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Lived Ecumenism as a Means of Reconciliation

Example Nigeria

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1. Introduction

Nigeria has been experiencing many conflicts especially several religious inspired conflicts over the years due to obvious and perceptible disunity. The various processes of sustaining and maintaining peace through dialogue, counselling and reconciliation are either not put in place or deficient when they exist. As a result, the constructive engagements of peace-building initiatives and instruments are far from being realistic. For this, some resort to the use of violence to resolve political, social and religious problems. It is thus, a fact of historical experience and reality of the world we live in that war retards, cripples and destroys development. It does not in any way build; instead it rocks social, economic and moral foundation of any country and creates long lasting tensions and divisions as well as some other consequences.

It is therefore in the light of this, that the ecumenical initiatives of the world Council of Churches on the pilgrimage of justice and peace underscored the significance. Hence, the recommendation, be reconciled in Jesus Christ the hallmark for social justice and development of peoples worldwide. This urges us all to move together toward one another and so we are given a new perspective and renewal in the God of life who alone grants life. In this perspective first and foremost as Christian people we are called and reminded of our common calling in the world to work collectively for its recreation in the unity to which God has called us. The journey of the transformation of the engagement to a Pilgrimage of justice and peace urge us to work together, pray together to God to lead us to be vanguards to any place where justice and peace are threatened, in countries having conflicts, or wherever relationships of oppression and injustices across borders.¹

Therefore to enhance a peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria bewildered with endemic, violent and escalating religious conflicts to the pilgrimage that humbles us to be open to change, to repentance and to something new and better.² We the adherents of these two major religions of the world are called into the pilgrimage of the Abrahamic ecumenicity as brotherhood and sister hood.³ Indeed, in seeking to understand this challenge for our life and environment, we will thus explore the relationship of our two religions as alienated household of Abraham so as to determine, discern and recognize how we may all be reconciled to each other and work together for the sake of reconciliation and justice and peace.⁴ This recommendation is made from a Christian perspective and with the understanding focusing on the functional role of peace and reconciliation as a theological index for measuring and promoting co-existence, integration, respect for the difference and treasures of difference of the ethnic nationalities and tolerance in Nigeria. This is the proper ecumenical attitude of openness, nevertheless correspondingly of searching the real and sustainable value which can bring

¹C.F, Olav Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, in, The Ecumenical Review. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, eds., Gill A. Theodore and Olav Fykse, Vol. 66. No. 2, 2014, 127.*

² C.F., Olva Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, in, The Ecumenical Review, 127.*

³ C. F., John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation. Restoring Justice: London, 114.*

⁴C. F., Ibid. 114.

us all to a better world.⁵ Such ecumenical attitude urges into solidarity and hospitality which presumes generosity, open heart and sensibility to the predicaments of others. Hence it implies overcoming certain attitudes which are loaded with violence and intimidation.

With this Nigeria and the world are on the path to development and by development is meant going beyond the mere material structures. It advocates for the attitudinal change in habit, norms and values. This habit and culture of a new way of being Christian or Muslim in the world and in Nigeria demands a critical look at the need for social justice in the face of harmful cultural practices, and the way forward will promote the right to peace, which will ensure respect for all other rights, encourage the building of true Nigerian society that will be a model for the promotion of peaceful co-existence.

The work enjoins religious leaders, politicians and others in the societies who hold some powers to negotiate on issues of misunderstanding and conflicts, to come to settlement by compromise. It bears in mind that although dialogue and negotiation can lead to agreement on issues that lay at the root of religious conflict, however, trust founded on mutual respect is necessary to reform relationships that form the basis for an enduring peace which will be sustained beyond the life of the immediate issues. It further, enjoined on Christian and Muslim leaders to endeavour to instill in their followers the lessons of the treasure of solidarity of humanity. It is pertinent to emphasize that solidarity and hospitality teachings are common beliefs of the two major religions; Christianity and Islam offer thus a lesson that all humankind despite our political and religious consideration come from the same origin of the creative action of God.

This study generates the conviction through ecumenical initiatives and contributions for a call for a theology of generosity and openness to bring about peace and justice in Nigeria and thus enhances and proposes the imperative of dialogue in Nigeria. Hence these proposals are important for sustainable and better co-living in a society bewildered with relationships of oppression and conflicts.

1.1. Approaches

Under this section of the work I shall discuss issues that fostered my interest into engaging in this study. It will further talk on the situation of Nigeria society today and of the dialogue between the churches and religions; this is a hope that is to be consistently kept alive. It is a concern that designates the sensitive alertness of the world in which we live in and a world that is at the same time pluralistic in culture and religious traditions. This undeniably demands for the recognition and right to be different and goes on with the commitment to truth, honesty and sincerity that is complemented with mutual consultations. Among other things it involves the challenge of peace which underscores the necessity to enhance peace initiatives that overcome, reconcile and manage the unfolding of religious conflicts in Nigeria. The approach moreover includes

⁵ C. F., Olav Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, Op., Cit., 127.

the concept of the study that polishes the mindfulness of pluralism in the world of today. In this regard it takes on the state of religion in the Nigeria case which is manipulated so as to achieve and enhance political ends that do not benefit the people rather it is for the advantages of the elite and the spread of violence in many parts of the country.

The objectives of this study as an aspect of the approach focus on the procedures of dismantling of disputes and lay bare prejudices and ignorance on what they really constitute. This section also focuses on the process to discourage people in Nigeria especially children not to grow up with the mentality of revenge and hatred interlocked in the foundation of their early lives. It seeks on the contrary to build on the culture to cultivate in them the value system which initiates and builds mechanisms that eliminate violence in all its forms. The structure of the work also comes on board as a theological thinking concerning living ecumenism in Nigeria as a means of reconciliation in Nigeria.

1.1.1. Personal Motivation

My interest was fostered to writing of this thesis, partly as a result of my childhood experience of the violent conflict of a civil war in Nigeria. The civil war, which was sometimes called the Biafran war, but most often in books referred to as the Nigerian Civil war, was the fighting (battle) fought between the Federal Military Government of Nigeria and the forces of Biafran, comprising the former Eastern Region of Nigeria, south-eastern provinces of Nigeria as a self-proclaimed republic of Biafra from 1967-1970. The war was fought for about three years. It ended on January 15th, 1970 with the collapse and surrender of Biafran forces. It was notorious for the starvation in some of the surrounded war-bound regions, with the consequent starved to death of about a million children, men and women because of a food blockade applied by the Nigeria federal military government. Apart from the starving of people to death, many other thousands people died as a result indiscriminate bombing of residential areas by the federal military government's forces. I remember during that war it was difficult to sleep in the nights for fear of being bombed in the night or the fear of the area being taken over in the night by the federal military government's army. Some two years into the war we were driven out of our home and town by the armies of the federal military government of Nigeria. We became refugees in our country – internally displaced people in the land. This lasted till the end of the 15th of January 1970, when the war ended.

The second aspect of my motivation to write the thesis on this theme: Lived Ecumenism as a means to Reconciliation: Example Nigeria was my experience as a missionary priest who worked in the western and northern parts of Nigeria. While in the regions I experienced brute and violent religious conflicts between Christians and Muslims. Most of the occasions I bumped into their violent rioting and demonstrations groups on the roads in the course of my priestly ministry with the antecedent threat of loss of life.

My interest was besides, fostered by the ferocious impact of the sharia controversy and the misunderstanding which trailed its implementation in Nigeria that pitched Christians and Muslims in Nigeria into violent conflict of bloody clashes, killings and destruction of property. Consequently, the general picture of peaceful living together is

unfortunately disturbed and often destroyed by outbursts of conflicts, sometimes violent and bloody. As these occur frequently, Nigeria is gradually getting the image of a center of religious conflicts – between Christians and Muslims. These and the recent phenomenon of the Boko Haram – Islamist militants or called by some people Islamist terrorists have been agitating the minds of many in Nigeria. Why are these pointless and absurd conflicts? As well as why does it seem to be accelerating in recent times?

Though, some people think that these conflicts do arise for merely religious reasons. Conversely, it is essential to say that the conflicts commence as a result of imprudent and careless public statements of overzealous government officials and their representatives whose speeches allegedly intend to dehumanize and provoke people. Besides, the root cause pitches its tents in the area of religious politics in all its expressions and excitements. These violent conflicts - civil and religious conflicts I experience became the reverberations of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970 that continue to vibrate. Tension builds up in Nigeria because of deep dissatisfaction, rivalry for access to limited resources, feeling of exclusion and unjust treatment. Hence, Nigeria is predisposed to upheavals as a result of it being an unstable society.

This problem motivated me to write this work, to stress on the dignity of all human beings and the justice, peace and love to which all are entitled as a challenge to the dehumanizing tendencies of religious conflicts. It calls on politicians and legislators to ensure that they are not hiding their faces from the dehumanization of their fellows, no matter if the dehumanization is on the other side of the faith tradition.

1.1.2. Nigeria Society Today

Indeed, the society of Nigeria has dissimilar cultural heritage. This is the case of the many ethnic nationalities which constitute Nigeria. There are about two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, with a population of about one hundred and sixty million people. The diverse ethnic groups speak languages different from the others. Nigeria has many minority ethnic groups, with three majority groups namely: the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba ethnic group living in the south-west of Nigeria and the Igbo ethnic group in the south-east of Nigeria. Prior to and after the independence of Nigeria in 1960 these three ethnic groups have had a dominance of the political and economic prospect of Nigeria. This dominance has frequently led to complains of marginalization by the minor ethnic groups thereby jettisoning regionalism⁶ and this led to the abandonment of the three regional creation of Nigeria: Northern region, Western region from which latter Mid-western region was created and the Eastern regions, into now the creation of many more states. In each state the minority groups complained against the majority which emerged from more state creations, so as to accommodate the agitations of more state creations⁷, of inequality and marginalization of the minority groups to counter the

⁶C. F., E. Alex Gboyega, *The Making of the Nigerian Constitution, in Nigerian Government and Politics Under Military Rule, 1966-1979, Ed., Oyeleye Oyediran*, New York: St. Martin's, 1979, 236-237.

⁷C. F., *Federal Republic of Nigeria, Federal Military Government Views on the Report of the Panel on Creation of States*, Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, 1976, 9.

majority groups. However, this in no way brought the desired solution to the problem. The more states were created the more the demands to create more are requested.⁸ This quest was rapidly hijacked by military officers and their politician allies that heightened tensions and ultimately threatened national unity. Their action leaned on the religious and political divisions which increasingly fall along ethnic or regional lines which continued to maintain autocracy. It lacked democratic principles of transformation and governance. They maneuvered not a fundamental reconfiguration of the rules to craft a new game, but simply a change of the rules of the game. This transited to the manipulation of religion by political opportunists for religious and ethnic entrepreneurs⁹ which created several avenues of uncertainties of violent conflicts. Moreover, such avenues are created because there was no legitimate existence of indispensable fundamentals for democratic process and consequently the performers of this political act manipulate boundaries and identities so as to generate constituencies advancing their manipulative commitments and benefits. In situation such as this, there are no peace, harmony, justice and progress. Rather, it throws up politics of hatred, conflict, antagonism, and religious ethnic parties' politics as Donald L. Horowitz would call it.¹⁰

The rising incidence of violent religious conflicts is being traced to the manipulative activities of these groups. However, it has to be emphasized that religious conflicts between religious groups or ethnic groups' conflicts between ethnic groups are not inevitable; neither are they perpetual. But, they nevertheless, arise as a result of some unambiguous historical conditions as well as being shaped by precise and unique circumstances created by the manipulative activities of leaders for personal comforts and safeties at the detriment of the people. In addition, they are created to work for certain interests of ethnic power brokers of diverse manners, by opportunists, ideologists, political leaders with various kinds of personal perspectives. Consequently there arises a volcano of unbearable violent conflicts. Conflict and violence are not bred at birth. It could also be said it is not preset in the character of people of Nigeria. People are predisposed to this as a result of leadership disappointment.¹¹ This crisis and disappointment was summarized by Chinua Achebe in these words: "The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility of the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership".¹² Politicians staged battles to whip up sentiments of support among people divided along religious lines. There were equally some spontaneous clashes of people over land and resource

⁸ C. F., D. Abdulrahman, *Ethnicity, Leadership and National Integration in Nigeria*, in H. A. Saliu, A. Jimo, T. Arosanyin, Eds., *The National Questions and Some Selected Topical Issues on Nigeria*, Ibadan: Vantage Publishers, 2006, 121-132.

⁹ C. F., Ted R. Gurr, *Peoples Versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace, 2000, 85.

¹⁰ C. F., Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in conflict*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000, 294.

¹¹ C. F., Peter Cunliffe-Jones, *Quoting Chinua Achebe in My Nigeria. Five Decades of Independence*, United States of America: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 26.

¹² Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Oxford: Heinemann, 1983, 1.

control. In the midst of all these, the government of Nigeria, the army, the police and the paramilitary groups failed to stop the killing of innocent people.¹³

The resultant effect of this volcano of violent religious conflict was enormously painful for the people, such that a conservative estimated human loss of 10, 000 deaths were recorded within four years – 1999-2003, under the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo.¹⁴

Besides, it is also important to note that the manipulators of religion for self-importance create most often the impression that religion represents a factor of disunity and conflict instead of a factor of unity, mutual respect, harmony and peaceful coexistence with one another within the society. However, we have to acknowledge that in many instances in our era religion impact very positively our society and world. On the other hand, to certain degree the negative impact could be correct; for the first century Christians of Rome who did not essentially understand properly the import and consequence of their faith in the context of their daily life and consequently there followed some conflicts. However, in circumstances such as this described above in Nigeria, Paul the Apostle admonished us to learn that the proper understanding of, and living peaceful and in harmony with one another lies on the fact of being committed to a reconciling faith in Jesus Christ; which is necessarily an obedient faith that commits people to a life where there is all the time place for diversity and difference, committed to a life of love and self-giving that is molded after the configuration of Christ. This is “reconciled in Jesus Christ”. It is faith such as this, which should governs daily life and encounter of people with one another meaningfully. Nevertheless, this is the faith of Christ, who in love therefore gave himself for others in order that we could move in love and peace with God and with each other in society. Consequently such faith and engagement are devoid of any ground for religious self-importance, economic, social, ethical, cultural and ethnic superiority. In the light of this, the obedient faith, commitment and reconciling faith in Christ which commits people to a life where there is place for difference and diversity, a life of love and self-giving demonstrated after the pattern of Christ removes the obstacle to a true Christian-Muslim dialogue and commits both to a willingness to truly admit that God’s love and providence extends equally to all human beings irrespective of religious identity.¹⁵ This is the reconciliation that is called for.

Any society that is anchored and explicates the meaning of genuine love in tangible life situations for her citizens works and reflects love and reconciliation. Therefore, we are to work and spell out the meaning of this love and reconciliation in our context that is Nigeria. It has to be reflected at both the personal level, community level and national levels, with the definitive ambition of exemplifying it in the everyday life of the nation. Hence, this thesis: Lived Ecumenism as a means of Reconciliation: Nigerian Example considers this explication and the contribution it makes on the ongoing dialogue between

¹³ C. F., Peter Cunliffe-Jones, *My Nigeria. Five Decades of Independence*, Op. Cit., 25.

¹⁴ C. F., Ibid 25.

¹⁵ C. f., Irfan A. Omar, ed., *A Muslim View of Christianity: Essay on Dialogue by Mahmoud Ayoub*: New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2007, 69.

Christians and Muslims. In the light of this engagement, there is a primary necessity for a mental disposition in dialogue that is openness. In this engagement there is a weighty assessment of one's faith commitment and practice. The apparent Zeal of this engagement is the proposal to be always partner in dialogue; the prospect to spontaneously express and be able to learn about the other. A habit of culture that could freely promotes peace, mutual respect and reconciliation and is completely devoid of conflict.¹⁶ We are engaging in reconciliation which demands for an operative dialogue that enables Christians and Muslims to proceed peacefully in their environment today in Nigeria. It engages all into a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

Furthermore, to be reconciled in our context delineates to purify one's memory of hatred, rancor, and the desire to revenge. The volcanos of violent religious conflicts in Nigeria with the attendant human loss and destructions has made the country to become a house of death. This necessitate a process and indeed real that reverts this into a place of peace and life. This peace and life will be found in lived reconciliation. Indeed, this lived reconciliation involves the engagement and commitment to heal the memory. Reconciliation calls for the acknowledgement as brothers and sisters those who have wronged us. It acknowledges moreover, not to be overcome by evil rather to overcome evil with good.¹⁷ This is active and participative engagement of one another and for the good of one another in dialogue.

Dialogue therefore, that will have to engage Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria would direct us to understand and better appreciate the zeal of an imperative dialogue in a multi-religious society like Nigeria which is ridden with religious conflicts and proposing reconciliation as the remedy and resolution to violent conflict. This hence interrogates dialogue.

1.1.3. Dialogue of Churches and Religions- a Hope

Dialogue delineates the sensitive alertness that is attained by the world in which we live; a world that is pluralistic in culture and of religious traditions as well as the right which each has for its own difference. This calls for conversation, a conversation that has the commitment to truth, honesty and sincerity that is complemented with mutual consultation. This commitment must develop adequate confidence in one another for the participants, which are engaged in listening to understand, find meaning and agreement. This engagement is dialogue. Dialogue is hence, a cordial inter-personal relationship whereby individuals or persons meet each other purposely for the sake of mutual understanding for peaceful co-existence in the midst of the richness of their diversities (which has to be devoid of proselytization in the case of faith followers).

Thus dialogue is primarily, a meeting and in this meeting; meaning and or accord are sought in the diversity of those barriers and worlds that come into view to separate

¹⁶ C. F., Ibid. 68.

¹⁷ C. F., John Paul II, *Message for 2002 World Day of Peace*, no. 2.

probable interlocutors in word and action.¹⁸ The diversity in Nigeria, that is the environment, calls for dialogue. Dialogue as already said to be a conversation is not just ordinary speech. It goes beyond speech as Martin Buber succinctly suggested. “Just as the most eager speaking at one another does not make a conversation (this is most clearly shown in that curious sport, aptly termed discussion, that is ‘breaking apart’, which is indulged in by men who are to some extent gifted with the ability to think), so for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense and it is still speech.¹⁹ Dialogue requires openness to the ground or faith of the other in its difference. Hence each partner in the dialogue ought to enter into the experience of the other, determined to grasp that experience from within. In so doing the partner to the dialogue ought then to go beyond the level of concepts which could make the experience to express itself improperly so as to come to the level of true experience. Indeed, Francis Njoku underlined this line of thought that although people enter into dialogue arena carrying their box of experiences. They nevertheless,

“come to discover each other in the root metaphors or meaning structures that is, on the grounds that animate their words and actions. The subject’s equality of essence guarantees that dialogue-partners have an equally unprejudiced ground to uphold themselves in their axiological signification. This rules out an attempt to manipulate the grounds within which, and in the context of which, meanings are shared.”²⁰

It is these encounter, commitment and effort of “knowledge” and inner “compassion” in dialogue which Raimond Panikker termed as an indispensable feature in any true dialogue especially interreligious dialogue.²¹

In this encounter people are treasured on the unique way of their being and diversity of experiences, since they have come to the arena being aware of one another. This encounter sees dialogue thus, as a process of sharing of meaning. It shares the meaning and understanding of the partner to the dialogue, for each listens in an effort to understand the other. Even though in this process, that is, in the dialogue, the partner expresses a view or preference that appear strange or interesting, nevertheless the dialogue partner can understand the reason why he prefers the view. The process offers the opportunity to the partners to understanding the preferences. It may not do away with the disharmony, but then as a consequence of dialogue you may come to understand why you disagree so vehemently with another person.²² Martin Buber further in his “I and Thou” classic work argued that an authentic dialogue demands something far more than an ordinary conversation. Dialogue thus calls for a genuine openness of each and to the concern of the other. In dialogue such as this, I wholly capture your perspective,

¹⁸ C.F., Francis O.C. Njoku, *Development and African Philosophy: A Theoretical Reconstruction of African Socio-Political Economy*. USA: iUniverse, Inc. 2004, 130.

¹⁹ C.F., Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, translated by Ronald Gregor-Smith, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1947, 3.

²⁰ Francis O.C. Njoku, *Development and African Philosophy*, 137.

²¹ C.F., Raimond Panikker, *The Interreligious Dialogue*, New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

²² C. F., Francis O.C. Njoku, Op. Cit. 138..

and therefore hold on with it in the most genuine sense of the term, whereas the other engages himself or herself in the same way. By so doing we internalize our views so as to enhance our mutual understanding, avoiding prejudices, discrimination and indifference. On this note of mutual understanding involved is dialogue hence said to convey an essential characteristic of our human spirit. In this regard Martin Buber underlined dialogue to be a way of being when he fittingly stated:

“The life of dialogue is not limited to men’s traffic with one another: it is, it has shown itself to be, a relation of men to one another that is only represented in the traffic....even if speech and communication may be dispensed with, the life of dialogue seems, from what we may perceive, to have inextricably joined to its minimum constitution of one thing, the mutuality of the inner action. Two men bound together in dialogue must obviously be turned to one another; they must therefore-no matter with what measure of activity or indeed of consciousness of activity-have turned to one another. It is good to put this forward so crudely and formally. For behind the formulating question about the limits of a category under discussion is hidden a question which bursts all formulas asunder.”²³

Martin Buber here indicates that in dialogue we are able to go and break through the courteous superficialities and defences with which we obviously and habitually shield ourselves. Hence in dialogue we intensely hear and genuinely act in preparedness to build a bond of relationship between us; thereby responding to the human yearning in dialogue by being able to go beyond self, so as to be able to communicate to the other.²⁴ Dialogue being a process of sharing of meaning therefore enhances and encourages the human prospect which makes allowances for peoples’ diverse preferences, values and ideals; which in turn urges us to know and understand peoples’ beliefs, experiences and histories that to great extent influence their preferences and values and that these diverse values and preferences are not certainly irreconcilably conflicting. Dialogue being a sharing of meaning is therefore, not a debate or a negation. Nevertheless, it is a platform ground for greater understanding.²⁵ It is moreover a sharing of opinions and experiences with those who enthusiastically desire to listen and understand others. It is in this perspective that dialogue fundamentally is the gift of compassionate listening and sharing even to those people who may be sadly misguided; thereby enabling the dialogue partners attain a greater understanding of their stand, beliefs as well as to the extent of respecting diversities of opinions.²⁶ This vision of sharing of meaning evokes the awareness of the other, and this awareness of the Otherness is also an awareness of the multiplicity of identities around us.²⁷ In the yearning for a sharing of meaning Buber

²³ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, 9-10.

²⁴ C.F., Daniel Yankelovich, *The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation*. New York: Rockefeller Centre, Touchstone, 1999, 15.

²⁵ C. F., Yusuf Fadl Hasan et al Eds., *Religion and conflict in Sudan: Papers from an International Conference at Yale Nairobi Kenya*: Paulines Publication, Africa, 2002, 183.

²⁶C.F., Ibid. 183.

²⁷C.F., Marco Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The future of World Religions, Violence and Peace-making* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 148.

contended that by evoking an apparently simple act of responding to empathically to the others and in effect being heard by them, makes us transcend the constricting confines of the self. This is what Marc Gopin quoting Emmanuel Levinas's ethics centred on the phenomenology of the facial encounter between one human being and another is the image of the awareness of Otherness which engenders an ethical response of care, compassion and pity.²⁸ In the encounter with the other from the fore going, it is apparent that for a serious and workable response to the endemic religious conflict in Nigeria has to take the unique path of dialogue which lead reconciliation and peace.

1.1.4. Reconciliation – The Aspiration

This section primed the necessity of dialogue that transits to reconciliation as central key response for Nigeria, lockdown in the false method or pattern in which it emerged to be a nation; by the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by the British colonial administration in 1914. This amalgamation has continued to echo suspicion and non-workability as well as the incompatibility of the two sections to be together. It did not dismantle the deep structural challenges which prevent an effective participation of the people in their life. It instituted power and parliament without transforming the political and social institutions that suppress good and sustainable nationhood for all. This continuously made Nigeria remain basically a “geographical expression,” the characterization Chief Obafemi Awolowo implored to describe Nigeria in 1947.²⁹ Consequently the key players to the nationhood of Nigeria did not believe in it. It failed furthermore to consider adequately the beliefs, welfare and divisions in the - about 250 ethnic nationalities of Nigeria, their cultural differences and their religious scope made up of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religions. These have been in constant contestation for the control of politics, social and economic resource of the country; which snowballed into constant religious conflicts, in which thousands of people have lost their lives or and their entire goods and property. This set the ground for the pressing significance for meaningful peace in Nigeria.

Peace is a prerequisite for progress, together with justice which on its own is a requirement for peace. Therefore justice and peace are significantly meaningful for development in Nigeria. Indeed it is equally a pressing need for peace in the religious scope of Nigeria- among Christianity, Islam and the Traditional Religions.

Peace by and large taking positively means a state of personal and social health and completeness. Here completeness or wholeness is understood to mean the well-being of persons. The term peace as a Christian concept builds on the Old Testament Hebrew word *shalom* and with its Greek equivalent word “*eirene*”. These two terms capture a holistic vision of peace which includes well-being, as well as right and just relationships and structures.³⁰ This conception is furthermore underscored in the opinion of Charles

²⁸C.F., Ibid. 148.

²⁹ See Chapter 2 of this work..

³⁰ C.F., Reina Neufeldt, et al, eds., *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* Palazzo San Salisto: Caritas International, 2002, 28.

Villa-Vicencio to capture; “the capacity of societies to deal with conflicts non-violently and to be willing to build healthy structures and institutions to deal with the underlying causes of conflicts.”³¹ This therefore means the yearning for a good social relationship with community members. It urges all thus to be artists of peace because; artists live an everyday ontology built on some, so to speak on three pillars as captured by John Paul Lederach in his book, “The Moral Imagination: The art and soul of Building peace”, namely: “an insatiable curiosity, constant invention and attentive critique. They learn from everything and everyone, but they never stop creating.”³² This continuous positive move to never stop creating and recreating for life; is a journey and as a journey is a route which is fundamental to all our life. The road map to this journey is reconciliation. Indeed it is the shared acceptance of each other in a peaceful relationship and sustainability of acceptance that is followed by an engagement to maintain affinity in harmony with future welfares instead of adhering to a broken and disputed past. One could however choose deliberately to acknowledge it, but then; it needs an attentive determination in order to put our foot firmly on it. The problem is thus how to remain or put our foot firmly on this route. This could be done like an artist by retaining the capacity of innovation, and to find and reflect on the circumstances and situations around us. The innovation aims at all times on the transformative future of communion between the people. Its goal is in addition, toward the transformation of the structural dimension of life in societies. From the forgoing therefore peace is not just the absence or ending of war, rather it is as already indicated, it underlines the wholeness of the well-being of the persons in the societies. This is the peace that urges its existence in Nigeria. Up till now the authority in Nigeria has been engaged in peacekeeping: that is using military interventions in trying to solve religious conflicts in the country. This system has not been effective. Thus the importance of the means we are proffering. Hence here we are proposing peace that is in connection with long term process of becoming whole, a wholeness that is ought to be the endeavor of peace procedure.

1.2. The Concept of the Study

The emergence of the new period of our history has created, enhanced, and polished the mindfulness of pluralism in our world today. This, in effect has conveyed a corresponding move which challenges the old order of exclusion, but at the same time has paved the way for a new approach to world view and a host of other things. In the light of this, Nigeria, a multi-cultural, multi-religious and pluralistic state is challenged to a new attitude in approaching the life of the people, moving from an exclusive mentality that engenders the “injustice of oppression” to an increasingly attitude which “must be fought with the creative climate of forgiveness instead of, and with an aping climate of revenge”³³. This demands and underscores the need for a new way of being

³¹ Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Political Reconciliation in Africa: Walk with us and Listen*. Washington, D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009, 3.

³² John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 122.

³³ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville U.S.A.: Abingdon Press, 1996, 122.

in Nigeria, for the teaming numbers of Christians and Muslims who, the story of the relationship between them is regularly marred by mutual distrust, doubt, violence and religious conflicts.

This situation has led to several thousands of people being killed in the name of religion. Indeed religion instead of playing a continuous and prominent role in the well-being of people, is rather manipulated and used as instrument of human dissension, destruction of human life; thereby promoting constant religious conflicts. Therefore, a new way of being among the Christian and Muslim people of Nigeria proves essential, because the ties which hold and engender together living of the people have been broken. The social solidarity and cohesion have collapsed and political pressure and tension reign. This new way of living I think is to be found in Reconciliation. The mutual acceptance of each other in a nonviolent and respectable association and sustainable welcome of the other. Reconciliation is then, the new way of being a Christian and of being a Muslim in Nigeria. This new way of being has been underscored earlier by a Ghanaian Pan-Africanist, Kwame Nkrumah, when he opined that:

“Our society is not the ancient society but a new society broadened by Euro-Christian and Islamic influences. So a new ideology is necessary, an ideology that can be stated in a philosophical definition, but which is at the same time an ideology which does not abandon Africa’s original and human principles ... an ideology whose aims will be to contain the African experience of Islamic and Euro-Christian presence as well as the experience of African traditional society.”³⁴

This understanding from Kwame Nkrumah underlines the significant imperative of these two ways of living has to be added to the African Traditional Religion to altogether become African way of being; since these religions have contributed to the development of the human persons, culture, politics and life of the people of Africa and Nigeria in particular. They are no longer strangers to each other, rather as partners and brothers and sisters in the African continent. They have contributed immensely to the indelible and historical experience in the psyches of the people. And so this underscores the significance and the role of these religions among the Africans and in particular the people of Nigeria. They should live and let live.

1.2.1. Questions

Nigeria like many other African Nations is inundated and challenged by religious pluralism. This has not been harnessed constructively to give the country a purposeful, transformative and good direction for the well-being of the people who ought to have being enhanced in a sustainable peace building endeavors among them. Instead the country has experienced decades of violence, apathy, disillusionment, trauma, insecurity, inhuman actions, self-doubt and distrust. In the light of such situation,

³⁴ Kwame Nkrumah, *Conscientism*. London: Heinemann, 1964, 93-94.

Nigeria struggles for self-definition. It is witnessing violent religious conflicts between two major religious groups, Muslims and Christians. These two religions are the two largest religions of the world that have lived alongside each other for many centuries. This notwithstanding, there have been several vicissitudes, new circumstances, and transformations in their culture and territorial frontiers. Also within this stretched period of time, they are characterized by skirmish as well as by fruitful collaboration. However, desolately, it is also fact of history that the great part of their relationship between has been marked by enmity, allegations and hostilities largely for the interpretation of history and experience. Their relationship has been accompanied with violence and prejudice instead of friendliness, cooperation and appreciation.³⁵

By the political campaigns of religious manipulation to achieve and enhance personal political gains emerge religious conflict. This indeed fostered violence and divisions in many parts of the country. Certainly, this manipulation has caused the loss of lives of many people and often enhanced the justification of brutality in their various forms. It engraved deep-rooted historical conflicts of inequality, discrimination, cultural rifts, social breakdown, economic stagnation and ethnic clashes. In addition competing self-centered political and military elites capitalize on this to emerge as leaders of the people, to exacerbate tension and fuel more conflict. Consequently, religion becomes the instrument to attend to power and repression. Situations such as this do not allow people to open up to the others or tell and hear their stories. They thus engender movement towards exclusion and into groups fighting each other. In all of these there is a breakdown of society. It fertilizes the mentality to be afraid of people whose thoughts are different and to disparage and encourage the exclusion of any value system other than the ones they are used to.³⁶ It is thus a problem if people build their lives around certain value systems; it leads to the non-acceptance of the value or treasure system of difference. Good relationship and good neighborliness become casualties; and conflicts of various kinds are ensued. This is however, the difficulty and dilemma confronting Nigerian and in particular her religious sensibility and hence truncate her unity and development. Hence it fostered a constant pattern of inefficacy and mediocrity.

1.2.2. The Purpose of the Study

This work seeks primarily to design a process whereby people affected by religious violence but indeed continue to live together emerge to build the capacity to promote reconciliation in the absence of non-intervention of the government. It seeks to focus on the procedure to lift people up and introduce them into the process which can transform their relationships into peaceful interaction. It seeks to focus on the process to transform the young ones into the system of non-violent engagement, openness and dialogue for peace building; to discourage children in Nigeria not to grow up with or into “jihad”, war, crusade, revenge, hatred interlaced into the very foundation of their lives, but

³⁵ C.F., Alwvi Shihab, *Christian-Muslim Relations into the Twenty-First Century: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15, no. 1 2004, 65.

³⁶ C.F., Philip Igbo, *The Treasure of Difference*, Enugu: Clacom Claretian Publications, 2012, 61.

instead, to cultivate the value system of reconciliation that eliminates the inscriptions of hatred, erase carefully the threads of violence³⁷ and trauma as well as inaugurate the movement from exclusion to inclusion that dispels fear thereby enhances trust, openness and from prejudice to understanding and from hatred to love and neighborliness.³⁸

In addition it focuses attention through a theology that makes use of the resources in Christianity and Islam to sustain, enhance and promote good neighborliness and peace building in the religious traditions of Islam and Christianity. There are in these religious traditions some impressive powers of transformation. It is a power which has in various epochs inspired people to engage in the forgiveness of their enemies; seek justice and pursue reconciliation. The potentials for peace building in these traditions to dispel religious conflicts are exploited. Hence, this study engages in a commitment and service of life in the Nigerian experience which reconciliation offers that focuses in the first instance on the cultivation of relationship foremost with God who becomes the medium through which reconciliation can be achieved. This relationship expresses itself in the practice of truth, for justice, for healing as well as for new possibilities. Through it, the restoration of the humanity of the people is attained. In this the memories of pain, trauma, the experience of injustice and violations are not denied rather they are transformed. Those who by reason of regimentation, may be more flammable tools for disharmony and violence and the political consequences of religious charlatanism on the polity that are destructive amongst Christians and Muslims are thereby transformed and helps the oppressors to translate their remorse into something practical for the people or community they once victimized.³⁹

1.2.3. The basic Structure of the study

This study is subdivided into six thematic parts, which is followed by the bibliography that is put in part 7.

The part 1 of this study is the introductory section that provides approaches to the question and reveals the concept of the study. It is thus clear from the beginning that a personal motivation inspired me to deal with the subject matter. First are the insights into the Nigeria society today. The questions, objective and method of the study are described. It underlines the fact that ecumenical and interreligious initiatives promote the process of reconciliation in the society of Nigeria.

Part 2 deals with the history and present religiously motivated conflicts in Nigeria. It differentiates between descriptive and reflexive parts. In the section I describe my insights into the situation of the nation of Nigeria today and recall the history of Nigeria in the colonial era. I also described the currently relevant religious traditions in Nigeria. Special attention is paid to the relationship between Christianity and Islam. My reflections focus on my perception of religiously motivated conflicts in Nigeria.

Part 3 is the statements of the Second Vatican Council and it shows the perspectives for interreligious and ecumenical dialogue based on the testimonies of the Second Vatican

³⁷ C.F., Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, Op. Cit., 111.

³⁸ C.F., Philip Igbo, *The Treasure of Difference*, Op Cit., 63.

³⁹ C.F., Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Image Book, Doubleday, 2000, 177.

Council. In doing so, I am especially concerned with issues relating to the mission and keeping an eye on pastoral aspects.

Part 4 concerns the documents of the World Council of Churches. This provides an overview of the efforts made in the World Council of Churches to strengthen the search for justice and peace in today's world. The biblical motif (topoi), which is moreover to justice and peace also incorporate the aspect of hospitality.

Part 5 deals with the religiously motivated initiatives for reconciliation in Nigeria. It indeed, shows which institutions are engaged in the national process of reconciliation in Nigeria. In this context, I recall, above all, the options of the Nigerian Catholic-bishops' conference as well as the concerns of other Christian and interreligious institutions.

Part 6 is the perspectives for Nigeria based on the model of reconciliation. This combines the theological concerns of Christian soteriological and anthropological arguments based on real-life experiences and with the sketch perspectives, in which questions of ethics are at the forefront. In this context it becomes clear once more that my study has constantly looked at the political situation in Nigeria.

And part t focuses on the bibliography, the books and Articles and material as well as the resources which I used in writing the work.

2. Past and present religiously motivated conflicts in Nigeria

2.1. Introduction

This section endeavors into the description of the problem of religious conflicts as it particularly concerned the Nigerian project. Nigeria was a colony of the British administration. In the nineteenth century it was created by the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria. This amalgamation is central to the understanding of the brutal and endemic violent religious conflicts in parts of Nigeria. The conflicts are the products of several complex and inter-locking factors, comprising an explosive synthesis of historical complaints, religious rivalries, ethnic and political manipulations. However, before the amalgamation the regions have had some ability of historical content for a peaceful co-existence among the multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural groups. Although, there were some local disturbances, but then the magnitude and scale of this for a period now, of over the last 45 years is worrisome. Nevertheless, the peaceful co-existence of tradition indicate the fact that conflict may not be inescapable, but it testifies that with the right synthesis of political and social agents the risks of religious conflict can be alleviated.

Religious conflict has potholed Christians against Muslims and most often hostilities have been between different Muslim sects. Even though certain efforts of success have been recorded, the escalation has geometrically doubled in several parts of Northern Nigeria. This problem has its roots in the historical formation the Nigeria as a country.

The section will consider the theme from several perspectives: These include descriptive approaches, from an angle of Nigeria as a nation. The perspective of the memories of colonial history. It involves as well the overview of religious groups in Nigeria – Christianity and Islam. Furthermore comes the individual scenarios of religiously motivated conflicts. Indeed, it includes a reflexive deliberation and the causes of religiously motivated conflict. The section will end with preliminary conclusion.

2.1.1. Descriptive Approaches

A starting point on the discussion on religious Conflict is first and foremost to understand what conflict involves. Indeed, the world over is today faced with violence and conflict. In effect, no period of the world history has gone without experiencing some violent conflicts. What attraction has violent conflict to pull every epoch to it? Or why does no period of history pass without the infectious hook of violent conflict on it? Indeed, it is essential to dredge up on the fact that the root source of conflict is most frequently the issues of injustice or the issues of power struggle. However, to begin answering what conflict involves or what it is? It can be said that there are bound to be in every society differences of opinions in almost all significant matters. These differences could be because of collective or personal reasons. Indeed, conflict arises if aggressive or competitive groups or persons or personalities attempt consciously to

defeat, subordinate, and annihilate each other in an effort to attain definite goals or ambitions. In the light of this, Oshita O. Oshita opined that “Conflict is the struggle between opposing forces”, hence conflict he continued may involve two or more actors and could be over resources, ideas, values, wishes and desires, or deep-seated needs”⁴⁰. Consequently, one conflict may possibly initiate many triggers, and numerous root causes. These trigger moreover, can function as immediate catalysts previous to the outbreak of violence.⁴¹

Besides, conflict in the opinion of C. M. Magagula delineates a serious struggle, disagreement and the fight which develops out of diverse opinions, wishes, values, needs and interest in the midst of and concerning individuals or groups.⁴² Hence, conflict is a struggle between and in the midst of groups and individuals over values, status symbols, power bases and claims to limited resources. The objectives of the individuals here engaged in conflict are simply to counteract, eliminate their rivals in order to enjoy the limited resources, the power bases and status symbols.⁴³ In this sense, conflict designates simply as opposition among people directed against one another. Hence it could designate hostile behavior between parties whose interests are, or appear to be incompatible or rather opposing. Indeed, conflict so taken envisions an intentional struggle between co-operative participants or competitors who engage collective or group power to overcome or remove imagined or factual enemies so as to impose the values on the others. Consequently, conflicts prevalently exist in the midst of social organizations, institutions, political parties, religious groups; it can be employed to express arguments, tensions and violent struggle which occur with and or between states.⁴⁴ And most outstandingly it is rife where the interests, aspirations of the groups as well as the aims involved cannot be concurrently realized hence they enter into a contest or duel⁴⁵; particularly if their treasure systems do not agree with one another. In

⁴⁰ Oshita O. Oshita, *Conflict Management in Nigeria: Issues and Challenges*, London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2007, 17.

