non-judgement hand of friendship to others. Even if we claim God is a Christian and we are challenged, we may argue with those who feel he is not with commitment and tolerance. Three examples in scripture show clearly that Jesus Christ is the fullness of revelation and that should not make any one become arrogant and proud, since the Lord himself, washed his disciples feet as a lesson on humility and selfless service.

The Gospel episode on the Samaritan woman John 4:4-42 is referred to as a paradigm for our engagement with truth, I have found a man who told me what no one ever did. Though a non-Jew, she was able to discover Jesus, the fullness of revelation.

In Acts 14:11-13 Paul and Barnabas refused to be made gods. They insisted that they were mortal men too. They did not attribute any power or authority to themselves. Finally, Jesus

washed his disciple's feet. John13:1-17, a lesson on humility and selfless service. The seventh theme is now discussed.

6.6 Constructive Approach to Ethnicity: Tarimo and Omonokhua integrating for peace

Tarimo's analysis on ethnic loyalties and the common good and its link with Omonohua's dialogue of ethnic nationalities can be a veritable force for building peace in the African continent.

The problems confronting African societies in the modern world are numerous. And some of the problems are cultural in the sense that they are related to cherished practices and attitudes inherited from indigenous cultures.

We have to acknowledge that the real question is not how to eradicate ethnicity, but how to integrate it into social relationships like religious organisations. We cannot afford to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Even the efforts of introducing democratic ideals in Africa will not succeed without taking into account the issue of ethnicity. Any project, be it political, economic, or religious, which involves the mobilization of people, must first take into account the cultural contexts in which individuals live rather than those in which someone may think they ought to be living. The point is that the process of building democratic institutions will succeed if and only if we start with what people are and from where they are. For Tarimo, many studies of ethnicity concentrate on justifying the idea that socio-political organizations based on ethnicity is a primitive model. And in most cases, such an approach suggests that if Africa wants to make progress it must first of all eradicate ethnicity. This approach has influenced many African leaders. Consequently, many leaders think that ethnicity will disappear as the process of urbanization gains momentum. They conceive the existence of ethnic loyalties and affinities as "some sort of a primordial carryover, a traditional, or atavistic residue, to be cured or erased with the march of modernity."⁷¹ In

⁷¹ Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 22.

addition to that, ethnicity is seen as a barrier to political integration and impediment to attaining the essence of nationhood and progress. I do not agree with them. My argument is that when people of different origins come together in urban areas within a short period of time while maintaining ties with their home areas and constantly recreating in homogenous groups, their ethnic identity and loyalty remain substantially unchanged. Although urbanization brings changes in cultural traditions, these changes cannot happen at once. The feeling of belonging to an ethnic group may, in fact, be stronger in towns than within a more homogeneous rural society. Ethnicity is reinforced in urban areas because of the opposition and diversity found in these places. Evidence of this supports my conclusion that urbanization, high levels of education, and high social status do not necessarily decrease ethnic awareness.

Ethnicity provides the content and the deeper explanation of the nation-state. Whatever point of view is adopted, the question of ethnicity must be approached in a positive way. Ethnic identities and loyalties cannot be suppressed by the State. They need not be destroyed. What should be destroyed, instead, should be the practice of manipulating them.

If we accept the importance of ethnicity, however, we must be ready to grapple with three questions. First, with regard to the issue of multi-ethnicity in Africa, what form should the state assume? Second, how can we reconcile the rights of minority and majority groups? Third, how can we order the conflict of interests among ethnic groups in the changing world? Fourth, what form should the concept of common good assume due to the economic disparity that exists between ethnic groups? Fifth, how can we harmonize ethnic languages? These questions could be answered adequately if we acknowledge that each ethnic group has some voice in shaping socially binding decisions. However, the strength of ethnicity is a two-edged sword. Ethnicity, on one hand, when abused, can be the root of internal problems connected with human rights and social justice. On the other hand, when appropriated properly,

ethnicity can be a positive ingredient that guarantees the realization of the idea of civil society by enhancing participation, integration of loyalties, and commitment to the public good.

In most cases, ethnicity is manifested as a form of resistance against the oppressive structure of State. It could also be said that the problem of ethnicity is related to the crisis of citizenship, lack of political consensus, the struggle to survive, socio-political and economic insecurity, and the lack of an agreed-upon concept of the common good

In most cases, ethnicity is manifested as a form of resistance against the oppressive structures of State. It could also be said that the problem of ethnicity is related to the crisis of citizenship, lack of political consensus, the struggle to survive, socio-political and economic insecurity, and the lack of an agreed-upon concept of common good.

While ethnicity cannot in itself form the basis of modern social organization, its reality and hold over African people cannot be denied. Acknowledging and providing this reality with a democratic form, however limited, that meets the demands of peace and collective prosperity in our times seems more sensible than denying its reality in the face of the numerous problems, from civil wars to [ethnic] patronage today.

We must perceive ethnicity as a process that involves negotiating identity within groups while maintaining ethnic differences. The failure to recognize the power of ethnic identity will continue to create political instability and lack of cohesion and exacerbate the situation of civil unrest found in many African countries. The problem of ethnicity in Africa is not a problem of primordial communal sentiments, sentiments that impede the unification of the State. Rather, it is a problem of incomplete structural integration. African states have failed to modify strong ethnic identification in favour of more national ones while at the same time not undermining the rights of ethnic communities.