⁴¹ C.F., *Ibid.* 17.

⁴² C.F., C. M. Magagula, *Conflict Resolution and Management: The Role of African Higher Education Institutions*. Articles featuring in: <http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/aern/confma.html>. 2008 Quoted in S. M. Nwaomah, *Religious Crises in Nigeria: Manifestation, Effect and Way Forward*, in *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice* Vol. 3. No. 2, August, 2011, 95.

⁴³ C.F., M. O. Okai, *The Role of the Christian Church in Conflict Management in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. An Unpublished Work, Ph. D Thesis to the Graduate School, University of Calabar*, Calabar, 2007, 22. As Quoted in S. M. Nwaomah, *Religious Crises in Nigeria: Manifestation, Effect and Way Forward*, in *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice* Vol. 3. No. 2, August, 2011, 95.

⁴⁴ C.F., B. T. Bakut, *The Environment, Peace and Conflict in Africa*. In S. O. Best, ed., *Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies in West Africa*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2006, 236.

⁴⁵ C.F., M. A. McDonald, *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Great Britain: W & R Chambers, 1977, 273.

such case the brawl to use force and power to subdue or to eliminate one another is more apparent.⁴⁶

Oshita O. Oshita, nevertheless, also contended that conflict has not only negative effects; it has some positives as well. Therefore, conflict is normal in human relationships and serves as an instrument which can transform. Hence a proper understanding of conflict not only identify it most often as negative, but also as an opportunity which enhances an adequate and constructive handling of conflict. As opportunity for change, conflict is a phenomenon with huge possibilities for positive change in the society.⁴⁷ Indeed, S. Awoniyi concurred with Oshita in describing conflict in a positive perspective. Succinctly he asserted that conflict could be constructively and destructively handled. He moreover, argued that conflict can be engaged and explored as a solution to some problems and equally stimulate creativity through the use of non-rational and emotive arguments while deconstructing long-standing tension.⁴⁸ Seen from this perspective, Conflict is not something essentially dysfunctional. Indeed, it is rather a part of human experience; as well as the unavoidable and normal channel through which people articulate their objectives and aspirations and hopes. Besides, it is a channel by which people express and define their problems, find creative solutions to their problems and a channel for the development of their collective identity. Therefore, it (conflict) can be very helpful and useful aspect of the society.

However, when conflict is considered from the perspective of a deliberate attempt to oppose, coerce or resist the will of the others, then, it turns violent. In this case one can talk of war – which is the most destructive result of conflict. It is a fact that the reason for war could be power struggle, economic gains. It could also be because of difference in religious ideologies, or encroachment or dominance of the other persons or peoples territory. Violent conflict or conflict also could arise when opposition or competition amongst groups, individuals, races and societies develop into tense, deliberate, conscious and they categorize their challengers' actions to be destructive thus, breaking relationships. Hence we talk of conflict. Here, then, conflict implies that, it is often seen as a threat to peace, and consequently negative. Indeed, conflict in this opinion when it escalates to the level of violence; then becomes dangerous and bad.

In the society, there are different “cadres” of classes from which class conflict arises due to exploitation. When, one class exploits the others for their own benefits and blocks the progress and development of the other classes. In addition, there is conflict that is due to the exploitation of one race in a multiple race society or country – Racial conflict - as the case in the United States of America, the UK and the South Africa showed – between the Blacks and the White. Similar, is the tribal conflict much seen in many African countries; where the majority tribes exploit the minority tribes. There is furthermore, the

⁴⁶C.F., S. M. Nwaomah, *Religious Crises in Nigeria: Manifestation, Effect and the Way Forward*, in *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice* Vol. 3, No. 2. August, 2011, 95.

⁴⁷ C.F., *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁸ C.F., S. Awoniyi, *A Discourse on Religious Conflict and Tolerance in Multi-Faith Nigeria*, in *European Scientific Journal*, Vol. 9. No. 20, July 2013, 125.

political conflict that is prevalent among different countries – in which in most of the countries one political party tries to obliterate the opponent political party thereby leading the countries involved into catastrophic wars.

Another standpoint of Conflict is that it could be religious; hence religious conflict – Religious conflict describes sectarian conflict or conflict in religious ideology. It is either within a particular religion or between different religions or different religious faith commitments. Since, it is a fact that with religion there are sects which can and do initiate sectarianism. Instances of such, we have for examples: the cases in Northern Ireland – the cases between two Christian groups Catholics and Protestants -, the Sunni and Shia sects' conflicts in Islam – in Pakistan, Iraq, and Syria; between the Sikhs and Hindus and between Hindus and Christians in India; We have the Muslims-Christians conflicts in different parts of the world. It is religious conflict such as this in Nigeria between Christians and Muslims that engages us in this section of the work.

Based on our discussion above, on what conflict is, that it does happen when something is in contention; however, in religious conflict the aims that are to be achieved may not be clear-cut or distinct, because the concept of religious conflict is in the opinion of Wendy Mayer at best regarded as a complex phenomenon due to a number of combined contested domains.⁴⁹ Consequently, B. Hoffman argued that many conflicts probably categorized as religious conflicts may not be in the actual sense of it religious, due to in many instances the origin of such conflicts could either be political, economic issues or otherwise.⁵⁰ And in comparable vein R. I. Gofwen opined that religious conflicts form a specific structure of conflict amongst groups that vary ideologically side by side of religious corners in a multicultural or all-inclusive society that go all out for political significance.⁵¹ Religion is thus mobilized to fascinate people into taking part in conflict. But on his part F. Stewart contends that identity mobilizes participation in religious conflicts; it is because all conflicts have multiple reasons including political or and economic issues commonly primary, however, mobilization repeatedly ensue on the root of precise identities. Definitely, conflict can thus be designated as ethnic, religious, ideological and or class conflict on the ground of how they are organized instead of the basis of economic or political engagements.⁵²

Religious conflict is a passionate interface in which the interest groups have a dispute which they rely on or trust centers on matters of ultimate concern to the degree that the

⁴⁹ C.F., Wendy Mayer, *Religious Conflict: Definitions, Problems and Theoretical Approaches*, in, Wendy Mayer & Bronwen Neil Eds., *Religious Conflict. From Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013, 2.

⁵⁰ C.F., B. Hoffman *Holy Terror: The Implications of Terrorism Motivated by Religious Imperative*, *Worldwide Department of Defense Combating Terrorism Conference*, 1993; *Virginia Beach*, & T. R. Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts*, Washington DC: Institute of Peace Press, 1993.

⁵¹ C.F., R. I. Gofwen, *Religious Conflict in Northern Nigeria and Nation Building: The Throes of Two Decades 1980-2000*, Kaduna: Human Rights Monitor, 2004.

⁵² C.F., F. Stewart, *Religion Versus Ethnicity as a Source of Mobilization: Are There Differences?* MICROCON, Research Working Paper, 18, 5.

consequence of their collaboration itself is of definitive concern. Indeed, now and again the conflict is or conflicts are strictly religious despite the fact that some other elements are involved; in this sense it disguises and transfers other forms of conflicts. Hence, religious conflicts reveal many features of conflict in general; nevertheless, religious conflict has its own distinctiveness. Religious conflict indeed, delineates and stimulates abundant cravings as well as meaning and occurs on an abstract intensity.

According to some scholars, the study of religious conflicts delineates four aspects of religious conflict theories, namely: That, religious conflict is first and foremost considered from the view point that some religions are more prone to conflicts on like others.⁵³ In the light of this, the proponents argue that religions with the worldviews that do endorse ideologies are more prone to be involved in rebellions and revolutions whereas those with worldviews rejecting ideologies are less prone to conflicts, such as religions that approve a pattern of subservience, as in the India's cast system.⁵⁴ Furthermore, even though some religions have huge predispositions to violent conflict than others, however, it is argued also, that all foremost religions have the possibilities to create and direct conflicts. Indeed, it has been these aspects that religious fundamentalist and the Islamic Boko Haram groups in Nigerian have adopted to wage war on Nigeria and kill many thousands of people and engage in kidnapping of children, girls and women.

There is also the religious conflict aspect from the environmental theory. Prominent on this opinion, was Samuel P. Huntington, in his Book: *The clash of Civilization*. He focuses on the social, political and economic environment through which the religious conflicts ensue. Indeed, it argued that certain vicissitudes in the international arena propel the rise of some religious conflict. Hence, it subscribed that religious fundamentalism would be the new ideology which will elicit the greatest threat to Western civilization.⁵⁵ Further along, Samuel Huntington, at the end of the cold war contended that conflicts in the world would take its course between civilizational ideologies based hugely on religions; hence, there will be an increase of religious conflicts.⁵⁶

A third aspect of religious conflict description or theory centers on structural slant of the relation amongst conflict and religion. Here, the contention emphasizes the relationships of the structure that exist between political and religious institutions and the elites groups as well as unfriendliness groups. Hence the form of alliance between these institutions

⁵³ C.F., Jonathan Fox, *Towards a Dynamic theory of ethno-religious Conflict, in the Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 5, 4, 1999, 433.

⁵⁴ C.F., David Kowalewski and Arthur L. Greil, *Religion as Opiate: Religion as Opiate in Comparative Perspective: Journal of Church and State*, Vol.32, No. 3.1990, 511-526, as Quoted in Jonathan Fox, in *Towards a Dynamic theory of ethno-religious Conflict*, Op. Cit, 433.

⁵⁵ C.F., Benjamin J. Barber, *Jihad versus McWorld, The Atlantic*, 1992, 269, 3 as Quoted in Jonathan Fox, in *Towards a Dynamic of theory of ethno-religious Conflict*, 433.

⁵⁶ C.F., Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations? Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1993, 25.

(political and religious institutions) defines the degree of endorsement and engagement in rebellions or conflicts.⁵⁷

Last but not least of the four aspects of religious conflict theories is the laundry approach. This method underlines the theorists' contention of the several ways through which religion influence, initiates and influences conflicts. Indeed, it contests that this initiative is infrequently vibrant since not much effort is involved to make them fit into an articulate definite and conceptual structure. However, in this approach religion galvanizes political support to affect conflict. Religion, in the laundry approach could be used to awaken national consciousness; when religion sensitizes and supplies the sense of national identity or group's identity. In this approach moreover, religious institutions or group or leaders that have attained a high organizational development are prone to give support, care or backing to innovative disruption or upheaval to protect the interests of their religious institution and so are compassionate to the objective of the conflict.⁵⁸ It is my contention that the Islamic fundamentalists in Nigeria; such as the Maitatsine of the 1980s, the proponents of Christianity or Islam who sought to unseat the rival religion, to impose their own values and control the state, the religious-inspired controversy of the 1970s rejection of the recitation of the national anthem of Nigeria and pledge by the Jehovah's Witnesses and the realignment of political parties on the line of politico-religious lines, as well as the discrimination of foreign missionaries in some part of Nigeria⁵⁹ were all inspired by this theory. Besides, the group – "Jama'atu Ansarul Muslimina Biladis" Sudan, known as the "Ansaru" meaning "Vanguards for the protection of Muslims in Black Africa – who is a self-proclaimed Islamist Jihadist group based in the North-eastern part of Nigeria (this group broke away from Boko Haram), the Boko Haram group that latter turned to a terrorist group and such similar groups, were equally inspired by the laundry theory approach.

Indeed, religious conflict, in this work is understood as the conflict(s) that has or have religious subject matter, whose frontiers do either group or both groups and factions are defined in religious standings or trappings. In this case when one group moreover defines the conflict as religious or endorse religious slogans and symbols so as to accomplish the conflict then, the other responds to the state of affairs equally through similar religious symbols and slogans. Indeed, in religious conflicts identity plays prominent role and these groups in the conflict chase and establish their interests as well as their needs through a developed ecclesiastical organizational support. Here, undeniably, loyalties, followership and sympathies are determined religiously. Indeed, all along religiously defined patterns, if the religious conflict is violent, this is demonstrated in the physical assault of the opponent parties. Then, the resultant effect

⁵⁷ C.F., David Kowalewski & Arthur L. Greil, *Religion as Opiate: Religion as Opiate in Comparative Perspective*. *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 32, No. 32, 1990, 511-526. See also, Jonathan Fox, *Towards a Dynamic Theory of Ethno-Religious Conflict. Nations and Nationalism*, Op.; Cit., 439.

⁵⁸ C.F., Gunther Lewy, *Religion and Revolution*, New York: Oxford, 1974, 585-586. CF, Jonathan Fox, *Towards a Dynamic Theory of Ethno-Religious Conflict*, Op., Cit., 440-441.

⁵⁹C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, USA: University of Rochester Press, 1998, 2.

could be seen in killings, setting of buildings on fire, destruction of property. In violent religious conflicts religion plays a prominent role to the extent that ethnic loyalties could disappear. This is always the case in most religious conflicts in Nigeria between Christians and Muslims.

2.1.2. Nigeria as a Nation Today

The Nigerian nation seems to have been built on a wobbling foundation. It was a nation which came up not as a result of the benefits to the people and for the people rather because of the tremendous advantage and profits it offered Britain who was anxious to make it a part of their increasing territory. This is informed by the way the British colonialists brought together the different nationalities that make up Nigeria. In this territory now called Nigeria there were several kingdoms and empires: Such empires as the Benin kingdom, the Yoruba kingdom, the Igbo traditional kingdom, the Fulani emirate, the Urhobo gerontocratic system and the many other kingdoms and systems. For these kingdoms and systems things changed when they were brought under the British conquest of Lagos in 1861, into the amalgamation of the northern and southern Protectorates.

The British colonialists arrived like all other European powers that were buying and selling slaves. However, British explorers ventured into the hinter land with intent to explore further the area. Beginning from 1795 to 1796 Mungo Park, who himself was a Botanist and explorer, sailed along the River Niger. He set sail as far as Boussa Rapids now in the present Niger state of Nigeria, but unfortunately in 1806 his boat capsized and he died.⁶⁰ After his death, Lieutenant Hugh Clappereton, a British naval officer continued the expedition which led him (1822-1824) as far as Kano in the northern Nigeria, precisely in the Fulani regions of the north. His expedition led him to the Sokoto Caliphate. He was later arrested by the Sultan of Sokoto and put into detention. But later he too died of dysentery in 1827.⁶¹

This expedition led to relations with the Muslims which could be described as being uncanny right from the beginning. But then from one angle the British took a decision to take over the Sokoto Caliphate in order to abolish its slave trade raiding Fulani

⁶⁰ C.F., A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*. Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012, 49.

⁶¹ C.F., Ibid. 48-49.

fanatics who were regarded as cruel slave exploiters.⁶² On the other angle to the relation was the decision of the British to use the slaves in support, to be able to govern the area. However, the intension of this exploit was for the purpose of indirect rule so that sooner or later to gain control and bring down the slave trade. This was advanced as one of the main purposes that led Lieutenant Hugh to the Caliphate, to entreat the Sultan to stop the slave trade which he loathed but rather pursued through the relationship that could offer him more advantages over his arch enemies who he wanted the British government to rout out in order to create an opportunity for him.⁶³

However, this ambition to abolish the slave trade seems to have suffered a great setback as soon as the colonial administration settled in the middle of the nineteenth century in the territory now called Nigeria. It has been argued, this was due to the huge lucrative trade interests that the colonial administration found in Nigeria. Moreover, the huge resources of peanuts, cocoa, palm oil and palm kernels created an enormous trade opportunities for the colonial administration. This trade prospects in agricultural produce attracted their engagement and subsequently made a colonial overthrow of the area, a lucrative enterprising exploits, because the export of agricultural products generated much of the bulk of the revenues needed.⁶⁴ This enterprise engaged the administration to emphasize more the production of cash crops and its mineral extraction, hence it stimulated the establishment of means to regulator finances and international trade. This therefore marginalized and pushed the local entrepreneurs to the aspects of the economy that were not very enterprising.⁶⁵ In addition to this, was the hugely rich River Niger, water ways which Mongo Park began its exploration that led to their movement into the enormously rich inland of Nigeria.

This change of ambition would indeed not surprise any keen observer of the Nigerian enterprise. Said Adejumobi underlined that the principal purpose of colonial state “was to subjugate the local people, create a system of power without responsibility or accountability, and form a state with foreign citizen, *without the local people. Therefore, ruthless exploitation and material extraction were the raison d’etre of the colonial state*

⁶² C.F., Ibid. 49.

⁶³ C.F., Ibid. 49.

C.F., ⁶⁴ Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, New York: University of Rochester Press, 1998, 51.

⁶⁵ C.F., Ibid, 51-52.

system”.⁶⁶ For this the contact with Nigeria was decisive and consequently the imposition of British colonial rule in the late 19th century. However, in 1860 the British had stronghold in Lagos and subsequently started to interfere with the activities of the other areas especially on the Niger Delta Areas.⁶⁷ This led them steadily into the interior to intensify their intrusion into Nigeria. Actually by 1903 it established a full colony in Nigeria. Nigeria was subsequently and completely colonized. The British created a system of administration that made use of the manipulation of indigenous politics and some new bureaucracy.⁶⁸

This laid the bedrock on which the Nigerian nation was created by the colonial governor Frederick Lugard, who before then was from 1900 to 1906 the high commissioner of the northern region. To him has been credited with the system of indirect rule⁶⁹ which, from 1912 to 1918, was extended to the south. This led the background through which he in 1914 amalgamated the southern and the northern protectorates into one country. He brought together the various ethnic groups into the entity called Nigeria. These were numerous independent ethnic groups and polities who had simply shared borders. No wonder then Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Yoruba leader of the Western region of Nigeria in 1947 succinctly stated that: “Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There is no “Nigerians in the same way or sense as there are “English”, “Welsh”, or “French”. The word “Nigeria” is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria and those who do not”.⁷⁰ The entity named Nigeria brought together into a single territory, people who are of various nationalities, tribes, different religious backgrounds and different cultural heritages. Hence Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, first Prime Minister of Nigeria (1960-1966) did not mince words in a parliamentary debate before 1960 that Nigeria is not an ethnically homogenous entity that has come into existence accidentally, it was the

⁶⁶ Said Adejimiobi, Ed., *State, Economy, and Society in the Post-Military Nigeria*: USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 7.

⁶⁷ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 51.

⁶⁸C.F., Ibid. 51.

⁶⁹ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Bloomington, USA: Indiana University Press, 2009, 31.

⁷⁰ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*. London. Simon and Schuster UK Ltd: 2011, 8. Confer also Obafemi Awolowo, *Part to Nigeria Freedom*, London: Faber: 1947 quoted by Isaac O. Albert in an Article , *The Sociocultural Politics of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts, in Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria* eds. Ernest E. Uwazie et al, USA, Lexington Books, 1999, 73.

outcome of the imperialism of Britain, thus he said: “Many deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one....This is wrong”. *So he further stated*; “I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial”.⁷¹ Nigeria has as a country about four hundred ethnic nationalities and with a huge variety of cultures as well as languages.⁷²

This hobbled foundation generated on Nigeria some central or basic difficulties. Hence Nigeria lacks a cohesive integration of her various cultural and different nationalities to this present time. Besides, Nigeria as a result lacks essentially, adequate evolvement of true sense of national identity needed for a proper commitment to develop into a true nationhood.

This same sentiment was echoed by John Campbell; a former United States of American Ambassador to Nigeria that “Nigeria is hobbled by itself and by its history”⁷³. This statement captures the content and the mode of this section and describes aptly the case of the root of religious conflict in Nigeria. Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1948 underscored this concern that ever since “1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any signs of willingness to unite”.⁷⁴ Thus for Balewa the Nigeria nationhood was just the creation of Britain. The import of Balewa’s statement is that Nigeria was nothing but an artificially constructed agglomeration of diverse nationalities and ethnicities. Nigeria was built by conquest and subjugation. The state thus never acquired any permanent legitimacy or trust from the different indigenous nationalities. There is, therefore, a constant allegiance to the kings of the indirect rules and religious affiliations that continued on to the 1960s. Allegiances such as these hugely reduced the speed of development and a durable independent nation. This thus made Nigeria into a theater itself of acrimonious rivalry for power and wealth and resource control. Within the hinterland the colonial administration nurtured the partnership of ethnic identities. Thus administrative entities were in effect constructed largely on linguistic diversities as well

⁷¹ Ibid. 73.

⁷² C.F., Ayodeji Olukujo, *Nigeria: A Historical Review cited in F. U. Okafor, New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*: (Enugu, Fourth Dimension, 1997), 12-13.

⁷³ John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*. Lanham, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011), 143.

⁷⁴ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*, Op., Cit., 8.

as on cultural linkages. These inclinations engendered struggles for resources and privileges based on these identities.⁷⁵ Nigeria's foundational root was a hobbled one. Colonization in Nigeria was through both the surrender, as a result of the threat of war and of the result of war itself. For instance, in 1887 King Jaja of Opobo who opposed the British advances to the interior of the regions for the trade in palm oil market was overthrown and exiled. Equally in this period to be precise in 1892 Ijebu was attacked and defeated.⁷⁶

Violence, conflicts and wars characterized the foundation of Nigeria. These mechanisms were always used to subdue the people into obedience to the colonial government. Treaties were entered into with threats and intimidations. These were treaties meant to force the people especially the local rulers to give up their land. They were exploited when they did cede sovereignty to the negotiators of the treaties. This therefore, was the story of the plunder and exploitation of Africa.⁷⁷ Thus Peter Cunliffe-Jones argued in his book: *My Nigeria, Five decades of Independence*, of a story documented by his Grandfather, Edward Burn: He argued that "Edward's story told how the *treaties* happened – with men going from village to village, tricking or pressuring local leaders to give up their land.⁷⁸ Further problem on this enterprise of treaties was that those who signed these treaties understood little or nothing of them and sometime signed on blank treaty forms. These were later to serve as the title of deeds of Britain's future colony of Nigeria.⁷⁹

Consequent upon the mechanism of intimidation and the tricking of people into surrender and the use of force on them, one would not wonder much on the root of the religious conflicts on Nigeria. The seed of religious conflicts does seem to have been methodically planted, after several decades of the application and use of this force system. Further to buttress this contention, in 1894 King Nana Olomu of Itsekiri of the Benin River was dethroned from his kingdom. The Oba Ovonramwen of Benin equally

⁷⁵ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, Op. Cit., 52.

⁷⁶ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 1.

⁷⁷ C.F., Peter Cunliffe-Jones, *My Nigeria: Five Decades of Independence*. USA. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 4.

⁷⁸ C.F., Ibid. 4.

⁷⁹ C.F., Thomas Pakenhan, *The Scramble for Africa. White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent From 1876 to 1912*, USA: Perennial, Harper Collins, Rep. 2003, 200 and 453.

was removed from office about the year 1897. Also the King Ologboshere in his attempt to regain the independence of Benin was forcefully dethroned and killed in 1899. Many other Kings lost their throne in the bid to resist the attempt of both tricking and intimidating them into surrendering the sovereignty of their kingdom. An example was the King of Ibanichuka of Okrika in 1898. In this same year the British colonial administration created the West African Frontier Force at Lokoja. The purpose of this establishment was to conquer and control the people of the region within the Niger-Benue confluence and far beyond.⁸⁰ Lugard who was the then first high commissioner of the northern Nigeria Protectorate used force to overcome the populace and then erected the British flag as a sign of the British ownership of the territory. In 1897 the Ilorin and the Nupe were defeated and their Emirs removed.⁸¹ The foregoing shows the extent to which the seed of crises and conflicts were sowed in Nigeria from its foundation. These conflicts weigh more heavily on Nigeria in recent times.

In 1960 as a result of much and series of struggles, Nigeria gained independence from Britain. Between, 1960-1966 Nigeria adopted a parliamentary system of government, with Abubakar Tafala Balewa as its first Prime Minister. Nigeria's birth was beset with numerous difficulties as a result of series of deep and intricate rivalries among the regions. It has to be noted that each of these regions was dominated by a major ethnic group forming its own political party. Hence, there was never a national party at all. However, the process of independence was encumbered with local rivalries and difficulties on the ground. There was no central authority to control excessive ethnic nationalism and regional autonomy that characterized the politics of 1950s.⁸² Nevertheless independence was granted. But sadly after six years, the republic failed as a result of military coup that sacked the civilian regime of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa in 1966. Since then politics has been worse, and the military leaders hijacked the Nigerian politics from 1966-1979: Aguiyi Ironsi: January 1966-July 1966; Yakubu Gowon: July 1966-July 1975; Murtala Mohammed: July 1975-February 1976; Olusegun Obasanjo: February 1976- October, 1979; Obasanjo handed over the reign of government to a civilian government that was from 1979 -1983. On December 31, 1983 the Military once again took over power and did not hand over power to civilian leaders until May 29,

⁸⁰ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria.*, Op., Cit., 13.

⁸¹ C.F., Ibid. 1-15.

⁸² C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 54.

1999, when Obasanjo took over as the elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria through a general election. Therefore out of the 53 years of the post-independence Nigeria the military reigned for 29 years.

2.1.3. The Memories of Colonial History

The amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates in 1914 was the beginning of the associated difficulties and problems of religion and politics in a territory of a heterogeneous cultural society and equally of a diversity of confessional strands, of Traditional Religion; with Christianity and Islam forming the major dominant religions of Nigeria. These various religions in a culturally diverse society that is called Nigeria developed into an aspect of the political process that engendered its own contradictions.

The legacy of the colonial administration was of two minds in scope to religions which simply presented two enormous tides which brought into existence a politico-religious system in the north to retain the old system but then the spread and expansion of Christianity in the south part of Nigeria. But instead than promoting a culture of mutual coexistence, a culture of tolerance as well as culture of understanding within the different religious groups and diverse ethnic nationalities, the colonial government rather chose to constrain Christian expansion into the Muslim areas so as not to displease the Emirs. When in 1903 the British force conquered the Sokoto Caliphate, they did not dismantle the structures of the Islamic Empire rather; it was allowed to flourish. The Islamic legal system was engaged and integrated within the colonial government's administrative system. So there was a deliberate favour granted to Islam under the indirect rule system introduced by the British colonial to the elites of Islam so as to defend Islam from the expansion of Christian missionaries.⁸³ Schools were allowed in this region for the Muslims only but non-Muslims were not admitted. Arabic schools were built in Kano to train Islamic scholars: to become magistrates in Islamic studies and laws; who could preside over Islamic marriages as well as property and inheritance issues.

⁸³ C.F., Cited in *Chima J. Korieh, Islam and Politics in Nigeria: Historical Perspective*, in *Chima J. Korieh, and G. Ugo Nwokeji Eds., Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Ogbu U. Kalu*, New York: University Press of America, 2005, 113.

The Muslim north had separate religious and political identities supported by the colonial administration. Consequent to this privilege was thus the emergence of a strong Islamic role in affairs affecting Nigeria, principally in the northern region. Furthermore it made the Muslim northern elites largely look disdainfully on the southerners. It consequently empowered Islam to sharpen its political integration, reinforce and advance its religious ideologies and identities⁸⁴; whereas the same were not accorded to the south but rather was enfeebled. It is to be noted that Southern Christians who migrated to the north were not allowed to interact with the Muslims rather were compelled to live in separated housing estate and also to educate their children in different separated schools. They were equally banned to acquire land in the north. The Muslims of the north were then taught to take the southerners as infidels and pagans, thus being forbidden to associate with them on administrative and religious basis.

The colonial administration's introduction of indirect rule in Nigeria permitted the former Islamic rulers to further continue to administer their region as it was prior to the advent of the British colonial rule thus underlining firmly their standing in the colonial administration. This exploit made the Muslim elites prominent and thus reinforced the establishment of strong geopolitical and religious north.⁸⁵ There was no level headed ground or equal opportunity given to the two sides, hence favoring Islam and became one of the sources on which religious conflicts in Nigeria had been rooted.

The mechanism of the colonial legacy of indirect rule introduced by Britain as Shadrack Gaya Best argued legitimized as well as consolidated the Jihad structure of the northern Nigeria era. It harped strongly on this structure in existence before the advent of colonial Britain that was basically Islamic. The northern traditional elites have perpetrated these structures as a strategy for the retention of political power in the region. This colonial policy of restraining or limiting minority religious groups and Christian in the Islamic north has continued till today. Its continuation occurs through the governments of these

⁸⁴ C.F., *Confer for detailed information on this, Adiele E. Afigbo in the Shadow of the Caliphate: Culture and Politics of Structure and Administration in Nigeria. Sultan Bello Hall Distinguished Lecture, University of Ibadan, 2002; Also confer G. A. Akinola, Religion and the National Question in Nigeria, Paper Presented at the Staff and Postgraduate Students Seminar, Department of History Ibadan, University of Ibadan, 2005, 4-5.*

⁸⁵ C.F., Chima J. Korieh, *Islam and Politics in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives, in Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria*, Eds., Chima J. Korieh & G. Ugo Nwokeji, New York: University Press of America, 2005, 114.

areas refusing to grant land to Christian Churches or individual Christians, land to build Churches or homes. These are further actualized for instance, in the many constraints and restrictions put on Christians seeking to acquire land and certificates of occupancy for their places of worships in states such as Sokoto, Borno, Kano and Yobe. Moreover the restrictions also apply to the teaching of religious education in the schools. Such restrictions and oppositions most often lead to religious conflicts.⁸⁶ This was the position of the Emirs who contended that the missionaries should not preach the Christian Gospel in their region. However, not until the 1930 that Evangelical Church of West Africa, then known as Sudan Interior Mission and Church Missionary Society were permitted to begin missionary work in areas such as Pategi, Zaria and Bida respectively.⁸⁷

Despite the great favors granted to the Muslim north of Nigeria, there were still agitation and the British colonial administration was under suspicion, because some Muslims considered the colonial administration and its policy as being Christianity's extension, marginalization and imposition on Islam. To them Nigeria does not characterize the hopes of the religiously heterogeneous and ethnic diversity of the people. Chima Korieh quoting Usman Muhamad Bugaje, states: "Can people of divergent and conflicting worldviews, culture and history forced under one colonial administrative unit, hardly sharing beyond the common misfortune of falling prey to British imperialism, form a nation? Is this common misfortune, which indeed they all share in it, a sufficient cohesive force to integrate and hold together these diverse groups?"⁸⁸

Colonialism and evangelization of the era contributed immensely to the problem of religious conflict in Africa and particularly in Nigeria because it refused to teach the people of Africa and Nigeria to tolerate one another as well as to love one another notwithstanding the divergent beliefs and religious associations of the people. As far as this era was concerned, it was only one's affiliation to his group that was prized. Only the members of one's group or Church merited to be loved. Thus the members of the

⁸⁶ C.F., Shadrack Gaya Best, *Religion and Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria*, in *Journal of Political Science*, Jos, Nigeria: University of Jos, Nigeria. Vol, II, No. III, 2001, 73-74.

⁸⁷ C.F., Alana E. Olu, *The Relationship Between Christians, Muslims and Afrelists in History with Particular Reference to Nigeria*, in Abubakre, R.D., Yahaya, M. T., Akanmidu, R.A., Dopamu P. Ade, et al. *Studies in Religious Understanding in Nigeria*, Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion, 1993, 209.

⁸⁸ Chima J. Korieh quoting Usman Muhamad Bugaje, in *Islam and Politics in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives*. 114.

other groups were pagans or false worshippers of gods. The preaching of the missionaries of the era inculcated into the people to premium discrimination thereby compromised the ethnic unity existing among the people. One can see today that religion has become a divisive instrument among the people; whereas the African Traditional Religions prized unity among themselves and even permitted Islam and Christianity in its environment; these two did not reciprocate this gesture of peaceful living.

African traditional religion accommodated Islam and Christianity and these were no irritation to it. The other groups were not exploited or fought against. But today the reverse is the order. They could intermarry among themselves without the risk of being ostracized from their neighbours or own people. Although it has to be stated there existed misunderstanding and tensions among the ethnic groups and in some beliefs systems; however they were not ferocious, in the magnitude and the endemic nature of the religious conflicts being experienced in this epoch in Nigeria.

2.1.4. Overview of the religious Groups in Nigeria

The religious scene of Nigeria is definitively pluralistic even prior to the advent of Colonial Britain and before the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914.⁸⁹ Indeed, among the various tribes of Nigeria there was a high fostering of religious attitudes.⁹⁰ In fact, this was more clearly epitomized among the Yoruba ethnic nationality such that it stimulated a guarantee to cultural adaptation to confront those who possibly will seek to be more narrow-minded or one-sided⁹¹ and as was also the case in many other parts of Nigeria. Certainly, in Nigeria, religion and politics mingle so much and are “bedfellows.” The relationship between the religions

⁸⁹C.F., Chukwudi Anthony Njoku, *Economy, Politics and the Theological Enterprise in Nigeria*, in, eds., Chima J. Korieh and G. Ugo Nwokeji, *Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honour of Ogbu U. Kalu*, New York: University Press of America, 2005, 142; Nigeria belonged to various religious attitudes before the jihad of Usman dan Fodio which took place from 1804-1810. This was a holy war declared by Usman dan Fodio (known then by the name Shehu Sheikh. Its purpose was to convert many of the people who belonged to the religions outside of Islam. Furthermore the over 250 various nationalities of Nigeria before the advent of the colonial administration in Nigeria had equally different religious beliefs and languages of their own, Cf., A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: A Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012, 8; Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge: University Press, 2008, 4.

⁹⁰ C.F., A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, Houston, TX: African Diaspora Press, 2012, 9.

⁹¹ C.F., *Ibid.* 8.

was a social “symbiosis” as was opined by H. Gunn and quoted by Matthew Hassan Kukah, that: “in the Middle Belt areas It appears that Muslims lived with pagans in a condition of social symbiosis that no attempt was made to convert the hill peoples and that; in fact, indigenous life was little influenced by Islam until after the area was first administered”⁹². Already, religion was very much central to the people as well as being a strong aspect of the construction of the identity of the people and equally a determinant factor for deciding economic rights and power control.⁹³ The struggle for the control of the Country explains the conflicts between Christians and the Muslims.⁹⁴ Religion plays much part in the whole scenario because politicians use it to appeal to their various people and fans so as to cling to power; some political leaders enriched their businesses by instigating successful Jihads as well as building new Mosques and Quranic schools through which they recruited Islamic scholars into their courts as Toyin contended.⁹⁵ At this period in time the international Islamic world was very relevant by which some rulers engaged into pilgrimages and exchanged diplomatic briefs with Muslim leaders worldwide.⁹⁶ Then, for whoever controls the state, dominates the country in terms of dispensing political power, constructing social classes and as well as using the apparatus of power to allocate the resources of the nation to and among the members of the federating states.⁹⁷

Nigeria as has already been said elsewhere has more than 250 ethnic nationalities and each of the ethnic nationalities has its own culture, language and religious traditions.⁹⁸ However, Nigeria governmentally became a confederation that had three regions namely: the Northern region, the Western region and the Eastern region. But then in the pre-nineteenth Century, before the coming of Christianity, traditional religion and Islam

⁹² Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Quoting H. Gunn, in Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993, 1.

⁹³ C.F., Toyin Falola has argued in his Book, “*Violence in Nigeria*”: *The Crises of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, that religion and the State were interlinked prior to the arrival of colonial Britain. Indeed, the local bodies at the period were organized around rituals of their indigenous religions, Toyin Falola, Op., Cit., 50.

⁹⁴ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 49.

⁹⁵ C.F., Ibid. 25.

⁹⁶ C.F., Ibid.

⁹⁷ C.F., Ibid. 49.

⁹⁸ C.F., Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, Op., Cit., 76.

were predominant in the religious Scene of northern Nigeria.⁹⁹ But with the engagement of Shehu Usman¹⁰⁰ Dan Fodio's Jihad of 1804 to 1817 in the north of Nigeria, Islam cemented its strong stand on the regions under the Sokoto Caliphate, the establishment of this through Usman dan Fodio. This region stretched from the state brought under the governance of the Hausa states down to the provinces of the former Borno and to the areas of Oyo's control in the southwest Nigeria.¹⁰¹

2.1.4.1. Christianity

Before the advent of Islam in Nigeria or more in particular the Northern region of Nigeria, Traditional Religions were in the dominance. Although Islam's advent conveyed some deep changes on the traditional religious landscape with the help of its jihad, however, it did not utterly get rid of the religions. It hugely weakened them continuously. Conversely in the southern region of Nigeria the penetration and influence of Islam was halted or at best, its presence and impact was minimal. Traditional Religions had their impact progressively reserved, even though there were some converts to Christianity often the adherents would slip back to the traditional religions.¹⁰² However the arrivals of the Christian Missionaries and their employment of extra-religious tools and techniques to win converts considerably altered the religious scene of the southern part of Nigeria.¹⁰³ During this era and in this region was the role which historical, socio-economic as well as purely religious factors played to lead the southerners more principally the Igbos to embrace Christianity. Hence Cyril C. Okorochoa opined that what led to the massive conversion of the south, especially the Igbos of Nigeria is the seeking of power.¹⁰⁴ Continuing Okorochoa argued that this power

⁹⁹ C.F., Gabriel Maduka Okafor, *Development of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal of the Religious Forces of Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1992, 18-19.

¹⁰⁰ C.F., *In this work I shall use the Name "Usman" for Usman dan Fodio. Indeed, it is to be noted that the name is also spelt in some books as Uthman dan Fodio. The latter only appears in quotations in this work.*

¹⁰¹ C.F., Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 61.

¹⁰² C.F., Augustine S. O. Okwu, *Igbo Culture and the Christian Missions 1857-1957: Conversion in Theory and Practice*, New York: University Press of America, 2010, 88-89.

¹⁰³ C.F., Ikenga R. A. Ozigbo, *An Evaluation of Christian Pioneering Techniques with Particular Reference to Nigeria*, in, *The Nigeria Journal of Theology*, Vol. 8. No. 1, 1994, 43-62.

¹⁰⁴ C.F., Cyril C. Okorochoa, *The Meaning of Religious Conversion in Africa: The Case of the Igbo of Nigeria*, USA: Grower Publishing Company Ltd., 1987, 197.

is found in their “Primal Religion”¹⁰⁵ and “this power” is not arbitrary or political power, but this mysterious something which makes living a dynamic adventure and gives the Igbo their characteristic push in whatever they are doing. Once a man believes that he has acquired this power, then he is unable to accept that anything can be impossible for him”.¹⁰⁶ The procedure of this power according to him spans every domain of existence. It was this power they sought in Christianity that led to their massive conversion into Christianity. For this power in the people’s primal religion is of the nature that “if a religious form or engagement does not produce enough power to assure the people of its effectiveness and viability in the face of any contingency, it is soon given up and a more effective one is sought”¹⁰⁷. This was the secret of the reception of the Igbo to Christianity. It is consequent upon this central distinctive of the Igbo primal religion and their sense of God, that they are able to act, to change by way of adjustment, flexibility, renaming and redefinition of value and principles.¹⁰⁸

Another important characteristic of the religious scene of Nigeria was that Christianity came in, in the very cloak of the reformation that took place in Europe in the era. That is to say that, Christianity came in its denominational and fragmented forms. The Irish and British missionaries in the British controlled territories of Nigeria came with their various nationalistic Christianity which consequently boosted their religious secularized nationalism; hence the desperate rivalries which Felix Ekechi documented in his book “Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914”, that characterized their missionary activities in the various regions of Nigeria. And the relationships amongst these missionaries were characterized by huge common suspicion and hostility.¹⁰⁹ It is to be noted that the several evident conflicts amidst the different Christian missionaries which canvassed for new converts into their denominations brought visible rivalry within the Nigerian religious scene and hugely engendered and planted the bedrock of religious conflicts in Nigeria. As a child in the late 1960s down to the early 1980, I experienced some heavy religious rivalries and conflicts amongst some denominations and in some circumstances Protestants and Catholics could not reach any agreements

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 206.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 197.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 206.

¹⁰⁸C.F., Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ C.F., See, *Felix Ekechi, Missionary Enterprise and Rivalry in Igboland 1857-1914*, London: Frank Cass, 1971.

with regard to boundaries, and in most other cases called themselves unprinted names which the children of the era learnt and used.

2.1.4.2. Islam

It is believed that Islam was first and foremost introduced into Nigeria, particularly to Bornu region of the Northern Nigeria in the eleventh century and to the Hausa regions between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Indeed, Chima J. Korieh attested in these words: “The spread of Islam in Nigeria dates back to the eleventh century, when it first appeared in the Kanem Borno in the northeast of the country. Later it emerged in Zaria and Kano in Hausa land through the activities of the Moslem trading community of the Dyulas, who made their way across the trade routes of the Sahara desert as the Trans-Saharan trade came to be conducted increasingly by Moslems”.¹¹⁰ At this period Islam nonetheless was the religion of the elites, the city dwellers or a class religion which belonged to the ruling classes.¹¹¹ Islam in this instance was patronized to certain degree by the town dwellers in the commercial centers most particularly by the aristocracy who were particularly anxious to hold on to their status and the control of the economic system. The majority of the people of the rural areas were not enthusiastic about it. Thus, it was a huge dynamic of social breakup among the people. The common people rejected it and confined themselves to the traditional religions; whereas the leaders - the chiefs - continued being nominal Muslims. Islamic rituals were absolved by the African Traditional Religion; consequently Islam and the indigenous customs and religion were mixed up and lived together.

It was on account of this that the jihad of Usman took place. He undertook the jihad to sanitized Islam and to transform and rid it of the syncretism of the traditional religion of the Hausas.¹¹² There was the background contention that although Islam in the Hausaland has been for about three hundred years before the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio; yet it did not however stand firm. The leaders of Islam then, the kings only retained the Islamic

¹¹⁰Chima J. Korieh, *Islam and Politics in Nigeria: Historical Perspectives*, in, eds., Chima J. Korieh and G. Ugo Nwokeji, *Religion, History, and Politics in Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Ogbu U. Kalu*, New York: University Press, 2005, 112.

¹¹¹ C.F., Ibid. 62-63.

¹¹² C.F., Ibid. 62.

scholars in the courts. That was purely for administrative drives.¹¹³ The Dan Fodio's jihad was very successful that it created the Sokoto Caliphate¹¹⁴ which extended into the region areas of the northern Nigeria. And on this, Maduka Okafor noted the jihads of Usman were aided by the prevailing state of Islam, social, economic, political and the moral state of affairs in this region then. Accordingly he wrote:

“the very corrupt nation of judges in the Hausaland and the indiscriminate, oppressive and frequently excessive imposition of taxes was one of the worst grievances of the people against their rulers. Therefore the Fulanis saw the taxes on their cattle as unjust and a violation of the principles of sharia. All these were to bring together the commoners and the Fulanis under the banner of Usman. And above all the religious zeal to restore Islam to its original status purged of all heresies and accretions as it was practiced and believed to have existed in the time of the prophet Muhammed and the first four Calips - state in which social justice, administered in the light of the sharia by God fearing rulers, favoured Usman in the movement that brought the whole Hausaland under the umbrella of Islam.”¹¹⁵

The Dan Fodio's enthusiasm and objectives were aided at this epoch according to Maduka by the movement of a group known as the Mahdi.¹¹⁶ The Mahdi is a group regarded as the just one who believed in the reformation of the world, to eradicate injustice, to guarantee prosperity, peace and revive and bring about the victory of Islam in the Hausaland and the world over.¹¹⁷ The triumph of Islam was further supported by the moral, political, religious, economic and social decadence at the time. Therefore the spread of Islam was a direct consequence of the standards that were at its lowest receding tide. Consequently Dan Fodio achieved his goal of a theocratic state based on Islamic principles. These principles underline: 1. The Islamic Umma— a body of Islamic believers; regarded as Islamic community,¹¹⁸ and in the community there is a created system which united religious and political powers in one figure and the community was required to profess her faith : which is the *shahaba*¹¹⁹. 2. There is the *Ulama* – a body of Islamic scholars or a body of learned Islamic scholars. It is the highest council of

¹¹³ C.F., Gabriel Okafor, *Development and Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 31.

¹¹⁴ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 25.

¹¹⁵ Gabriel Okafor, *Development and Christianity and Islam in Modern Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 31.

¹¹⁶ C.F., *The Mahdi is a prophet, an apocalyptic one who had been promised in many prophecies as the end-time Muslim leader who would bring justice to the world.*

¹¹⁷ C.F., Ibid. 31.

¹¹⁸ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 71.

¹¹⁹C.F., Ibid.

state.¹²⁰ This body is to ensure that the leadership supply comes from it. The leadership goes to the most learned in the group who succeeds the emir. 3. A third aspect is the the sharia - as the laws to guide the activities of the state.¹²¹ 4. A fourth aspect involves the “Mashwara” – a system of public opinion consultations that are exercised on mashura - that is consultation, it is merely through “ittifaq” - that means agreement of scholars by a process of the “ijtihad” – it is by means of deductive reasoning – The deductive reasoning is on issues the Quran and the “Hadith” – which was orthodoxy in general - have no clear provisions as guides to the public action and behaviours.

The spread of Islam then went as far as the Republic of the Cameroons, the Cameroon side that had borders with Nigeria at that time and was a part of Nigeria, and the jihad created theocratic states that formed the Sokoto Caliphate. These were a sort of free federating states which the Sultan of Sokoto governed, but of note is that a descendant of the Othman Dan Fodio takes the mantle of the leadership. The “jihad” hugely broke up political boundaries and weakened ethnic loyalties and transferred it to the religious leader. Nevertheless, it united all the Hausa states by making Islam the official religion of the majority. The Islam practiced was very exclusive and its opposition to the traditional religions was great. So it was diametrically opposed to any kind of accommodation of the Traditional Religion. Under the jihad a number of minor ethnic nationalities like the Kilba were subjugated to the Sokoto Caliphate; whereas some others such as the Birom priced and kept to their independence.

These non-Muslim groups who maintained their independence and their opposition to the Sokoto Caliphate were nonetheless forced into embracing it. This indeed, sheds light to the problem of religious conflict between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, especially in this region. However these many tribal nationalities that did not consent to Islam nevertheless came under the control of the emirate and they were constrained to pay tributes according to the Islamic laws (the Sharia laws) to the Emirs and the most awful of all they were held as investments for slave pillaging. The British colonial administration from the foregoing only recognized the status of the tribal ethnic nationalities in so far as they were within the Emirate created and controlled by the Emirs. The Emirs, therefore, selected the District heads, the village heads as well as the

¹²⁰ C.F., Ibid. 74 and 101.

¹²¹ C.F., Ibid. 74.

Ward heads that were themselves Muslims or had to convert to Islam in order to be in the structure of the administration. This underlined the facts that direct rule was established and exercised in the non-Muslim areas. Nonetheless, some of these tribal nationalities absconded from the Emirate scheme through taking of refuge to the hills.

The British colonial administration represented by Lord Lugard, the first British colonial governor to Nigeria in 1903 made a promise to Waziri, the then Sultan of Sokoto not to interfere with the Islamic religion and its law. With this made term Lugard confirmed the Emir into the office. The Emir on his part agreed to abide and be guided by the British Residents in future. Besides, the ban of slave trade and the phasing off of the domestic slavery stood. This placed the Emir at the wheel of a discourse of domination and power. This agreement boosted continued influence and affected the status of Islam in its relationships to the other religious groups. It further stated even though the chief commissioner was to appoint the Sultan and the Emirs, however, the Emirs thus appointed were to continue to rule over the people as they were doing before the fall of the town. They will continue to take taxes as they are approved by the High Commissioner. Consequently the Alkalis and Emirs will continue to hold their law courts as before and the government would not in any way intervene in the Islamic religion.¹²²

This agreement shaped the origin of the indirect rule method adopted by the colonial administration in the northern regions of Nigeria. The promise of non-interference into the Islamic religion thus became the official policy of the British colonial administration; with its far reaching consequences on the status of the other religions particularly Traditional Religion and Christianity. The prohibition of evangelization in the Muslim areas for the non-Muslim undoubtedly gave Islam much reputation and aided its expansion in the region.¹²³ Christian missionary work or activities were banned in the region. In order to take on to any Christian missionary activities to the region of the non-Muslims living within the Emirate express authorization of the Emirs was absolutely required. The permissions were usually not given. Therefore the Christian

¹²² C.F., Ikenga E. Metuh, ed., *Muslim Resistance to Missionary Penetration of Northern Nigeria, 1857-1960: A Missiological Interpretation*, *Mission Studies, Journal of IAMS*, III/2: 1986, 32.

¹²³ C.F., Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op., Cit., 30.

missionary works were carried outside the Emirates in the villages that sprang up outside and around the Muslim areas such as Kano, Sokoto, Bauchi, and the Kastina.

The pact between the British colonial and the Fulani lords as already noted brought about the indirect rule system. Even though the authority was in the hands of the British, the native local authority controlled the people. And the Emirs had the authority to distribute land and levied the poll and animal taxes. Moreover, with the sultan they were of the highest judicial echelon. They were accountable for the nomination and promotion of the judges – known as the alkali taken after the Hausa word for al kadi - they equally administered the courts in these areas. They had the powers to arbitrate at will on any ongoing trials, commence lawsuits, charges and above all the reversal of judgments.¹²⁴ This system was a respite to the British colonial government who had to shift the responsibility of engagement away from the people's way of life. With this policy of non-interference or minimal interference Islam took up the Centre stage of dominance amongst the people, even those who were not adherent of the religion. This power-sharing procedure was advantageous to both the Fulanis and colonial administration; for the Fulani, it advanced their influence and authority in several aspects and for the British it already relieved them of the responsibility to engage in the people's life.

This understanding and policy, although seemed to have given some respite at the time were dynamite or a time bomb which have to explode in the future and the bedrock of the religious conflicts that are being witnessed in today's Nigeria. This is seen on the background of the Ethnic nationalities who had strove in sustaining their independence during the entire nineteenth century but were now subjugated to the Islamic authorities at the command of the British colonial administration. The ethnic nationality of the Kataf and some other nationalities, for example were subdued under the rule of the Emir of Zaria with the attendant effect of decades of every single post in the district area being filled with the Fulani and the Hausa.¹²⁵

The outcome of such system is futured more in the region of the Middle Belt of Nigeria, although not a part of the incorporated area of the Emirates, however the colonial administration relied more effectively on the managerial staff recruited from the Fulani

¹²⁴ C.F., C. S. Whitaker, *The Politics of Tradition: Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria 1946-1966*, New Jersey: Princeton, 1970, 269-270.

¹²⁵ C.F., Joseph Schacht, *Islam in Northern Nigeria*, in, *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 8, 1956, 126-127.

and the Hausa to run the local customary native laws in these areas.¹²⁶ It is being argued that they were more atoned to the bidding of the administration because of the pact already existing amongst them – the policy of non-interference or minimal interference. Reinforcement this point Lieutenant Colonel Beddington as quoted by Johannes Harnischfeger emphasized that: “for the British it was often easier to engage the friendly Fulani as district and village heads. Communicating with them was easier, both sides held similar colonial attitudes, and it appeared that the Fulani – like the British – had been destined to rule”: thus they “feel that the Fulani and the English races have much in common. Both have had a long experience and special aptitude for administering their own and other people’s affairs”.¹²⁷ A group that has enjoyed this system of dominance for so long cannot relinquish it easily; they will like to hang on it and fight to retain it. Accordingly, this is the case of Nigeria with the systemic religious conflict, more especially in the Northern Nigeria. Moreover the group that is so subjected and dominated in such systemic order would equally subsequently want their independence. For as in the past almost all available post and positions were filled with the Fulani and their allies. This is made complex and is in line with the Islamic principles and traditions of the sharia; for which judicial matters and political power were never separated. The sultan and his Emirs retained the power for capital punishment in the Emirates.¹²⁸ This constant fight was conveyed during the struggle for Nigerian Independence. It gave rise to the formation of several political parties in the Middle Belt. It was the birth of the movement for the creation of the Middle Belt State from the existing Northern Nigeria.¹²⁹ The petition was warranted against religious backgrounds. The fear of religious persecution and discrimination of the minority ethnic nationalities in the north by the Muslim Majority are real. Moreover the aggressive and invasive mentality utilized by Islam in the eighteenth down to the nineteenth centuries has continued to motivate most religious and political leaders to exploit Nigeria and thus push the country into religious conflicts and tear the people apart. Religion has often been used in Nigeria to grab power by desperate power hungry politicians and to force for change because of

¹²⁶ C.F., Johannes Harnischfeger, *Democratization and Islamic Law: The Sharia Conflict in Nigeria*, New York/Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008, 52.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 52.

¹²⁸ C.F., Ibid. 53.

¹²⁹ C.F., Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *The Decades of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*, in, *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology: Power, Authority and Leadership, Africa and Christian*, (EANT Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians) Vol. 6, No. 1, 1994, Nigeria: Enugu, 1994, 74.

the popular dissatisfaction. Indeed, the use and manipulate religious symbols and values so as to consolidate powers. In Nigerian history undeniably politics and religion have been “bedfellows” to be grabbed and misused for personal gains . It has become part of the identity structure and means for capturing power and a determining factor of economic influence. Toyin Falola captured this when he argued that:

“Underlying the riots in Nigeria has been the issue of religious dominance. Proponents of Christianity or Islam seek to unseat the rival religion, to impose their own values, and to control the state. This has become a major problem, and the struggle for political power has come to entail the manipulation of the symbols and beliefs of Islam and Christianity. Indeed, religion has become so important in recent history ... of modern Nigeria”.¹³⁰

2.1.4.3. Individual scenarios of religiously motivated conflict in Nigeria

This sub section discusses the scenario of particular individually inspired religious conflict in Nigeria. Undoubtedly the conscious acceptance, awareness and reality of divergent religious beliefs as well as values, objectives and attitudes of persons and groups in their relation with God or whatever they believe in and the accommodation of these existential divergences known as religious pluralism is a treasure highly priced and cherished in any society for its development and progress. This is a premium that symbolizes our world today. This value should exist in any society for growth. There is indeed in Nigeria religious differences, but sadly there is lack of respect for others religions and recognition not duly accorded to it. Such a situation is partly responsible for the reoccurring religious conflicts between the major religions in Nigeria. Hence Muslim-Christian rapport had established huge hostile casualties. This is unmistakably apparent in the several occurrences of religious conflicts and crises seen and chronicled across Nigeria. Such religious conflicts and violence assumed basically an alarming proportion more evidently and easily since 1980s. The chronicles of the scope of the Religious conflicts underline the endemic nature of the conflicts.

¹³⁰ Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 10 .

However, before independence there have been instances of religious conflicts in Nigeria arising from the Usman dan Fodio's Jihad politics and religious communities of the northern Nigeria of 1754 – 1817. This heralded the conquest of the Hausa states in the northern Nigeria,¹³¹ and the imposition of Islam on the Hausa ruling dynasties. However, the Hausa in turn used their culture to reconquer the Fulani through absorption. Shedrack Gaya Best argued that this assimilation had led to the Hausa/Fulani labeling. Moreover, both have very distinct identities and this designation Hausa/Fulani also refers to the power elite that the British colonial nurtured between 1900 and 1960 in northern Nigeria.¹³² During the first republic of the 1960 – 1966, was the internal spitefulness and apathy of external mutual suspicion.¹³³ And thereafter, Nigeria has been torn apart by endemic bouts of these Religious Conflicts mechanisms between Muslims and Christians.

Indeed, Okafor observed the case of the 1967- 1970 civil war nevertheless has the ingredients of religious propaganda. The war in this regard was a resistance and fight against Muslim expansionism. Furthermore there was the case of the 1970 – 1975 of the regime of General Yakubu Gowon, when there was a cold war in which Christian Mission schools in the southern Nigeria were all taken over by the Gowon administration whereas in the north the government preserved and funded Koranic schools. In addition to the chronicles of religious conflicts was the Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo regime of 1976-1979, which brought about the Sharia controversy during the 1979 constitutional drafting. The controversy was whether the sharia penal legal system was to be allowed into the Nigerian criminal legal system. The Sharia controversy is always a huge reoccurring problem which has devoid resolution because the elite and politicians employ it for self-seeking interests. As long as it continued to serve this purpose for them, it may continue to hold the country and its development to nothing.

In actual fact, it has been argued as the reason since 1980 -1992 were marked by numerous religious conflicts. In Kano, for instance the Muslim sect called Matatsine in

¹³¹ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op Cit., 25-26.

¹³² C.F., Shedrack Gaya Best, *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State, Nigeria*: Ibadan, Nigeria Spectrum Books Limited, 2007, 9-10.

¹³³ C.F., See F.U. Okafor, Ed, *New Strategies For Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*, Enugu, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1997.

December 1980, October 1982, February 1984 and April 1985¹³⁴ attacked all they regarded as infidels and pagans as well as some Muslims who do not belong to their sect. Several hundreds of people lost their lives.¹³⁵ There was the 1982 Bulunkutu - Maiduguri religious conflict which was organized and carried out by some escaped members of the Matatsine group from Kano. In this same year in Kano was the burning of Christian Churches, which were allegedly burnt by protesting Muslims against Christian Church building near a Mosque. Besides, there was also in 1984 the religious conflict of the Jimeta – Gongola caused by a vestige of the Matatsine from Bulumkutu. In Gombe 1985 occurred another uprising from Maitatsine fragment group. Other series of conflicts happened at the Dan Fodio University of Sokoto in 1986; at the University of Zaria in Kaduna State in 1987; at the Bayero University of Kano 1989: In 1991 were the Kastina, Bauchi as well again Kano religious conflicts, the Jalingo conflict of 1992. Huge loss of lives and properties were the casualties of the conflicts.¹³⁶ Furthermore from 1994 down to 2004 *and up to 2013 the* situation has never gone better, rather has worsened and more religious conflicts have been experienced in Nigeria.¹³⁷ Since the year 2009 up to today Nigeria has experienced the violence unleashed on her by Muslim sect called Boko Haram. It abhors what it calls western Education. It has invaded Maiduguri and Bauchi Towns all in the northern part of Nigeria. It is agitating for the implementation of Sharia Legal System in Nigeria but with more emphasis on the northern part of the country. It is equating western Education with Christianity. It is to be noted just as Lai Olurode succinctly observed that in contemporary Nigeria “religious differences in a way coincide with spatial configuration” and this “makes religion” in Nigeria “a central element for the constitution of social differentiation and relations.”¹³⁸ For this reason, a rising inadequacy of social and economic situations exposed huge part of the people of Nigeria to conflict and violence appear to have intensified rightly in nature and stroke.

¹³⁴ C.F., Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbour*, (New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2008), 17.

¹³⁵ C.F., *Confer F. Okoye, ed., Impact of Religious and Ethnic Conflicts on Women and Children in Northern Nigeria*. Kaduna, Human Rights Monitor, 2000.

¹³⁶ C.F., *See Popinter Magazine. An Annual Magazine Published by the Nigerian Association of Philosophy Students. Owerri, Seat of Wisdom, Vol.13, 2000/2003 edition, 28.*

¹³⁷ C.F., Patrick Lambert Udoma, *The Cross and the Crescent: A Christian Response to Two Decades of Islamic Affirmation in Nigeria*, (London: Saint Austin Press, 2002), 143-152.

¹³⁸ Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *Assessment of Government's Formal Responses to Ethnic/Religious Riots, 1980-199s in Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, eds., Ernest E. Uwazie, Isaac O. Albert and Godfrey N. Uzoigwe Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 1999, 122.

This perspective informed the choice of Kaduna and Kano as individual scenes of religiously enthused Zones; the problems they raise and the likely dynamics that have brought them about. The frequency and the ease with which these Religious conflicts occur tend to betray the impression that religious conflicts do appear to be seemingly an integral aspect of the political system of Nigeria of the Nigeria society. But then it is to be noted that the inability on the part of Nigeria to put to control Nigeria's contact with international fundamentalist religious groups around its international borders has exacerbated the situation. Thus, the aftermaths are more often than not seen on the Christian-Muslim relation in Nigeria chronicling myriads of acrimonious scenes and acidic occurrences of violent religious conflicts.

2.2. Reflexive deliberations

Prior to Nigeria's Independence, the Middle Belt complained of the threat of Islam, that was forcing them to embrace Islam and more in particular compelling them to be tried in the Alkali courts. This was further to reinforce their petition for the Middle Belt state creation. But then the complaints were taken up by a commission of Enquiry set up by the British colonial to look into the fears of the minority ethnic nationalities. The demand was, however, by the Enquiry rejected. Nevertheless the agitations continued even after Independence.

What then was responsible for the British colonial administration's refusal to permit Christian missionary work in the north of Nigeria? Lugard Frederick contended that he was not against Christian missionary activities in the northern Nigeria.¹³⁹ However, Ayandele argued that Lugard although believed that Christianity would bring more dividend than would Islam and Christianity was probably to make people more loyal to the British administration than would Islam.¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, there was the fear on one hand within the British Colonial administration of conflicts of interests that such a mission would create in a predominantly Muslim area with the Fulani society. Therefore, the British administration was out to promote those interests that coincide with its own goal, and not to promote the interests of the missionaries unconditionally. On the other

¹³⁹ C.F., E. A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*, London, 1966, 126; Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, London: Routledge, 1965, 586.

¹⁴⁰ C.F., Ajayi J. F. Ade, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of the New Elite*, London: Longmans 1965.

hand the missionaries were promoting the growth of self-consciousness of the national people through education. They emphasized the fundamental equality rights of the Africans as human beings with the colonial British. But then it has being contended the the Missionaries identified with the work of the British colonial in other to continue to carry out their work of Christian expansion; that are meant to uproot the continuing presence of those forms in the society and the customs which they deem were not good for Christian life. Hence the needed the assistance of the administration to break down walls of a society that object to their missions.¹⁴¹

However, in the “Sabon Gari” (strangers` quarters) area of Kano that was populated mainly by southerners who were immigrant workers, Christianity was allowed. This area is Christian and till today the Christian parts of the town of Kano. This section of the town is very often the epicenter of endemic constant attacks. It is a high flash point area of religious conflict in the region. The background to this problem stems from the British colonial administration`s policy of discouragement of the movement of the non-Muslim migrants into the main Muslim region cities thus restricting them to the “Sabon” “Gari” section. In addition to this was the Indirect rule policy. Indirect rule policy or system was a British colonial administrative system of governance by which the native or local rulers or chiefs were considered and involved as an important part of the apparatus of government.¹⁴² It is a kind of pact between the colonial British administration and the traditional ruler of the region.¹⁴³ This contract was not between equals. Actually there were senior partners and junior partners. Integration of the people, though Christians who came to the north as a result of the development of the railway lines; constructed from Lagos to Kano, between 1898 and 1912 and the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 was lacking as a result of the policy. Indeed, these Nigerians from the southern part of the country were responding to the developing economic opportunities in Kano, Kaduna and to Zaria. Initially the prospect of interaction and integration was huge and was happening between the consequential productively plurality of ethnic nationalities. But then it did not mature into the right ethnic nationalities integration in all cases because, the ruling class of the Caliphate

¹⁴¹ C.F., Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op., Cit., 29-30.

¹⁴² P. K. Tibenderana, *The Irony of Indirect Rule in Sokoto Emirate, Nigeria 1903-1944*. *African Review Studies*, 31, 1, 1988, 67-92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/524584>; October, 2018.

¹⁴³ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary African and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1996.

period were more territorially oriented and averse to welcome strangers.¹⁴⁴ With the passage of time the lack of integration between these peoples and the locals given a bust by the British colonial era degenerated into the distinction between indigenes and the strangers which began to play much role in the political and social life of Nigerians till today. This metamorphosed into the sharpened dichotomy of the ethno-religious identities. It, in effect strengthened biased practices which keep influencing relationships in Nigeria between the Hausa-Fulani and the inhabitants of the town.¹⁴⁵

Another dimension which underlined the problem on discuss was the huge self-consciousness arose in the 1970s among the non-Muslims nationalities of the Northern Nigeria. Before this time there was the trend of assimilating them into the dominant Muslim Hausa – Fulani culture. The consciousness of the non-Muslim nationalities pursue their interest and to assert their own distinct identity different from that of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims became pronounced. This consciousness expanded into the creation of their autonomy and determination to establish themselves. The situation they faced in the region made them to embrace the Christian Church and Christian education in the mission schools that were dispersed in their ethnic localities. These groups latter, nonetheless, in the post primary schools and in Church activities and conferences they attended came together to discuss their predicaments, to chart the course to free themselves from the domination of the Hausa-Fulani Muslims. The consciousness gave birth to the identification of their identity and religious dissimilarities. Their determination ushered them into the independence era to find expression into the formation of political parties demanding to be out of the Northern region, thus the creation of a middle Belt state. They used religious grounds to vindicate their claim. Their request was so strong arising from the background fear of discrimination and persecution from the majority Muslim North, who they claim want to force all into the Muslim north.

The terrain of the Nigerian scene was changed with the emergence in 1966 of General Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State of Nigeria¹⁴⁶ and thus began the process of change.

¹⁴⁴ C.F., *Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict. Crisis Group Africa Report, No. 168, in, The International Crisis Group, Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide*, December 20, 2010, 5.

¹⁴⁵C.F., *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria, Op., Cit.,* 55; Max Siollun, *Oil, Politics and Violence: Nigeria's Military Coup Culture, 1966-1976*, New York: Algora Publishing, 2009, 151-159.

He is a Christian from the Middle Belt of the minority ethnic nationalities of the Northern Nigeria.¹⁴⁷ With his emergence came a huge change of the process of the states' creation in Nigeria as well as a turning point within the Christian-Muslim relationship and with it, however, the consequent transformation in the demand for autonomy of the minority ethnic nationalities of the north of Nigeria as well as in the southern part of the country, Nigeria. It was the creation in Nigeria of twelve states then, thereby abrogating the former three regions creation of the Northern, Western and Eastern regions. The process continued with the emergence of General Murtala Mohammed as head of state following the overthrow of General Gowon in 1975. So with General Murtala Mohammed regime (1975 -1976) came the nineteen States creation, although General Olusegun Obasanjo assumed power following the assassination of Murtala in 1976 in a military coup, Obasanjo's regime lasted until 1979. Furthermore, the process of States creation continued in 1987 under the charge of General Ibrahim Babangida to twenty one States 1985-1993. Moreover the States creation reached its peak to 36 States within the time Sanni Abacha presided over the affairs of the country as Head of State (1994-1998).¹⁴⁸ During the period of the processes of the States creations the Christian minorities of the Middle Belt – that is of the north – and the minorities of the south got their determination fulfilled. An analysis of the States creation showed that: there are now since after the civil war (1967-1970), 19 States in the Northern Nigeria instead of the twelve States of the 1967. This has greatly altered the platform relationships between the minority ethnic nationalities and the majority Hausa and the Fulani. For now the minority –the Christians minorities - of the North have about six to seven States. They have now considerable Christian Majority and equally have Christian Governors and legislatures.

There were about five States that have some weighty Christian minority and with eight States of principally Muslims that have also a generous Christian presence. This structuring has substantially fractured the regional platforms of the majority ethnic nationalities and hence eroded the dominance of the majority ethnic groups. It is therefore clearly that this creation of the northern region into the nineteen States weakened the Hausa and the Fulani hegemony of the vision of the one North. To be underlined here is the issue that although the restructuring did not create the minorities'

¹⁴⁷ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent Since Independence*, Op., Cit., 201.

¹⁴⁸ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 55-56.

majority in the north, it however, brought about the emergence of the reduction of the Hausa and the Fulani power domination on the minority ethnic nationalities –the Christian minority. This fact is buttressed with the creation in 1987 of Katsina state that in effect incorporated some part of Kaduna state in the north which had lowered the proportion of the Hausa and Fulani ethnic nationalities that lived there. This was to my thinking the reason why the late M.K.O. Abiola won the annulled national election of 1993, conducted by General Ibrahim Babangida.

It is, however, important to state that this procedure or the fracturing of the region undoubtedly resolved some problems and in effect created new ones, such as the issue of religious conflict, which engages us here. Nonetheless, in states with substantial Christian majority, Muslims who do not accept the loss of their power of dominance feel unsatisfied and in effect cause religious upheavals or create religious violence. On the other hand, few Christians in the Muslims dominated states feel also upset.¹⁴⁹ This is the background the reason for the septic religious conflicts in Nigeria. These reforms have significantly altered the balance of power and eroded the power of the Emirs in the emirate structure of their power and privileges of power enjoyed in the colonial era, now that they no longer influence the formation of the governments or dictate who takes up government appointments.

2.2.1. Some Individual Scenes of religiously enthused Conflict- Kano

Religious Conflicts in Nigeria has consistently centered on some central zones. These zones have a vast area with several millions of people with and from different shades of backgrounds who are living alongside each other. They are zones of the country with poor record of community management relations. Indeed, in several ways in the past, has been remarkably a zone with the habit of sustained nonexistence of religious conflict. But in the last several years has become the bed of consistent brutal and violent religious conflicts. For the reasons above, Kano and Kaduna have been remarkable. I shall therefore, elucidated this with the choice of Kano and the Kaduna as some of the individual scenes of religiously enthused conflict zones which are the next consideration of this conversation.

¹⁴⁹ C.F., *African Report, Northern Nigeria: Background to Conflict, No. 168, 2010. December, 20, 2010.*

2.2.1.1 Kano

In Nigeria religion and politics are most often mixed and twisted to play vigorous tasks and their influences had forked into all aspects of the socio-economic growth of Nigeria. These have fed the religious and ethnic sentiments of Nigerians to breed several religious conflicts in the country. Politics has since after independence played all along religious inclinations that breed many religious conflicts. In this regard has the Northern Nigeria especially Kano been besieged by several endemic religious conflicts. Kano since the 1980s, has suffered religious conflicts which stretched over into about three states in Northern Nigeria in the sequence of five years and convulsed them since then. Much has been attached to these sentiment and inclination that virtually always, the intra and the inter region disunity or polarity along religions and political strokes are frequently noticeable in vital strategy choices by decision makers in Nigerian.

Undeniably, since religion has a solid power on the social and moral aspects of the people in Nigeria religious die-hards, fundamentalists and ambitious rich politicians use it to manipulate and exploit the people for their own benefits. Such was the case and situation in Kano, and with Marwa Muhammad and those he recruited to fight the uprising of the Maitatsine of the 1980 as well as the Bornu and the Kaduna religious conflicts of 1981 and 1983 respectively, when he used the almajiri pupils and the graduates of the almajiri education system. There has been since then, a polarized climate of increasing mobilization of religious identities behind the sectional struggles over the implementation of the federal character principle. It has to be underlined that however, for the most part, religion has become increasingly vital in Nigeria and together with an emergent fundamentalist tendency not only in Islam but as well as in Christianity. Indeed, the rush of politicians to patronize religion so as to win elections and political party contestants also rushed to Imams and supposed prophets and pastors to get prayed for, and receive prophecies of winning elections and to sway the electorates to their sides as the chosen of God to win elections to govern the people. Combined with this was the socio-economic vicissitudes that has taken place in Nigeria since independence and with the disillusionment arising from the political development, the mistrust on the politicians' leadership competence to solve these problems in the country. Consequently Islamic extremists preachers and teachers usurped the trends and saw democracy as increasingly treachery of Islam.

Consequently, there began a series of major religious conflicts in Kano of which the Yan-Awaki area was one, in 1980, and precisely from 18 -29 December occurred. It was an Intra-Religious conflict between rival sects within Islam. It was a two dimensional conflict arising from Islamic fundamentalism and the political decadence as well as economic instability on the background of the 1970s, and was during the second republic regime Presidency of Alhaji Shehu Shagari¹⁵⁰ against a background of a deteriorating revenues with high redundancy rates, a political exploitation, government maladministration with its antecedent widespread materialism and a falling popular concern of morals and religious standards.¹⁵¹ It was championed by a Muslim fundamentalist teacher and Prophet, Marwa Muhammad, who claimed he came to cleanse the society that was immersed in pollution, with the fascination and attraction which appealed to the people who felt frustrated by the failure of the government to address their problems. This fundamentalist tendency, threatening as it were not only to the Muslims but equally to the non-Muslims, has hugely contributed to the reinforcement of the religious conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria.

In the midst of this trend arose Marwa Muhammed, an Islamic fundamentalist preacher, who declared himself Prophet Marwa Muhammed and the founder of the sect Maitatsine.¹⁵² He declared jihad in Kano 1980 with the endeavor to take over the big Mosque in Kano; but he was not accepted by the orthodox Muslims, for his teachings were never in agreement with them. Muslims fundamentalists cherish, encourage and pursue jihads as legitimate avenue of proselytizing and forcing people to convert to Islam. Thus they (Marwa and his followers) engaged themselves fighting some sort of jihad, a cause they absolutely pursued and believed in. According to them, in jihad, “all who die or suffer in it are committing *a shabada* (a total submission to *Allah* and his messenger and dying to defend the cause of one’s faith and liberty)”.¹⁵³ This was the

¹⁵⁰ Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*. Op., Cit., 138. See as well Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian Muslim Relations in Africa: The cases of Northern Nigeria and Tanzania Compared*, 95-96, 98.

¹⁵¹ C.F., Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op. Cit., 94.

¹⁵² C.F., See Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *Government’s Response to Ethnic/Religious Riots, in Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, Ed. by Ernest E. Uwazie, Isaac O. Albert and Godfrey N. Uzoigwe Lexington Books Boston: Maryland, 1999, 124-128; See as well Bala J. Takaya, *The Foundation of Religious Intolerance in Nigeria: Background for Understanding the Maitatsine Phenomenon*, in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology, EANT.*, Vol. 2. No. 2-Vol. 3.No.1, Nov. 1989-April 1990, 31-43.

¹⁵³ Bala J. Takaya, quoting Ahmadu Usman in *The Foundations of Religious Intolerance in Nigeria: Backgrounds for Understanding the Maitatsine Phenomenon*, in *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology: The*

impetus that makes it enticing to get willing followers by Islamic fundamentalists' extremists into their folds to engross in jihads. He was a Quranic teacher, influentially persuasive as well as being a charismatic preacher and had followers recruited from amidst the unemployed and the deprived ones as well as students graduating from the almajiri school system. In the Kano circles of Quranic preachers and teacher, his opinion hugely deferred. He however, denounced many parts of the holy Quran. He was alleged to have critiqued the Prophet Muhammad, and was further said to have arrogated to himself with the divine power and mission to save the world.¹⁵⁴ The sect was anti-western and was of the Imami Shi'ite tradition. It has to be underlined that the sect was not accepted by the orthodox Muslims. As has already been said, he set off according to him to purify Islam of materialism, science and technology. This is seen in his disparaging such things as radios, wristwatches, automobiles, motorcycles as well as bicycles. All those who use these things and read books that are not the Quran are pagans who will not inherit heaven.¹⁵⁵

In the subsequent fierce violence that, those Maitatsine group's unleashed on Kano in 1980, about 4200 people were killed,¹⁵⁶ most of whom were Muslims. During the upheaval which was aimed at the reformation of Islamic worship and the purging of Islam from many of its non-Muslims accretions some Christians were killed, besides many Churches building were burnt and destroyed.¹⁵⁷ Some accounts hold that the numbers of people killed were not known because they were very hard to establish as a result of the magnitude of the conflict. The Government however gave the figure to some hundreds of people that were killed, but then some other accounts put it to some thousands of people who lost their lives.¹⁵⁸

Another aspect of Intra-Muslim Maitatsine religious conflict ensued in October 1982 and spilt over to Maiduguri, in which, however, the sect killed some 400 people. The October 1982 religious conflict was apparently as a result of the protest of some Muslim Students' Society against the building of an Anglican Church, St. George, near a mosque

Power Game. Kaduna Mafia and the Church in Nigeria, EANT, Vol. 2 No. 2-Vol 3 No 3 Nigeria: Enugu, Nov. 1989- April 1990, 37.

¹⁵⁴C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 143.

¹⁵⁵ C.F., *Ibid.* 142.

¹⁵⁶ C.F., Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria' Decades of Blood, 1980-2002*, Ontario: Canada, 2003, 39.

¹⁵⁷C.F., *Ibid.* 39.

¹⁵⁸ C.F., A. O. Omotosho, *Religious Violence in Nigeria: The Causes and solutions. An Islamic Perspective, in Swedish Missiological Themes, Vol. 91, No. 1.2003, 16.*

in Fagge city of Kano. They argued that it is an offence against Islam to build a Church near the location of a mosque and they held on to the sharia law to point to the fact that Christian places of worships should not be built near a mosque but rather within a certain distance of the mosque. The argument and protest were irrational on the background that the Anglican Church had been built about the 1930 whereas the mosque was built about 1968 many years before the mosque.¹⁵⁹ The Muslim Student's Society was involved in a number of religious conflicts and violence. They equally participated in the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria conflict, in which they protested the consumption of alcohol on the campus of the University.¹⁶⁰ Muslim Students especially in the northern Nigeria emboldened by the Muslim Students' Society refused to recite the national anthem of Nigeria on the reason that its recitation is their participation in the religion of nationalism that Islam abhors. Further in this year alone this radical Muslim Students' Society burnt about eight Churches and a Christian bookshop.¹⁶¹ They averred to speak for the large number of Muslims as they maintained that Islam had been a victim of the imposition of Christian or Western values that had been disposed to erode some of its own values and to persecute Muslims.¹⁶²

Kano experienced other violent religious conflicts in 1991.¹⁶³ This time, it was an Inter-Religious conflict between Muslims and Christians. Christians had invited Reihard Bonnke an Evangelist from Germany, for a crusade in Kano city, tagged "Christ for All Nations of Africa campaign designed to evangelize the continent of Africa by the year 2000"¹⁶⁴. Prior to the crusade some Muslim foreign preachers were refused entry to Nigeria, for instance a South African Muslim Imam¹⁶⁵ to conduct celebrations and preaching and another one was deported. Moreover, the race course was denied them for the use of some celebrations; and the Muslims reacting to the situation took the turn of violence, killing of people and destruction of property "worth millions of Naira."¹⁶⁶ It was estimated that about 2,000 Christians lost their lives, some 13 Churches were

¹⁵⁹C.F., Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood*, Op., Cit., 40.

¹⁶⁰ C.F., Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op., Cit., 95.

¹⁶¹ C.F., Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbour*, New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2008, 17.

¹⁶² C.F., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 167.

¹⁶³ C. F., Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices and the Neighbour*, Op., Cit., 18.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 18.

¹⁶⁵C.F., *Lissi Rasmussen, Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op., Cit., 96.

¹⁶⁶ A. O. Omotosho, *Religious Violence in Nigeria, Swedish Missiological Themes, SMT*. Op., Cit., 16.

burnt.¹⁶⁷ Kano was once again engulfed in 1995 in another Inter-Religious conflict; this time was prelude by the beheading of an Igbo man, Gideon Akaluka a trader in Kano which took place in 1994. It was alleged that his wife used some page of the Quran book as toilet paper for her baby, by so doing had desecrated the holy book, Quran. Gideon was as a result jailed for the defilement of the holy book by his wife.¹⁶⁸ Among many stories surrounding Gideon's jail and beheading in prison was that while there, he studied the Quran and as well wrote notes on it, which was for the Muslims more defilement of the Quran. The exact story of the incitement is very much beclouded. But what is certain was that a group of Muslims followers of Abubakar Mujahid, who were themselves a breakaway group from El-Zakzaki's fundamentalist extremists' movement, broke into the prison and had Gideon Akaluka beheaded. They thereafter marched with his head in the environs of the city of Kano.¹⁶⁹

Subsequently, there followed a violent clash between the Muslims and the Christians groups. But because the Kano authorities did not respond or investigate the accusation proffered against Gideon properly nor arrested those who beheaded him, or and did not release his body then for proper burial became the time bomb that exploded in 1995.¹⁷⁰ with the least provocation, to give rise to a religious conflict. As usual combined with several other accusations and counter accusations between the Christians and Muslims violence ensued. The brawl spread all over the city, the Muslim fanatics took to the streets killing and maiming anyone who could not recite in the Arabic language, the Islamic *shahada* confession of faith: when translated means: "There is no God but Allah" "and Muhammad is his messenger" and with the usual Muslim war cry "*Allahu Akbar*"- "God is great".¹⁷¹ The group thereafter marched with force into the St. George's Anglican Church; a Church that was once set ablaze in the 1991 Kano religious conflict, but was rebuilt, and now armed with dangerous weapons such as Machetes, knives, guns, Bows and arrows, etc. once again burnt the Church and some others.