Whatever the case, ethnicity is not a negative reality or evil in itself as it has been portrayed by the forces of colonization and post-colonial politics. The fact is that ethnic consciousness becomes harmful when abused. Henry Okullu makes the same point. He argues that [ethnic] grouping is not hereby wholly condemned. [Ethnic] affiliation as an extended family system is a great asset in nation building especially when acting as a moral retaining influence upon, and a means of security for, its members. It can be argued that [an ethnic] as a larger family unit is an order of creation. A nation, some people will argue, is not an aggregate of individuals, but rather a unity of independent institutions, of which [ethnic] grouping is one. If such is true, then [ethnic] groups are a very strong foundation upon which a strong nation can be built. To do this effectively it is necessary to know how to distinguish between that which belongs to the [ethnic group] and that which belongs to the nation.

It is unrealistic to believe that a State can ignore the structure of ethnicity without negative consequences. On the other hand, it is a mistake to believe that State affairs should be dictated from the viewpoint of one ethnic group as it is the case in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Nigeria and so on.

To sum up, the significance of ethnicity has not diminished with the formation of nation-states. There are several reasons for this: First, family, clan and ethnic group are still the essential structures of social relationships in African societies. Second, one's identity is ethnic, not national. Third, African leaders have done very little to convince their people that nationhood offers more benefits than ethnicity. Fourth, African leaders have not defined the relationship between an ethnic group and state with respect to the common good. Fifth, African states have not managed to appropriate inherited cultural traditions to help come to terms with the cultural realities of the times and emerge with new visions for the future. Sixth, the approach to nation-building has not tried to find a way of integrating and welding together several ethnic groups into a large cohesive political community called the nation-

state to help eliminate internal confusion and transfer ethnic loyalties to new central governments. Seventh, there have been no efforts made to formulate viable and contextualized ideologies for contemporary African nations. Eighth, there have been no effective ways of dealing with traditional moral standards that seem to crumble in the wake of rapid social change. Ninth, most governments do not respect the freedom of the judiciary and the rule of law. Tenth, the issue of political morality, has not been fully addressed. Still on dialogue of ethnic nationalities and loyalties and religious groups and the common good, Omonokhua's exclusion of "religious groups" in national dialogue could be interpreted to mean that we need only 'atheist' or non-believers to decide the future of Nigeria. Unfortunately atheist may not form a quorum in a national conference given that Nigeria could be recorded among the most "religious countries" in the world. Therefore religious leaders and groups ought to stand up to actively defend the vision and mission of religion in the world. The eighth theme will be discussed now.

6.7 Critique of Tutu's TRC in South Africa by Tarimo

For Tutu, The TRC provides a historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterized by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy, peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South African, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex. But a number of problems Tarimo sees emerging from TRC are related to the challenges of interpretation and ideological difference. Overall, the experience of South Africa reveals five problems.

Firstly, the process "lacks empirical benefits for the victims, especially in terms of compensation as a means to mitigate the pain experienced by victims."⁷²

Secondly, truth is relative because there are competing versions of it depending on the

⁷² Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 65.

interpretation of the parties involved. That is to say, there are different genres of truth required to satisfy different interests. The version of truth for Tarimo “depends on one’s value system and the components that inform it, such as religion, culture and politics. For some people, certain atrocities are justified by the claim that they were fighting subversion to safeguard national security.”⁷³

Thirdly, the choice of spiritualities to follow raises disagreement. Did Tutu as chairman allowed his Christian background for example to determine the faith of non-Christian or Muslims? Fourthly, immunity from persecution allows politically connected personalities to get away with murder.⁷⁴ Fifthly, TRC do not function properly if they are overloaded with a variety of tasks, including holding public hearings, writing reports of what happened, granting amnesty, and evaluating legal implications. The refusal of some perpetrators to acknowledge publicly their involvement in human right violations affect the healing process. In the case of South Africa, some leaders refuse to apologise, repent and testify before the commission.

This is a challenge because leaders who have organized state violence, torture, killing and detention of innocent people are not willing to apologize. This situation aggravates the anger of victims and the urge to revenge. Things become complicated when it is obvious that these involved, because of their social status, are not summoned before the court of law for prosecution.

Finally, it is not possible to experience complete healing through the TRC because the process takes place within a limited time framework. Such a limitation justifies the claim that social healing is a process, not an event. In addition to that, the process of social healing

⁷³ The current Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari, an ex-military Head of State always insist that national security comes before the rule of law. This position is highly criticized by the Nigerian bar association (NBA) and other civil and human right groups and activists. Who defines what national security is and why should it override the rule of law?

⁷⁴ A very common reality in Nigeria because of the immunity of the president and the vice president, and governors and the deputies of the thirty six states of the country.

cannot be fruitful if the population is not prepared in advance and if the population is not willing to construct new relationships. It is evident that these commission cannot by themselves change the future of a democratizing nation. They are only able to advocate the spirit of renewal as a required variable for shaping the future. Whatever difficulties encountered, the role of the TRC to my mind, cannot be ignored. They are stepping stones to a successful transition to democracy, given that they are deliberately formed to reconstruct social relationships after conflict. I now discuss the ninth theme.

6.8 Ubuntu of Desmond Tutu: Vague or valuable concept?

For Tutu, Ubuntu is intrinsically likened to forgiveness and peace. A more nuanced version of his thought on Ubuntu is the corresponding need to tolerate diversity and gifts. This is problematic for Tarimo.

A major criticism against Ubuntu for Tarimo is that it “remains rather vague. Not only is a universal translation on the concept unfeasible, it is a vague term which meaning can be filled in with anything that revolves around the importance of interpersonal connections.”⁷⁵ This can lead to different interpretations not only of the word itself, but also on how it should be achieved. In business this could lead to conflicts, both knowingly and unknowingly. When two people agree on running a business in a more Ubuntu way they might not realise until later on that their interpretations were quite different.

One could also argue that Ubuntu might not be best suited for businesses as they tend to aim for maximizing profit strategies and this usually involves cutting costs wherever possible and exploiting workers, matters which obviously go against the meaning of Ubuntu.