The occupants of the non-indigenes quarters of the *Sabon Gari* area most of whom are Christians had to confront the force of the fanatics with equal force, in the bid to defend

¹⁶⁷ C.F., Ibid. 17.

¹⁶⁸ C.F., Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood*, Op., Cit., 46.

¹⁶⁹ C.F., Ibid. 46.

¹⁷⁰ C. F., Ibid. 47.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. 48.

themselves by fighting back; because the police force did not intervene or stop the violence and killing of people. This led to colossal loss of hundreds of lives and the destruction of millions naira¹⁷² worth of property. But since the attackers were defeated by the Christians force at the *Sabon Gari* area, they consequently turned to other parts of the Kano city, here they arbitrarily attacked and killed many non-indigenes of Kano. Consequentially the problem assumed a socio-ethnic facet resulting further into the hundreds of loss of lives. Besides, because the government force did not once more come in judiciously to arrest the situation, hundreds of people had to flee the region either into the army barracks, to the police stations or to other neighboring towns or straight away with any means available to them.

Among the religious conflicts that took place in Kano were: 1. the demonstration of May 30, 1995 of rioting Islamist who insisted with the dissemination of flyers that the Muslims have to reposition Islam to greatness as well as themselves to die for Islam. This then resulted into the killing of many Christians and violent confrontation with the police force.¹⁷³ Christian Van Gorder held in his book; *Violence in God's Name* that in June, 2000 in Kano State some thousands of Muslims protested and demanded with persistence and force the removal of the Chief Justice of the State and his replacement by an Imam.¹⁷⁴ And furthermore on October 13, 2001 many Christians were attacked and killed in Kano simply because America attacked Afghanistan because of the Sept 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in the USA.¹⁷⁵ According to the rioters they were identifying with their Muslim brothers in Afghanistan against America as Infidels.¹⁷⁶

The Maitatsine Intra-Religious conflicts spilt over to other areas, and was taken up by some other groups such was the case of the Shi'ite fundamentalist movement of 1991, led by *Zaka Zaki* from Zaria. They too attacked Christians and set some Churches on fire. The conflict was necessitated by their demand that the government introduce the

¹⁷² C.F., Naira is the Federal government of Nigeria's monetary system.

¹⁷³ C.F., A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in God's Name: Christian and Muslim Relations in Nigeria*, Texas: Houston, 2012, 247.

¹⁷⁴C.F., Ibid. 247.

¹⁷⁵C.F., Ibid. 247.

¹⁷⁶C.F., Ibid. 247.

sharia law practice in the state of Kaduna. The conflict brought also its tolls on the loss of many human lives and the usual destruction of property.

Other spillovers of religious conflicts in the north of Nigeria were: the Bauchi and Katsina of 1991 in which Iheanyi Enwerem argued that there were clear external proof of evidence of participation, support and involvement of Iranian based Shiite Muslim fundamentalist. In support of the claim he cited a statement attributed to the then Chief of Army Staff, late Major General Tunde Idiagbon who in April 1985 said that, there were “the existence of a new group of Iranian and Lebanese mullahs” who “have tried to introduce fundamentalist and revolutionary doctrines to corrupt Nigerian Islamic culture and way of worship”.¹⁷⁷ The leader of the group based on the report alleged he was tutored in Iran as well as received his inspirations from Iran and the Ayatollah Khomeini trademark of Islamic activism.¹⁷⁸ What is more, there was the Jimeta-Yola religious conflict –in Gongola State - of February 1984 which was a spillover of the Maitatsine sect conflict of the Kano in the mid-1980s. Thereafter were the Kafanchan/Kaduna and the Zaria/Funtua religious conflicts of 1987. Then the Zangon/Kataf religious conflict of 1992 of May 17-19. The Zangon/Kataf conflict has some background history of difficulty for their mutual suspicious religious and ethnic conflicts worthy of note here.

Thus, the Zangon-Kataf/Hausa-Fulani is a town in the southern Zaria of Kaduna State. The backgrounds of the Zangon/Kataf could be drawn to a long history of rancorous acrimony and enmity between the ethnic Communities of Zangon/Katafs and the Hausa/Fulani as far back as 1902 during the British imposition of Hausa-Fulani district leaders on the Zangon-Kataf ethnic nationality. The issues here were and are the combination of religious and communal interests giving rise to conflicts. Religious and ethnic identities are merged such that separation become very challenging and for most part incredible. This played into the Zangon-Kataf and the Hausa-Fulani groups. It has to be underscored that, it is impossible to describe the Hausa identity without talking about their religious identity (the Islam). This fuels much of the religious conflicts.

¹⁷⁷ Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *Government Response to Ethnic/Religious Riots* Op. Cit. 124.

¹⁷⁸ C.F., *Ibid.* 124.

Toyin Falola on this held that the key to understanding these conflicts in Nigeria is the introduction of indirect rule¹⁷⁹. Besides, he went on that:

“Colonial rule restructured the economy and politics” of *Nigeria* “in a way that made competition inevitable. Power struggles and contests over land and boundaries added to the incidences of violence. The politics of managing local areas created tensions among chiefs and between communities. Rivalries for power intensified during colonial rule at two levels: within a city, a King could clash with other chiefs, notably powerful lineage chiefs, over power and prestige; and between cities, kings could fight with one another for superiority. Conflicts among chiefs and kings could become communal conflicts, leading to riots and physical attack on key individual actors”.¹⁸⁰

This was the situation in the Zangon/Kataf region that aware of the historicity of the imposition burden of the area, continue to resent burden. Thus, Iheanyi Enwerem quoting Francis Duniya on “the Zangon/Kataf crisis in Respect of Minority Culture in the Northern Nigeria, in *Bulletin of Ecumenical* Vol. 7, nos. 1-2, 1995, contended that the conflict was “akin to previous ones in” *when the Kataf rose in rebellion stretching from* “1902, 1904, 1905-1907, 1946 and 19553-1958”.¹⁸¹ Arising from this endemic problem the Zangon Kataf who themselves are Christians and the Hausa-Fulani who are Muslims live in a mutual suspicion of hatred and disrespect of each other. But because the issue of ethnicity was combined with religion in the Zangon-Kataf and Hausa-Fulani conflict, thus identity becomes stronger and the conflicts - a mixture of religion and ethnicity – have a tendency to last.

The history of tension and conflict existing between these two groups, since after the Usman dan Fodio and with the colonial administration strengthening it, were also the background of the present prevalent and endemic conflicts of the area. The matter was not even alleviated but rather compounded, with the creation of Zangon-Kataf local government Area of 1991 and an election of a Christian local government Chairman as the head of the government. However, the fracas that have ensued during conflict have taken many thousands of human lives and destruction of properties worth several

¹⁷⁹ C.F., Toyin Falola, *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 177.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 177.

¹⁸¹ Iheanyi M. Enwerem, Op. Cit., 123.

millions of naira. Some reports have it that some 4,000-4500 people from both Muslims and Christians died, in the conflict, with the Muslims recording more casualties.¹⁸²

The next individual scene of religiously enthused conflict zone is Kaduna. This is as a result of the large presence in Kaduna of non-indigenes and its Christian large population. This situation further intensely underlines the protracted, epidemic and precarious nature of the religious conflicts and the awfully subtle religious narrow-mindedness in Nigeria, especially in the Northern region and the urgency to nurture a culture of religious harmony promoting peace amongst all in Nigeria.

2.2.2. Kaduna Scene of Religiously motivated Conflict

There had been some religious conflicts in the post-independence Nigeria in Kaduna, but then the most notable arose in Zaria in 1977/1978 when there was confrontation between Muslims and Christians in the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. In the ensuing fight about six students lost their lives. It was carried out by the Muslim Students' Society when they rioted in Zaria during the constitutional debates on sharia law.¹⁸³ The Muslim Students Society also abhors, jettisons and opposes the Nigerian Constitution claiming that it entrenches Nigeria as a secular state, which is anti-Islam. This contention contradicts the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which identifies the fact that Nigeria is a religiously plural state. Thus, the constitution states: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religions or belief in worship, practice and observance".¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, it underlined the detail that no religion shall be inaugurated as a state religion. However, it has to be stated that, it is inappropriate that the Islamic fundamentalists ostensibly seem to jettison this section of the Constitution's provision to suit their interest to enforce the political ideologies of Islam on Nigeria. This style cannot be ignored or gauged simply to be accidental because, as I have so far indicated, their method of militancy and insurgency have been diverse, with intent on making Nigeria an Islamic state.

¹⁸² C.F., Jarlath Walsh, *Religious Riots in Nigeria, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, no. 11*, UK. Birmingham, 1993, 17.

¹⁸³ C.F., Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, Op. Cit.*, 95.

¹⁸⁴ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, see Section 10, 1979.

The devastating nature of this trend is moreover seen in the members of the Muslim Students Society who seem to blame Christians for the woes in the country through many dangerous anti-Christian actions, and have equally engaged in other violent bitter conflicts, such as there was in the campus of University of Ahmadu Bello when they violently protested against the consumption of alcohol.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, when Pope John Paul II visited Kaduna, Nigeria in 1982 the same Muslim Students Society was once again violent. They protested the visit of the Pope to Kaduna, claiming that Kaduna is a Muslim predominant area, controlled by Muslims. Kaduna in 1920 was by the British administration created and made the headquarters of the north of Nigeria. Since then has since been considered as a Muslim town, controlled politically by the Muslims, hence they maintained, Christians have no right to turn it a Christian town. But then it is of interest to note that there is a huge population of Christian in Kaduna. Such was however the reason many Christian thronged to Kaduna from every part of Nigeria to welcome the Pope¹⁸⁶ who on that visit to Nigeria ordained “94 deacons from nearly all the dioceses and religious congregations in Nigeria to the Catholic priesthood.”¹⁸⁷ Although the Pope told the people who gathered to see him as well as some individuals and groups he met that he came “in order to meet the people of different religious persuasions ... and I earnestly hope that my presence among you will express the love that I have for all of you, as well as my esteem for the worthy religious values that you cherish”.¹⁸⁸ This expressed esteem and appreciation of the religious values of the religious tradition of the Nigerians did not appease, impress the Muslims or prevent them from attacks on the Christians, for they retorted and questioned how a Muslim could associate with the Pope at such a conspicuous level and at the same time continue to be a good Muslim, said to refer to the President who invited the Pope to Nigeria. In 1987 there was another religious conflict between Christians and Muslims that resulted into the burning of 5 mosques and 152 Christian Churches. It arose from a mainly Christian area of Kaduna, the Kafanchan, because a Pentecostal pastor, Rev. Abubakar Bako, formerly a Muslim, organized a Crusade tagged “Mission 87”. Rev. Bako was alleged to have misinterpreted some passages of the Quran. Some Muslims found that so odious and challenged the

¹⁸⁵ C.F., Raymond Hickey, *The 1982 Maitatsine Uprising in Nigeria: A note. African Affairs* Vol.83, no. 331, April, 1984, 255.

¹⁸⁶C.F., Jarlath Walsh, *Religious Riots in Nigeria, Op. Cit. 4.*

¹⁸⁷ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993, 157.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 157.

crusade violently. The conflict that ensued in the encounter, like wide fire, spread rapidly to other areas of Kaduna State, such as Zaria. This quickly developed into a fierce fight between Christians and Muslims. Many lives were lost, and no fewer than 62 people were wounded in the fight. Some business premises were as well set on fire.¹⁸⁹

Religious conflicts took more an endemic dimension in Kaduna particularly between 2000 and 2001 in which arose what some people called “second jihad”. It was a period when some Islamic fundamentalists’ leaders violently demanded that sharia penal code law be imposed in Kaduna. Prior to this time Zamfara state governor, Sani Yerima of the state, was the first to introduce the Islamic sharia legal system in January 2000 and thereafter the adoption of the sharia legal system was followed by some states of the north of Nigeria. This led to mass protest by the Christians arguing that the introduction and imposition of sharia legal system in Kaduna, a multi-religious society infringed on their right of religious freedom in Nigeria. Christians further argued that the imposition would unavoidably lead to their oppression and marginalization in Kaduna. On the other hand there was a counter protest by Islamists in support of the state House of Assemble to move on with the imposition of sharia law on the state Kaduna.

These two groups on the way clashed to fight and the resultant consequences of the sharia legal system imposition were the brutal, deadly, unthinkable and horrific experiences on the people of these states.¹⁹⁰ Soon afterwards, the conflict turned into an ethno-religious confrontation, as some Hausas attacked some Christian tribes to avenge some perceived past grievances of injustice. In this regard Christian Van Gorder quoted Karl Maier underlining that in the ensued ethnic cleansing “many of the victims of Kaduna had been Igbos, and when their corpses started arriving the Igbo heartland, enraged gangs of youths vented their fury on any northerner they could find”.¹⁹¹ Gorder further stated that: “Retaliation in Aba” – a state in the southern part of Nigeria – “saw at least 450 Hausa massacred A total of about 609 deaths were reported in government documents over the three-day period of rioting”.¹⁹² However, this figure he argued was deliberately played down by the government probably to avoid more

¹⁸⁹ C.F., Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *Two Decades of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 85. See also Lissi Rasmussen, *Christian-Muslim Relations*, Op. Cit., 96.

¹⁹⁰ C.F., A. Christian Van Gorder, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 249.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 250.

¹⁹² Ibid. 250.

escalation of the conflict. However, some sources had it that over 2,000 people were killed. Some other sources such as the Human Rights Watch alleged that more than 5,000 people lost their lives. Besides, there were some victims of government extrajudicial killing done in the attempt to quell and control the violent horrific conflict.¹⁹³

Besides, the loss of human lives, were the inestimable loss of business premises, Churches that were burnt down, homes that were destroyed. The costs, according to some records ran into billions of naira. One can see and decipher that the subsequent impact of these destruction was the crushing of the economic prospects. In such atmosphere of insecurity it will be absolutely difficult to attract foreign investors, a place where businessmen and women are continuously and unpredictably murdered and business abandoned for uncertainty.

This devastating style of violent conflict occurred again in February and March 2000, when some Islamic fundamentalists went on another spree of destruction of properties worth millions of Naira and the loss of some 200 lives to protest the Miss World Beauty contest,¹⁹⁴ and a Human Rights Monitor in Kaduna reported in the furtherance of the Muslim's agenda that many Christians were forced to renounce their faith and those who did not were killed.¹⁹⁵ They regarded it as an anti-Islam crusade to defile Islam. Religious conflicts tend to pop-up in Kaduna at the least provocation of Muslims around the world, as shown already in the Miss World Beauty contest above. There was the subsequent attack by some Muslims fundamentalists on the people in protest over the invasion of Afghanistan over Bin Laden by USA. This resulted in the death of 150 people.¹⁹⁶ There had been so many other religious conflicts that took place in Kaduna, all cannot be handled here, however, these ones are put forward to buttress the unfolding drama of religious conflicts in this region. But then, the frequency of the violent conflicts

¹⁹³ C.F., *On the Kaduna religious conflict Jan H. Boer has given some detailed account of some of the disasters that took place. See Jan H. Boer, Nigeria's Decades of Blood, and Op. Cit 63.-78.*

¹⁹⁴ C.F., *See CNN, Nigeria Miss World Strife goes on.*

[http://cnn.worldnews.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?expire=-1&title=CNN.com+ - +Ni, 2000.:](http://cnn.worldnews.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?expire=-1&title=CNN.com+ - +Ni, 2000.;)
[Accessed on March , 29, 2010.](#)

¹⁹⁵C.F., World Christian News, Christians in Kaduna Forced to Renounce their Faith or die.
<http://www.worthynews.com/2757-christians-in-kaduna-forced-to-renouce-their-faith-or-die>. March 13, 2000. Accessed March, 29, 2010.

¹⁹⁶ C.F., Isaac Terwase Sampson, *Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendation to the State and Religious Communities.* www.ajol.info/index.php/ajcr/article/69042, 2012, 107.

in Kaduna is as a result of its centrality in the northern Nigeria as a former headquarters of the region before and after the independence and one of the principal cities in northern Nigeria. The city of Kaduna and Kaduna state have huge momentous population of Christians. Some estimates put the population of Kaduna Christians to about 40% of the entire population. Besides, religious diversity, there are some thirty ethnic groups mostly based in the southern region of Kaduna state.

See the Maps of Nigeria below. They help to illustrate the individual scenes of religiously inspired flash Conflicts in Nigeria. The map figure 1 below indicates the 36 states of Nigeria and the Abuja the Nigeria Federal capital. The state capitals of Nigeria are marked in red and including the federal capital Abuja. On the map of Africa on the right side Nigeria is shown in red colour.

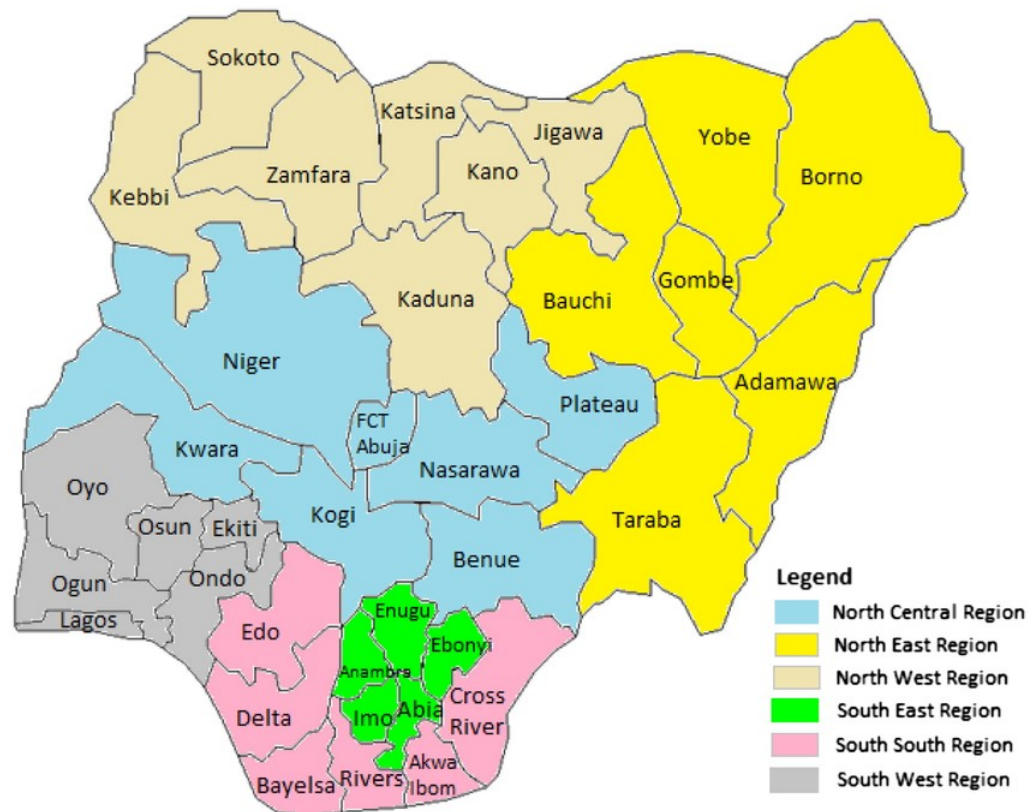


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing all the states of Nigeria.¹⁹⁷

The Map figure 2, below indicates the 6 geo-political and geographical regions of Nigeria in various colours for easy identification:

1. North Central Region in sky blue colour
2. North East Region in yellow colour.
3. North West Region in light yellow colour.
4. South East Region in Green colour.
5. South South Region in Pink colour.
6. South West Region in gray colour.

The North East and the North West Regions are mostly the religiously motivated conflict affected Regions in Nigeria. However, there are now and then sporadic religiously motivated states in the other Regions



Map Figure 2 of Nigeria.¹⁹⁸ This map shows the states that are affected by the religiously motivated conflicts.

¹⁹⁷ C.F., *Nigerian States Map Assessed from Google*:

<http://www.google.de/search?q=map+of+the+six+geopolitical+zones+in+nigeria&tbm=isch&imgil>

Nigeria_states_map: Feb. 16, 2016.

¹⁹⁸ C.F., *Ibid*, *The second Map of Nigeria showing the Regions*.

Map Figure 3 below¹⁹⁹ shows the Towns most affected in North-East Nigeria by the Boko Haram religiously motivated group.



A further poignant example of the individual scene of religiously motivated conflict was the case of the Boko haram. Boko haram was emboldened by introduction and implementation of sharia law in Nigeria. Indeed, Boko haram was at the beginning regarded as a fundamentalist Islamist group founded in 2001 by Mohammed Yusuf, an Islamist cleric in Maiduguri; the capital of Borno state in the northeastern Nigeria. It was initially not regarded as a terrorist jihadist sect, rather identified as a new rising fundamentalist Islamic sect, because there have been many of such groups in Islam in Nigeria. The actual emergent date of boko haram has been variously stated; some date it to 2000 or 2002; however the range is very close. The sect addresses itself as “Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati Wal-Jihad, which designates simply translated from the Arabic, to be “people committed to the propagation of the Prophet’s teachings and jihad”²⁰⁰, of the Prophet Mohammed.

Mohammed Yusuf, the founder was himself a Muslim fundamentalist who received his training in Salafism procedure which was a hardcore Islamic training,²⁰¹ an Islamic

¹⁹⁹ C.F., *The Map of the North East Region of Nigeria affected by the Boko Haram religiously motivated conflict and fight, Assessed from, the War and hunger threaten chilgren in Nigeria. International Rescue Committee IRC*:<http://www.rescue.org/article/war-and-hunger-threaten-children-nigeria>, April 20, 2017.

²⁰⁰ Lauren Ploch Blanchard, *Congressional Research Service. Informing the Legislative debate since 1914, Nigeria’s Boko Haram: Frequently Asked Questions*, 2014, 1.

²⁰¹ C.F., Adran Davieson, *Boko Haram and Its Suicide Squad: The Confession of a Jihadist*, 1014, 55.

school of thought associated with jihadist mentality.²⁰² It is a radical Islamist group which abhors western education. Indeed, Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of boko haram was predisposed to the influence of Ibn Taymiyyah, an Islamic fundamentalist preacher, who was a fourteenth-century Islamic legal scholar. He was a significant Islamic radical personality in the Middle East.²⁰³ It is this type of radical Islamist and jihadists which operate in Maiduguri in Bornu State of Nigeria, but it soon afterwards spread to other parts of Northern cities swiftly.²⁰⁴ The group has terrified and carried out brutal killings and slashing of throat of several thousands of people across Nigeria and in particular in Northeastern part of the country. Boko haram signifies literally western education is sinful, and anyone who is not educated in Islam and sharia mindset is an infidel.²⁰⁵ In addition, the radical jihadist sect is believed to hold the belief; that only what the Quranic verse states is valuable; hence “Anyone who is not governed by what Allah has revealed is among the transgressors (Quran 6)”²⁰⁶ and the sect was deeply involved in the Taliban tradition. It normally opposes to the secular government of Nigeria. It would not be surprising why the militant radical Islamist has strong hold in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. The reason was because Maiduguri was the home of preachers who regularly denounce the United States of America as well as the headquarters of the anti-western, anti-modern Islamist radical sect besides – boko haram. More to that point, it opposes all forms of western education and civilization. It has been alleged to enjoy the support and patronage of influential elite and people in Borno state where it originated. Certainly, in his interview with a jihadist; Adrian Davidson in his “Book, Boko Haram and Its Suicide Squad” told the story of the jihadist who claimed the funding of the sect was from Northern politicians. Hence the jihadist contended: “If it hadn’t been for the support of the northern Nigerian politicians, Boko Haram would not have the funds to operate and to recruit foot soldiers and suicide bombers. Most of our supporters are disgruntled northern politicians who felt deprived of their Allah-given rights to rule Nigeria”.²⁰⁷ Boko haram is a militant group by nature, which spreads and inflicts terror

²⁰² C.F., Mohammed Aly Sergie, and Toni Johnson, Council on Foreign Relations, Nigeria’s Boko Haram and Ansaru: <http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/boko-haram/p25739>, sourced October, 7, 2014.

²⁰³ C.F., Ibid.

²⁰⁴ C.F., John Campbell, *Nigeria. Dancing on the Brink*, Op., Cit., 35.

²⁰⁵ C.F., Adran Davieson, Op. Cit., 29.

²⁰⁶ C. Farouk, *Who are Nigeria’s Boko Haram Islamists’ BBC, Online: www.bbc.com.uk/news/world-africa-13809501*. Accessed on Sept, 20, 2014.

²⁰⁷ Adran Davieson, 51.

among the people claiming, to be doing such on behalf of Prophet Mohammed and in the name of Allah on unsuspecting innocent people. However, it has to be noted the group is abhorred by many good and peace loving Muslims in Nigeria. Boko Haram has become a notorious Islamist terrorist sect with its activities of killing, maiming and kidnapping of people ravaging the northeast and north central states of Nigeria.

The sect claimed like many other Islamist radical sects before it, as reform movements to reform Islam, among them before him were, the Dan Fodio's of 1804, already indicated above, and the Maitatsine Islamist radical of 1980. These movements were among other things a social protest aimed at apparently Muslim elite, who were seen to be rich, abusive and corrupt hence their attitudes non-Islamic in nature.²⁰⁸ Besides the Dan Fodio protest reform movement, Maitatsine sect group had killed about five thousand people alone whereas boko haram on the other hand has so far murdered about twelve thousand people. Indeed, both are hostile to constituted authority and have equally killed several policemen, military men and bombed government institutions.²⁰⁹

Mohammed Yusuf, the founder of the boko haram Islamist radicals led a brutal insurrection on the government of Nigeria, at both state and federal levels, which later rapidly spread to other northern states. In July 2009 he was arrested by the military and handed over to the police. In the insurrection high profile police officers were killed by his sect members; hence he was alleged killed in police custody, which sparked rather further violent insurrection by his members that was only quelled by the Nigerian army. Subsequently, the sect has waged war virtually on daily basis on Nigeria particularly in many northern states. It has targeted military and police installations and barracks, mosques, Churches, and media houses. These targets have been constantly and severally bombed. Besides, motor parks, markets as well as living homes have been blown with improvised explosives and many lives have also been lost, including the property and means to have a decent life. The sect has on many occasions robbed banks and carted many millions of dollars. With the stolen money they have engaged in importing complex guns and ammunitions. Moreover, they are engaged into snatching vehicles

²⁰⁸C.F., John Campbell, Op., Cit., 52.

²⁰⁹ C.F., Mervyn Hiskett, *The Maitatsine Riots in Kano, 1980: An Assessment in Journal of Religion in Africa*, 17, no. 3, 1987, 209-223.

from people at gun points and from the military and police to attack villages and towns in suicide bombings.²¹⁰

The sect's agenda is the total Islamization of Nigeria under the rule of sharia law, and total war against Christianity besides this ideology has on several occasions been loudly publicized in Videos by the leader of the sect group since after the death of the founder Mohammed Yusuf. This has been the motive for which they are fighting. This motive is not new in Nigeria, besides, the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio as I already wrote at the early stage of this work had engaged on similar movement, however, what is novel in this enterprise is the manner, brutality and ferocity of their attacks, atrocities, kidnappings, burning of houses and schools, bombings and murdering of innocent citizens of Nigeria.²¹¹ Also before him the Maitatsine sects employed the same tactic and aim in Nigeria in the 1980.

Reacting to the menace of Boko Haram, the U. S. Department of State designated "boko haram and Ansaru its ally as Foreign Terrorist Organization, under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, and as Specially Designated Global Terrorist under section 1 (b) of Executive Order 13224.²¹² The radical Islamist terrorist sect has had links with the al-Qaeda another Islamist radical sect in the Islamic Meghreb. This sect (al-Qaeda) is equally as brutal as the boko haram, and is partner to boko haram and Ansaru another terror group in the common barbarism of murder, kidnapping, violence and crimes against humanity.

The Nigerian government has with great difficulty wrestled to step its responses to the radical Islamic terrorist group's threats, since it directed its violent, brutal arsenal to kidnapping women, girls, and school children, especially girls and the conscripting and training of boys to fight its course in Nigeria. Boko haram has engaged into coercive conversion of women, girls and boys kidnapped into Islam, thereby stepping its targets

²¹⁰ C.F., T. Adisa, *Security Agencies Uncover Sources of Boko Haram's Explosives*, in *Nigeria Tribune*, 2012.

²¹¹ C.F., *Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Education under Attack, 2014*: <http://www.protecting-education.org-and-Amnesty> International, *Keep Away from School or we'll kill You, Right to Education under Attack in Nigeria*, Accessed, October, 4, 2013.

²¹² C.F., *US Department of State: Diplomacy in Action, Terrorist Designations of Boko Haram and Ansaru*: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/2013/11/217509.htm>. Office of the Spokesperson, Washington, DC, Sourced, November, 13, 2013.

of war on Christianity. In April, 2014 more than three hundred school girl were kidnapped from their school dormitory in Chibok in Borno state, by boko haram terrorists. Agonizingly till this date November 2014 they have not been rescued. In its related crimes, brutality and violence, over three hundred thousand people have been displaced from their homes in the northeast and central states.²¹³ These attacks and threats have had increasing and traumatic impacts on the people in the northeast, north central and Nigerians in general. Government has severally declared emergency rule in these zones and deployed the military and other security agencies to counter the threats of the terrorists. To supplement government's efforts, there has been the formation of Civilian Joint Task Force (Civilian-JTF).²¹⁴ These are the local's young men who form themselves into civilian military groups to defend their towns and villages in the northeast and north central states and also fight boko haram.

Indeed, the northeast and north central are areas of the country impoverished and educationally backward. It then beats the imagination of reasonable human beings, why boko haram should denounce western education and culture so as to install Islamic ideals which to my thought category does not bring peace, co-existence or improve morality they want to reform. This ideological propaganda continues to impoverish the people, destroy whatever progress that has been achieved before now. Its zeal to reform Islam through the eradication of whatever they perceived un-Islamic; rather than bring enhancing development, enrich value system of the people, enhance peaceful co-existence, justice and harmonious living; instead establishes corruption and retrogression in all its ramifications to the already impoverished zones and degrade Islamic value system.

The jihadist habit of the 18th century employed in Nigeria today to spread Islam, even at the time did not work. It only increases and entrenches violence as a system, retards freedom of religion, human rights, living a dignified life, economic, political, cultural and human developments. Therefore, there is urgency for the various religions in Nigeria to employ and enjoy no longer the extreme exclusive mentality, which tendency

²¹³ C.F., *Council of Foreign Relations*, *Nigeria Security Tracker*, <http://www.cfr.org/for-a-tally-of-boko-haram-attacks>; *United Nations Office on the coordination of humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Bulletin: Nigeria*, Sources April 03, 2014.

²¹⁴C.F., Adam Nossiter, *Vigilantes Defeat Boko Haram in its Nigerian Base*, in *New York Times*, October, 20, 2013.

brings no meeting point among the religious faith communities, rather condemns and excludes the other. Hence there is indeed the need for interfaith relationships. Besides, for peace, justice, development – economic and political, as well as human development, there has to be the realization that for our “conversation to be reasonable and effective, it has to be inclusive, leads us to the equally important but unsettling recognition that it has been exclusive.”²¹⁵ Consequently the caution of Raimundo Panikkar is not only a very helpful attitude and informative but a succinct mindset and approach in dialogue and interfaith commitment in a pluralistic society such as Nigeria; then he contended:

“To realize that our neighbor’s religion does not only challenge and may enrich our own, but that ultimately, the very differences that separate us are somewhat potentially within the world of my own religious convictions; to accept that the other religion may complement mine and we may even entertain the idea that in some particular cases it may well supplement some of my beliefs provided that my religiousness remains an undivided whole.... The obvious positive aspect of this attitude is the tolerance, broadmindedness and mutual confidence that it inspires. No religion is totally foreign to my own; within our religions, we may encounter the religion of the other; we all need one another”.²¹⁶

The second Vatican Council advocated the same stand as it argued that our relationship with the other ought to be characterized by an attitude that esteems and considers the other on the same basis;²¹⁷ hence any honest and authentic encounter with the others should be on the ground of equality, freedom and equality of stand and power should guard our conversation and dialogues with the others

2.2.3. Basic understanding of religiously motivated conflicts

An important development in the religious scene of Nigeria was the almajiri system of the Islamic Religion operated in the Northern Nigeria. This is a system in which children especially young boys connect themselves under the care of Quranic teachers, as apprentices to learn about Islam and to receive necessary training in Arabic so as to be

²¹⁵ Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*, Mary Kknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1995, 90.

²¹⁶ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Intra-religious Dialogue*, New York: Paulist Press, 1999, 9.

²¹⁷ C.F., Gregory Baum, *The Socio Context of American Catholic Theology, in the In Catholic Theology in North American Context: Current Issues in Theology, CTSA, Proceeding, ed., George Kilcourse*, Macon: Merce University Press, 1986, 92.

able to read the holy Quran. As much as possible many of these young boys are allowed to leave their parents' home to live with these teachers and, or even to travel long distances with them so as to learn. Discussing about the almajiris Toyin Falola underlined the fact that the almajiri were legally recognized. Hence he opined: "The almajiri were permitted by law to beg in Mosques, street corners, and roads, keeping part of the proceeds and surrendering a portion to their leaders".²¹⁸ The almajiri²¹⁹ system was a further impetus and an incentive; he argued leading to the exploitation in the sense that these children were used by these teachers to make money. Hence the more the young boys are under the guidance and tutelage teachers who use them to make financial gains the more indeed is the huge corruption of the alma Jiri system.²²⁰

The aftermath of the system was that it marginalized many Muslim youths educationally, who have to start their lives being exploited by the Quranic school teachers, because they have to move around begging to pay these teachers. The knowledge gained in these schools does not actually qualify them to gain any meaningful employment, for it offers them knowledge to read the Quran, however for religious life, but then not fit to compete in the employment market.²²¹ This culture engendered a negative attitude amidst the northern Muslims toward western education. Consequently they are unemployed, for they are not trained worker, thus they roam about as street beggars. Such youths would constitute a larger portion of the recruit that Marwa Mohammed made his followers in the movement of the Maitatsine²²² religious conflict of the Kano of 1982. Emefie Ikenga Metuh underlined strongly this problem created by the Almajiri system especially amidst the poorer classes of Muslims of the northern Nigeria as he stated:

"Many Muslim children of the poorer classes begin life as Almajiris (pupils of the Koranic schools), who go about begging to pay their Koranic teachers, and graduate from these schools only to find out that their knowledge though very useful for their religious life, no longer fitted them for better placement in the modern Nigeria society. They therefore end up in many towns

²¹⁸ Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 148.

²¹⁹ C.F., Aishatu Adamu Fada, *Factors Perpetuating the Almajiri System of Education in Northern Nigeria: A Case Study of Zaria and Environs*, Kaduna State Faculty of Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2005, 4.6; *This system has been fully discussed here by Aishatu Adamu Fada.*

²²⁰ C.F., Ibid. 48.

²²¹ C.F., Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, Op., Cit., 76.

²²² Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 138-158; Confer, Charles Ndiomu, *Religious Disturbances in Nigeria, Kuru: The National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies*, Kuru, 1986, 18-19; 22-23.

as unskilled laborers, hawkers, beggars, and unemployed. These easily fall prey to Islamic fundamentalist preachers and easily provide the fodder in the hands of the rich political class to fuel any riot, even for the mere promise of the opportunity to loot".²²³

The students or and the pupils of the almajiri system of education are easily exposed to all types of dangers as they are left to be on their own without parental care or supervision. They are readily disposed to manipulations and misuse by the rich people, politicians and as well as religious extremists and are gladly and enthusiastic at any time to lend themselves to be used or drafted as tools for religious conflicts. Hence, their recruitment increased rapidly membership of Marwa Mohammed's followers to fight with him in the Maitatsine riots of Kano and Kaduna of 1980 and 1983.²²⁴

This unfortunate situation although a socio-economic problem is, reinvigorated the conflict in the religious scene of Nigeria. This is so bearing in mind that in Nigeria and particularly among the Muslims of the northern Nigeria and to huge degree religious beliefs had political and economic implications in the sense that emerging political and religious elite felt that it was suitable for them to express their political opinions within their religious activities as citizens in the political environment. This culture created a situation of suspicion and negative attitude to Western education with the consequent effect of marginalization of many Muslim youths of the northern Nigeria of not getting properly educated. It is to be observed that this culture got some impetus in 1914 during the amalgamation of the northern and the southern Protectorate of Nigeria with the emergence of the British colonial administration's collaborative hegemony with the Muslim elites. However, the British continued to prevent meaningful social transformation of the north of Nigeria by not allowing Christian missionaries' activities in the northern part of Nigeria as already stated above.

The consequential effect of this system further emerged in the dual procedure of colonial pacification alongside the traditionalism of the northern ruling class and Muslim intellectual standpoints which are enlightening in grasping the longstanding political

²²³ Emefie Ikenga-Metuh, *Two Decades of Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: A Recipe for Peace*, in, *the Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology*, Op., Cit., 76; See also, Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 159.

²²⁴ C.F., Confer, A. B. Galadanic, *The Plight of Almajiri and Destitute in our Society: The Need for Sustainable Solution, A Paper Presented at the National Seminar on Begging and Destitution*, Kaduna: Arewa House, 5th – 7th Sept., 1997; also see Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 142.

outcome of the British colonial encounter in Nigeria – the resultant delays in granting Nigeria self-government in 1957. The West and East had to wait until 1959 for the Northern Nigeria to catch up for independence to be granted.²²⁵

This is the enthused religious Scene of Nigeria that has shaped and given much impetus to the religious conflicts in Nigeria. Besides, it has continued to shape and affect subsequent conflicts in the Nigerian scenery and would perhaps go on if no adequate and proactive response for the peace and real integration of the various nationalities of the country is prioritized and handled. However, this scene has played huge roles in many religious Conflicts in Nigeria such as, in Intra-Religious and Inter-Religious conflicts.

2.2.4. Causes of Religiously motivated Conflicts in Nigeria

The conscious acceptance, awareness and reality of divergent religious beliefs as well as values, objectives and attitudes of persons and groups in their relation with God or whatever they believe in and the accommodation of these existential divergences known as religious pluralism is a treasure highly priced and cherished in any society for its development and progress. This is a premium that symbolizes the modern world we live in today. This value should exist in any society for growth and proper integration. There is indeed in Nigeria religious differences, but sadly there are lack of respect for other religions and recognition is not duly accorded to it. Such a situation is partly responsible for the reoccurring religious conflicts between the major religions in Nigeria. Hence Muslim-Christian rapport had established huge hostile casualties. This is unmistakably apparent in the several occurrences of religious conflicts and crises seen and chronicled across Nigeria. Such religious conflicts and violence assumed basically an alarming proportion more evidently and easily since 1980s. The chronicles of the scope of the Religious conflicts underline the endemic nature of the conflicts.

Further cause of religious Conflicts in Nigeria can be traced back to the days of the trans-Atlantic slave trade that indeed greatly flourished in Nigeria. It encouraged and enhanced kidnapping of people for sales. Hence, the raiding of other tribes to kidnap their young ones, children and women for money was then prevalent. Undoubtedly the

²²⁵ C.F., Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa*, Op., Cit., 77.

prevalence of religious conflicts in Nigeria could be said to be as old as Nigeria but at the early stage was immensely on a small scale.