So, to conclude, the African management philosophy⁷⁶ of Ubuntu is a concept based on a communitarian nature where problems are solved through extensive cooperation and where everyone’s voice is heard. During the course of history, the people in different African

⁷⁵ Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 22.

⁷⁶ Chuwa, L. T, *African Indigenous Ethics in Global Bioethics: Interpreting Ubuntu* (Vol. 1: *Ubuntu Ethic*), Springer. . (2014), Chapter 2.

countries have had to rely on the people in their surroundings and on the sharing of the scarce resources they had to ensure survival. So yes, Ubuntu as a managerial concept stems from a history of different needs in a different environment, but there are some values that could be of use for future managerial styles of the west. Ubuntu for me is summed up in these words: “If you want to go fast, you go alone; if you want to go far, go together.”⁷⁷

However, Ubuntu is not all as glorious and wonderful as being portrayed. One of the main critiques with Ubuntu to my mind is that it views the collective above any individual. The problem with this is that it seems to force a feeling of community, at the expense of an individual’s wellbeing. This can create an atmosphere in which people experience perceived restraint on their personal freedom and feel obliged to be loyal to the group without questioning much of the authoritative powers or changes within the group. Questioning these types of developments is then perceived as disorderly behaviour and disturbing the group harmony. When leading a business in an Ubuntu way it needs to be clearly established that these concerns can be addressed in an approachable manner. The tenth theme is next for consideration.

6.9 Tarimo Critique of Religion and Peace Education

Tarimo is of the opinion that, “there are three extreme positions that must be avoided, when we want to use the power of religion”⁷⁸ for social transformation. The first position is the one that excludes religion from the public sphere. On this front, a number of scholars tend to enforce the idea that religion must be limited to the private sphere because it is irrational;

⁷⁷ Kamwangamalu, N. M. (1999). Ubuntu in South Africa: A sociolinguistic perspective to a pan-African concept. *Critical arts*, 13(2), 24-41.

⁷⁸ Religion is very powerful force. The African experience shows that religion can be dangerous to human liberties and rights of believers and non-believers alike. The situation has often been the source of the common reaction to many people about the role of religion in the public sphere. Some claim that religion threatens democratic principles, freedom, and peace of public life and can easily shatter the fragile moral bonds holding human societies together. See David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethic* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 89. See Tarimo, *African Peace-making and Governance*, 107. The power of religion challenges all forms of injustice and work against repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. See Milan Opocensky, “Theology between yesterday and Tomorrow” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 22, 3 (November 2001): 331-47. Through such dynamics, religion becomes one of the forces of social transformation.

and, while it could be tolerated in the private sphere, it should not be allowed to play any role in the public sphere. The second position is found among those who enforce the idea of forming theocratic states. What is at stake in this vision is that it ignores religious pluralism, freedom of choice and cultural differences. The approach of imposing religious beliefs on everybody remains problematic. In the context of Africa, Tarimo argues that, this approach will only worsen the situation by increasing the number of conflicts.

The third position makes use of religion to achieve political goals.⁷⁹ This is precarious because extremists can hijack the religious cause to serve political interests. In order to avoid these extremes, we have to move towards a state that would be inclusive of all religions. There must be a “dialectic relationship between state and religion so that the state could be nourished by religious virtues. Such mutual influence could also be institutionalized.”⁸⁰

Religious intolerance and exclusion could be avoided insofar as we acknowledge the difference between religions. It is not easy to outline effective solutions because many religions are characterized by the tendency of exclusion. Any proposed solution, however, must go together with the task of “demonstrating how faith can strengthen democratic ideals and the will to combat intolerance and exclusion in a concrete way.”⁸¹ Religions are called to submit themselves to self-evaluation and self-criticism with a view to seeking reforms that can draw them closer to the best ideals of building humanity.

A common criticism directed towards religion in some situations is that “religious insensitivity to human rights, social justice and pluralism foment hatred and disorder.”⁸² In

⁷⁹ In defense of religion, Pope John Paul II claims that religious-inspired violence is often motivated by social injustices, unresolved frustrations, endless sufferings, powerlessness, and hopelessness. John Paul II, “An Address to Ten Ambassadors to the Vatican,” *America* (December 24, 2001): 5. Politicization of religion emerges when secular regimes fail to resolve socio economic problems, establish the rule of law, and guarantee fundamental freedom. When injustice lingers for too long, it breeds hatred and thereby becomes the source of violence among people. See Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 120.

⁸⁰ Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, 26.

⁸¹ Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, 35.

⁸² Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” *African Christian Studies*, 35.

the context of South Africa for example, during the apartheid era, some churches even defended apartheid policies.

I have two examples to understand Tarimo's position. The first from South Africa, then from United States of America in general. Firstly, the Dutch Reformed Church, which maintained the theology of apartheid, taught that apartheid was biblically justified. The most blatant racist oppression was defended and God's blessing proclaimed over it. Many sincere churchgoers were told that to believe in apartheid was following the Word of God. Uncritically, they supported the policy of apartheid because it had been preached from the pulpit since their childhood.

Secondly, in the Americas, likewise, during the period of slave trade, a lot of slave owners believed that God created black man to be slaves. It correlates with the will of God, they thought. Even when the abolition of slave trade was declared, some Christian families and churches that profited from slavery condemned the declaration and continued to keep slaves. Likewise, missionaries who came to Africa failed to condemn slave trade, colonization, and looting of natural resources. Even today, some religious movements do not address the extreme poverty ravaging the African continent. With these examples, one can rightly claim that there has been limited input from churches intended to promote social reconciliation.