Actually, during the colonial era, religion was a central factor in the delineation of regional and political identities in the Northern part of Nigeria.²²⁶ Indeed, the party politics of the First Republic of Nigeria, 1960-1966 was from the onset defined by religion and religious culture. This is buttressed by the politics of the Northern People Congress (NPC) party which leaned towards Islamic orientation and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) had linkage with Christianity and the non-Muslims.²²⁷ Also, in the North, during this period, were the widespread and constant intra-religious conflicts between the different Islamic sects. Besides, as I discussed elsewhere in this section, there was the Islamic religious conversion undertaken by the Premier of the Northern Region, Sardauna, and Ahmadu Bello. However, religious conflict as I have defined above has most often characterized the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. But, since the 1980s it has experienced a wide range of varied dramatic increase in religious related conflicts. These conflicts have hugely threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria as a country. Some of these religious conflicts could be designated as intra-religious as well as inter-religious conflicts. There were some others that are political, ethnic and economic in nature, however, with huge religious coloration. Most often it is so interpreted because the proponents and participants involved are from different religions and in effect people see them from this perspective.

The discussion on the causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria in this work would not be exhaustive. Therefore due to the fact that quite a lot of literature has done so and moreover, due to the fact that many of these causes have been discussed elsewhere in this work. In addition, the theme has focused the engagement of A. O. Omotosho.²²⁸ It has moreover been argued and frequently alleged by Christians that religious violence is part of an Islamic jihad agenda of Muslims against non-Muslims. Hence it is claimed to be a continuation of the nineteenth century exploitation through which people in Nigeria were endangered to slave invasions, by the neighboring Muslim emirates,

²²⁶ C.F., F. A. O. Schwarz, *Nigeria: The Tribes, the Nations, or the Race? The Politics of Independence*, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1965.

²²⁷ C.F., Shadrack Gaya Best, *Religion and Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria*, in *University of Jos Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 11, No. 111, 2001, 67.

²²⁸ C.F., A. O. Omotosho, *Religious Violence in Nigeria – The causes and Solutions: An Islamic Perspective*. *Swedish Missiological Themes*, 2003, 15-31.

however likewise wrestled attacks from Zaria and Bauchi emirate.²²⁹ Definitely, the memory of slave invasions as well as the past injustices resonating in the present day has been prevalent and significant.²³⁰ Nevertheless, it has equally been contended by some scholars that, the accusations that, there is presently a structured jihad affecting and endangering Christians in the central Nigeria appear unfounded. But the high level, pattern and prevalence of religious conflicts in this zone seem to suggest otherwise. Allegation indeed such as this spreads widely and provokes much fear and distress on the people; especially on the minority tribes living in the Area. That notwithstanding, some literature has identified some causes of religious conflicts in Nigeria. Among them are: Rotgak J. Gofwen in his Book: “Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria and Nation Building”,²³¹ also includes are U. E. Iwara,²³² C. T. O. Agwu²³³, and Biodun Salawu – “Ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria”²³⁴. We have as well, K. A. Balogun who identifies religious intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism.²³⁵ He argued that religious fundamentalism, extremism and intolerance cause religious violence because the proponents purposefully decide and build on them as the starting point of violent religious conflict upon which other religious violence depend on.²³⁶ The political import of religion causes religious conflict such that religion at some point is politics. This has been highlighted by B. J. Takaya when he argued that religion is politics at some point because it is the most potent and stretched enduring political association. Hence religious creeds stimulate and extract the deepest possible emotional and physical loyalties from their members whenever there is political competition with people of different religious.

²²⁹ C.F., J. H. Morrison, *Plateau Societies' Resistance to Jihadist Penetration*, in, E. Isichei ed., *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*, London: Macmillan, 1982, Confer also, J. G. Nengel, *Precolonial Africa Intergroup Relations in the Kuru and Pengana Politics of Central Nigeria Highlands, 1800-1900*, Frankfurt am Mains, New York: Peter Lang, 1999.

²³⁰ C.F., R. Blench, *The Present in the Past: How Narratives of slave-raiding era inform Current Politics in Northern and Central Nigeria*: [http://www.rogerblench.info/Anthropology/data/Text/The present in the past](http://www.rogerblench.info/Anthropology/data/Text/The%20present%20in%20the%20past), 2010; M. Last, *Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: An Economy of Political Panic. The Roundtable: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 96, 392, 2007, 605-616.

²³¹ Rotgak I. Gofwen, *Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria and Nation Building: The Throes of two decades 1980-2000*, Kaduna, Human Rights Monitor, 2004.

²³² C.F., U. E. Iwara, *Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences*, *Sophia: An African Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2006, 153-157.

²³³ C.F., C. O. T. Agwu, *Religious Conflicts in Kano and Kaduna States*, in, Ikejiani-Clarke Miriam ed., *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: A Reader*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2009, 518-531.

²³⁴ Biodun Salawu, *Ethno-religious Conflict in Nigeria: Causal Analysis and Proposals for New Management Strategies*. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2010, 345-353.

²³⁵ C.F., K. A. Balogun, *Religious Intolerance as a Source of National Disintegration*, in Sam B. Mala ed. *Religion and National Unity*, Ibadan: University Press, 1988, 166.

²³⁶ C.F., *Quoted in Isaac Terwase Sampson, Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities*

Such is prevalent in Nigeria,²³⁷ especially in Northern part of Nigeria. It was in this vein, it is argued that the political difference between the mostly Christian natives in Jos, 2000 and the settler community of the predominantly Muslim Hausa-Fulani sparked violent religious conflicts.²³⁸

Moreover, religious intolerance breeds religious conflict. Thus it tolerates hostility towards other religions and religious practitioners. It blocks the ability of the religious enthusiasts to harmonize between the theories and the practical aspect of religion. It significantly drives religious conflict and enhances the attitude of superiority over others with religious inducements as a sociological fact frequently embraced in the dealing and valuation of others. An attitude such as this excludes others and classifies them as perhaps ignorant; who are doomed and so create consistently an atmosphere of hostility. An Atmosphere such as this penetratingly inclines towards the opposing religious persuasions. This is most clearly shown and experienced where they find their numerical strengths as a political benefit. In this perspective any new religions or religious newcomers are taken as threat to the hegemonies been relished, enjoyed or experienced. Religious militancy exists on both Christians and Muslims and this fuel suspicion and allegations that some Christians and Muslims amass weapons for religious attacks. Indeed, both sides play role in fueling the conflict. The subsequent effect thus, is the volatile nature, a high stage and pervasiveness of violent religious conflicts seen in the individual scenarios of religiously motivated conflicts. Hence in the least misunderstanding or the proximity of Christian Churches to a mosque sparks off huge conflict and the burning of such Churches.²³⁹

In Nigeria religion has been hugely politicized. Since the independence of Nigeria, religious and ethnic tensions and incitements have characterized and flawed development in Nigeria. Although, majority of the people in Nigeria are either Christians or Muslims, they have not been either able to overcome the obstacles of religious politics of the ruling class or elite who remain manipulative of the religious sentiments of the

²³⁷ C.F., B. J. Takaya, *Religion, Politics and Peace: Resolving the Nigerian Dilemma*, In J. K. Olupona ed. *Religion, Peace and Multi-faith Nigeria*, Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press 1992, 10.

²³⁸ C.F., Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, In *Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration*, USA: Xlibris LLC, 2013, 59.

²³⁹ C.F., Matthew H. Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Kaduna, Nigeria: Spectrum Books, 1993, 158.

people by setting the groups against each other.²⁴⁰ It was on the force of this that the government of Nigeria 1986 secretly registered Nigeria as a member of the (OIC) Organization of Islamic Conference that resulted into violent conflict between Christians and Muslims. This was perceived by Christians as making Nigeria an Islamic State. It is in this sense also, that the introduction and implementation of Sharia legal system in about 12 states in the Northern part of Nigeria that has significant Christian population was understood. That, too resulted into several, escalated dramatic religious violence with many hundreds of loss of life and several millions dollar property destruction.. This thus engendered and spread mistrust, tension, hostility, mutual suspicion and marred relationship between Christians and Muslims in several parts of Nigeria. The mantra for the proponent of the introduction and implementation of sharia legal system is to fight corruption in Nigeria. Sharia is a political weapon on the chess board for some political elite and proponents of sharia to consolidate and maintain power. Hence it is most essential to note, that sharia has had no perceptible impact on corruption in Nigeria. The steam does seem to have left its activists and campaigners. But then it is often manipulated by its advocates to achieve political interest when the need arises or when the occasion enhances it for them.

The introduction of the Sharia legal system runs contrary to the constitution of Nigeria even though it was written by a select few by the Military and imposed on the people. It also runs contrary to the belief of Christians in the zones who have experienced and seen frequent crises of religious violence between Islam and Christianity and the resultant effects. Understanding this situation E. U. M. Igbo and E. E. Anugwom opined that:

Muslims ... believe that they have the right to Islamise the world. This is not necessarily through persuasive argument or evangelism but through holy wars or Jihad. Christians on their own part believe in evangelism or spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. They argue that one cannot attain salvation or go to Heaven except through strict adherence to the teachings of Christ. Each of the two groups want to maintain separate identity and at the same time try to win converts from the other.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ C.F., Ignatius A. Kaigama, *Dialogue of Life: An Urgent Necessity for Nigeria Muslims and Christians, Jos*, Nigeria: Fab Educational Books, 2006, 19.

²⁴¹ E. U. M. Igbo and E. E. Anugwom, *Social Change, Social Problems: A Nigerian Experience, Nsukka: AP Express, 2002*, in, C. O. Tagbo Ugwu, *Religious Conflicts in Kano and Kaduna States of Nigeria*, in, Mariam Ikejiani-Clark, ed., *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd. 2009, 520.

An attitude such as this and the attendant struggles to victory of converts fuels and provokes religious violence and retard the development of the areas and impoverish the people and only enrich the proponents of the confusion.

In the face of all these the government of the country has maintained a deceitful and false stance and refused to take the tough stand of hard conversation with the nationalities which make up the country. This indeed fuels religious violence. Hence C. N. Uba quoted by Tagbo Ugwu observed that the pre-independence favoritisms of the colonial administration of Lord Lugard's policy was a central factor planting violence as he upheld:

“One of the colonial governors – Donal Cameroun – held a meeting with the members of the three missionary groups that had persistently been avid to evangelize the north viz the Sudan United Mission and Church Missionary Society and Sudan Interior Mission and advised them to take things easy noting that he does not want to press on the northern emirs to accept the penetration of the missionaries into the emirates by force. He said that the task of inculcating into the northern leaders the idea of religious tolerance was a hard task that needed time to accomplish.”²⁴²

It was remarkable that from the colonial era, this religious favoritisms engendered religious fanatics especially in Islam who claim (such as the Maitatsine sect) that their brand of Islam was superior to every other religious tradition, comprising Christianity and thus leash religious violence on others. There was no sincere effort made to introduce religious tolerance in the region. This was the background to the religious conflict that ensued in 1990 as a Christian preacher (Reihard Bonnke) was allowed to hold a Christian convention in Kano regarded by Muslims as a Muslim state; whereas previously they argued a Muslim preacher was refused permission to hold a similar convention in Kano.²⁴³

The Boko Haram, an Islamic sect which claimed that western education and western values were forbidden has caused several serious religious conflicts, in Nigeria, particularly in the North Eastern Nigeria. This group declined to acknowledge any

²⁴² C. O. Tagbo Ugwu, *Religious Conflicts in Kano and Kaduna States of Nigeria*, in, *Mariam Ikejiani-Clark, ed., Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria. A Reader*, Ibadan. Spectrum Books Ltd., 2009, 521.

²⁴³C.F., For more readings on this Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the other, Pentecost, Christian Practices and the neighbour*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008, 15-19.

constituted authority or the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.. The group indeed has rejected all other values, cultures, and traditions which are not of Islam. It has waged a systematic and organized war on the Nigerian people particularly the north Eastern Nigeria.²⁴⁴

Lack of justice with regard to prosecuting people who previously were sponsors and instigators of religious violence has continued to fuel religious conflicts in Nigeria. Only a few of the people who organized or committed religious violence or conflict were arrested and when arrested were not indeed prosecuted especially when such individuals are in government or authority. They are untouchables. Their arrests are often to protect them from prosecutions of the courts. Besides, the corruption of the judiciary and the police force compounds the problem.

2.3. Preliminary conclusion

Nigeria is a country diverse in religions, diverse in culture, diverse in ethnic nationalities and diverse in languages. Before the conquest of Nigeria, as a British colony between 1885 and 1914, and the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates; Nigeria had independent nation states and communities that were autonomous.²⁴⁵

Indeed, African traditional religions, Christianity and Islam co-existed with one another before Nigeria came into existence in 1914. However, Christianity and Islam vied for converts from African traditional religions and the competition between both was not a friendly one rather was of suspicion and mutual mistrust. Certainly, one can say they rather tolerated each other and they adopted various systems of conversion. The tolerance between Christianity and Islam was on the background that in the south west of the country many Muslims and Christians are from the same family or because of intertribal marriage had family links and solidarity.

However, soon after independence in 1960 and for the military takeover of governance in 1966 in a military coup d'état in which some political figures were killed; then the configuration became most awful²⁴⁶ and the solidarity was damaged. The military

²⁴⁴ C.F., *Vanguard Nigeria on line, Boko Haram Scare in Abuja*, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/10/boko-haram-scare-in-abuja/>, October, 2, 2010; For more reading on Boko Haram see, Adran Davieson, *Boko Haram and Its Suicide Squad. The Confession of a Jihadist*, 2014.

²⁴⁵ C.F., Levi A. Nwachukwu and G. N. Uzoigwe, eds., *Troubled Journey: Nigeria since the Civil War*, New York: University Press of America, 2004, 11-12.

²⁴⁶ C.F., J. O. Ojiaku, *13 Years of Military Rule*, Lagos: Daily Times Nigeria Publications Ltd, 1981, 222-226.

government, even though it did not enter into religious promotion nevertheless, according to some authors very much favored Islam and legalized religious politics to influence its foreign policies.²⁴⁷ It was observed that in this period the military led Nigeria into the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and its sponsorship of many Muslims religious pilgrimage and bilateral relationships with the Arab countries, but severed diplomatic relation with Israel; such policies were influenced by religion. Consequently the involvement of military government on religious affairs caused much concern, protests and demonstrations from Christians of Nigeria, who termed it the imposition of Islam on Christians. This indeed, galvanized the Christian Association of Nigeria to political demands on behalf of Christians and its consequent involvement in politics.

The gravity of religiously driven conflict got messy at the turn of the 1980s and lay open the delicateness of Nigeria and a Nigeria which craving and crying for new and innovative standards that will nurture peaceful, interpersonal, religious harmony and relations and good governance.²⁴⁸ Religious conflict impedes, pollutes social relationship of Nigerians. It destabilizes the economy of the country as well as acts as the pivot on which different groups are galvanized to demand political power and self-governance.

Indeed, to manage fundamentally the expanding problems of religious conflict; Nigeria needs mutual religious understanding, hard conversation, dialogue, the practice of the tenants of peace and justice for all in relation to the other faith communities. It has to allow all these and make them into compulsory lesson and courses to be taught in schools and universities. Besides, we need a good new political and socio-religious compass that will uphold the rule of laws that comprises the overcoming of the root causes of violent conflict, reinforcing the networks among hostile groups; through good legislative processes and rebuilding the nation with a view to establishing long term stability via peace, democracy²⁴⁹ and good governance.

²⁴⁷ C.F., W. O. Alli, *Religious Crisis in a 'Pluralistic Religious State: The Muslim Perspective in Religious Understanding in Nigeria*, NASAR Publications, 1993, 115.

²⁴⁸ C.F., Akintunde E. Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria: A Contextual Study of Ambivalent Encounter*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, IX. *The Emphasis is mine.*

²⁴⁹ C.F., *Peacebuilding: International Parliamentary Conference on Peacebuilding: Tracking State Fragility*. Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, CPA: London, www.cpaukbranch.org: Sourced on 20 Sept. 2014.

3. Statements the of Second Vatican Council

3.1. Introduction

In this section I discuss the huge import of the Second Vatican Council documents on the relationship of the Church with Non-Christians and other churches which have greatly encouraged the development of peace initiatives and dialogue amongst people of living Faith. By this I mean the second Vatican council's efforts to promote the fact of the urgency and indispensability of the reality of peace in the world. To demonstrate peace is urgent necessity and attainable development in the world and among religions; the council initiatives invite multi-religious and secular nations of the world, irrespective of confession, language, to the life of the spirit of love, justice, unity and peace where the children of God are appreciated and welcomed, irrespective of differences in their belief and religious commitments.

The Second Vatican Council initiated the theological foundation for the engagement of dialogue amongst other religious faith communities and the Catholic Church. In addition, it explores the need and the important role that dialogue plays in enhancing peace in the midst of religious conflicts. Hence there is urgent need for dialogue among the religions and stakeholders in a country torn apart by endemic religious conflicts; such as Nigeria for significant advancement. There ought therefore, to be some forum in which there are collaborative actions, in which participants work together toward common understanding and the exploration of common grounds, so as to live in peace. The exigency for dialogue is rightly underlined by Hans Kung; when he rightly articulated that. "No peace among nations without peace among the religions". *And he further stressed* there is "no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions."²⁵⁰ This assertion is important to Nigeria where religion plays very influential role among the contemporary life of the people that peaceful relations between the religions in Nigeria is among the major prerequisites for peace in Nigeria. Hence, in some of the most heart-breaking religious conflicts in today's Nigeria, it is impossible to close one's eyes to the remarkable role of religious conflicts and religious controversies in Nigeria, especially as described by the media in Nigeria. There is the

²⁵⁰ Hans Kung, *Islam: Past, Present and Future*. Oxford: One World Books, 2007, xxiii.

further deep-rooted consciousness of religious belonging that constitutes the ethnic nationalities and identities in Nigeria. This moreover underscores further the singular role of religion in Nigeria. Hence Emefie Ikenga Metuh scored the need that: “It will only be when Nigerians begin to dialogue frankly and respectfully with one another that they will be able to come to reconciliation.”²⁵¹ Thus reconciliation is also one of the keys to redeeming the situation of the endemic and protracted religious conflict in Nigeria.

3.1.2. Before Second Vatican Council

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, some fathers of the Church designed a theology that permitted them to attribute some significant view of salvation of God to other religions. Among these Fathers of the Church, Justin who uses the “Logos” designated as the Son of God. Jacques Dupuis noted that, Justin spoke of the Son as the “divine Word existing with God; yet, on the other hand, all the cosmological functions, all God’s interventions in the world, are attributed precisely to the Logos.”²⁵² Moreover, in the opinion of Jacques Dupuis, Justin and the Fathers of the Church maintained: there are different kinds of participations; hence, he summarized Justin’s ideas in four concise points namely: a) that there exist three kinds of religious knowledge: that proper to the nations, the Jewish and the Christians; b) the second of all the religious knowledge in its different kinds, the Logos is the unique source; c) the difference between the various kinds of knowledge corresponds to various forms of participation in the Logos: However, extending to the whole cosmos and to all human beings, the intervention of the Logos in Israel becomes decisive; it is completely only in Christ’s advent in the flesh, and d) all persons who have known the Truth and lived righteously are Christians, since, and insofar as all have partaken of, and lived according to, the Logos who is all Truth.²⁵³ This understanding is participatory differentiation of the Logos. In this system of participatory differentiation, all people share in him, but to some others they received from him partially, whereas to them (the Christians) whom the Logos revealed himself in his incarnation have been blessed with his complete manifestation.²⁵⁴ Here one can

²⁵¹ Emefie Ikenga Metuh, *Reconciliation: The path to true peace and authentic progress for Nigeria, in Mission Studies. Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies*, Vol. XVIII – 1, 35, 2001, 22.

²⁵² C.F., Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001, 57.

²⁵³ C.F., *Ibid.* 59.

²⁵⁴ C.F., *Ibid.* 59.

then locate implicitly positive attitude to other religions. The foundation led by Justin was taken up by Irenaeus, who expressed the universal active presence of the Word of God previous to the incarnation. According to him, it was the “Logophanies” that announced and prepared the Word’s decisive manifestation of God in the flesh in history.²⁵⁵ Irenaeus, in developing this thought distinguished four covenants of God’s manifestation in history. Thus he noted: “Four covenants were given to human race: one, prior to the deluge, under Adam; the second, that after the deluge, under Noah; the third, the giving of the law, under Moses; the fourth, that which renovates the human beings and sums up all things in itself by means of the Gospel, raising and bearing upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom”²⁵⁶. Indeed, Irenaeus saw the first two of the covenants as universal which express in history and in creation God’s manifestation to all human beings²⁵⁷ and the decisive manifestation of God in Jesus Christ was expressed according to Irenaeus in the third covenant concerning the chosen people of Israel and this serves for a direct historical preparation for this decisive endeavour by God.²⁵⁸ Besides, Origen and St. Augustine of Hippo all saw some positive significance of God’s manifestation in the other religious traditions of the world.

Certainly, in the course of Christian history the axiom “outside of the church there is no salvation as a historical antecedents connected to St Cyprian became prominent. Cyprian held that there is no salvation outside the Church for those who are heretics.²⁵⁹ St Cyprian’s axiom was particularly addressed to the Christian heretics and schismatics who were guilty of their separation from the Church. However, Dupuis noted that St. Cyprian did not apply this axiom to the majority of the people at his time who were still pagans and to the pagans in general it was not however clear or known if he judged them in this manner.²⁶⁰ He was rather more concerned for the unity of the Church which for him the heretics and schismatics were tearing and breaking, and for that reason baptism conferred outside of the Church was invalid.

²⁵⁵ C.F., Ibid. 77-78. Books, 2001, 77-78.

²⁵⁶ Jacques Dupuis Quoted Adv. Haer III, 11, 8; ANF 1:429, in, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001, 78.

²⁵⁷ C.F., Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Op. Cit., 78.

²⁵⁸ C.F., Ibid. 78.

²⁵⁹ C.F., Ibid. 88.

²⁶⁰ C.F., Ibid. 88.

The axiom “outside the Church there is no salvation” latter found entrance into the official documents of the Catholic Church. Hence the fourth Lateran Council in 1215 defined that “The universal Church of the faithful is one, outside of which no one is saved”²⁶¹. The council was reacting principally to some groups it regarded as anti-ecclesial, spiritualists and the Albigensians as well as the Cathars who reduced the Church to an Assembly, thereby denying the incarnational and mediatory nature of the Church.²⁶² Hence Denzinger and Schönmetzer in the *Enchiridion Symbolorum* noted:

“There is indeed one universal Church of the faithful outside which no one at all is saved, and in which the priest himself, Jesus Christ, is also the sacrifice (*idem ipse sacerdos est sacrificium Jesus Christus*). His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the body by divine power and the wine into the blood, to the effect that we receive from what is his in what he has received from what is ours (*ut...accipiamus ipsi de suo, quod accepit ipse de nostro*) in order that the mystery of unity may be accomplished”.²⁶³

It has to be emphasized that the declaration included a profession of faith in the sacramental and Eucharistic community. Indeed there is one universal Church of the faithful and outside of this Community no one is at all saved. In the footsteps of the Lateran Council Pope Boniface VIII in his papal pronouncement in 1302, in the bull “*Unam Sanctum*” as well as the Council of Florence in 1442 maintained the “axiom” of outside the Church there is no salvation.²⁶⁴ The Pope went further to emphasize that those who found themselves outside the confines of the Catholic Church and not in communion with the bishop of Rome were not included in the saving grace of God²⁶⁵. In addition Pope Benedict VX noted and addressed the members of non-Christian religions as those who are “the numberless heathens who are still sitting in the shadows of death”.²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ John A. Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism: A Contemporary Catechism of the Teachings of the Catholic Church*, New York: An Image Book, Published by Doubleday, 1981, 235.

²⁶² C.F., Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Op., Cit., 93.

²⁶³ H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer Eds., *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Defintionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum Edition 36*, Freiburg: Herder 1976, 792 quoted in, Jacques Dupuis, *Toward A theology of Religious Pluralism*, Op., Cit., 93.

²⁶⁴ C.F., Ibid. 235.

²⁶⁵ C.F., John A. Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism*, Op., Cit., 235.

²⁶⁶ Denis Chidi Isizoh, Ed. *Christianity in Dialogue with African Traditional Religion and Culture*, Vatican City: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 2001, 6.

Later issue which came out of this became the salvation of those, who not because of their culpability or through no fault of theirs were outside of the Church. This designate the theory or theme of implicit faith in Christ and faith in a provident God through the adherence to their enlightened conscience. This concern however fostered a theological environment which characterized the faith of some people before Vatican II. This subject raised some problem that engaged theologians and the officials of the early Church to articulate a positive view of the other religions. In 1076 Pope Gregory VII in his letter thanking King Anzir of Mauritania, a Muslim for the release of some prisoners and gifts to him, noted that Christians and Muslims serve the same God. He thus asserted:

“God, the creator of all, without whom we cannot do or even think anything that is good, has inspired to your heart this act of kindness. He who enlightens all people coming into the world (Jn 1: 9) has enlightened your mind for this purpose. Almighty God, who desired all people to be saved (1 Tim 2: 4) and none to perish, is well pleased to approve in us most of all that besides loving God, people love others, and do not do to others anything they do not want to be done unto themselves (Mt 7: 12). We and you must show in a special way to the other nations an example of this charity, for we believe and confess one God, although in different ways, and praise and worship him daily as the creator of all ages and the ruler of this world. For as the apostle says: “He is our peace who has made us but one” (Eph 2:14). Many among the Roman nobility, informed by your goodness and virtues.... God knows that we love you purely for his honour and that we desire your salvation and glory, both in the present and in the future life”.²⁶⁷

The significance of the pontiff’s letter cannot be over emphasized, for it underscores the importance of the respect of other people’s faith. All serve the same God who is the merciful God. Besides, St Francis of Assisi was credited with being committed to peace with Muslims for seeing every person as a brother or a sister, equal in dignity; hence no violence should be perpetrated against anybody or any creature.²⁶⁸ There were some others engaged in similar articulation of positive significance of salvation outside of the Church²⁶⁹, however, since the discussion on this theme is not our major concern, I

²⁶⁷ C.F., Jacques Dupuis, *Pope Gregory VII quoted in Toward a Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Op., Cit., 102.

²⁶⁸ C.F., Michael Cusato, Series Ed, and Daria Mitchell, Vol. Ed, *Daring to Embrace the Other: Franciscan and Muslims in Dialogue: Spirit and Life. A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism*, Vol. 12, Ashland, Ohio: Book Masters, Inc, 2008; See also Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Op., Cit., 104-105.

²⁶⁹ C.F., Jacques Dupuis, Op., Cit., 120- 129.

therefore limit myself to what has been so far noted above. This understanding and similar ones noted above; as credited to the pre-second Vatican Council concerning non-Christian religions showed appreciative and positive evaluation of their worthy in creating the well-being of their adherents. It further perhaps paved the way for a deeper positive understanding of the second Vatican Council.

3.2. Single Documents of Vatican II Council

In the previous section, I tried to situate the religious conflict in Nigeria with particular reference to the Northern part of the country. But in the present section I shall make an appraisal and the role of the relevant documents of the second Vatican Council inspiring dialogue among religions of the world. The documents are not seeking unity among the various religions to make them into a global religion rather; its goal is prevent the religions from being the source for violence and hatred among people of various faith commitments. Besides, to remove prejudices, remove mutual misunderstandings and to enhance and promote better appreciations of the various traditions, and to make the world a better place for all to live. In this sense the second Vatican Council set the pace.

The Second Vatican Council has been inspired by a universal concern for the well-being of all. It therefore views the promotion of peace, harmony and unity as her chief duty²⁷⁰ for the world. It maintained, the understanding that we have only one origin – God and, because God made the entire human race to inhabit the earth. This inspiration motivated the Council to consider the salvation of those who found themselves outside the confines of the Catholic Church, and those outside the Church without imputable guilt, the theory of implicit faith in Christ implied by their faith in a provident God, and a sincere following of one's moderately rational conscience²⁷¹. Therefore, all have only one basic

²⁷⁰ C.F., Dekret über den Ökumenismus „*Unitatis Redintegratio*“ in Peter, Hünemann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, Eds., (Herausgegebenen) *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band 1, Herder: Freiburg, 2004, 211; Von Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, *Theologischer Kommentar zum Dekret über den Ökumenismus, Unitatis redintegratio*, in, Peter, Hünemann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band, 3, Herder: Freiburg, 2005, 109 -113.

²⁷¹ C.F. Von Peter Hünemann, *Theologischer Kommentar zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche “Lumen gentium”*, in, Peter, Hünemann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band 2, Op., Cit., 397-399, LG 16; See also Von Hans-Joachim Sander, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralkonstitution über die Kirche in der Welt von heute, „Gaudium et Spes*, in, Peter Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band 4, Op., Cit., 710-713, GS, 1-3 and 22; See as well,

ultimate destiny, God alone whose goodness, plan of salvation and providence covers all. This indeed encourages the council Father to explore and promote what engenders friendship among people.²⁷² Indeed, the Church consequently enjoins her members in living their faith in the world to recognize, concede, preserve and nurture the spiritual and moral truths found in the non-Christian and in the social life and culture.²⁷³

Indeed, with the notoriety of religious conflicts and the dissention and discord in world affairs today, the importance of the Council's documents on relationship between the Church and the Non-Christian Religions cannot be over emphasized, more in particular its enrichment to dialogue with Islam. The declaration on the Church's stance on the non-Christian religions, commissioned by Pope John XXIII, in 1962 initiated the condemnation of anti-Semitism and eased a new epoch of peaceful interfaith relations or dialogue, as it confirmed a new attitude and dynamic vision toward the people of other faith communities, a real transformation originating in the profound sense of reconciliation based on the attitude and teaching of Jesus Christ that Pope John XXIII embraced and sought to implement, so as to build a world community of peace, liberty and justice. Hence it manifested the start of an era of positive significant outlook of the Church to the world religions.²⁷⁴ This new positive attitude of the Church to these

Dekret über die Missionarische Tätigkeit der Kirche, „Ad gentes“, in Peter, Hünermann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band, 1, Op., Cit., 476-477, Ad Gentes 9; Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen, „Nostra Aetate“ in, Peter Hünermann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, Band 1, Op., Cit., 355-357, Ad Gentes 2; Dekret über die Missionstätigkeit der Kirche, (Decretum de activitate missionali Ecclesiae, „Ad Gentes“), Einleitung und Kommentar von Suso, Brechter, in, Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil, Teil 3, Herder: Freiburg, 1968, 45.

²⁷² C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents. New Revised Edition, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992, 738; (*Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*), (*Nostra Aetate*) 28 October, 1965, 1; Von Helmut, Hoving, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen: Nostra Aetate*, in, eds., Peter, Hünermann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Freiburg: Herder, 3, 2004, 649.

²⁷³ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, 2, Op., Cit., 739; See as well the Commentary of Von Helmut Hoving, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen*, in, eds., Peter, Hünermann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, in *Herders Theologische Kommentar*, Op., Cit., 658; See also *Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen, Nostra Aetate*, in, Peter Hünermann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band, 1, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 357-358.

²⁷⁴ C.F., Victor I. H., Gospel, *Mission and Dialogue: Second Vatican Council and Islam*, in *Vidyajyoti*, 63, 1999 4, 267.

religions is to be considered on as stated in the Documents: “*Unitatis Redintegratio*”, (Decree on Ecumenism); “*Lumen Gentium*”, (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church); “*Gaudium et Spes*”, (the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World); “*Nostra Aetate*”, (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), the Document “*Dignitatis Humanae*”, (the Declaration on Religious Freedom and included here is “*Ad Gentes*”, (the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church). Below I focus on the documents initiatives.

3.2.1. *Lumen Gentium*²⁷⁵

The Second Vatican Council’ outlook on other religions is accentuated on this document (*Lumen Gentium* 21 November, 1964) that the Church as an earthly reality is relative. It does not establish that the Church is the only means of salvation, since to do so would signify that the other religions and their traditions will be irrelevant. Even though it maintained that it is in the Church instituted by Christ that has his presence in a special way. Nevertheless full incorporation in the society of the Church belongs to those who are in possession of the Holy Spirit²⁷⁶, and this Spirit works effectively and blows wherever it wills, outside the visible structure of the Church.²⁷⁷ And through the power of the Holy Spirit everything in the Church is envisioned to serve and be a sign of the saving dialogue of God with the world in Christ.²⁷⁸ We are therefore invited to be in a Church in dialogue for the Triune God has entered into the dialogue with us.²⁷⁹ It indicates that through the Holy Scriptures and tradition the pilgrim Church is essential for salvation, because there is only one Christ, the only mediator; who is in us through his body the Church. Thus *Lumen Gentium* states:

²⁷⁵ C.F., Gerard Philips, Löwen, Die Geschichte der Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche, *Lumen Gentium*, in, eds., Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard, Häring; Josef, Höfer und et al, eds., *Lexikon Für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Dokumente und Kommentare. Zweite Völlig Neu Bearbeite Auflage*, Teil, 1, Freiburg: Herder, 1966, 139-199; Peter, Hünemann, Theologischer Kommentar zur dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche, *Lumen Gentium*, in, Peter, Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Vatikanischen Konzil, Freiburg: Herder, Band 2, 2004, 269-562.

²⁷⁶ C.F., *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, 14, in, Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Op., Cit., 366.

²⁷⁷ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, Op., Cit., 364; Confer also Von Peter Hünemann, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche, Lumen Gentium*, Op., Cit., 388.

²⁷⁸ C.F., *Ecclesiam Suam*, 73.

²⁷⁹ C.F., *Ibid.* 73.

“Basing itself on scripture and tradition, it teaches that the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is mediator and the way of salvation; he is present to us in his body which is the Church. He himself explicitly asserted the necessity of faith and baptism (cf. Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:5), and thereby affirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church which men enter through baptism as through a door. Hence they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ, would refuse either to enter it, or to remain in it”.²⁸⁰

It emphasizes the uniqueness of Christ as the only mediator and only means of salvation. Besides, the church is essential for salvation, and faith and baptism are also essential for salvation. These are so to speak linked while salvation comes from Christ the, head of the Church which is his body.

Consequently, the document LG no. 16 threw its doors open to the other religions. Those who do not belong to the Christian fold are related to the Church or to the people of God in a variety of ways²⁸¹. Moreover, those people to whom the covenant and promises were made and the people who acknowledge God as their creator and hold the faith of Abraham; they are recognized as the people of God and are designated to include:

“Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways... But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Moslems: these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day. Nor is God remote from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, since he gives to all men life and breath and all things... Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience--those too many achieve eternal salvation”.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, Op., Cit., 365-366; *Lumen Gentium*, no. 14; Gerard Philips, Löwen, *Die Geschichte der Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche*, *Lumen Gentium*, in, eds., Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard, Häring; Josef, Höfer und et al, eds., *Lexikon Für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Dokumente und Kommentare. Zweite Völlig Neu Bearbeite Auflage*, Teil, 1, Freiburg: Herder, 1966,199.

²⁸¹C.F., Michael L. Fitzgerald, *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*, in, *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*, Eds. Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow, Eugene, Oregon: Orbis Books, 1999, 207-220.

²⁸² Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II*, Op., Cit., 367; *Lumen Gerundium*, no. 16; Gerard Philips, Löwen, *Die Geschichte der Dogmatischen Konstitution über die Kirche*, *Lumen Gentium*, Op., Cit., 205.

The document, by admitting that those who are submissive to the will of God through the promptings of their conscience as well as those who seek God through images and symbols underscored the possibility of the Church to work in concert for the salvation of all irrespective of the religious beliefs. Hence, outside the boundaries of the Church; there are many elements of sanctification and of truth that are found. Indeed, these are gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, they are forces impelling towards Church unity and dialogue.²⁸³ *Lumen Gentium* besides declaring the Church as a vehicle through which humanity may come to a full unity in Christ²⁸⁴, also it affirmed the universality of the One People of God, that is to say, the reconciling and in-drawing mission of the Catholic Church²⁸⁵ through the unique and universal salvific significance of Jesus Christ.²⁸⁶ The document further reiterates that the offer of salvation embraces also those who acknowledge the creator, first of all among them are the Muslims. These, the document moreover affirmed, profess and hold the faith of Abraham and these people together with us adore the one God, the Merciful God.²⁸⁷

In *Lumen Gentium*, there is the affirmation and respect of the religious other's integrity. The council fathers extended the spirit of inclusiveness to hold that those who have not heard and responded to the gospel message in accordance to their religious pursuit are imbued with value of truth which is either preparatory for or complementary to an explicit knowledge of God, while asserting the priority of the Christian salvific mission.

3.2.2. Unitatis Redintegratio²⁸⁸

Over the last few decades, we have witnessed a process of social awareness that has affected and continue to affect all human beings. There is a voracious desire for universal

²⁸³ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium*, no. 8, Op., Cit., 357.

²⁸⁴ C.F., Francesco Gioia, Ed., *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church*, (1963-1995). Boston: Pauline Books and Media, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 1997, 41.

²⁸⁵ C.F., Ibid. 41.

²⁸⁶ C.F., *The Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis, Published in Origins 15, July 4, 1985, 103.*

²⁸⁷ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed, Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, No. 3, Op., Cit., 739-740; *Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen, Nostra Aetate*, in Peter, Hünermann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., in, *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band, 1, Op., Cit., 358.

²⁸⁸C.F., *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 57, 1966, 673-701; See also Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New Revised Edition, Dublin: Dominican Publications,

brotherhood/sisterhood. Besides, there is an unquenchable desire for a world of justice and peace, of equality and of participation. These are becoming progressively sensed and articulated. In this sense Robin Green in his article: “God is Doing a New Thing: A Theological Reflection on the Practice of Partnership, in the, *International Review of Mission* 80 captured this process of social awareness as he noted: “We have entered a new stage in the history of humankind, in which a vision is being shaped of a community that is more extensive than any offended group, that includes all sides, that is passing beyond tribalism into a recognition of a new interdependence. During this century we have arrived at a revolutionary understanding of God”.²⁸⁹ Indeed, Albert Nolan, a South African theologian exclaimed that “all these experiences of going beyond some limitation or restriction are experiences of God”²⁹⁰. He nevertheless continued that this experience of God is transcendence, the voice of God. This “voice is the call of transcendence that challenges us to go further into doing more and into trying harder, to change our lives as well as to venture out into new areas and into the unknown”²⁹¹. God he argued “is out there calling to move beyond the system, beyond sin, beyond suffering, beyond our narrow and limited ideas of what is possible”²⁹². The Council fathers of the Second Vatican Council taking history much more seriously reflected a shift and changes in theology as well as opening itself to the a more evolutionary worldview inspiring Catholics to look to cooperate with others with various philosophical or religious perceptions in working towards the common good and to strife to respond to the issues of our time and the sufferings of our world. Hence the council exhorts all Catholics to recognize the signs of the time and to adopt an active and intelligent role in the engagement of ecumenism.²⁹³ This shift is expressed in *Gaudium et Spes* thus: “The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic,

1992, 452-473; Peter Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, 1, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 211-241.

²⁸⁹ Robin Green, *God is Doing a New Thing: A Theological Reflection on the Practice of Partnership, in the, International Review of Mission* 80, 1991, 219, (219-226).

²⁹⁰ Albert Nolan, *God in South Africa: The Challenge of the Gospel*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, 187.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.* 188.

²⁹² *Ibid.* 188.

²⁹³ *C.F. Unitatis Redintegratio*, 4; Peter, Hünemann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil: Die Dokumente des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 218; Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican II Council: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, New Revised Edition*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992, 456.

evolutionary one. In consequence there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as numerous as can be, calling for efforts of analysis and synthesis”.²⁹⁴

In its relation to the world, *Gaudium et Spes* 1, tries to delineate the Church essentially as a faith community whose mission it is, to give joy and hope to the world, characterized often by gloomy looks, lacking simply actual joy and actual knowledge on which way to continue moving. This is premised on that fact of the striving of Christians for Church unity. This strivings rests on sound and undeniable theological logic. It is worthy of note that Christianity is anchored on the belief in one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, One Spirit, one Saviour and one fundamental ethical code (the ten Commandments). As a religion Christianity was inspired by Jesus Christ, the one founder and by the one Spirit, the Spirit of love which animated the Church. Christianity from these foundational elements thinks and speaks of unity and of one fold, under one shepherd, and was at this era in an ecclesial unity.

But as the centuries go by this unity was severed, as a result of some doctrinal diversities, hence the unity was shattered and lost. However, hope was enkindled in history, for the Church not to lose completely focus of her calling to unity and so became very conscious of the spirit of unity. Meanwhile, in the nineteenth century different Christian groups have been working towards the restoration of the Christian unity. In this regard, the works of the Second Vatican Council and the World Council of Churches are remarkable and clear evidence in search of the restoration of complete Christian unity, promotion of good relationship, good neighbourliness, peace and dialogue with people of other religious understanding.

Undeniably, some significant progress has been recorded in the march towards Christian unity. In pursuance of Christian unity, there is the ecumenical encounter, which involves all the major Christian Churches. The Second Vatican Council acknowledged this movement and is neck deeply involved in this ecumenical endeavour; hence in its decree on Ecumenism, it committed substantial energy, study, time and resources. The

²⁹⁴ *Gaudium et Spes*, 5.; Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Revised New Edition*, Dublin, 1992, 907; Von Hans-Joachim Sander, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralverfassung über die Kirche in der Welt von heute, Gaudium et Spes*, in, Peter, Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Freiburg: Herder, Band, 4, 719-720, GS., 5.

divisions among the various Christian groups results into some embarrassment and scandal to the non-Christians, while each church claims to be the true Church of Christ. Hence, in its official document on Ecumenism; “Unitatis Redintegratio” (Decree on Ecumenism), the Second Vatican Council Document expressed with deep distress on the divisions existing among Christians that “such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the most holy cause, the preaching of the Gospel to every creature”²⁹⁵ and peace in the world.

After recognizing officially the Ecumenical Movement and emphatically asked all Catholics to embrace the ecumenical movement with the other major Churches as brothers,²⁹⁶ further declared the era of the religious diatribes and accusations have been close down through the ecumenical endeavours, because this endeavour is being fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁷ And through the same Spirit Pope John Paul II in the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* noted that “brotherhood rediscovered was principally one of the fruits of the ecumenical dialogue that has taken place and so the “Universal brotherhood of Christians has become a firm ecumenical conviction (*Gaudium et Spes*, 3).²⁹⁸ Hence, the decree recognizes that the non-Catholic Christian communities are truly churches and do possess for their members the means of grace and salvation. As a result a validly administered “Protestant Baptism” is equal to a valid “Catholic Baptism”.²⁹⁹ Now, there is a famous endeavour whose goal is the establishment of the one church of the People of God, in truth and in fidelity to the concept of the Biblical image of the One Church of Christ where all grow closer to Christ and to one another³⁰⁰ and in this every member of the Catholic Church has a role to play in enhancing that the Catholic Church grow in unity with other Christians, everyone depending on his/her capabilities and talents. Hence all are encouraged to undertake an intelligent and active

²⁹⁵ *Unitatis Redintegratio, Decree on Ecumenism*, no. 1; Peter Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil: Die Dokumente des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 211.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 1.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 1.

²⁹⁸ *Ut Unum Sint*, 41-48 and 66.

²⁹⁹ Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Real Achievement of Vatican II*, H. Herder New York, 1966.

³⁰⁰ C.F., *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 6; See also See also Peter Hünemann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil: Die Dokumente des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 222-223.

part in working to promote Christian unity, with the necessary attitude of hospitality to the other Christians from whom we are separated.³⁰¹

Indeed, the ecumenical endeavour according to Augustine Cardinal Bea promoted the practice of considerate, authentic and sincere dialogue of joint commissions of Catholic and Protestant Theologians on an equal standing. It is a dialogue on equality of foothold that has led to thoughtful and deep research into and appraisal of ecumenical issues such as the status, role and function of the Papacy as well as other Church institutions in the context of the eventual unity of all Christians. Such ecumenical endeavour of dialogue amongst Catholics and the other Christian churches is gradually collapsing some of the institutional as well as some doctrinal difficulties and the flood of misunderstanding and disagreement on the path of Christian unity.³⁰² Hence underscored is the progress and huge understanding growing through the decree on ecumenism of Second Vatican Council and the joint work of the World Council of Churches towards the restoration of unity among all Christian churches. Catholics are thus called to respect the beliefs of those who are not in communion with the Church. The respectful dialogue set in motion by the Council Document, “Unitatis Redintegratio” continued in other deliberation of the Vatican II as can be seen below.

3.2.3. Nostra Aetate³⁰³

The purpose of this declaration was directed to nurture fraternity, unity among the people of the world, especially on the ground of the commonality of human beings as

³⁰¹ C.F., Unitatis Redintegratio, 4-5.; Peter Hünemann und Bern, Jochen Hilberath, eds., Op., Cit., 218 .and 222; Von Bernd Jochen Hilberath, Theologischer Kommentar zum Dekret über den Ökumenismus: Unitatis Redintegratio, in Peter Hünemann und Bern, Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil: Die Dokumente des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*, Freiburg: Herder, Band, 3, 2004, 128-131.

³⁰² C.F., Augustine Cardinal Bea, *The Unity of Christians*. Geoffrey Chapman: London, 1963, 60-61.

³⁰³C.F., See the Commentary of Von Roman A. Siebenrock, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen*, in, Peter, Hünerman und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band 3*, Freiburg: Herder, 2005, 595-677.; *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 58, 1966, 740-744; Austin Flannery ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992, 738-749; See the Commentary of Georges C. Anawati, Exkurs zum Konziltext über die Muslim, in, Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard Häring; Josef Höfer; Huber, Jedin und et al., eds., *Lexikon Für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Dokumente und Kommentare, Zweite Völlig neu Bearbeitete Auflage*, Teil II, Freiburg: Herder, 1967, 485- 487.

well as to promote peace among the people.³⁰⁴ Expressing his views on the document Francis A. Sullivan noted that the declaration on the relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions was the Second Vatican Council's declaration whose attitude to the non-Christian religions gave most significantly detailed response to religions other than the biblical ones.³⁰⁵

Definitely, Christianity and Islam are the two religions commanding the largest followers in the world today. The historical relationship existing between these two largest religions in some past at many different places of the world have been characterized by tension, suppression and conflicts. However, in the light of this and moreover, realizing that day by day people are being drawn closer and closer together whereas relationship between them is becoming stronger than before in forming one community. The Church thus considers what people have in common and what attracts them together so as to promote unity and love among them, hence the significance of the Church's examination of her relationship to the non-Christian religions.³⁰⁶ Religious liberty as stated by *Dignitatis Humanae* in supporting *Nostra Aetate*'s understanding that Catholic Church rejects nothing which is holy, true in other religions³⁰⁷; and also although their doctrines and precepts differ in many ways from the teaching of the Church, even though often reflect a ray of that truth which enlighten all men³⁰⁸, affirmed unequivocally that it is a right given by God based and founded on the dignity of the human person, found in natural law, as well as in divine revelation, hence it is not toleration because according to Richard John Neuhaus the one who grants or offers toleration may decide to withdraw it.³⁰⁹ These people although not of the Christian fold,

³⁰⁴ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, (Nostra Aetate)*, 1, Op., Cit., 738; Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard, Häring; Josef, Höfer; Huber Jedin und et al, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil: Dokumente und Kommentare. Zweite, Völlig Neu Bearbeitete Auflage, Teil II*, Freiburg: Herder, 1967, 489; Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard Häring; Josef Höfer; Huber, Jedin und et al., eds., *Lexikon Für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil. Dokumente und Kommentare, Zweite Völlig neu Bearbeitete Auflage, Teil II*, Freiburg: Herder, 1967, 489.

³⁰⁵ C.F., Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation outside the Church: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*, London: Paulist Press, 1992, 164-166.

³⁰⁶ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, no. 1, Op., Cit., 738

³⁰⁷ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, 2; Heinrich, Suso Brechter; Bernhard, Häring; Josef, Höfer; Huber Jedin und et al, eds., *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil*, Op., Cit., 491.

³⁰⁸ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, 2.

³⁰⁹ C.F., Richard John Neuhaus, *The World seen from Rome: Vatican II, 40 Years Later. Dignitatis Humanae Zenit. On the Declaration of Religious Freedom*, <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/vatican-ii-40-years-later-dignitatis-humanae>, November 20, 2003. Accessed on Sept. 20, 2014.

but then related to the people of God, are themselves part of the people of God though in variety of ways have the rights to be rightly termed so.

Undeniably, the council acknowledges that it is an abuse of God's will and the sacred rights of every person and family to use force to compel any person in any way to repress his religion. Further affirming the position of the council in promoting a culture of peace among Muslims and Christians, the Vatican Information Services reiterated the right of religious liberty thus: "religious believers have as servants of the Almighty, a duty above all to work in favour of peace, through showing respect for the convictions of individuals and communities everywhere through freedom of religious practice. Religious freedom, which must not be reduced to mere freedom of worship, is one of the essential aspects of freedom of conscience, which is the right of every individual and a cornerstone of human rights"³¹⁰. Indeed, in a manner only known to God, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility to know Him.³¹¹ Thus, in furtherance of support for the necessity of religious freedom Pope John Paul II echoed that:

"When the violation of any fundamental human right is accepted without reaction, all other rights are placed at risk. It seems then to me that this truth needs to be seen in relation to all juridic norms. International law cannot be the law of the stronger, nor that of a simple majority of states, nor even that of an international organization. It must be the law which is in conformity with the principles of natural law and of the moral law, which are always binding upon parties in conflict and in the various questions in dispute".³¹²

Nostra Aetate encouraged Catholics to develop an affirmative stance on Islam and urged to learn about Islam as part of their lived experience of the faith. Hence, Pope John Paul II acknowledged the golden path initiated by Nostra Aetate and the common patrimony from Abraham³¹³; therefore, it is indeed worthy to note and moreover explored and experienced; that the spiritual unity of the children of Abraham can be found in living the genuine tradition of our Abrahamic faith. Besides, living the genuine tradition of the

³¹⁰ Jean-Louis Tauran, *Christian and Muslim called to promote a culture*, in *Vatican Information Services*, September 28, 2007.

³¹¹ C.F., *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Ad Gentes Divinitus, 10, Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church*, December 7, 1965, in *AAS 58, 1966, 947-990*, Text: Flannery A., ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Dublin: Dominican Publication, 1992, 824.

³¹² Pope John Paul II, *Speaking on Right Conditions for effective Freedom on Religion*, in Gioia F., ed., *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church from the Second Vatican Council to John Paul II, 1963-2005*. Boston, Pauline Books and Media, 2006, 699.

³¹³ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, 3, Op., Cit., 739-740.

Abrahamic faith engages us into the hospitality³¹⁴ of Abraham, shown when he welcomed the guests at the Oak of Mamre (*Gen 18:1-8*). His attitude is to be seen as a basic attitude toward neighbour that is much needed in our society today. An attitude such as this urges Christians and Muslims who claim to be Abraham's children to realize that whenever any group is defamed, insulated or attacked; we respond in solidarity to say no through common and unity resolve of support, advocating legal and civil protection for the vulnerable group and not resort to the rhetoric of words that are; perhaps said for the sake of saying something.³¹⁵

The council conceded and refused nothing whatever that is true, good and holy in the non-Christian religions while it esteems the Muslim religion high and then encourages and called on Catholics to participate in dialogue and collaboration³¹⁶ with Muslims, thus declared:

The Church has also a high regards for the Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsist, merciful and all almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to men. They strive to submit themselves without reservation to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plans, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as prophet, his virgin Mother they also honor, and even at times devoutly invoke. Further, they await the day of judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-deed and fasting.³¹⁷

The *Nostra Aetate* declaration recognizes a distinctive regard for the Muslims since they share the same tradition with Christianity through Abraham. Even though Islam adores the one God, living and subsisting in Himself, takes pains to surrender to Him unreservedly, just like Abraham did. It however does not unequivocally approve its claim as successors of Abraham. But it identifies Islam aiming to imitate Abraham's

³¹⁴ C.F., To look for more information on theme of hospitality see Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the other: Pentecostal, Christian Practices and the Neighbour*. New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2008, 99-160.

³¹⁵ C.F., Thomas Michel, *Living Our Faith Together. Muslim-Catholic National Plenary 2012/1433, United States Conference of Bishops*: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/inter...> 2012, 2, Accessed on Sept. 20, 2013.

³¹⁶ Cf. *Nostra Aetate*, 2-4; *Lumen Gentium*, 16

³¹⁷ Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Nostra Aetate*, (No. 3), Op., Cit., 739-740; Confer as well, Von Roman A. Siebenrock, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen*, „*Nostra Aetate*“, in, Peter Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil*, Band 3, Op., Cit., 658-659.

perfect faith in God. However, both religions place an absolute significance on this virtue of faith in God. The document clearly stated that Muslims do adore God, but then, it did maintain that their perception of the divine was accordingly correct.³¹⁸

The Council further, outlined what it judged to be common between Christianity and Islam and prudently urges Christians through dialogue and collaboration, while giving witness to the Christian faith to therefore acknowledge the spiritual and moral goodness in Islam so as to promote peace always for all. It acknowledges that Muslims hold in special esteem the cardinal moral virtues as well as religious virtues as best they know them, even with much rigor than they are found in other societies. In this case the Church sees Islam a great collaborator in their acceptance of natural law which has been pushed aside in an age that has imbibed so much of secular liberalism. The church can collaborate with openness and friendship with Islam in defence of moral virtues and religious life in public domain.

The council in yearning to bring to a halt the sad events of violent persecution, bias, prejudice as well as oppression, and misunderstanding that marked bitter relationship with Islam and open up friendship declared: “Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men and women, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values”.³¹⁹.

In the same vein Donna Orsutu opined as Christianity and Islam have common patrimony, dialogue between them will indeed snowball into mutual respect and better understanding, hence such an encounter will diminish prejudice and promote a friendly attitude toward other people and among Christians and Muslims.³²⁰ Interreligious dialogue with Muslims therefore; the council reiterates can be regarded as a way of witnessing to one’s own faith and way of life. It nevertheless, acknowledges preserves

³¹⁸ C.f., *Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den Nichtchristlichen Religionen, Nostra Aetate*, in, Peter, Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band 1, Op.*, Cit., 358.

³¹⁹ Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.

³²⁰ C.F., Donna Orsutu, *On the Front Line: Christifideles Laici and Lay Involvement in Interreligious Dialogue*, in Denis Izizoh C., ed., *Milestones in Interreligious Dialogue: A Reading of Selected Catholic Church Documents on Relations with People of Other Religions*. Rome: Ceedee Publications, 2002, 189.

and encourages the spiritual and moral truths found among the people of other religions. Consequent to this “the Church asserts that God creates all men and all have the same goal namely to God. His providence, manifestations of goodness and His saving designs are extended to all men”³²¹. Indeed in the fostering of relationship between the religions the document acknowledges the presence among the religions of a hidden power pervading the religions. Hence it asserted:

“In Hinduism men explore the divine mystery and express it both in the limitless riches of myth and the accurately defined insights of philosophy. They seek release from the trials of the present life by ascetical practices, profound meditation and recourse to God in confidence and love. Buddhism in its various forms testifies to the essential inadequacy of this changing world. It proposes a way of life by which men can, with confidence and trust, attain a state of perfect liberation and reach supreme illumination either through their own efforts or by the aid of divine help. So, too, other religions which are found throughout the world attempt in their own ways to calm the hearts of men by outlining a program of life covering doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites”.³²²

3.2.4. Ad Gentes

Ad Gentes calls for a fraternal dialogue with the Non-Christian in the mission of the Church. The decree evokes the universal plan of God for the salvation of the world³²³, by the incarnation of the Son of God who inaugurated a communion of peaceful relation between God himself and humankind, thereby inaugurating a union of brothers and sisters.³²⁴ The decree advises Christian and all engaged in mission to avail themselves of perfection, purity and raise themselves in Christ so that they do not destroy whatever truth and grace found in the nations. These are some kinds of secret presence of God because living and manifesting Christ in the world and Christian Missionary activity is

³²¹ Staffner H., *Mission Methods According to Vatican Council II*, in *Indian Missiological Review*, 9 1987 1, 231.

³²² Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II, Nostra Aetate*, 2, Op., Cit., 739; *Erklärung über die Haltung der Kirche zu den nichtchristlichen Religionen „Nostra Aetate“* in Peter Hünemann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band 1*, Freiburg: Herder, 2004, 356-357.

³²³ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1, (*Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Ad Gentes*, 3, Op., Cit., 814.

³²⁴ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, (*Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, Ad Gentes*, 3, Op., Cit., 814.

nothing but the manifestation and realization of God's plan in the world and in history.³²⁵ Besides, whatever good found sown in the heart and minds of human beings or in the rites and culture of the different peoples, is not only simply to be protected from destruction rather is equally to be enriched, ennobled, healed and made perfect for the glory of God and the peace and common good of human beings.³²⁶ Indeed, to truly bear witness to Christ, Christians are to acknowledge and make themselves be part of the people among whom they live with; therefore through different undertakings and affairs of human activities and life they share in the social and cultural life of these people.³²⁷ Hence Pope Paul VI identified thus dialogue as a foundational means through which the Church is to carry out its apostolic mission and adhere to her vocation. Consequently dialogue is in the very plan of God, who inaugurated in his Son a conversation with the human race. The Pope, moreover noted that in salvation history there are many splendored conversations between God and humanity. This culminated in the eternal Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ.³²⁸ The Pope besides, asserted the Church as the body of Christ should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labours.³²⁹ Indeed, with all this and together with Ad Gentes 22 inspired some consequences for dialogue in which God; the Father is contemplated as a pervasive love unlimited by space and time. This thus reminds us however, that although God has bound the offer of salvation to a concrete community in history, nevertheless, God is not essentially bound to this one people. God can choose other people besides Israel. Hence Matthew says "The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the Kingdom" (Mtt 21: 43) Here the centrality of the universality of God's love in history is underscored. And Michael L. Fitzgerald noted that this was the conviction that had shadowed and grown in the council, basically the mercy of God that cannot be geographically confined. It underlined the fact that we cannot exclude anybody from the possibility of responding to God and from being united with God. It takes its practical effect for dialogue, hence, for God wills to save all as

³²⁵ C.F., Dekret über die Missionarische Tätigkeit der Kirche, „Ad Gentes“, in Peter, Hünermann und Bernd, Jochen Hilberath, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band, 1, Op., Cit., 476-477, Ad Gentes 9.

³²⁶ C.F., Ibid. Ad Gentes, 9.

³²⁷ C.F., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Vol. 1, (*Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity*, Op., Cit., 825, Ad Gentes., 11.

³²⁸ C.F., Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, 70.

³²⁹ C.f., Ibid. 65.

noted in (1 Tm 2: 5). This is important; because, if God wills to really save all, then He must otherwise in some way or other provide the means to achieve salvation.³³⁰

Consequently dialogue as indicated above then, has its place within the Church's salvific mission. Indeed, from this sense, it is a dialogue of salvation, for it is in being closely united with men in their life and work; that the disciples of Jesus hoped and sought to render true witness of Christ to others and also to work for the salvation of others still where they were not capable to announce the message of Christ wholly.³³¹

3.2.5. Gaudium et Spes³³²

The advancement of dialogue among people of living faith was carried further by the Second Vatican Council in the Document "the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" – "Gaudium et Spes" speaks of the Church's solidarity with humanity.³³³ The constitution expresses its hope not merely of the Catholics but to the people of the world. The council fathers took seriously the opening address of Pope John XXIII, when he proposed that the council fathers should refrain from the language of condemnation to the adoption of the theme of reconciliation with the modern world. The Council then took up the theme of reconciliation to extend it to the Church's relation to non-Western Culture, to the non-Catholic Christian and to the non-Christian communities- to all humanity. The Council thus adopted the ideals and method of dialogue as a way to articulate its own social teaching in response to scrutinizing the signs of the times³³⁴ and to inspire inner appropriation and spoke most characteristically in words of friendship, partnership, reciprocity and dialogue.

Truly, following this understanding the document of Gaudium et Spes (GS, 44) takes the approach to include and plead to a new way to foster dialogue between faith and

³³⁰C.f., Michael L. Fitzgerald, What the Catholic Church has learnt from Interreligious Dialogue, JSMOR, 4, 48.

³³¹ Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow, Op., Cit., 39.

³³² C.f., Acta Apostolicae Sedis, 58, 1966, 1025-1120; Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Op., Cit., 903-1000; Von Hans-Joachim Sander, *Theologischer Kommentar zur Pastoralverfassung über die Kirche in der von Heute "Gaudium et Spes"*, in, Peter, Hünermann und Bernd Jochen Hilberath, eds., *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil, Band 4*, Freiburg: Herder, 2005, 585-886.

³³³ C.f., I. H. Victor, Gospel, *Mission and Dialogue: Second Vatican Council and Islam*, in, *Vidyajyoti*, 63, 1999, 4, 267.

³³⁴ C.f., Ann Lois Lorentzen, *Gaudium et Spes*, in the *New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994, 406-416.

science, and between faith and culture. Although dialogue is not a new idea to the Council fathers, they nevertheless understood the Church in the context of humanity. The document emphasizes the fact that the Church should and simply put, must learn from the insights of modern science. Involved here are also the human sciences and the world of politics. This approach includes in the plan of salvation those who through some material branches of knowledge are searchers and seekers of the truth; they are the seeking being who is naturally drawn to the creator in whose image they are made. Here dialogue is located in revelation. The seeking being is from the very beginning invited to converse with God (*GS*, 11). Consequently, it is only in revelation of the God made man that human beings can comprehend themselves, man who converses with and hears God in his conscience. This is subsequent to the understanding that God is the fountain of both science and faith, and the realization that by the same Spirit of God who is reflected in the created things as well as in the human beings who is also in creation. Hence anyone who enters into the depth of truth with courage and humility even if he is not aware of it, is being led by God, who himself has given existence to all. This God is the common origin and end of the human race that is the bond between Church and the non-Christian.³³⁵ The nations form one community, because all human beings share a common destiny which is divine (in God), then we have to hold that the Holy Spirit of God offers to all the possibility of being made partners to God, in the paschal mystery.³³⁶ It is therefore only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear. So through his incarnation the Son of God in certain way has united himself to each man.³³⁷ Indeed, the document reminds the modern world that the human person, when properly understood, is the focus of the world activity and the Church.

Gaudium et Spes focused its understanding of the human person in a world that is swiftly moving. It approached the world from the perspective of meeting the world at the point where the world was and not from the view where the Church may have wanted the world to be.³³⁸ The Church document confesses that all both Christian and non-Christians, ought to admit that all things are ordained to humankind as their center and

³³⁵ C.f., *Nostra Aetate, 1; John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue, Eds. Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow*, Eugene, Oregon: *Orbis Books*, 1999, 30.

³³⁶ C.f., Austin Flannery ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Gaudium et Spes, 22, Op., Cit., 922.*

³³⁷ C.f., *Ibid. GS. 22.*

³³⁸ C.f., Peter Matheson, *The Inductive Methodology of Gaudium et Spes, The Australian Catholic Record*, 63, 1986, 280.

summit. It nevertheless asserted that human beings created in the image of God are called to be social beings since they are bestowed with free will and conscience that are special gifts from God.³³⁹ As a result the Church seeks participation in all efforts of dialogue towards a truly human world with all who are working for the transformation of the earth.³⁴⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* noted that atheists are considered and perceived to be called to an earnest and sensible dialogue³⁴¹, hence all persons are involved and called to share in the dialogue of love and charity so as to establish right order in the world where all live together.³⁴² Sincere dialogue as a way of continuing the Gospel message to all people, race, nation, culture and religions for the peace, justice and harmony in the world under the inspiration of God is emphasized and given urgency.³⁴³

3.3. Preliminary conclusion

Hitherto in this chapter, I have argued that the theology of the second Vatican Council created the groundwork and prototypes on dialogue engagement with other faith communities and the Catholic Church. The perspectives and channels of encounter opened since 1965 have germinated into huge promising enduring commitment to dialogue at different levels. This has generated a theology which makes Christians and Muslims be aware of, and recognize the need for each other; so as to understand their scriptures and traditions for the respect of the others or a theology of love that strengthens the process of interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence: Hence, it opened the doors to survey collectively and mutually the traditions of other religions in order to enhance ways of living peacefully in a multi-religious, multicultural and multi-social environment.

This engagement has necessitated an outright shift from the exclusive mentality of religion to the embrace and hospitality of the others. In this regard, despite the challenges, Christianity and Islam prize essentially the love of God and the love of neighbours. Indeed, Ghazi bin Muhammed was right as he opined that there is no true

³³⁹ C.f., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Op., Cit., 916-917, Gaudium et Spes*, 16-17.

³⁴⁰ C.f., *Ibid.* 947, GS. 45.

³⁴¹ C.f., Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, Gaudium et Spes*, Op., Cit., 911; GS, 10.

³⁴² C.f., *Ibid.* 922, GS. 21.

³⁴³ C.f., *Ibid.* 999-1000, GS. 92.

faith in God starved of love of neighbours.³⁴⁴ The theology of Vatican II thus, offers a standard for the positive attitude among religions and presents an approach that primes and recognizes the values, the differences, the connections and relationships in the different religious traditions as well as promotes harmony through the respect and acceptance of the treasure of differences. Definitely, this approach is a model of respecting the otherness, of dialogue and a model of love.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ C.f., Ghazi Bin Muhammed, *A Common Word between Us and You*, in Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammed and Melissa Yarrington, eds., *A Common Word Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbour*, Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010, 30-46.

³⁴⁵ C.f., Wener G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love*, London: T & T Clark International, 2010, 1-4.

4. Documents from the World Council of Churches (WCC)

4.1. Introduction

On this section of the work I appraise the World Council of Churches (WCC) stance through its central committees. Indeed, the WCC in one of its central committees 1971 at Addis Ababa it enunciated on the theme: Guidelines on dialogue with people of living faith and Ideologies. The World Council of Churches is an Assembly of the various Christian Churches worldwide. It is an ecumenical organization, which confesses a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour. It works for the unity as well as the renewal of the Christian fellowships and bids them the forum by which the work together in the spirit of mutual understanding, Christian witness, tolerance and peaceful co-existence in multi-religious and cultural world.³⁴⁶ The Churches that are affiliated to this body has a working relationship with it toward achieving the zeal. In her proclamation the word of God and witnessing to the world which is essential for all Christian, she is sensible of doing so according to the gospel principles with full respect and love for all peoples.

It is in the light of this understanding that the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in 1997, commenced a project study designated as “Ethnicity, National Identity, and the search for the Unity of the Church” (ETHNAT). The precise objectives of the project study according to its Faith and Order paper 201, named “Participating in God’s mission of reconciliation³⁴⁷ indicated: It is a source for Churches in situations of conflict, and it highlighted four initiatives precisely to endow churches to explore the bearings of ethnicity and national identities; the impacts they have in their inter-church relationships and how it affects their relations with other Churches and the societies where they are situated. It was further meant to enhance the Churches ability to handle the challenges and loyalties of national and ethnic identity that hold back Church unity and reconciliation amongst communities, societies and or Churches in situations of conflict.³⁴⁸ Indeed, it enunciated the ways in which the Churches are to be

³⁴⁶ C.f., *Oikoumene. Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World, Recommendation for Conduct*: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dial...> Accessed on October 20, 2014.

³⁴⁷ C.f., *Participating in God’s Mission of Reconciliation: A Resource for Churches in Situation of Conflict: A Faith and Order Study Document. Faith and Order Paper 201, World Council of Churches*, Geneva, 1997.

³⁴⁸ C.f., *Ibid.*

prophetic in their ministry of unity and reconciliation which would in effect generate healthy and renewed human community. It furthermore called on the Churches to be envoys and agents that will constantly bring in reconciliation and douse tensions in their communities and societies whenever conflicts arise. The commission therefore, emphasized the imperative of collaborative work among the Churches and not to work individually. And in this section of the work I shall also consider the Council's initiatives for pilgrimage of justice and peace; to establish and enhance a culture of acceptance of one another.

Additionally the WCC is aware of the tensions between people of faith communities of different religious persuasions. It threads not only with carefulness but aware of the necessity of Interreligious dialogue to tackle concrete issues and barriers among peoples, boosting peace and justice that are connected with Christian witness in a multi-religious society – world.³⁴⁹ The engagement of the Council is to enhance and inspire the Churches to use its recommendations and guidelines for their proclamation of the gospel among people of different religions and among people who do not profess any specific religion. It seeks to nurture ecumenism, mutual understanding in the collaboration between different churches worldwide. And among other things it seeks to live out the Christian unity in a visible manner, being neighbours to all, that is working together so as to enhance the good of all, and taking responsibility for the greater care of creation and the sustainability of life.³⁵⁰

Following the declaration of *Nostra Aetate*, new stimulus to the enterprise and engagement of World Council of Churches' was enunciated for dialogue among religions. Speaking on the theme: "Being Neighbours to all", the secretary general of the WCC opined, that as both Christianity and Islam share many values in common through Abraham, we are all called therefore to be one in our love to God and our neighbours.³⁵¹ This equally underscores a clarion appeal for Christian unity as against the scandal of Christian disunity. Continuing he asserted; the long history of co-

³⁴⁹ C.f., Oikoumene: *World Council of Churches*, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/epeeches/presentat...> Accessed January 10, 2013.

³⁵⁰ C.f., Oikoumene: *WCC*. Presentation to the World Islamic Call Society, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/speeches/presentat...> Accessed on Jan. 10, 2013.

³⁵¹ C.f., *Ibid*.

existence of Muslims and Christians in many different part of the world, is something we all can carry on to learn in both difficult times and the experience of being able to live well together. He moreover, maintained these characteristics are essential resources for us towards our endeavour to be good neighbours to one another³⁵² since Christians live in communities with people of other faith convictions. For that reason, mutual dialogue is essential for a better understanding, collaboration and friendship between people of various faith commitments. As well, the council stressed and appealed that interreligious dialogue ought continually to remain formulated and be organized ecumenically together. Hence the council insisted this will enhance the building of relationship of respect and trust among people of different religions and in effect facilitate deeper understanding, cooperation for common good and reconciliation.³⁵³ In this sense dialogue, could spontaneously spring up where families meet as neighbours and play together. And moreover, people of various “faiths and ideologies share common activities, intellectual interests as well as spiritual quest for dialogue related to their entire life can become a style of constant living-in-relationship”³⁵⁴.

This attitude echoes the spirit, letter and the openness of the second Vatican Council on the relationship of the Church with other religions which unlocked the way for a new dialogue based on the desire for insightful and profound understanding and respect. It further re-enforced Pope John Paul II’s profound conviction that interreligious dialogue is a path which can stimulate respect between members of various religions and help to bring peace and harmony to the world torn by religious conflicts, and wars. In enhancing its resolved determination for interreligious dialogue, WCC emphasized that in our world increasingly pluralistic many interreligious dialogue and cooperation are required whilst supposing that conflict driven by religion is to be fruitfully handled.³⁵⁵ The inspiration of the *Nostra Aetate* continued to motivate the WCC to collaborate with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in organizing conferences, symposia,

³⁵² C.f., Ibid.

³⁵³ Joseph Kenny, *Views, Document 9, Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies. World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1979*, <http://www.dhspriory.org/kenny/views/views33.htm>. Accessed on Jan. 28 2011.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ C.f., *Oikoumene: Inter-religious dialogue and Cooperation in WCC*, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/interreligiousdialogue>. Accessed June 20, 2013.

lectures and series of visits to countries to strengthen the resolve for interreligious dialogue meetings and solidarity among faith communities.³⁵⁶

Nigeria benefited from such visits of the World Council of Churches by her interreligious delegation of senior Muslim and Christian leaders in October 14-22 2000³⁵⁷, 2010 and 2012³⁵⁸ respectively. These were during the heights of tension and the interreligious conflicts that engulfed the country. The delegation visited Jos and Kaduna the most highly plagued regions of the conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria. Their mission was to promote interreligious dialogue, peace and reconciliation among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The visit among other things highlighted the necessity to find avenues to free religion playing the role of creating conflict and to re-engage it for conflict management and kind-hearted co-existence and justice.³⁵⁹ The delegation equally met with the Christian Association of Nigeria (*CAN*) and as well the Nigeria Interreligious Council (*NIREC*), in addition the delegation met some government officials, religious leaders, traditional rulers and the families of the victims of the violence.³⁶⁰ The delegation hopes their visit will promote Christian-Muslim collaboration to continue the conversation they began and to empower religious leaders to work for the wellbeing and peace of all in Nigeria. This thinking and understanding of the WCC had earlier been noted and summarized by Pope Benedict XVI in the following words:

“In our troubled world, so frequently marked by poverty, violence and exploitation, dialogue between cultures and religions must more and more be seen as a sacred duty incumbent upon all those who are committed to building a world worthy of man. The ability to accept and respect one another, and to speak the truth in love, is essential for overcoming differences, preventing misunderstandings and avoiding needless confrontations.... A sincere dialogue needs both

³⁵⁶ C.f., *Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue: Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. Recommendations for Conduct.*

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interel/documents/rc_pc_interel...

³⁵⁷ C.f., *World Council of Churches. Nigeria Visit: Interreligious dialogue and Environmental Justice.* <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/news/press/00/37pu.html>. Accessed June 20, 2013.

³⁵⁸ C.f., *The World Council of Churches and RABITT on Interreligious Cooperation in Nigeria:* http://en.radiovaticana.va/storico/2012/07/13/the_world_council_of_churches_and_rabii... Accessed June 20, 2013.

³⁵⁹ C.f., *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ C.f., *Ibid.*

openness and a firm sense of identity on both sides, in order for each to be enriched by the gift of each other”.³⁶¹

4.1.1. Projects and Programs

The World Council of Churches, through its departments, programs, and Documents testify to its participation in the struggles to wear down and overcome religious and interreligious hostility, inter-human conflicts and discords which pose an exceptionally perilous hazard to human communities and to unravel the fabric of the entire social order both locally and internationally in human history. The Council participates in order to overcome human scourges, to settle conflicts, so as to create an atmosphere of peace, peace that enhances human well-being, and removes hostility and aggression. It engages in this sphere through its initiatives for justice and reconciliation to diminish the menaces of societal hostility.

Through its Commission of the Churches in International Affairs, the World Council of Churches has continuously been involved in cases of human rights violation in different parts of the world by promoting and protecting rights. In pursuit of this engagement the Council produced its innovative document on “Declaration of Religious Liberty”. This document reflects and commends the right of every person to a religion of his or her choice. In the declaration the council asserted: “The right to determine faith and creed involves both the process whereby a person adheres to a belief and the process whereby he changes his belief.”³⁶² Hence the council admonishes Church in witnessing to their faith to engrave in their conscience the respect of the choice of the faith of all other persons. Moreover, it was through the instrumentality of the Council’s Commission of the Churches in International Affairs that the United Nations Commission on Human

³⁶¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Address to a Delegation of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations: God’s Word is a Lamp and a Light to our Path*, (October 30, 2008), <http://www.ccr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-andstatements/roman-catholic/pope...> Accessed June 20, 2013.

³⁶² *The World Council of Churches, Declaration on Religious Liberty, Adopted at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in August 1948*, <http://www.religlaw.org/content/religlaw/documents/wccdecreliglib1948.htm>. Accessed Jan. 23, 2013.

Rights was inaugurated and besides took active part in the 1966 International Covenants on Human 'Rights'.³⁶³

Indeed, the World Council of Churches in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (*PCID*) and the World Evangelical Alliance (*WEA*) noted in their reflection Document called "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World" that "Christians are called to commit themselves to work with all people in mutual respect, promoting together justice, peace and the common good of all. It emphasized that interreligious dialogue and cooperation is an essential dimension of such commitment".³⁶⁴ Earlier it has been noted that the Catholic Church followed in the vanguard of the freedom of religion through the encyclical of Pope John XXIII "*Pacem in Terris*" and with the Second Vatican Council's document "*Dignitatis Humanae*" in which the Council firmly reconfirmed the Church's stand on the universal application of religious freedom. Catholic Church through the pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue together with WCC and the World Evangelical Alliance underscored that "Religious freedom involves the right to publicly profess, practice, propagate and change one's religion and that it flows from the very dignity of the human person that is grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26)."³⁶⁵ Being made in the image and likeness of God every person, man or woman is endowed with a heart and reason and in this every one of us is capable of promoting peace and justice, because it springs from the dynamism of free will guided by reason towards the common good that is attained in truth, justice and love. This condition is primarily grounded on the decision of the consciences of human beings seeking harmony in relationships, with respect for the fundamental human rights inherent in every person.³⁶⁶

To defend the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God is a major condition to attend to peace and central to the resolution in favour of peace,

³⁶³ C.f., Jerald D. Gort, *The Christian Ecumenical Reception of Human Rights*, in Eds. Abdullahi A. An – Na'im, Jerald D. Gort et al, *Human Rights and Religious Values: An Uneasy Relationship*, Grand Rapids Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, 207.

³⁶⁴ World Council of Churches, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*. June 28, 2011, <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world.html>. Accessed on Jan. 30, 2013.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ C.f., John Paul II, *Message for 1982 World Day of Peace, The Pope Speaks*, 1982, 112.

because according to Pope John Paul II; it is in teaching the people the truth about the human person which underscores the most fruitful avenue to affirming the value of peace.³⁶⁷ Hence the Pope asserted that the dignity of the human person must be forcefully respected because “authentic peace is only possible if the dignity of the human person is promoted at every level of society, and every individual is given the chance to live in accordance with this dignity.”³⁶⁸ It is based on this then the human rights include the recognition of the fundamental, universal, indivisible, inalienable, inviolable and transcendent characteristic. These rights are fundamental because they are a demand of human nature such as God created it, for these rights are common to all, embraces all, individuals, families, peoples and should be respected in any context³⁶⁹.

In 1975 in Nairobi Kenya the World Council of Churches at its 5th Assembly came to a consensus on the content of what constitutes the Human Rights. It noted that it encompasses what it described as the “first generation” rights - of individual civil and political rights and religious freedom. On the “second generation”, it includes economic, social, cultural rights and the freedom, whereas on the “third generation it involved “rights to self-determination, development and freedom from want and aggression.”³⁷⁰ Further initiatives from the WCC involves its responsiveness to the problem of the environmental rights. It underscored the fact that human beings have the responsibility for the care of creation, God's work, therefore humanity has not the right to exploit nature, emphasizing that it is an injustice to exploit nature. It delineated the significance of the symbiotic relationship between human beings and the environment cautioning that what affects nature affect human beings. Hence, if nature suffers human being equally suffers.³⁷¹ Hence the integrity of creation is once again brought into focus in the dialogue initiatives.

All along the WCC has been involved in initiatives that took up the reconciliation between people affected by inter-human frictions, religious conflicts and interreligious hostility. In this area it has been well-known of its activities during the first and the second World Wars. It has handled the problems raised by displaced people from their

³⁶⁷ John Paul II, *Message for 1995 World Day of Peace*, no. 1.

³⁶⁸C.f., *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ C.f., John Paul II, *Message to Dider Opertli Badari*, 30 November, 1998, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 23/30 December 1998, 6.

³⁷⁰ C.f., Jerald D. Gort, *The Christian Ecumenical Reception of Human Rights*, Op., Cit., 223.

³⁷¹ C.f., *Ibid.* 219.

homes, such as refugees. In the aftermath of the Nigerian civil war, the World Council of Churches with the Caritas International and the Peace Corps Volunteers and other humanitarian organizations rendered humanitarian services to “Biafra, the Easterners who suffered during and after the civil war, in forms of food items, educational material, medicine and clothing to the starved ex-Biafran children and the aged, the victims of the war³⁷² with millions of malnourished children and the elderly. However, Ntieyong U. Akpan observed that the WCC found itself hamstrung because it was Nigeria and not the Biafran churches which were its legal members, and the legalistic attitude of the council resulted into some internal rebellion, such that many of its member Churches defied its authority to form a joint church Aid organization to send relief to innocent victims of the civil war.³⁷³

Since the 1970, the Council has shared initiatives in various part of the world for programs to alleviate poverty and responded to social justice issues, sponsored programs in undeveloped areas, through the Commission on the Churches Participation in Development and the Ecumenical Development Fund. Indeed, with this it has sponsored projects in research, in education and provision of supports in the pursuit of justice and self-reliant economic projects for people.