In the context of Africa, many people are still afraid of the dangers of religious involvement in the public sphere. The mistrust derives from the painful experiences of the past through which religious identities become the source of hatred, disorder and conflict.⁸³ Religious identities tend to create group bonds that do not coincide with those which bring together people of the nation-state and ethnic groups.

Another challenge of religion in the public space is the variable that it strengthens the

⁸³ This assertion could be justified by taking an example of Sudan through which Islamic fundamentalism and the urge to form an Islamic state has caused an endless war in the South. An excellent analysis of this situation is found in articles compiled by Yusuf Fadl Hasan and Richard Gray, eds, *Religion and Conflict in Sudan* (Nairobi: St Paul Publications, 2002), 22.

suspicion that arises from the fact that, if we allow religious groups to participate in the public forum, it could be problematic because some of them may encourage their believers to use this opportunity to advance their view of life and, if possible, impose it on others. This argument is sometimes valid because some religions, in the name of God, supported diabolical ideologies such as racism, sexism, and imperialism. From the African experience, some missionaries failed to condemn slave trade, colonization, apartheid policies, and overlooked African cultural heritage. Christian churches for example, have not been agents of social cohesion and peace because of their denominational competition and complicity to the oppressive regimes. Summarily, religion thus, cannot claim innocence in the ongoing conflicts among peoples. It could promote a “we” and “they” feeling.

Generally speaking, people who belong to a particular religion feel they are the chosen ones, with a special revelation or relationship to the divine. From this point of view, the others are not merely different, but inferior. When persons from other religions are not seen as enemies, they are regarded as potential converts. Such a view of the other may lead to proselytism rather than violence. But when the others are seen not merely as different but as competitors in the economic, social, political or religious sphere, the religious difference can be used as a tool for demonization. This kind of prejudice makes it easy for us to attack others when we feel we are defending our religious identity against the onslaught of infidels.

To say that religion is ambiguous is not to underestimate its divine character and potential. On the contrary, it is to admit that, since religion is also shaped by cultural elements, it is, to a certain extent, limited. Its limitations arise from the fact that there is a distance between the infinite God and the finite human being. Ambiguity characterizes religious experience because “historical experience presents a series of interacting changes with unpredictable effects. Religious experiences occurs within competing contradictory possibilities.”⁸⁴ The

⁸⁴ Tarimo, *African peacemaking and Governance*, 110.

eleventh theme will be discussed now.

6.10 Abbas Aroua and Irfan Omar: Reconciliation and dialogue and non-violence in the Islamic Tradition.

In the fifth chapter, two major selected Islamic scholars and writers on interreligious response to peace-making in conversation with other theologians were treated. Aroua and Omar, using Islamic texts from the Quran and Hadith, systematically unpack the basis for peace, love and reconciliation in Islam. They argued and brought legitimacy and the need for solidarity and tolerance in Islamic relations with non-Muslims and the need to work for peace by all stakeholders. Aroua teaches on the quest for peace in the Islamic tradition by emphasizing the role of peace and conflict in transformation of society, while Omar emphasized the role of peacemaking in the challenge of violence. They examined these topics with relevant Islamic texts to support their positions.

Abbas Aroua's main points in the fifth chapter centre on respect and equal treatment, mercy, compassion, love and forgiveness. While Irfan A. Omar emphasizes Jesus in the Eyes of a Muslim: Islam in the context of Dialogue and Jesus a Prophet in Islam and the place of dialogue, tolerance and peace from the Hadith is discussed. He also treats dialogue, plurality and harmonious relations and the dynamics and purpose of interfaith dialogue, respect and agreement in relation to other Religions in Islam.

These two Islamic scholars, like Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu dwelt on selected themes in the Islamic tradition that can be discussed in interfaith dialogue. For Aroua, forgiveness is holistic, by which to build a culture of peace within oneself is forgiveness. For Omar, the reality of plurality in religion is evidenced even in the Quran. He thus agrees with Tutu and Omonokhua on the need to tolerate others even though diverse. One central theme that runs

through all these is respect for all. Their position may appear simplistic to others but it is the moderate interpretation of Islamic texts I came across. I now make a final summary, proposals and synthesis of this study before the final conclusion.

6.10.1 Creating a Climate for Dialogue, openness, Tolerance, Education, forgiveness and Hospitality: A Theological Proposal for peace in Africa: A Synthesis and criticism of scholars thoughts

The following key proposals are oriented to the ideal of a world and society in which no person is left behind based on ethnic or religious affiliation. I argue on the notion of tolerance and the promotion of tolerance in education for peace as means of fostering respect for the “other”. In its place the theological specified notion of hospitality is proposed.

I ask some key questions thus: is there an inherent gain from the promotion of dialogue, tolerance in Nigeria and throughout Africa? Is tolerance the best way to enable genuine respect for all? Is tolerance and forgiveness virtues we should promote and are they idealistic? Bearing in mind the core teachings of the theologians, I advocate the following:

Firstly for a dialogue of faith and life based on Omonokhua teaching. This is a call for the universal respect for all as the great path to peace. Since all people have the right to live in peace and harmony, we must forge an expanding solidarity of ordinary citizens committed to protecting that right, and, in this way, rid the world of needless suffering due to violence.

Since the practice of dialogue stressed the importance of dialogue as the foundation for all our activities based on the works of these theologians, this practice should be emphasized as robust embracing evangelization and theological exchange to help foster an ethos of global citizenship and service.

Omonokhua’s thoughts can be summed up in this way. A community in dialogue of faith and life must be nurtured spiritually and support loving one another and giving one another strength. Such a community of honesty create open zone of freedom where differences may be expressed, explored, and worked through in mutual understanding and growth. It

empowers, renews and trains people for making evangelization primordial in the formation of conscience and peacebuilding.