In addition, the World Council of Churches positive commitment with Dialogue with the People of Living Faith principally on the ideals, inspiration and spirit of Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council has continued to enhance dialogue collaboration with other religious faith communities all over the world. Hence, Christians in interreligious dialogue bring their firm belief that the fullness of salvation comes from Christ alone and that the Church community to which they belong is the ordinary means of salvation. However, the Church gladly acknowledges whatever is true and holy in the religions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam as reflection of that truth which enlighten all people, but Christians are to keep in mind the uniqueness of Christ who is the way and the truth and life.³⁷⁴ Hence interreligious as noted by Pope John Paul II, is underlined as a part of the

³⁷² C.f., Kalu Ogbaa, *The New Americans: The Nigerian Americans, U.S.A.:* Greenwood Press, 2003, 29.

³⁷³ C.f., Ntieyong U. Akpan, *The Struggle for Secession, 1966-1970: A Personal Account of the Nigerian Civil War 2nd Edition*, New York: Routledge, 2013.

³⁷⁴ C.f., *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to the Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate*, 2.

Church's evangelizing mission³⁷⁵ and this dialogue does not engage in the conversion of any dialogue partner. It is therefore a dialogue which emphasized the imperative to save life, life that God has given. Hence the Council calls on God, who is the God of life to lead us to justice and peace.³⁷⁶ This is in the light of the situation of the world where the life of people and the whole of creation are at stake. Indeed, it is urgent to attend to and heed the word of the God of life. Thus, most importantly, there is the necessity to determine, where and how the God of life is leading people to affirm the abundance of life for all.³⁷⁷

4.1.2 Overview

The World Council of Churches in 2001 initiated the program on the Decade to overcome violence in the world.³⁷⁸ This initiative was a committed call to the member Churches to join hands for the transformation of the world from a culture of violence into a culture of peace. This Decade to Overcome Violence was a transformative action to rediscover and sharing in the importance of our common humanity.³⁷⁹ This agenda is a forum geared towards working together by diverse religious faith practitioners for world peace and to be in solidarity with people who have suffered violence.³⁸⁰ The agenda deals not only with the goodwill to handle the various manifestations of violence but at the same time deals with the reality of violence in our various contexts; however noting that violence presents the Churches the challenges to explore their contribution to violence. Consequently an acknowledgment such as this would enhance solution,³⁸¹ since, the history of the early Christianity makes us to realize that conflicts is a decisive factor for developing both Christian Culture and Christian theology: Hence, it could be underscored that the church in our globalized world today displays a richness of diversities and struggles which may be used creatively instead of destructively for justice

³⁷⁵ C.f., *Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio*, 55.

³⁷⁶ C.f., *The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches*.

³⁷⁷ C.f., *World Council of Churches 10th Assembly: God of life, Busan, 2013*.

³⁷⁸ *A Basic Framework for the Decade to Overcome Violence: A Working Document Adopted by the World Council of Churches' Central Committee, Geneva: Fiftieth Meeting of the Central Committee, 1999, 59-63.*

³⁷⁹ C.f., K. Raiser, *Welcome and Remarks for World Council of Churches*, 2000, 109.

³⁸⁰ C.f., *A Basic Framework for the Decade to Overcome Violence*, Op., Cit., 190.

³⁸¹ C.f., R. D. Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence: A Historical Reflection on a Decade to Overcome Violence: The Ecumenical Review*, 25, (1), 1997, 192-201.

and peace in the world.³⁸² This transformative engagement “the Decade to Overcome Violence has been a principal concern engaging the WCC for long.³⁸³

This central theme continues to be enfolded and explored by WCC such that in its 10th Assembly in Busan in the Republic of Korea, 8 November 2013, it invited the Churches members and their ecumenical partners to dedicate themselves to working collectively as a fellowship for A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace all geared towards advancing time to examine and lay bare the diverse structures of violence and their relatedness with the goal of engaging into solidarity with victims of conflict and violence.³⁸⁴ Indeed, it is a call for a journey together in search of and a transformative engagement for the renewal and protection of life coming from God the source of all life. It is a journey of the shared experience of the search for unity of the Churches so as to be a sign of hope in the world. This journey or pilgrimage is traced to the God of life, to lead the people to justice and peace by lending themselves to be directed, transformed and become instruments of peace in a society torn by conflict and division. It is a journey, a change of heart engaged individually and collectively for the world to be made whole, for justice, peace, reconciliation and healing of the world. It aids, enhances and deepens the realisation not to allow ourselves to be closed up to the harsh realities or rest our hands from God’s transforming work.³⁸⁵ Indeed, it emphasizes a commitment of the people, themselves to the common journey of spiritual renewal and prophetic calling and enhances the understanding that we need each other on this journey and that we can build on our longstanding relationships between ourselves for the life of the people and the world for justice and peace.³⁸⁶

Furthermore, a pilgrimage could be understood to designate multiple journeys and walks undertaken by people in particular in many different situations and contexts.³⁸⁷ And in

³⁸²C.f., Moises Mayordomo, *Paul as Mediator*, in eds., Fernando Enns, Scott Holland and Ann K. Riggs, *in Seeking Cultures of Peace*, Op., Cit., 179.

³⁸³ C.f., M. M. Thomas, *Risking Christ for Christ’s Sake*. Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1987, 201.

³⁸⁴ C.f., *The Decade to Overcome Violence*, Op., Cit., 190.

³⁸⁵C.f., World Council of Churches, *UCAN Spirituality: The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*. <http://spirituality.ucannews.com/2014/01/20/the-pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace>

³⁸⁶ C.f., German East Asia Mission (DOAM), *Ecumenical chronicle: together on the pilgrimage of justice and peace: letter to our sisters and brothers in South Korea and Japan from the Deutsche Ostasienmission*, Dec. 1, 2014.

³⁸⁷ C.f., Nyambura Njoroge, *Pilgrimage of Public Witness and Diakonia*, in *Ecumenical Review*, July 1, 2014.

this journey, seeking God, the pilgrims allow God direct us in the path that allows us to let right be our light and indeed we may always be bright and be glowing on the path for others. Hence we profess and maintain on this journey God our creator is the source of all life. Indeed, since God, the creator and source of all life is sought; led by the love of Jesus Christ and by the mercy of the Holy Spirit, we form a communion of the children of God moving together towards the fulfilment of the Kingdom.³⁸⁸ Although, we are diverse, but seeking the grace from God we are called and empowered to be sensible steward of God's creation³⁸⁹ discovering our unity while walking side by side, with one another, professing, witnessing to the same Kingdom of God that is to come and to its signs manifested as a foretaste already here and now, revealed and recognized as justices and peace.³⁹⁰ These (justice and peace) are central to the gospel message of Jesus Christ and indeed are God-given gifts for the world. They are genuine signs of the Kingdom of God that is to come; however, they are also prevue of the Kingdom that is incarnated and lived out in authentic ways in history. On this journey, the God of life, who brought us together as one people though the gift of our baptism and faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, called us together, to move together toward one another and working together in the Spirit of God to address the needs of the people in the world in a new way together. For as partakers of the gifts of God we are called to implement justice and peace on the destinations we pass through. With the presence of God on the journey we undertake of justice and peace we thus grow into being pilgrims towards God's Kingdom, hence engaged in living and accomplishing his will for the world.³⁹¹

However, pilgrimage, since it is a process involving journeys, Sacred centers and more so symbolic articulations of deep religious messages alongside with manifestation of localized meaning – here I refer to a belief, messages and experience to justice and peace, found and replicated across cultures and traditions; consequently pilgrimage of justice and peace refers to being present with others, identifying and journeying with them and the other partners in faith , seeking with them and engaging in dialogue focusing on the will of God for the world. It consequently calls for a focus on, and orientation to inclusive community, Church and world that bring the good news to the

³⁸⁸ C.f., *World Council of Churches Assembly, God of life lead us to Justice and Peace, Busan, Republic of Korea, 30 October- 8 November 2013.*

³⁸⁹ C.f., *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ C.f., [Sauca Ioan](#), *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: An Ecumenical Paradigm for Our times: An Orthodox Viewpoint*, in, *Ecumenical Review*, July 1, 2014.

³⁹¹ C.f., *Ibid.*

marginalized and oppressed that suffering could end. This touches on the foundation of Jesus' ministry: "that inclusive community is basically a fellowship of and for the least of his brothers" (Mtt. 25:40). It indeed is a travel for "justice" and "peace" which does not involve locking people up under horrific conditions and essentially condemning them to a life sentence of shame and alienation. In contrast, for Jesus genuine pilgrimage of justice and peace involves visiting prisoners - displaying welcome, hospitality, and healing. Indeed, it underscores the meeting of humanity's need, relieving human suffering, engaging in liberation, sharing in the struggle for peace and the inauguration of social justice as Jesus proclaimed in Lk 4: 18 -19. Indeed, here we are engaged on a transformative journey of our world through pilgrimage of justice and peace whereby each day we have the opportunity to encounter the God of life in his Son, Jesus Christ through and in the sufferings of others, joy, interactions with others and also through every aspect of our human experience moving forward together. Such acts embody genuine justice and echo the words of Jesus about his own vocation in Luke 4: 18-18: freedom for the oppressed, sight to the blind and good news to the poor. It is the chance and opportunity offered to this group of people to enhance, develop and improve their situation.³⁹² Furthermore, in the process we deepen our connection with God of life who leads us to life.

The process engages us on the journey which gives shape to our future, a future that is to be guided in justice and peace. In this process we are open to resist being reduced by the definitions and problems of our past and become energized and empowered to be open to how God can enable us serve one another and to be accountable to one another in our common calling.³⁹³ The principles of this journey and process are applied frequently and mutually exclusive to diverse and limited kinds of situations. It addresses what the people need and equality before the law: For instance to the contestants and competitors in an election and sports events, a fair acknowledgement of their demonstrated merit and workers are honoured with what they have earned.³⁹⁴ Indeed, this is necessary as a result of the threat of violence facing the world today. It is not necessarily intimidation of violence principally from nuclear war as was the case during the cold war period. Somewhat rather, the threat of violence exhibits itself in multiple

³⁹² C.f., Schmitz, *Elements of Justice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 19.

³⁹³ C.f., Olav Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, in *Ecumenical Review*, World Council of Churches, July 1, 2014.

³⁹⁴ C.f., Schmitz, Op. Cit. 18-19.

forms as a threat to human life and its relationship.³⁹⁵ Pilgrimage of justice and peace in the thought of the World Council of Churches hence, is a journey that challenges in our specific and general contexts to constantly reflect on the societal, political and cultural contexts we live in; to respond to the struggle and demands of justice and peace in the world.³⁹⁶ Additionally, it underlines the way that we have to walk and equally delineates that it requires certain attitudes of resilience, dignity, mutual respect and mutual accountability. This is a legacy which challenges, inspires and engaging all in dialogue from our different cultural and Church experiences. The dialogue requested is not merely dialogue rather a real dialogue leading to a theological thinking not basically for uniformity instead an ecumenical theological exploration towards the various struggles and forms that justice and peace could be achieved in our diverse cultural and societal contexts.

4.1.3. Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

In the light of WCC, pilgrimage of justice and peace seek in unity and communion of engaging together in concrete action for justice and peace in the world. This collective transformation as I already argued above and the collective journey of our faith follows and answers the demand and appeal of Christ to lift the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, etc., and as well as to turn away from those structures and habits that dehumanize life instead to develop and enhance life. Indeed, in this sense “every day the Disciples of Christ were and are together on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in search of God's presence in the world--and so are we *continuously* today.”³⁹⁷

Therefore, considering the passage of history, and the facts of recorded history, we can say that the world community and the churches at large had had at one time or the other failed to call for justice and peace in the face of impoverishment and distress during the 19th century industrialization process, such that they had ignored colonial oppression and genocide in various parts of the world and as Martin Robra contended that “in the

³⁹⁵ C.f., *World Council of Churches, Decades to overcome Violence*; Confer, Fernando Enns, *Space for Theological Reflection on Being Peace*, in eds., Fernando Enns, Scott Holland and Ann K. Riggs: *Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation*, Pennsylvania: Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, 29-41.

³⁹⁶ C.f., *Ibid.* 30

³⁹⁷ C.f., Martin Robra, *A Trinitarian Perspective on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, in, *The Ecumenical Review*, Op., Cit., 150.

early 20th century, that the majority of Christians went happily to war and accepted the racist and violent ideology of Nazism leading to the murder of millions of Jews in the death camps and the millions of dead on the battlefields of World War II.³⁹⁸ And furthermore he observed that paying attention to “the voices of Christians and churches in the ecumenical movement, it was clear that much of today's world was threatened by growing inequality, the destructive consequences for nature and already poor and marginalized communities, the naked, the imprisoned and new risky forms of competition between the powers that be”.³⁹⁹ These are the places or points of power or the destination of the pilgrimage of justice and peace. And the truth is then that poor children are deprived of health care; the hungry are starved of food, schoolchildren are going without textbooks on accounts of wars and also as a result of the cooperation of lack of compassion and lack of responsiveness of our political leaders. Indeed, the most deprived of the poor have been shut out of decent human life and in most countries of the world the poor are left to be very desperate, going without food and the elderly are deprived of medicine. Pilgrimage of justice and peace moreover leads us to these places of God’s presence in these people and proposes opportunities for new inspiring experiences with others and of new relationships.⁴⁰⁰ The Churches in Nigeria fall short of collective efforts in this regard, but individually some engage in it. This places us in the places of power and mystery to fulfil some sacred obligations, to renew ourselves and our communities.

These destinations of the pilgrimage of justice and peace are profound calls that touch the indispensable dimensions of our Christian faith; the mystery of the presence of God in the world.⁴⁰¹ Hence to be Christian in the ecumenical world means to identify oneself with the good news that Jesus preached, specifically, the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Indeed, Jesus’ inaugural sermon in the town of Nazareth made clear why and how and to whom his message was the “good news. Thus Luke writes, Jesus asserting: “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”.⁴⁰² Indeed, as disciples

³⁹⁸ C.f., Martin Robra, *Ecumenical Review*, Op., Cit., 151.

³⁹⁹ Ibid. 151.

⁴⁰⁰ C.f., Ibid., 151.

⁴⁰¹ C.f., Ibid., 151.

⁴⁰² Luke 4:18-19.

and followers of Jesus we must reconnect with our original calling to bring good news to the poor. Therefore, a loss of the proximity to, and or the loss of the relationship with the poor people, would mean to lose the essence of the Gospel news that Jesus Christ preached. It could also mean to lose the place of the power of the mystery to renew ourselves and our communities. Indeed, action on behalf of justice and the participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to the followers of Christ as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel. Hence, it is the mission of the Church and the ecumenical body for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.⁴⁰³ This mission enjoins us to be co-workers in God's cause, to be his peace workers. Therefore, it underscores the call as it was asserted in Matthew 25: 35-40 to welcome the least of our brothers and sister – our neighbour in the world.

The significance of pilgrimage of justice and peace cannot be over emphasized. Consequent on the discussion, it underscored the implication of God's peace not only to the marginalized, the oppressed, the poor, the captives etc. instead for the whole of humanity. Peace as we noted signifies the well-being or human blossoming or human development. It is the enjoyment of posterity;⁴⁰⁴ including everything important to healthful living; good health, good fortune, the cohesiveness of the community, relationship to people and their state of well-being and in summary whatever is deemed necessary for everything to be in order.⁴⁰⁵ Furthermore Pope Paul VI concurred to the same meaning when he opined that: "peace is not simply the cessation of violence and conflict based on precarious balance of power, rather it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day towards the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men."⁴⁰⁶ The impact of this is that announcing the Gospel of peace from the perspective of the poor, the marginalized, the disabled, the strangers etc. reveals how the peace of God invites us to utterly new way of expressing, exemplifying and embodying God's story in the world. It enjoins us to remain authentic to the Gospel of peace of Jesus Christ, in welcoming and being friends and neighbours

⁴⁰³ C.f., *The World Synod of Catholic Bishops, (Justitia in Mundo) Justice in the World*, no. 6. 1971.

⁴⁰⁴ C.f., G. Von Rad, *eirene*, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, ed. G. Kittel, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964, 403.

⁴⁰⁵ C.f., See above, 15.

⁴⁰⁶ C.f., Pope Paul VI, "Populorum Progressio", Encyclical on the Development of Peoples, March 26, 1967, no. 76.

to those strangers and those who are different from us; as the central message of Jesus engages.

Additional impact of the pilgrimage of justice and peace highlights the fact that Gospel of peace of the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus and enjoins us, conveys wholeness of presence, way of life and being to the people, especially people different from us. This is further exemplified in the healings of Jesus already talked about which requested us to live in harmony; that rights the relationship with God and one another particularly those who are other than ourselves.⁴⁰⁷

On the conversation of justice, a biblical concept, we noted that justice that refers to the enjoyment of one's right is crucial to peace, for there cannot be peace without justice. This is consequent on that fact just as Nicholas Wolterstorff contended that peace is an "ethical community". Indeed, just like individuals, if they are deprived of what is suitable or fitting or due them or that their entitlement on the others is not acknowledged or granted by the others and also when others do not discharge their responsibilities or commitments to them, then peace that is ethical community is injured, because justice is not present.⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, peace that is responsible community in which God's laws for the multifaceted existence of God's creatures are obeyed, safeguards people of diverse cultural, religious and political backdrops can live in harmony and their well-being is secured. Therefore, it is my view that this understanding and the great treasure of peace is a good response to systematic or a widespread violation of human rights as well a great treasure that pilgrimage of justice and peace contribute to the management and transformation of conflicts in the world and Nigerian in particular. This thought delineates how Jesus understood his ministry in terms of justice as John Fuellenbach succinctly affirmed. The concept of justice in the New Testament is connected "to the Kingdom of God theme insofar as justice refers to right relationships. The entire ministry of Jesus is geared toward re-establishing those relationships on which the covenant was built. "His image of God as the compassionate One concerned with justice, his constant

⁴⁰⁷ See Page 22 above.

⁴⁰⁸ C.f., Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace embrace*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987, 71.

critique of his opponents for having ostracized whole groups, and his untiring effort to bring those marginalized back into the covenant community”.⁴⁰⁹

4.2. Biblical Foundation of Commitments

This section considers the biblical foundation for commitment which I deem the basis for the engagement for the pilgrimage for justice and peace. It starts from the Old Testament particularly on the relevant sections dealing with the issues of justice and peace. This section also turns to the New Testament to discuss its insights on the concerns of justice and peace. This foundation greatly enriches the commitment of the world Council of Churches understanding and development of her projects and programs for the churches engagement with the world and people of other faith commitments.

4.2.1. Justice

First and foremost the Old Testament understanding of the word “justice” delineates a protracted record. However, many writers on the issue of the biblical concept of justice have approached it with some biased thoughts. And with such predisposition engage the reading of the texts. Hence, there is need for caution on the biblical understanding of justice.

The word “justice has a central significance of meaning for all relationships of human life in the Old Testament. This is on the background that the people of the Old Testament were in special relationship with God as a result of the existence of the covenant amongst God and the people of Israel. In Psalm 24: 1; God invites human beings to be good stewards of God’s things. He entrusted into us to care for his things. He invited us into a partnership, into cooperation with him. This relationship with God underscores the fact that every member of covenant community is in a relationship with every other person: the poor and rich alike and also the foreigners. This relationship demands some responsibilities. Hence, the honest person was faithful to the demands of these responsibilities.

⁴⁰⁹ John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, Op., Cit., 160-161.

In the Exodus 2:23 – 25 God intensely underlined his concern for justice for the people of Israel as they were in Egypt in slavery. Hence, he sent Moses to redeem them. Undeniably, the Exodus experience consequently became a fundamental experience of liberation from oppression and injustice as God saw their sufferings, Exodus 3:7-8. Hence, God is then seen as the defender of the oppressed and poor in the society, as the book of Deuteronomy 14:28-29 states. Here, justice is rooted in the nature of God and the covenant he made with his people, is that, God is the defender of the marginalized. He is the one who feeds the hungry and redeems the prisoners and (Psalm 146 7-8) attests to this idea.

All through the history of Israel the prophets repeatedly reminded them to be faithful and authentic to the covenant God made with them. However, they had the principal duty to guide the people to return to God through the path of justice and righteousness. Indeed, Jim Wallis on this: emphasizes that *justice* is frequently synonymous with *righteousness* and the two are on occasions interchangeably used.⁴¹⁰ This claim according him is because both justice and righteousness are possible words referring to the Hebrew word “sedeq” and the “dikaosune” a Greek word designating the same. But then, Donald Carson cautions on the tendency to translate all instances of these words to designated “Sedeq” and “dikaosune”.⁴¹¹

“Sedeq” in the Old Testament designates “moral uprightness” or “personal holiness”. It is furthermore used in many other diverse ways to embrace honest scale and measures such as in Leviticus 19:36; Lev 25: 15 and Ezekiel 45: 10. In deciding legal disputes, it is used in *Deut* 1: 16, *Ps* 58: 1, *Jer* 11: 20. As fairness it is found in *Prov* 31:9. It is also used in reference to restoration, honesty, personal integrity and prosperity⁴¹² (*Job* 8: 6, *Prov* 12: 17 and *Job* 6: 29, *Prov* 8: 18). In the same vein “sedeq” according to the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament designates conformity to moral and ethical paradigm that is the nature and will of God.⁴¹³ The prophet Ezekiel delineates on his part justice as “righteousness” is the one who does what is just and right. Justice designates the one who does not oppress anyone, is one who returns what he took in

⁴¹⁰ C.f., Jim Wallis, *The Soul of Politics*, New York: The New Press, 1994, 193.

⁴¹¹ Donald A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd Edition, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1996, 60-61.

⁴¹² C.f., Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in the New Testament Theology and Ethics*, U.K.: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006, 28.

⁴¹³ C.f., “Sedeq” in Harris et al., Editors, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.

pledge for a loan. Justice describes the one who gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked as well as the one who does not do wrong and judges fairly between his neighbours. He is the one who keeps the law (confer Ezekiel 18: 5-9). The concept of Justice in the Old Testament argues in favour of the deprived and underprivileged but then it is not favouritism to the disadvantaged, since justice forbids unambiguously showing partiality on issues dealing with justice to everybody. Hence Leviticus underscores this when it declared: “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor, rather do judge your neighbour fairly”.⁴¹⁴ From the foregoing therefore favouritism or partiality is the perversion of justice. Justice as described above has at its foundation fairness; this basis embraces the principle that there is a definite equilibrium concerning our actions, thus their motivation and the aftereffects.⁴¹⁵ Hence the prophet Jeremiah opined. Do what is just and right. Then rescue from the hand of his oppressor the one who has been robbed and do not wrong or do violence to foreigner, the fatherless or widow or shed innocent blood.⁴¹⁶ Indeed, the concept of justice consequently allows the society to launch the limit of individual and collective rights so as to facilitate social order and harmony and also enhance individual happiness.

Additionally, the book of the prophet Amos designated the fullest discussion of justice in the Old Testament; stated his ideas of justice that are not contrary to the understanding of justice somewhere else in the scriptures, as already shown. But Amos’ ideas were dominated by disquiet for the poor and the marginalized of his society. Hence, he spoke against the oppression and acts of injustice in contrast to the poor.⁴¹⁷ Amos epoch witnessed the exploitation of the poor by the wealthy elite. The poor of his day could not indeed get justice in the courts of the land.⁴¹⁸ In Amos 5: 6-7, he declared: “seek the Lord and live or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it. Ah you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground.”⁴¹⁹ Indeed, Jeffrey Rosario argues that biblical justice stretches simply beyond the word justice; because it is associated to another central biblical word namely righteousness. They are frequently used in place of the other for

⁴¹⁴ *Leviticus 19:15.*

⁴¹⁵ C.f., Stig Jorgensen, *On Justice and Law*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1996, 91.

⁴¹⁶ C.f., *Jeremiah 22:3.*

⁴¹⁷ C.f., Philip Igbo, “Justice as a Basis of a Healthy Society: A Study of Amos,” *Maryland Studies*, Vol 10, 2011, 47-58.

⁴¹⁸ C.f., *Amos 5:7, 10, 12 and 15. Cf also Amos 2: 6; Amos 5:11.*

⁴¹⁹ C.f., *Amos 5:6-7.*

fundamentally they mean the same thing.⁴²⁰ For this reason, righteousness biblically speaking integrates the idea of doing justice and doing justice expresses the idea of righting what has gone wrong.⁴²¹ It is in this sense that Amos connects justice and righteousness with the presence of God as the life-giving force. Indeed, as he further declared: “Seek good and not evil, that you may live, and so the Lord, the God of host will be with you. Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts will be gracious ... to you.”⁴²² Amos then links justice in the community with life because life in the community demands justice. Undeniably, when people do not practice justice in the community, the community weakens. So it is with Israel that Amos addressed his prophecy to. Therefore to ensure that life thrives in the community, requires that justice and righteousness must be upheld and life belongs to God and is given by him, hence, the goodness and the significance of the theme of WCC programme “God of life, lead us to justice and peace”.⁴²³ The council calls all to the sense of urgency for the care of life by seeking justice. It is a transformative programme to engage with in and with God’s vision of justice and peace in order for all to have life in abundance. A Clarion call therefore, for a journey of all Christian churches together with their partners in faith for a culture of a collective transformation seeking in God’s name and God’s gift and guardians to uproot a culture of violence. In this light, justice seeks particularly life for every person in the society. But then since life is for all, justice gives primary attention to those whose life is denied. Indeed, justice is pretty important to God. Justice provides for access to all to the communal good life. Consequently, no one can fairly flourish at the expense of the others. It is in this sense that the prophet Amos sees justice and so God inspires transformation for the benefits of all. Indeed he said “Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream”⁴²⁴. However, there is the essentiality to ask at this juncture where does justice lead us to? The discussion of this question then, leads us to peace in the Old Testament.

⁴²⁰ C.f., Jeffrey Rosario, *Justice and the Old Testament, Light Bearers*, <http://www.lightbearers.org/justice-and-the-old-testament>. Accessed on March 12, 2014.

⁴²¹ C.f., Ibid.

⁴²² C.f., Amos 5:14-15.

⁴²³ *World Council of Churches 10th Assembly, 30th October to 8th November, Busan, Republic of Korea, 2013.*

⁴²⁴ *Amos 5:24.*

Furthermore, in the New Testament justice is among the major themes handled. However the Greek word “dikaiosune” is used to designate righteousness and justice and at some other times righteousness is used in place of justice⁴²⁵; hence they are most often interchangeably used. This Greek word, “dikaiosune was used for the translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Septuagint occurrences of “tsedek” (tsedeq) in most cases to mean justice and righteousness.⁴²⁶ It refers to in the Old Testament to mean fidelity to the demand of a relationship. So God is just in God’s very being.⁴²⁷ Thus Matthew 6: 33 stated: “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness (justice) and all these things will be given to you as well. So here the Greek word “dikaiosune” is translated as justice (righteousness). Indeed, it underscores the fact once again of righteousness or justice ought to be the driving force for the conduct of one’s life. The same word is as well used to delineate personal holiness and moral uprightness just the same meaning it had in the Old Testament.⁴²⁸ In the Matthew’s passage quoted above the concept of justice is connected to the central leitmotif of the Reign of God in as much as justice describes right relationship. Moreover, Jesus’ ministry was involved approximately on the re-establishment of the relationship on which God’s covenant was made. By covenant here is meant a solemn agreement that unites two or more people or parties in love and binds them in justice. It is an encounter or engagement that is free from enslavement to freedom and to tender love.⁴²⁹ Jesus defined his ministry further in the gospel of Luke in terms of justice as the statement of his manifesto declared in the synagogue. He told the hearers that he fulfils the vision of the prophet Isaiah to release prisoners, give sight to the blind, and liberating the oppressed. Thus he opened the mission with the declaration: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”.⁴³⁰ In the re-establishment of relationship Jesus gave out the image of God as the compassionate God concerned with justice; hence Jesus’ constant critique of his opponents for ostracizing entire groups and moreover, his indefatigable endeavour

⁴²⁵ C.f., Andrew Kulikovsky, *Justice and the Bible: A Paper presented at Summit Australia Conference*, January, 2007, 10.

⁴²⁶ C.f., Robert L. Foster, *Understanding of Justice in the New Testament*, in *An newsletter for Public School teachers by Society of Biblical Literature*, in <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/teachingbible.aspx>. Accessed on Feb. 20 2015.

⁴²⁷ C.f., Psalm 145: 17.

⁴²⁸ C.f., Andrew Kulikovsky, Op., Cit., 10.

⁴²⁹ C.f., Thomas L. Schubeck, *Love that does Justice*, New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2007, 27.

⁴³⁰ Luke 4: 8-19.

to bring all marginalized back to the covenant community underscored the manner he took his ministry in terms of justice.⁴³¹

The ministry of Jesus places a high premium on justice. He was exceptionally and profound sensitive to any sort of discrimination and prejudice. Hence, he abhorred any form of injustice, differentiation and disparity. For Jesus, there are no outsiders in the kingdom of God; all men and women no matter their ethnic group, class, race and colour are members and potentially neighbours in the kingdom. And he underscored obviously through the parable of the Good Samaritan that we really become neighbours in God's kingdom whenever we serve those in need such as the hungry, the imprisoned, the homeless and the dying.⁴³²

4.2.2. Peace

As I have noted above from the prophet Amos, that when there is no justice in the community, life is sterile and the worship of God is a deception. The practice of justice has a goal and this aim is that we may come to know God better. Knowing God better as the prophet Jeremiah signifies it, will be well with whoever practices justice and righteousness. Hence, he declared: "Did not your father eat and drink and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him. For he judged the cause of the poor and the needy; then it was well."⁴³³ The practice of justice means knowing God and this leads to peace. In a place or community where peace is practiced there is the prospect of peace flourishing and this peace is indeed negated wherever oppression reigns. And consequently, oppression thrives where there is lack of peace. Here peace (*shalom*) designates not just the absence of war and violence, rather it defines wholeness. It describes all the situations of life which creates for wholeness and harmony. Indeed, Psalm 89: 14 states: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; and steadfast love and faithfulness go before you".⁴³⁴ Moreover, peace or "shalom" as it is called in Hebrew Scripture denotes a wide range of meanings such as "well-being, wholeness and completeness".⁴³⁵ Furthermore, Willard M. Swartley maintained that "shalom"

⁴³¹ C.f., John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God: The Message of Jesus Today*, New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1995, 160-161.

⁴³² C.f., Luke 10: 29-37.

⁴³³ *Jeremiah 22: 15-16.*

⁴³⁴ Psalm 89:14.

⁴³⁵ Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, Op., Cit., 27.

designates ranges of meanings and can refer in different contexts to bounteous physical conditions, moral values, to a cosmic principle and divine nature.⁴³⁶ Shalom thus includes salvation, prosperity as well as everything essential for wholesome living.⁴³⁷ It involves moreover, the interrelatedness of the community, good health, good fortune, a sense of well-being. It involves among other things anything judged essential for everything to be in order; it defines how things should be.⁴³⁸ God of Life, lead us to justice and peace, theme of the World Council of Churches 10th Assembly underscored the necessity of wholeness, peace, shalom that involves all the conditions of life . Shalom is the aim of God's work as the liberator and deliverer of his people. Hence God's determination in the world however, is the restoration of the brokenness of the world. Thus God's purpose for the world is peace (shalom) and the task of our community is to harken to this will of God for peace in the world.

Moreover, there is an ethical dimension to the concept of peace (shalom). This is mentioned to in the book of Psalms, especially in Psalm 37: 37. Here, someone whose character is truthful and upright is thus described as a man of peace or "a man of shalom". Indeed, peace or "shalom" delineates the sense of integrity and honesty⁴³⁹ and when one is working for peace or "shalom" it designates one who tries to work so as to jettison hypocrisy and deceit which do take place whenever and wherever injustice occur. In this we see that justice and peace are connected. Thus, to encourage, stimulate or endorse straightforwardness and integrity underscores the promotion of peace or "shalom".

Consequent on the concepts above the Old Testament delineates justice as serving life. Justice of God is basically to save. It is God's fidelity and role in his covenant. Principally, it is God's will, that created the world for a harmonious relationship and maintains it, nevertheless despite all the violent conflicts in the world; he goes on to enhance and encourage our harmonious living. This justice restores relationships.

⁴³⁶ C.f., Aviezer Ravitsky, *Peace in Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought: Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements and Beliefs*, ed. Arthur A. Cohen et al, New York: Macmillan, 1987 quoted in Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, Op., Cit., 27.

⁴³⁷ C.f., Perry B. Yoder, *Shalom: The Biblical Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace*, Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1987, 18.

⁴³⁸ C.f., Ibid. 16.

⁴³⁹ C.f., Ibid. 15.

When we turn to the New Testament, on the issue of peace, it highlights to a great extent that the life and ministry of Jesus were founded on the practice and faith of the Old Testament. This is the reason for which he fastened and presented himself in the story of Israel. Indeed Ted Grimsrud argued succinctly that Jesus is the continuity of the Old Testament. He is the summation of the path to eternal life. He fulfils the Torah and did not obliterate it.⁴⁴⁰ Jesus, in beginning his ministry on earth according to the gospel of Luke identified himself with the Servant of the Lord; and indeed saw himself as part of the great prophetic tradition of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea. Then, Ted Grimsrud opined: Jesus presented himself “as the core message of the Law and the prophets.”⁴⁴¹ He is the fullness of peace (shalom), as well as of justice and peace. He is our path to justice and peace. This peace as Christians understand it underscores peacefulness, tranquility and peace of mind. It is peace contrary to that which the world gives (John 14: 27). Undeniably, Arichea D. C. asserted: one who establishes right relationship with God and lives in such a good relationship with people will accordingly live through tranquility, peace of mind and serenity.⁴⁴² With him we know and have the justice and peace of God. Jesus renewed in himself the covenant of God; hence, we are invited to be thus agents of God’s peace in the world. In him was the announcement of the coming of God’s reign. He did not simply announce the coming of the reign of God in the power of the Holy Spirit; he nevertheless was the embodiment of the reign of God. Hence, in his life and ministry we see and continue to experience the reign of God. In a new and decisive manner his death and resurrection established God’s reign.

Also related to the concept of justice in the New Testament is peace concept in the New Testament. As we saw in the Old Testament, peace in the New Testament occurred several times. The Greek word used for it is “Eirene” and its usage remains strongly centered in the Hebrew traditions of shalom. It designates well-being, wholeness as well as the content and the goal of all Christian preaching; subsequently the message is referred to as the Gospel of Peace.⁴⁴³ And wholeness according to Douglas J. Harris is central to biblical concept of peace.⁴⁴⁴ Indeed, any time that Jesus heals a person, he tells

⁴⁴⁰ C.f., Ted Grimsrud, *Old Testament Peace Theology: A Paper Presented to the Contextual Ethics Section of the American Academy of Religion and Annual Meeting*, Atlanta, November, 2010, 15.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² C.f., Arichea D. C., *Peace in the New Testament*, *The Bible Translator* 38 1987, 201-206.

⁴⁴³ C.f., Ephesians 6: 15.

⁴⁴⁴ C.f., Douglas J. Harris, *Shalom: The Biblical Concept of Peace*. Grand Rapids MI: Baker Book House, 1970, 40.

him or her to “Go in Peace. For Jesus therefore, peace refers to completeness. It comprises physical, spiritual and social well-being. In Luke gospel, Jesus declared the woman healed of hemorrhage to “Go in Peace,”⁴⁴⁵ Indeed, John Fuellenbach underlined certain meanings and ways of conceiving peace in the New Testament to include: the none presence of war or chaos, right relationship with God or Christ, a good relationship between people, and an individual state of tranquility or serenity.⁴⁴⁶ It delineates good or right relationship with God or with Christ. Such right relationship with God ought to result in good relationship with other people. Hence to live in peace signifies to live in harmony with others. Peace is thus the consequence of a genuine harmony in diversity.⁴⁴⁷ This peace, the good news is to spread to the ends of the world; underscoring the fact that it embodies a transforming power through defenseless communities of witness and service. And thus, is contrary to an imperialistic nation-state spreading its good news through the sword of war and terror.⁴⁴⁸ Jesus’ Peace that is not in the manner the world gives peace shows that the world’s peace does not worth it; it is more of a fable or tale. Indeed, it is the fact of history that the world had fought many wars. Before the first and the second world wars and even before the birth of Christ about 36 B.C., the world had fought several wars

In his contribution to the concept of peace in the New Testament Gerhard Von Rad stated that peace as in the Hebrew refers to the word “shalom” is translated into Greek as “eirene,” but then with expanded meaning to involve the ideas of prosperity and of growth.⁴⁴⁹ Thus the New Testament Message is called good news while also the gospel is referred to as gospel of peace. This is so because the message therein carries the good news of the will of God in the world for peace. Indeed, the community of the world particularly his followers are invited to demonstrate always the peace of Jesus through the action of His Spirit in their words, actions as well as their behaviours to everybody. This is indeed Jesus’ vision of peace and peace thus takes into consideration the need of the marginalized, the oppressed and those who stand at the fringes of the society. This is shown in the parable of the Good Samaritan in which John R. Donahue sees that Jesus’s peace does not violate the freedom of anyone. The Good Samaritan entered into

⁴⁴⁵ Luke 7: 50.

⁴⁴⁶ C.f., John Fuellenbach, *The Kingdom of God*, Op., Cit., 170.

⁴⁴⁷ C.f., Ibid. 171.

⁴⁴⁸ C.f., Ted Grimsrud, *Old Testament Peace Theology*, Op., Cit., 17.

⁴⁴⁹ C.f., Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965, 130.

the world of the victim of robbers with care and compassion and left him in such way that the victim was given freedom along with the very help he received.⁴⁵⁰ This understanding for Donahue underlined a nexus between love and justice and as pope Paul VI opined in his January 1972, World day of peace that : “if you want peace work for justice. It is peace that is rooted in a sincere feeling for humanity. Peace such as this is the consequence of true respect for man.”⁴⁵¹ This sincere feeling for ones’ neighbour is also known as justice. Indeed, such justice calls for communities, nations, and every human being to guarantee that people have adequate access to benefits such as educational, spiritual, political as well as medical attentions to all children of God.

Jesus’ vision of peace is his own person and own personal peace. It is that same deep, splendid peace that stilled his heart in the midst of haters, traitors, and everything else he had faced. Hence, he said “Peace I leave you, my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”⁴⁵² So in the hub of unfathomable opposition, abandonment and persecution he was unfaltering.⁴⁵³ This peace, he bequeathed on his followers. This peace is equivalent to that in Isaiah 53: 5, where it is translated properly to “whole” to mean “shalom”. It is thus the dialectical opposite of the historical and personal reality portrayed in Genesis; the breakdown of peace in the early tribal history of Israel. A period when the brothers of Joseph (Genesis 47: 4), could not any more speak “shalom” (peace) as he sold him into slavery in Egypt.⁴⁵⁴ Again it is contrary to the breakdown of national peace in the Davidic Dynasty as a result of the extravagance of King Solomon and the injustice of King Rehoboam.⁴⁵⁵ The vision of peace of Jesus is in line with the prophetic vision of peace (shalom) that anticipated a society whereby the needs of every person would be satisfied in a covenant between nature, persons and God, a social peace in which nations learn war no more.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁰ C.f., John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, 133.

⁴⁵¹ Pope Paul VI, *English Edition of “World Day of Peace Message,”* January 1, 1972.

⁴⁵² John 14: 27.

⁴⁵³ C.f., Mark 14: 50.

⁴⁵⁴ C.f., James E. Will, *A Christology of Peace*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989, 16.

⁴⁵⁵ C.f., *Ibid*; 1 Kings 7-12.

⁴⁵⁶ C.f., Micah 4:3-4.