Secondly, as Tarimo emphasized, the prophetic voice for religious peace education and the role of the common good in the society is fundamental to peace. A learning based approach and teaching on tolerance and respect for others should be encouraged. The function of learning will enable people and communities, particularly the small Christian communities and ethnic nationalities to accurately assess the impact of their actors and to empower them to effect positive change.

For Tarimo, there is also the need to correctly reaffirm the obligation of governments and religious institutions to prevent lawlessness and protect human rights through peace education. Such force must not be excessive and must always be in the context of the primary responsibility of the state in creating social justice and promoting human welfare. Any use of force must be based on the participatory consent of the people.

Thirdly, pluralism was a common denominator throughout this study as emphasized by these theologians particularly Tutu, who propose that since our awareness of peoples belonging to different religions or ethnicities can be transformed through direct contact, collaboration and conversation with some members of a different group, we ought to engage in open and frank dialogue, create space for tolerance and forgiveness and the world will begin to appear in a warmer, more human right. This is also the spirit of Ubuntu in Tutu's thought. It is my conviction that dialogue is absolutely essential if we are to build a world in which there is reasonable peace. The strengthening of institutional framework to prevent violence has to be emphasized. In this regards, I strongly hope the work of NGOs and religious bodies will lead to a start of negotiations for peace.

For Tutu, there is the need to reject all labelling of others as enemies and the abolition of institutions that perpetuate enemy relations. Furthermore the affirmation of diversity among

peoples and nations and the growth and change that can emerge from the interchange of differing value systems, ideologies, religions and political and economic systems should be enhanced.

Fourthly, having looked at the dimension of forgiveness and reconciliation we make more proposals for bold initiatives. Religious and ethnic groups must learn to cease fighting and agree to live with differences. This agreements can be guaranteed sometimes with the establishments of certain boundaries. Furthermore, parties must expand the social space and change the climate to permit working together more. Parties must also try to create a new, common narrative that overcomes the division of the past. The aim is to create a less conflictive and more collective narrative of the past.

Fifthly, parties can create the social conditions so that the violence of the past cannot be repeated. We need a theology of forbearance, seen as a gift of the Holy Spirit, can help people to accept one another (Col 3:8-10, 12-16) and to live with legitimate differences. A theology of creating safe and hospitable spaces would support the expanded social spaces and changed climates sought in reconciliation.

Sixthly, the theology of reconciliation can help to build a new common narrative as illustrated by Ephesians 2:12-20, where Paul presents the Gentiles and Jews, who had formerly been divided, now brought together through the blood of Christ into a common household of God. The wall of hostility has been broken down, and a new narrative based upon the apostles and prophets, with the story of Christ as a cornerstone, now informs the reconciled community. Finally, the completed process of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace is caught in 5:17-20, it is also captured in the vision of the New Jerusalem descending from heaven in Revelation 20.

The role of the elders as fundamental in the society for peace is a recurrent theme Omonkhua, Tarimo and Tutu agreed on. Tarimo further stressed the significance of the Small

Christian Community in relation to Authority, power and Dialogue in peacebuilding was a laudable balance and discovery in this study.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The wisdom of the elders in Africa indicates the strength in our great continent. It is a popular opinion that civilization started from Egypt (Africa). The exportation of human labour, agricultural products and arts from Africa contributed to the development of Europe and America.

Omonokhua builds on the role elders and authority play in peacemaking in Tutu's view. The focus of omonokhua is the question of harmony that should exist in each and individual community and organization. He buttresses the point of Tutu that a community or society has a vision of order to protect life and property. The mission sometimes is human and economic development while the objective is to create an environment where every individual will be happy and fulfilled. To direct the human affairs therefore, it has become imperative that out of many in a given community, somebody or a group of persons are either elected or appointed to take charge of the leadership and governance of the people and their concerns. For omonokua, the persons chosen, is done in trust and hope that they are credible with a divine mandate since the voice of the people is the voice of God. This trust for omonokhua is often tested through dialogue *ad intra*.

There is the need for a spiritual and moral renaissance which should start with the development of the vernacular literatures to express the African spirit, values and wisdom. This value could help the African nations to further understand that whoever eats alone dies alone. This would assist Africans to respect their elders. This would remind the elders, patriots, statesmen and women that they have the obligation to preserve the integrity of the communal life we inherited from the ancestors and the heroes past. This again, is our chance. We are waiting for the elders to announce the dawn with practical examples that will not disappoint the next generation.

For Tarimo, the basic Christian community, he argues, is a place, where reflection and social analysis of the deteriorating economic conditions, the unclear political climate, the long entrenched social problems, like violent crimes, endemic corruption, blatant misuse of power and position, ethnic and religious disturbances, neglect and oppression of the poor and powerless in the community, will lead to right decisions in the light of the Gospel. Hence, Tarimo contends, that the basic Christian community should not be reduced to a prayer group, but to a religious cultural group with values that influence all fabrics of the society. It should be a place, where "the action and words of Jesus in the Gospel," is encountered and lived, for the renewal of the community and the transformation of society." For Tarimo, the Catholic Church in Eastern Africa has devised the methodology of the small Christian communities to localize the church in her search for peace.

For Tutu, the elders is a group that works to promote human rights. The idea of founding a group of elders dedicated to solving global problems is fundamental for peacebuilding. Tutu wants to equate their role as almost a constitutional one.

For me, these elders are not called elders simply because of their age or longevity. They are called so because they have been tested by the entire community and have no criminal or bad record. They in most cases enjoy a good name. If they commit any crime in any at any stage, they can be removed from such a position. Furthermore, we can ask: to what extent do the concept of authority command respect and obedience and affect a peaceful co-existence in a community? How relevant is authority and power in dialogue and peacebuilding? Do "obedience" and "command" enhance respect and obedience or simply induce a fearful response? Very often, obedience is mistaken to mean command instead of the capacity to listen. The effect is that respect and freedom are rendered victims and casualties in governance. Is authority about sustain and retaining power at all cost? The elders must concern themselves with living virtuously, and acting so as to achieve the most practical benefit of the society. The elders must not be influenced by the praise or condemnation from other people. They must be ruled by dialogue. In dialogue and the play of power and authority, omonokua poses a question: is management more effective in the atmosphere of fear or in an environment that is permeated with love and mutual respect? Is it not human desire to freely and joyfully work because of the love the workers have for a particular person in authority who demonstrate knowledge and self-respect to lead and direct others as subjects rather than as slave? Furthermore, some people in authority are not approachable making those who work with them so fearful. Fear can either provoke in people reverence or revolt for an authority who can become a tyrant. For omonokua, the sole use of memos, canonical warnings, petitions and commands are key indicators that dialogue has broken down in a particular community or organisation. A leader who has knowledge and wisdom should be firm and demonstrate a human and true conscience, recognising the companionship of his followers. Most leaders actually realise the intensity of their loneliness either when they leave power or when they are old for "no position is permanent". This is very obvious in communities where leadership is rotational or only within a certain period. A good example is a religious community where a novice of yesteryears becomes the superior of a congregation to take care of a superior emeritus who was a bully when he or she was ling under his or her fearful authority.

6.10.2 The Dynamics of Forgiveness: A critique and journey with the theologians

From the chapters of this dissertation, the study of forgiveness has become a growth industry. In the past, it was often dismissed pejoratively as spiritual and religious, but because of the experience of the TRC in South Africa and other TRC globally, it is gaining attention as an academic discipline, studied by psychologist, philosophers, sociologists, physicians and theologians. It is an all-embracing activity.

Can the account posited by Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu on peacebuilding be synthesised into an entity, or must they remain simply three distinct entities with their own unique and mostly incompatible features?

Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu are all in agreement with the Church's belief in the necessity of forgiveness as a process of healing and transformational journey.

These theologians have powerfully made out a case for forgiveness even where there have been gross violations of human rights, communal and government inspired violence, political oppression and racial discrimination. Forgiveness is at the core of peace-making.

Omonokhua believes that the paradox of dialogue is that even though forgiveness is difficult, it can become easy if the person who needs forgiveness can remove his or her mask and confront the situation.

Tarimo is of the opinion that from the Christian perspective, forgiveness is built upon the radical love of enemy and the common good.⁸⁶ The dynamics of forgiveness transforms the conscience of individuals and society

We cannot achieve genuine reconciliation without building the attitude of mutual forgiveness.

Tutu remarked on this thus "I have seen this in my own country (South Africa), in Rwanda,

Finally, for me, true leadership and the use of power and authority must be freed from and exposed the evil of corruption, wickedness, indifference, ignorance, greed, and myopia of leaders and subjects. Potential ignorance and indifference to problems could give way to horror if a smooth transition is not achieved in governance. The golden rule, do unto others what you will (others done to you) remains the best model of authority, power and dialogue in all human communities. See Tarimo, *Applied Ethics and Africa social Reconstruction*, 22-50. See also Abu, *Church-Family of God*, 22-40.

⁸⁶Tarimo, *African Peacemaking and Governance*, 43.

in Northern Ireland and in the hearts of so many who travel the long and difficult road to find the peace that comes through forgiving.”⁸⁷ He advocated for the fourfold path; telling the story, naming the hurt, granting forgiveness and renewing or releasing the relationship

Omonokhua, Tarimo and Tutu all agree on the understanding of peace most especially as a principle for harmonious coexistence. They also agree that peace that “demands, insists, requires (non-negotiable) is the peace that we seek in order to do good and avoid evil. In Omonokua’s terminology, this may be regarded as the level of “spirituality of service” that is the distinctive capacity to determine right and wrong. It enables human beings to make the world a better place.”⁸⁸

Tarimo on the other hand, phrases this as “the prophetic voice for peace education.” Furthermore, his assertion that: “Religion alone speaks of repentance, mercifulness and compassion.”⁸⁹

From his background, Tutu describes religion as nobody’s monopoly. No one possesses all truth.⁹⁰ Because of the universal emphasis on the sense of the call for peace, Tutu centred his theology of peace on the level of seeking for truth in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). We can conclude then that peace as a concept and human characteristic and human capacity of intrinsic, pure, inerrant, and a lasting part of the human person, finds favour with Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu.

The challenge before the teaching church in terms of peacebuilding is a proper deciphering for itself and for its followers of what comprises the objective truth about working for peace, rightness and wrongness, good and evil so as not to confuse its faithful. Omonokhua, Tarimo

⁸⁷Tutu, *The Book of forgiving*, 214. Tutu, “Forward: Without Forgiveness There is No Future” in *Exploring Forgiveness* Robert D. Enright and Joanna North (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), xiii-xiv.

⁸⁸Omonokua, *The Joy of Service, Dialogue of Action*, 166.

⁸⁹Tarimo, “Religion as an Avenue for Peace Education,” 28

⁹⁰Tutu, *God is not a Christian and other Provocations*, 34.

and Tutu would agree that the challenge for each individual and community is to remain docile and seek peace in the teachings of the church in this respect.

In the spirit of the teaching of Abbas Aroua and Irfar Omar, the two Islamic scholars in this study,

I advocate for bold initiatives like an inter-religious summit for peace in Africa and especially Nigeria. This will dwell on the core teachings of Islam which include, peace, through learning, non-violence forgiveness and conflict transformation as advocated by Aroua and dialogue, tolerance and respect as emphasized by Omar. Anything that poses an eminent threat to peace in Nigeria has no place in the future we are creating.

Abbas Aroua made an affirmation that war must be eliminated as an instrument of national policy and the global economy must be more just. To meet these goals, international institutions must be strengthened.

For Omar the affirmation of nonviolent conflict as inevitable and valuable, an expression of diversity and essential to healthy relationships among people and nations should be enhanced.

6.10.3 My critical analysis of the core theologians

Two points to be considered in Omonokhua works are interfaith dialogue and his reflection on conscience.

The theological foundations of interreligious dialogue have also been critiqued on the grounds that any interpretation of another faith tradition will be predicated on a particular cultural, historical and anthropological perspective. Some critics of interfaith dialogue may not object to dialogue itself, but instead are critical of specific events claiming to carry on the dialogue.

On conscience, Omonokhua to my mind, did not succeed in establishing a solid argument for the need to re-examine the popular framework for moral character education that has typically identified in dialogue outcomes as broadly defined and culturally valued morals,

virtues, and character traits. The focus instead would have been on the process of conscience formation; a process that attends to reflexivity particularity, and associated feelings.

Omonokhua can stimulate further work in a search for a critical path in conscience formation, peacebuilding and to move research forward in a developmental theory of care of emotions and differences in dialogue engagements. His thoughts can inform the current democratization of character formation and good citizenship in Africa and especially Nigeria. It demands a critical examination of the desired outcome for conduct that is externally controlled, versus the internal acquisition of norms that govern behaviour. Omonokhua can advance on how education is lacking for the formation of conscience and holistic dialogue for peace education by highlighting the importance of religion; where the motivation of conscience, “things that matter”, the sacred, can be honoured in all spheres of life.

On religious re-education, Tarimo’s analysis of the relationship between religious educations needs to be reconsidered. In a sense, there is no more room for simple interpretation of religion. This points to the vital importance of the questions raised and views expressed by him. If religious education is going to play its indispensable role in future right relations within Africa and among the nations of the world, the nature, purpose and aim of religious education needs to be carefully explored.

Thus any educational or religious educational endeavour that does not take account of the contemporary cultural milieu in which all religions and ethnic nationalities are immersed, is destined to be less than adequate. In this regard, it is important for the adult members of a faith community, especially those who are ‘official’ teachers, to remember that their ideas, values and attitudes are culture-bound too, even if from a different cultural experience. This recognition will encourage intercultural dialogue between groups in Africa and thus create an environment for peace.

Tarimo argued on the importance of the Small Christian community and its role in peace making. Although some would argue that SCCs have never really fulfilled their potential as the expression of the church alive and active in the local context of the Christian community, a definitive judgment on their success or failure would appear premature. The significant factors of the future development of SCCs include the level and nature of interest from ecclesiastical leadership, (like priests and bishops) the commitment to the formation and empowerment of the lay faithful and the relative strength of negative socio-economic and cultural factors, Along with the need for ongoing critical reflection on the present organization and practices of SCCs, much still needs to be done to develop the theology of Small Christian Communities as “church in the neighbourhood”. This theology ought to facilitate the expansion of the missionary focus of SCCs to include attention to socio-political, ecological and economic conditions of their context.

On ethnic loyalties among nationalities and the common good, and their role in peacebuilding. Tarimo did not address the role of language in nation-building and identity formation in a multi-ethnic society. He would have examined the concept of nationalism and the role of national languages, which are integral for the establishment of a national linguistic cultural identity and peace. This will help by addressing the issue of what constitutes ethnic linguistic identity and whether a pursuance of it reflects an ethnocentric stand that contributes to the divisiveness or unity of a nation, or does a multi-lingual population contribute to the strength of the plurality of the nation?

Tutu’s Ubuntu, broadly defined as an ‘African worldview’ that places communal interests above those of the individual, and where human existence is dependent upon interaction with others, ubuntu has a long tradition on the continent. Tutu explores the ways in which the philosophy and language of ubuntu have been taken up and appropriated by ideologies in post-apartheid South Africa. This teaching on ubuntu offers the most obvious illustration of

this, but there are more subtle ways in which the ubuntu theory and language have been (re)introduced to post-apartheid South Africa to support and reinforce neoliberal policymaking. But rather than reject ubuntu thinking outright as too compromised by this discursive shift, as much of the Left in South Africa has done, I still wonder if there is something potentially more pragmatic and transformative about ubuntu beliefs and practices that can be meaningfully revived for more progressive change.

All this leads me to suggest that an ubuntu ethic is not entirely suitable for grounding public morality. Perhaps for more industrialised and globalised societies, in which the liberal ideals of freedom and human rights are of paramount importance in shaping public morality, an ubuntu ethic can only play a much more restricted role than it did in pre-industrialised African societies.

Tutu in his plea for interfaith dialogue did not consider the contemporary approaches to Interfaith Dialogue. There are a number of theories that underpin a contemporary understanding of the interplay between religion and peacekeeping. Generally, these fall into three main categories those that are concerned with the situational, individual-level theological motivations towards peace or conflict; those that arise out of the political process and are concerned with structural conceptions of how religion and religious conflict are manifestations of the material social, economic, and political conditions in which people exist and interact; and those that see interfaith dialogue and peace-building as merely a function of trust-building between groups, reliant solely on changing the attitudes of conflicting groups and developing a keener understanding of each other.

Despite the emphasis on Islamic tradition on conflict transformation, Aroua made no reference to civil society. Civil society space in the 21st century plays a critical part in conflict transformation, in particular the creation of dialogue that is more inclusive of the voices of the poor and marginalised. Conflict transformation in any context is inherently political and

the widening of civil society space or involvement allows citizens to engage in this political process more effectively. Omar did not address problems and chances of the relations between Christians and Muslims in Africa.

Dialogue between Christianity and Islam have made great inroads upon the African continent and the indications are that the influence of the two great religions will continue to be felt for a long time to come. Fanaticism is a major challenge. This phenomenon is the excessive belief in the rightness of one's cause to the exclusion of all others. To the fanatic, the other belief systems do not exist and even if they exist at all, they are inconsequential. Such systems, must of necessity, be eliminated for his own to predominate.

Political Mobilisations is another task. Another impediment to Christian-Muslim cooperation is religious mobilisation for political objectives. Some social scientists have opined that religion has been the source of conflicts. Our educational institutions should be used to foster harmony without any attempt to use such educational facilities for the purpose of forced conversion.

Some faith groups assume that dialogue, in itself, is the solution to the theological and political issues between Christians and Muslims. Dialogue may clarify the real issues and remove some imagined issues. It may enable Christians and Muslims to work together more readily on matters where cooperation is possible. Mutual ignorance is a problem between Christians and Muslims; however, it is not the deepest problem.

In Christian-Muslim dialogue, it is inappropriate and damaging to. 'Attempt to meld Christianity and Islam, pretending that they have the same basic teachings and that the differences between the two are merely trivial points of theology.

6.10.4 Building Peace: looking at and shaping the Future

My proposed theology of renewed peacebuilding and education for Nigeria, Africa and the wider world is based on a synthesis of the teachings of the local church and other teachings, and synodal documents in Africa and especially Nigeria, the Catholic bishops of Nigeria as a body and selected individual bishops. Others include three members of the Catholic theological Society of Nigeria and the thoughts of three major scholars in this study: Omonokua, Tarimo and Tutu and Islamic voices of Aroua and Omar. All aimed towards a positive look at the future. A synthesis of their teachings is summed up in these words: ‘Towards a culture of interfaith dialogue of life and action, tolerance, peace education and forgiveness’. This renewed theology of peace clearly meets and indeed enriches the key principles enunciated in the entire chapters of this study: The aim of these church teachings, both universal and local and the thoughts of all the scholars is to nurture moral values and personal responsibility, respect for diversity, concern for other people, positive and outward-looking attitudes.

Another aspect of peacebuilding that may be considered for future detailed research which was mentioned briefly by Bishop Ignatius Kaigama is the role of women and youths in peacebuilding. In a global society that calls for inclusivity in both religious and public life, in a digitalized society of the social media in the wake of the “me too”⁹¹ movement and other women’s rights groups, and the call for inclusion by “Millennials” (very young people born after the year 2000), if peace must be achieved in church and society and at the local and international levels, the role of women and youths must be adequately used to achieve this. An inclusive and engaging ministry is the ultimate aim for lasting peace in our communities and world.

⁹¹ The Me Too (or #Me Too) movement is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual abuse of women and girls.

6.11 Conclusion

This conclusion is firmly based on two core values of Catholic Church teachings both universal and local and that of the scholars including Omonokhua, Tarimo, Tutu and Islamic voices. The first of these values is a theology of reconciliation and the second is our promotion of the common good. Catholics believe explicitly in a God who reconciles, and actively and endlessly draws people to himself, and in so doing, draws people to each other and into a loving community of faith. God is a God who heals and who enters into a personal relationship of love with all men and women; with the sole condition that they respond freely to his invitation. To believe in this God is by definition to promote reconciliation, especially where it is most urgently needed. The goal of this thesis was to explore the role of the local African church and especially Nigeria, the teachings of Nigerian bishops and the reflections of individual bishops on peace. The position of Omonokhua, Tarimo, and Tutu and Aroua and Omar, two Islamic scholars were also fundamental in this peace mission.

For me, the continuity of their theological tradition of dialogue and peace suggests something of the breadth of recovery of the peace message of Jesus in this twenty first century. They thus, give voice to the peace ethic of scripture and the African traditions, as did a long tradition of Christian theology. I do wish to suggest that the three core theologians discussed in this study have had direct effect on the thoughts and lives of millions of people across the African continent and beyond.

Ultimately, we need to recognise the fact that we have a phenomenon of violent conflict. The situation is not limited to a present phenomenon. It is a historical reality that goes back to the legacy of our ancestors: creation and fall, good and evil, dignity and depravity. Hence, violent conflict, persecution and hatred are not the monopoly of a certain religious community or ethnic group, rather, they are part and parcel of the human essence, the mega narrative of the human family.

I wrote this thesis in response to both the relatively new and widespread Islamic-Christian peace witness in our time and the growing public concern with ethnic and religious violence in the African continent. I am convinced that Muslim and Christians engaged in the present struggle with issues of religious violence and peace can benefit from some familiarity with their historical predecessors like Martin Luther king jnr. Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko and others, who, in the most inhospitable times, bore witness to God's peaceable kingdom. Those of us who find ourselves committed today to the peace ethic of Jesus can learn from the failings as well as the courage of these theologians in these contemporary era in African history: from Cornelius Omonokhua in Nigeria to Aquiline Tarimo in Tanzania, East Africa and Desmond Tutu, the Nobel peace winner from South Africa.

Furthermore, the thoughts of other theologians and Islamic voices and other scholars in the nexus of culture, religion, and other factors in the search for lasting peace in Nigeria and the African continent are explored. It discussed various themes, emphasizing what it means for Christians to seek peace in relation to non-Christians, particularly Muslims and all ethnic nationalities. These are noble ideas that we must understand biblically, religiously and socially, as this will shape the work we do and the outcomes we seek. The universal and local church in Africa teachings on peace and indeed all these scholars and writers have helped us to return to the question of Christian and Islamic formation for peacebuilding as part of our transformation to become people of God, people who seek peace.

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