Jesus's peace is a road map towards the ending of violence and wars. His was nonviolent both in his teaching and actions.⁴⁵⁷ This is always contrary to the world peace that is repeatedly peace through the potency of military force. Thus we have the examples of the *Pax Romana* – the external peace which the unity of the Roman Empire forged; a time when many people suffered subjugation and oppression from the Roman golden age of prosperity. These are features which oppose and mock “shalom precisely because of peace established through military strength, wars and conquests⁴⁵⁸ and the Roman government achieved also under Caesar Augustus political unity in Western Europe, Northern Africa and the Near East,⁴⁵⁹ but not peace.

Besides, the gospel is full of accounts of Jesus using nonviolent means to defend his disciples and himself. He did not either empower or permit them to defend him through the medium of force.⁴⁶⁰ His peace mission was also characterized by his willingness to suffer condemnation and death of the cross without resistance, revenge or being aggressive to his oppressors. Moreover, his non-use of violence or coercion to advance his mission was further proof not surrendering to the power of evil or to his enemies instead underscored the power of his nonviolent love and reconciling power for sinners.

For him peace excludes no one. A peace vision of Jesus involves the weakest of the weak and the most vulnerable members of the society. It is God's mission to mend the torn fabric of the whole of creation. However, it is more than designating the absence of conflict. God's peace manifests itself in right relationships of flourishing and goodness: It involves all members of God's creation living in harmonious and life-giving relationships one with the others.⁴⁶¹ It is the state in which the world is meant to be, as well as the best description of what the reign of God will be like: hence, a place of well-being, justice and truth, a place of the enclosure of love, of joy, of trust, safety and happiness. This underscores however, an appropriate focus of respect of high attention to God and his created order. Thus, God's peace necessitates the welcoming of every

⁴⁵⁷ C.f., Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972, 2-24.

⁴⁵⁸ C.f., Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace*, Op., Cit., 37-38.

⁴⁵⁹ C.f., Thomas L. Schubeck, *Love that does Justice*, Op., Cit., 55-56.

⁴⁶⁰ C.f., John 18: 10.

⁴⁶¹ C.f., Craig L. Nesson, *Shalom Church: The Body of Christ as Ministering Community*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010, Quoted in Jason Reimer Greig, *Shalom Made Strange: A Peace Church Theology for and With People with Intellectual Disabilities*, in *The Conrad Grebel Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, 2014, 29.

person most attentively as a sacramental sign of God's presence in the world. Indeed, Jason Reimer Greig argued that, those outside the precincts of "normal" cannot be "othered" into a special outlier status, since human thriving demands a lively solidarity that takes in or receives the stranger and searches for the lost.⁴⁶² In addition he maintained that this understanding further underscored in the life and ministry of Jesus who went on his way; inaugurated God's reign on earth by eating, drinking and partnering and identifying with innocent victims; thus the community of the people of God are to act as a sanctuary for those most overlooked, unloved and ignored of the society.⁴⁶³ Such peace focuses and challenges our society for unjust structures which deprive the weak and the disabled of their human dignity and rights. It also contests and emphasizes on the work for the construction of a more just social order to reinforce the visible form of the Kingdom of God. Jesus's peace brings in every person his or her human dignity and rights in the right perspective. It affirms the intrinsic dignity of each person which is the foremost impact of what peace enhances. Jesus accords each person and underscores the fact that pilgrimage of justice and peace is to be pursued since his kingdom of God's message was done through teaching, healing (the human dignity), delivering human dignity through the Gospel of peace and also built on the dignity of the people of his community that must be grounded in the dynamic affirmation that every person in this community "has been created in the image of God and for this reason alone is deserving infinite respect... *Therefore to avow that every person is created in God's image is to claim that when we encounter another human being, we are to be immediately reminded of the God who created each person thus are to relate to that person with sacred respect*".⁴⁶⁴ Jesus in the life of the world and the people of the earth is to guide according to Luke the Evangelist our feet into the path of peace⁴⁶⁵. This is the meaning of the presence of Jesus in our midst. Consequently this underscores the significance of his declaration that in him the word of the prophet Isaiah has been fulfilled.⁴⁶⁶ Indeed, in Jesus' peace, the lepers have the peace of well-being; all are well. And the deaf have now the peace of hearing, the blind have the peace of walking and the dead have the peace of being alive. The presence of Jesus to these people is their

⁴⁶² C.f., Jason Reimer Greig, *Shalom Made Strange: A Peace Church Theology for and With People with Intellectual Disabilities*, in *The Conrad Grebel Review*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, 2014, 29.

⁴⁶³ C.f., *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴⁶⁵ C.f., Luke 1: 68-79.

⁴⁶⁶ C.f., Luke 4: 16-21.

peace; thus his visitation is their peace. I do think just like Brendan Bryne opined that it is in this sense of Jesus' presence as God's visitation of his people that as well constitute peace: hence, one can refer to Luke regarding the entire life and mission of Jesus Christ as God's visitation to his people.⁴⁶⁷ Here, we recall that Simeon, upon seeing the infant Jesus felt blessed with God's promise of peace. Jesus is both Guest and visitor. Those who are guests and visitors to him all receive peace. Indeed, those who receive him discover that his presence ushers them into a broader perspective of God's peace that is hospitality, which is God's. Certainly, Brendan Bryne argued that the one who comes as visitor and guest actually becomes the host and bestows hospitality by which humanity as well as the entire world can become in all honesty human and really attend to the depths of their heart and know salvation.⁴⁶⁸ This accordingly leads us to examine and probe definitely the significance and meaning of hospitality? In the pages that follow I focus my attention to the exploration of hospitality –generosity and openness designate.

4.3. Hospitality

This section seeks to explore hospitality as embodied in Jesus Christ as a means to support in the transformation of religious conflict. It strives for a framework to respond to challenges posed by violence, to move towards reconciliation and as a framework of co-living for people of divergent cultures, religious faith and ideologies to live peaceful with one another.

Moreover this section emphasizes that hospitality is a great resource for peace and conflict transformation. The discussion then led to underline the significance of hospitality as a theological resource of living in, and or making peace with people different from ourselves. This is the message that Jesus communicates to us on the story of the Good Samaritan. It is an action and gesture that accentuated his fundamental principle for the true attitude to others.⁴⁶⁹ This is very essential and in particular when the other or others is or are not someone we know or that are close to us. It delineates love in action and the fact that hospitality as a way of life is not so much a task as it is a way of living our lives and sharing ourselves. Even though it entails accountability and

⁴⁶⁷ C.f., Brendan Bryne, *The Hospitality of God. A Reading of Luke's Gospel*, Minnesota: Collegeville, 2000, 4.

⁴⁶⁸ C.f., *Ibid.* 4.

⁴⁶⁹ C.f., *See Luke 10: 30-38 for the story of the Good Samaritan.*

truthful performance of duties, it nevertheless arises from appreciative open heart. Hence it is first and foremost a response of love and gratitude of God's love and welcome. Hospitality is consequently about living with the other and more especially those who are in need or who suffer.

Hospitality therefore stands out not just a simple work or duty, it is a difficult task. There is always the tendency to reconstruct the others to be ourselves in order to welcome or accept them. As a way of living we must have to cultivate the culture of living it over a lifetime. It equally ought to be encouraged, developed and lived since its advantages, successes and benefits come over time. Hospitality must be intentionally cultivated for it to succeed. This is on the backdrops that the practice is at variance with most contemporary values. Subsequently, it demands our priorities to be re-ordered, remodeled and or even be changed.⁴⁷⁰ Hence we can live in harmony with people of different religions, ethnic groups etc. who are different from ourselves

We have noted above, from both Old Testament and New Testament that God is the giver of peace. Hence Jesus tells his disciples that he bestows on them a peace that the world cannot give them.⁴⁷¹ The New Testament characterized Jesus as the bringer of peace and St. Paul attested to this when he said that "Jesus is our peace"⁴⁷² and is as well the one who works as our mediator between us and God so as to usher in peace to us.⁴⁷³ In this light indeed, as we noted earlier, Jesus was anointed to bring the gospel of peace to the poor, to bring peace of sight to the blind, to announce the discharge of prisoners, etc. In the discharge of this ministry he (Jesus) proclaimed himself as the one who gives freedom to the people so as to restore their human dignity in order for them to be able to share what they have with the hungry, to be able to cloth the naked and give shelter to the homeless. In so doing he ushered and inaugurated them into the ministry of giving and sharing and of being hospitable not only to the marginalized but with all.⁴⁷⁴ The Gospel of peace of Jesus Christ to the oppressed, marginalized, the poor, the sick and the dehumanized etc. is to save them from all that exploits them and bring them into

⁴⁷⁰ C.f., Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999; See also her Article, *Hospitality, a Practice and Way of Life*, *Vision*, Spring 2002, 35-43.

⁴⁷¹ C.f., John 14: 27.

⁴⁷² Ephesians 2: 14.

⁴⁷³ C.f., Hebrew 12: 24.

⁴⁷⁴ C.f., Luke 4:16-21, Isaiah 58: 7.

God's Kingdom where there are no outsiders, and all are members of equal dignity. He is a father for all and he is hospitable and good on the dynamic affirmation that he is the ground of human existence; he is the provider, guide and blessing of his people, the creator and the one who sustains as well as is present in the everyday life of his people.

Jesus is indeed, the paradigm of hospitality for the reason that he epitomizes and personifies the hospitality of God. This is highlighted in the extravagant sense of hospitality of God he embodies. Thus, he is compassionate, generous and friendly by his acceptance of all who are invited to share the banquet of life in God's Kingdom – the lame, the blind, the poor and the crippled.⁴⁷⁵ Luke furthermore showed that God's Kingdom as ushered and proclaimed in by Jesus was to be hospitable community of universal love as outlined in the parable of the Good Samaritan.⁴⁷⁶ It is moreover highlighted in him as the authorized representative of God's salvific hospitality, for he is the fullness of the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Indeed, this salvific hospitality by nature presumed generosity, an open heart and sensibility to the predicaments of others: such as the poor, the blind, the lame the crippled and the prisoners etc.

Hospitality therefore, is a way of living our life and sharing ourselves. In this regard Amy Oden argued that hospitality is a way of life. Indeed, "hospitality is not so much a singular act of welcome as it is a way, an orientation that attends to others, listening and learning, valuing and honouring. The hospitable one looks for God's redemptive presence in the other, confident it is here, if one only has eye to see and ears to hear. Hospitality, then, is always a spiritual discipline of opening one's own life to God's life and revelation"⁴⁷⁷. It is a way of life which underscores to be present to the otherness and looking for God's redemptive action in the others. This was the entire life and ministry of Jesus. Hence, he emptied himself taking the form of a slave and being born in human likeness⁴⁷⁸ to share and give his life for all. Hospitality thus emerges from a grateful heart. Above all it is a response to love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us. Hence Miroslav Volf contended in his Book "*Geben und Vergeben in einer gnadenlosen Kultur*" that God's love is not prompted for the intent of manipulating

⁴⁷⁵ C.f., Luke 14: 1-35.

⁴⁷⁶ C.f., Luke 10: 29-37.

⁴⁷⁷ Amy G. Oden, *And You Welcomed Me: A Source Book on Hospitality in Early Christianity*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001, 14-15.

⁴⁷⁸ C.f., Philippians 2: 7.

the object of love.⁴⁷⁹ God's love moreover, he added does not arise from seeking his own good. Instead, God's love for the sinners and evil persons arises from their own good, so as to make them righteous and good. The summit of this love was demonstrated on the cross on which Jesus took on himself the sins of the entire world. This he did not for his own sake rather that he may free the fallen humanity. Christ thus was the absolute expression of God's love for us all.⁴⁸⁰ Indeed, Leonard Boff in his Book "Virtues: For another Possible World," added that hospitality presupposes overcoming prejudices and an almost naïve trust, hence he contended that these are indispensable if hospitality is to be true and without constraints.⁴⁸¹ Hospitality as Jesus' hallmark challenges our narrow definitions of comfort. It Challenges us not just to open up ourselves to those with whom we feel comfortable, instead to those different from us and more to those we may not have known before our encounter with them. It is about welcoming the strangers into our space. But then sometimes it will be literally our homes and at some other times it will be opening ourselves to them and giving ourselves in whatever way and context that may be expressed. Hence, it is much about attitude and demeanour as it is about actions. In actual fact, this is what constitutes and enhances peaceful living of people of divergent religious, cultural and political backgrounds. It requests them no longer to ask questions or to prod for information; therefore Leonard Boff succinctly moreover asserted that basically and jubilantly strangers are welcome and the appearances of the strangers are not issues of concern.⁴⁸² The central issues are the willingness to accept, welcome, accord and offer that entire thing, one can afford or has. Hence underscored are the needs of the strangers.⁴⁸³ Indeed, it means that people are together in living and caring for one another. A pilgrimage of justice and peace means just this. In these areas justice and peace are threatened God however leads us to these threatened areas to triumph. Hospitality thus described "is a true ecumenical attitude of openness as well as of searching the real and sustainable values that can bring us all to a better world"⁴⁸⁴. Hospitality underscores a key role for us in the "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" that urges and engages us to move into the arenas or "countries of conflicts or to the areas of

⁴⁷⁹ C.f., Miroslav Volf, *Geben und Vergeben in einer gnadenlosen Kultur*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 45.

⁴⁸⁰ C.f., Ibid. 45.

⁴⁸¹ C.f., Leonard Boff, *Virtues: For Another Possible World*, Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011, 49.

⁴⁸² C.f., Leonard Boff, *Virtues*, 49.

⁴⁸³ C.f., Ibid. 49.

⁴⁸⁴ Olav Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, in, *The Ecumenical Review, The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, Issue 66. 2, July 2014, 127.

relationships of oppression and injustices across borders,”⁴⁸⁵ because of the sensibility to the needs and predicaments of the others that urges us to invite and welcome them. Indeed, Leonard Boff affirms that “without this sensibility there is no reaching out for the other and also there is no encounter to aid the other”⁴⁸⁶.

Undoubtedly, when we delightfully welcome the stranger, the lame, the blind the poor, the crippled and all those who are not typically welcomed as Jesus did, we are indeed expressing the love and the welcome of God’s Kingdom. Consequently, those who experience hospitality such as this from us are undeniably having a taste of the life of the Kingdom of God which is to come. Moreover Leonard Boff added that as we practice hospitality we guarantee life, the life of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the life of all those wandering and the strangers.⁴⁸⁷ Hence, hospitality is love in action. Such love in action when embraced by people of diverse cultural and ethno-religious backdrops enhances and betters co-living. A process such as hospitality is the attitude and practice of providing the atmosphere and opportunities nevertheless hazardous, in which strangers, the poor, the marginalized, the strangers, etc., are free to become friends, and in so doing, feel, accepted, included and loved. In this way relationship indeed lunch the prospect for eventual communion among the host, people of diverse backdrops, the poor, the stranger and God.⁴⁸⁸ Hence, Pilgrimage of justice and peace is a process or and a rediscovery of our original vocation – a mandate as followers of Jesus Christ to go out into the world as people who offer peace. It is this vision that is all but a natural way of life that all are invited to follow. It is a call and invitation to throw ourselves on the hospitality of others, on the strangers. It is following the invitation of Jesus engaging us to make peace with people different from us. However, as a way of living, Pilgrimage of justice and peace is not just fulfilment of our mandate as Christian people. It is an honest and sincere following, the invitation of Jesus Christ, who walked through the diverse places of life that were often difficult and painful. Hence each community and culture of people has different perspectives of living and conceiving it.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. 127.

⁴⁸⁶ Leonard Boff, *Virtues. For Another Possible World*, Op., Cit., 51.

⁴⁸⁷ C.f., Ibid. 51.

⁴⁸⁸ C.f., Fred Bernard and Steve Clapp, *Widening the Welcome of the Church: Biblical Hospitality and the Vital Congregation*, Fort Wayne, Indiana: Life Quest, 2004, 22.

4.4. Preliminary conclusion

Our discussion on this section showed the world Council of Churches delineated ways to enhance and chart significant long-term dialogue or interfaith dialogue; it is hugely crucial for an attitude of openness, responsiveness, and friendliness to other people. There is indeed the need, for the appreciation of potential paradoxes in both theological groundworks and commitment to the truths and frankness to diverse modes of expressing the same truth. Therefore, we are called into a journey of requisite disposition to hold on to transformation through commitment and encounters.⁴⁸⁹ This journey is that of just peace into God's purpose for humanity and trusting that God will guide us into the way of his peace. This journey according to the WCC inspires and urges to be committed into building of a culture of peace and cooperation with people of other religious traditions. Indeed, through it the Christian communities earnestly seek in the world to respond to the gospel injunction of abhorring violence, loving one another and seeking justice for the oppressed, the deprived and the poor.

⁴⁸⁹ C.f., William R. Burrows, *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993, 106.

5. Religiously motivated initiatives for reconciliation in Nigeria

5.1. Introduction

This section handles among other issues invitation to dialogue arising from the foundation of common beliefs between Christianity and Islam, - the Christian-Muslim relationship, the world Council of Churches (*WCC*) influence and initiatives to dialogue, the Christian Association of Nigeria (*CAN*). It also focuses on the efforts of the other Churches in Nigeria in fostering peace, the contributions of the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council – a body of the Christian communities and Muslim community in Nigeria (*NIREC*) as well as a distinct group of the Muslims known as the Jama'ata Nasril Islam (*JNI*).

5.1.2. Initiatives from Single Institutions

There are institutions that enable and enhance the initiatives for dialogue and liberation in an interreligious perspective. These institutions make effort to ensure that Christianity and Islam despite their problems with one another are able to overcome toxic historical memories so as to develop active collaboration in discharging their work to build communities of freedom and well-being⁴⁹⁰ and of reconciliation. These institutions are discussed below and they cut across to the institutions in Islam. First on the category of discussion is the commitment of the Catholic Church through the Catholic bishop's conference of Nigeria and the other Christian communities in Nigeria.

5.1.3. Christian institutions

In Nigeria the undertaking of Christian ecumenical engagement started about 1911 in conjunction with various ecumenical movements on the international stage. It was the, early protestant missionaries that initiated the movement to overcome denominational bottleneck that beclouded, divided and created some jealousy and conflict among

⁴⁹⁰ C.f., *The works of two great authors on issues of interreligious dialogue are very enterprising and bearing on this theme*; Raimund Panikkar, *Cultural Disarmament: The Way to Peace*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995; See also Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995.

Christians and their missionary activities in Nigeria.⁴⁹¹ However, this initiative was not progressive and could not enhance the missionary activities of the Churches for enriching collaboration. The hindrance then was as Kalu U. Ogbu observed it; that at this stage of the ecumenical commitment the scheme was to checkmate the dominance of the Catholic Church in mission activities.⁴⁹² But by the united effort of the Catholic Church and the other churches in the 1970s motivated by the second Vatican council's statements on decree on ecumenism; there was success. Indeed, with the other Churches under the umbrella of the Christian Association of Nigeria they engaged on a collaborative commitment for peace and unity within the Christian Communities; they were then able thus to forge some mutual working understanding. This section therefore, considers Christian institutions and the role they played towards living ecumenism to make it means of reconciliation in Nigeria.

5.1.4. Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)

Through our understanding of God who has entered into relationship with the human race and the Church all through history we are inspired to dialogue. Within this perspective the Catholic Church in Nigeria on various levels, engaged in dialogue initiatives. These have also been inspired by the second Vatican council, and encouraged by the declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council and by recent Popes, local bishops, committed Christian as well as people of other faith communities. As a result interfaith relations and dialogue have assumed a significant degree of the missionary involvement of the Church in Nigeria and world over. It has become a characteristic function of the contemporary world is the realization of religious pluralism.

Accordingly, the Catholic Church in Nigeria has always been engaged in interreligious dialogues. She has been on the vanguard of championing dialogue among religions in Nigeria towards contributing to the maintenance of peace, the resolving of religious tension and religious conflicts arising between the religions; so as to create an

⁴⁹¹ C.f., Kalu U Ogbu, *The Divided People of God: Church Union Movement in Nigeria 1857-1966*, NOK Publishers International Ltd., New York, 1978, 3.

⁴⁹²C.f., *Ibid.*, 3.

atmosphere of peaceful co-existence particularly with Islam. The Church engages in this project through the organ of the Catholic bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN).

The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria is the assembly of the entire catholic bishops of Nigeria. They exercise their pastoral office cooperatively so as to enhance the church's beneficial influence on all the people of Nigeria, especially Catholics, through the form of the apostolic means that are appropriately modified to the circumstances of their time – in Nigeria.⁴⁹³ The Vatican Document on the Church in Modern World reiterates this appeal that the Bishops Conference is authorized to inspire her society with the message of Christ, to perform a transformative as well as to provide leadership role in the society chiefly by cultivating public responsibility, defining and shaping cultural values that are informed by the gospel message for the common good.⁴⁹⁴ This Organ in Nigeria therefore, seeks proper means within Nigeria's boundaries to confront the society with Christian Values. The CBCN undertakes this function through the establishment of departments such as for mission, for religious dialogue, for health, social and communication departments among others within the CBCN on the national level, ecclesiastical level and diocesan level. To compliment this work on the regional level; there are the establishment of the ecclesiastical provinces of the Catholic bishops who take up the challenges of dialogue with Muslims and other religions through the establishment of interreligious dialogue commissions, Justice and Peace commissions to achieve this purpose. However, it is commendable to note that the growth –evolution of interreligious dialogue has given rise to tremendous, veritable and large amount of library of literature severally documented.

So as to render the Gospel message meaningfully in the modern world and Nigeria in particular for sincere dialogue with all men and women of every nation, religion and culture, the Catholic Church in Nigeria is created into nine Ecclesiastical Provinces. The Bishops Conference of Nigeria thus, operates at this level nationally and provincially: The challenges of a multi-religious country such as Nigeria with more than 250 ethnic groups and more than 200 linguistic groups and many religions as well as many cultural

⁴⁹³ C.f., *The Decree Concerning The Pastoral Office of Bishops in The Church: "Christus Dominus"*, Proclaimed by Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965, no. 38.

⁴⁹⁴ C.f., *Second Vatican Council: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium ET Spes. Promulgated by Pope Paul VI December 7, 1965, no. 42.*

differences⁴⁹⁵ urge urgent work for offering peace, forgiveness and reconciliation in the midst of many religious conflicts in the Country under the auspices of the ecclesiastical provinces; Abuja ecclesiastical province, Benin ecclesiastical province, Calabar ecclesiastical province, Ibadan ecclesiastical province, Jos ecclesiastical province, Kaduna ecclesiastical province, Lagos ecclesiastical province, Owerri ecclesiastical province and Onitsha ecclesiastical province.

Working honestly to contribute and to create an atmosphere of peaceful environment for dialogue as well as peaceful co-existence of the multi-religious people of Nigeria, the organism – *CBCN* – articulated the aim as follows:

“As shepherd of God’s people in our land, we are called to bear witness to Christian hope The church has the mission to proclaim the truth which guarantees the dignity and right of the human person. If hope is not illusory and deceitful, it has to be based on truth ... we cannot stand aside when the dignity of God’s children is being trampled upon. That is why we insist that ethics and morality must never be divorced from politics. We should be failing in our mission if we do not speak and teach to direct the hearts and minds of the citizens to shun evil and to do good in order to usher in true development and lasting prosperity”⁴⁹⁶

The *CBCN* engages in this ecclesiastical function by working together, with one voice and through the issuance of Communique at their plenary meetings, by organizing seminars and workshops through its departments of Interreligious Dialogue Commissions and Ecumenism. In addition, there is in every diocese in Nigeria a department known as the Justice, Peace, and Development Commission that promotes dialogue and reconciliation in multi-cultural dioceses and – Nigeria in general.

In pursuit of the project of interreligious dialogue, and to contend the viral religious conflicts rocking Christian-Muslim relation in Nigeria, the *CBCN* in March 2013, through its Secretariat –the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria - *CSN* - organized a Symposium on: Peace and Reconciliation: A Nigerian Conservation in the Light of *Africae Munus* in Abuja at the Daughter of Divine Love Retreat and Conference Centre, Lugbe, Abuja. Papers were presented by experts and eminent speakers in various areas

⁴⁹⁵ C.f., *Martin Meredith, The State of Africa, Op. Cit., 76.*

⁴⁹⁶ *Catholic Bishop’s Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), The Church in Nigeria: Keeping Hope alive. Communique after its 1st Plenary Meeting for the Year at the Divine Love Retreat Conference Centre, Abuja, March 6-11, 2006; See also Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria: <http://www.cbcn-ng.org>. Accessed on April 14, 2013.*

of dialogue and reconciliation. The conference deliberated on the various aspects of ‘religious conflicts and violence in Nigeria and determined to assist find lasting solution to the problem of religious conflict and violence in Nigeria. Indeed, the Participants at the Conference represented several segments of the Church in Nigeria and beyond and works of life. At the end of the week long colloquium a communique was issued out. Among the messages sent, the communique noted that; God who by his nature is dialogue has called the whole of creation into dialogue and accordingly the Church has a mission to dialogue.⁴⁹⁷ Furthermore the communique identified the need for forgiveness and reconciliation and peace as the panacea to resolving the crisis in Nigeria. The Church in Nigeria being a stakeholder has an enormous role to play so as to ensure that peace and reconciliation reign among the multi-cultural, multi-religious as well as political differences in the manner of the gospel values and the social teaching of the Catholic Church. The church being a sacrament of God’s presence in the world, the communique added ought for that reason manifest in the difficult situation in Nigeria and bear witness to the gospel of peace.

Through workshops and religious sensitization, and dialogue for a peaceful co-existence of all people in Nigeria, the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) enhanced dialogue and the challenges of a multi-religious people of Nigeria.⁴⁹⁸ This conference was held in Kaduna, 2003. The choice of Kaduna was informed by the endemic series of religious conflicts that have taken place there. Besides, Muslim and Christian leaders, government and their representatives, traditional rulers and opinion holders in the communities equally attended the dialogue, study and workshops. Here once more papers were presented from both Muslims and Christians; study and workshops were organized. While applauding the determinations and “esprit de corps” towards engagement for forgiveness and reconciliation in the area the Body cautioned that:

“They “recognize the facts that religion must not be the reason for hatred, violence and conflict in our sub-region. Rather, the three major religions, as reemphasized by their representatives at

⁴⁹⁷ C.f., *Catholic News Service of Nigeria: Manipulation of Religion Identified as one of the Causes of Religious Crisis*. <http://www.cnsng.org/viewnews.php?tabnews=739> March 19, 2013.

⁴⁹⁸ C.f., Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Nigeria: A Socio-Political and theological Consideration*. USA: Library Congress, 2013, 192. Cf., *Islam and Violence From a Girardian Perspective, in Interreligious Dialogue Commission of the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa. Accra Ghana, October 7-10, 2002.*

this seminar/workshop, encourage forgiveness as against revenge and hatred. At the same time, the representatives recognize the duty of the government to curb violence and injustice to take steps to prevent violence and lawlessness when there are warning signs. They are also bound to demand accountability from public officials.”⁴⁹⁹

Indeed, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria through further communique after a plenary meeting, 1987 added to this, and boosted their zeal to bring peace and unite the multi-religious and cultural people of Nigeria, unequivocally stated during life threatening religious conflict thus:

“We condemn outright recourse to violence in the name of religion ... there has been wanton destruction of life and property. Of particular concern is the fact that the property destroyed are Churches and places of worship. In order that justice may be done now, and to prevent a re-occurrence, a thorough, honest and speedy investigation should be conducted to identify the culprits and bring them to book.”⁵⁰⁰

The Bishops’ organism further in their communique appealed to the government for an unqualified and necessary investigation into the conflict; that have to cover the immediate and remote causes, as well as sponsors. They also appealed to religious leaders and those who influence opinions in the society to team up, and build up the communities through words and action to curb a further re-occurrence of such ugly situations of religious conflict and violence,⁵⁰¹ and consequently condemning violence and emphasizing the necessity for forgiveness, reconciliation and peace.

The CBCN underscored through its departments of interreligious dialogue commission and Justice, Peace and Development commissions the establishment and building of ties of relationships with people of other religions, ethnicities, and cultures. It formed these departments – of interreligious dialogue, Justice, Development, and Peace Commissions (*JDPC*) in every diocese, and Ecclesiastical Province in Nigeria, so as to facilitate their activities and easy access to the people. In addition, it embarks on a process of healing memories in every community which has experienced religious conflicts. Moreover, it

⁴⁹⁹ *Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa: A Communique on 14 November, 2003 published, in Borrmans, M., ed., Islamochristiana, Pontificio Istituto Di Studi Arabi e D'Islamistica, Rome, 2003, 210.*

⁵⁰⁰ *Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria: The Nation in Jeopardy, in Catholic Life, Easter Edition, Lagos: Toklast Enterprises, 1987, 17.*

⁵⁰¹ C.f., *Ibid.* 17.

boosted this with the establishment of truth and commissions in the conflict zones along with the sensitization of the beneficiaries of peace process through education, workshops and seminars. In this sense therefore, the ecclesiastical province of Jos, has since the 1980 to 1990 worked and collaborated the growth of relationship between Muslims and Christians in the zone. It has developed this friendship through the setting up of the secretariat of Muslim-Christian affairs. This Secretariat was seriously tested during the 2001 religious conflict in Jos, and burdened to organize workshops, study on dialogue and reconciliation for Muslims and Christians.⁵⁰² Similar conferences have been organized spreading from 1996 down to the 2005 showing a lot of care and attention to further educate Muslims and Christians on the priority and gains of dialogue between the two religions.⁵⁰³ Added to this, Kano diocese formed the center for Comparative Study of Religions to compliment the progressing efforts on peace initiatives, understanding, and reconciliation among Christians and Muslims; through workshop and seminars initiatives.⁵⁰⁴

In Kaduna (since 1999- 2000) the, sharia law introduction and implementation redefined perceptions of ethno-religious identity and interests and increased rhetorical discourses underlining the interpretation and reinterpretation of historical events. Consequently, Kaduna has been one of the hot individual scenarios of religious conflicts in Nigeria.⁵⁰⁵ A further reason for this was because of it relatively advanced urban composite accommodating institutions and various groups. Kaduna State characterizes a unique state in northern Nigeria. Indeed, it has what could be described as a combination of Christians and Muslims, each group claiming to be in the majority in the state.⁵⁰⁶ Besides, the Hausa-Fulani Muslims ethnic group resides geographically in the north of Kaduna, whereas the Christians are located in the southern part of Kaduna State. It is on record that the Muslims have been dominant in the State. This, in effect creates tension between the ethno-religious groups.⁵⁰⁷ Such is the background story that accounts for

⁵⁰² C.f., Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Op. Cit., 193.*

⁵⁰³ C.f., Ibid. 194.

⁵⁰⁴ C.f., Ibid. 194.

⁵⁰⁵ C.f., Hussaini Abdu and Lydia Umar, *Ethno and Religious Crisis in Kaduna, in Hope Betrayed: A Report on Impunity and State-Sponsored Violence in Nigeria*, 83, 2002, 88; *Human Rights Watch, Political Sharia? Human Rights and Islamic Law in Northern Nigeria*, 87 2004; Confer, section I of the work above.

⁵⁰⁶ C.f., H. Angerbrandt, *Political Decentralization and Conflict: The Sharia Crisis in Kaduna, Nigeria. Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 29, 1, 2011, 18.

⁵⁰⁷ C.f., Ibid, 18-19.

the ease with which the adoption and implementation of sharia law evolved into large-scale violence in Kaduna State in 2000. However, this is in contrast to the other states of the north, and further for its history as a state known for her violent religious crisis in Nigeria.

Consequently, Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province, during the 2005 Kaduna sharia religious conflict, through its commission on interreligious dialogue coordinated a conference and workshops on the theme: Implication on Islamic sharia in the Northern Nigeria for Christians.⁵⁰⁸ The Conference covered attendants from a wide range of areas; as far as from the Kaduna Archdiocese –Kaduna metropolis, and Kafanchan diocese that comprise southern part of Kaduna State. Other attendants came from Kano diocese, comprising Kano and Jigawa states, Apostolic Vicariate of Kontagora in Niger State and Kebbi State; Minna diocese also in Niger state, Sokoto diocese involving – Sokoto and Kebbi states and also in the attendance was Zaria that is northern Kaduna comprising some part of Kano state and Katsina state.⁵⁰⁹ At the conference on the “Implication of Islamic Sharia in the Northern Nigeria for Christians; some Muslims representatives were in attendance, and Hajiya Bilkisu a representative argued the sharia implementation was to hold political leaders accountable to the people. While the argument from the Muslims that sharia was not for the Christians rather for Muslims, a contrary opinion was held by Christians. Nonetheless, a communique was issued at the end of the seminar; jointly they emphasized and affirmed that the “importance of dialogue in our multi religious society cannot be over emphasized”⁵¹⁰. They further appealed for a continuous dialogue between both Christians and Muslims for a better understanding of sharia in Islam”⁵¹¹. Besides, they echoed and agreed since “both Islam and Christianity preach peace” they “believe that without peace there can be no sustainable development, and therefore mutual respect and appreciation of each other’s religion should be encouraged at all levels”.⁵¹² The communique continued: “that the manipulation of religion for personal and selfish aggrandizements has to be condemned, likewise both adherents should be engaged in fighting social ills and make sure that the

⁵⁰⁸ C.f., *Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Op. Cit., 193.*

⁵⁰⁹ C.f., *Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria by Ecclesiastical Provinces:*
<http://www.gcatholic.org/dioceses/country/NG-province.htm>. Accessed on June 20, 2013.

⁵¹⁰ *Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Op. Cit., 306.*

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.* 306.

⁵¹² *Ibid.* 306.

pursuit of justice in all spheres of life should be ensured”.⁵¹³ They affirmed their belief in the commitment to Nigeria as one nation under one God who cares for everyone in Nigeria, irrespective of religion, ethnic origin and language.

5.1.5. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

Christian Association of Nigeria is an Association of Christian Churches that has well-defined identities as well as identifiable Church structures. They ought to have an organized system of worship. Such a Church must confess a belief in the one God in the Trinity of the Father, the son and the Holy Spirit.⁵¹⁴ Besides, CAN is an “Ecumenical body” an association of churches, that has been christened *Christian Association of Nigeria*⁵¹⁵ comprising the Christian Churches throughout Nigeria.

The objective of CAN has the issues of unity of the Christians, in social relations between the various peoples in Nigeria at heart. CAN’s role and duty to the Churches and to Nigeria in general asserts the purposes thus: “to serve as bases of the response to the unity of the Church, specifically as enclosed in the Lord’s Prayer on unity, that they may all be one (John 17: 21). CAN thus, considers itself an ecumenical body engaged with a spiritual function in order to bring all Nigerian Christians together as desired and prayed for, by Jesus Christ.”⁵¹⁶

In the course of pursuing its Objectives, CAN has had to deal with Nigeria’s many religious conflicts; which are closely related to or spill over to the ethnic and as well political problems; mostly between Christians and Muslims - This has brought the body in many occasions into strong confrontation with Islamic clerics and leaders on the epidemic religious conflicts in Nigeria. In the course of the religious conflict, as viral as it has been, caused;

“Many are killed, wounded and maimed. There have also been widespread disruptions of economic activities with negative effects on productivity. Over a hundred churches and mosques

⁵¹³ Ibid. 306.

⁵¹⁴ Cf., *Christian Association of Nigeria’s Constitution, As Amended, 2004, 1.*

⁵¹⁵ C.f., C.O. Williams, *General Secretary of CAN’s Report, in A. O. Makoji and G. I: Afolobi Ojo, Religion in a Secular State: Proceedings of the Second Assembly of the Christian Association of Nigeria*, November 15-17, 1988, 10.

⁵¹⁶ C.f., *An Unpublished PhD Work of Abraham Terumbur Mbachirin, The Responses of the Church in Nigeria to Socio-Economic, Political and Religious Problems in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Christian Association of Nigeria*, 2006, 199.

.... Private homes have been reported destroyed. A conservative estimate cost of all the damages would run into billions of Naira. In this process again, billions of Naira are wasted in reconstructing and replacement of damaged property and paying of the compensation of victims. Resources sunk here would have, under normal circumstances, been ploughed into some other productive areas of the economy.”⁵¹⁷

These assertions above set the background to understand the environment, under which CAN works. Those religious conflicts militate against and weaken national unity that is essential for a social and political foundation for democracy, an aspect of the objectives of CAN. The body (*CAN*) fights religious conflict because the elites are using religion as means to manipulate their way to power. Besides, religious conflict engenders and manipulates religious consciousness and sentiment to influence election results. Further, the body confronts religious conflict because it expresses itself in economic bias, as well as influencing the manipulation of political appointments for these are done in Nigeria following religious sentiments. This is essentially because religious conflicts create mistrust, discrimination, lack of freedom of religion, suspicion and abuse of human rights.

However, in responding to the challenges of interreligious dialogue in Nigeria, CAN tasks itself to promoting and upholding of the fundamental right of every Nigerian, irrespective of his or her state of origin, place of abode, or religion and or gender. In this regard, it states that any state law which violates these rights is exploitive, retrogressive and undue. Therefore, it accords high premium to the declaration of the second Vatican Council on the relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions – *Nostra Aetate* – that the purpose of interreligious dialogue is not just to elucidate what is obscure rather recognizing the value of positive echoes of the other which in effect will enhance one’s own faith.⁵¹⁸

Certain factors in the development of Nigeria have helped pressed hard on CAN on its relation to Islam and Muslims. Indeed, these events in Nigeria that influenced CAN to moderate its direction and made some dramatic changes leaned it towards politics and made it the leading voice of the Christian in this perspective. These were the political

⁵¹⁷ Gofwen R. I., *Religious Conflicts in Northern Nigeria and National Building: The Throes of Two Decades 1980-2000*. Kaduna: Human Rights Monitor, 2004, 9; Cf., *Above on Section II of this work*.

⁵¹⁸ C.f., *Nostra Aetate*, no, 3.

calculation of the Military, the Muslims aspiration is to make Nigeria a Muslim state, and the discrimination Christians experienced from the national governments' activities. When the military entered into Nigerian politics, Nigerians applauded their entrance. This entrance was as a result of the experienced rot, corruption and lack of leadership direction of the politicians. Consequently, the military presented itself as the redeemer of Nigeria from the clueless and leadership insensitivity and problems. But this was not to come. It lost whatever good will the people had for it, because its activities were more of a military that came to vandalize and exploit a country rather than save it.⁵¹⁹ In the eyes of the people they were ineffectual administrators. In response to this awareness, they sought to maintain power, and resorted into clamping on the freedom of speech, on the media, and press, hence the use of violence to silence criticism.⁵²⁰ They banned the activities of Associations perceived as their worst critics, such as the Nigerian Bar Association, (NBA), National Union of Nigerian Students, (NUNS), Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), and the Nigerian Labour Congress, (NLC). Any member of these Associations became an endangered species in the hands of the military.⁵²¹ To consolidate power, the military had to issue out many decrees. I remember vividly during this period; the military regime of President, Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, who gave the highest number of decrees, almost on a monthly basis, through the then Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and minister of justice, Clement Akpamgbo.

In the face of this situation CAN decried the marginalization of the Middle Belt Christians; through its Middle Belt States branches, the Northern Elders Forum. The organ further denounced *perceived* political dominance and relegation of many Christians in these states of the Middle Belt. In particular was putting in the hands of the Sultan of Sokoto the permanent leadership of the traditional rulers of the Northern Region and equally the imposition of emirate authority on the Non-Muslims of the Middle Belt.⁵²² Beyond that, CAN accused the government of side-lining the Christian police officers from promotions, the suppression of Christian broadcast and Christian religious circles and

⁵¹⁹ C.f., Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 9.

⁵²⁰ C.f., *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ C.f., *Ibid.* 210-211.

⁵²² C.f., *Ibid.* 135.

as well educational privileges in the state owned schools and electronic media in the northern regions.⁵²³

The political engagement of CAN was besides, occasioned by government restriction of Christian ministries been carried out in the region, northern Nigeria. CAN reaction to this restriction was thus:

Our schools and colleges have been taken over by government and yet we see schools and colleges established under the umbrella of another religion (that is “Islam) being sponsored and entirely financed and administered by government; we have been denied access to the use of the electronic media in certain parts of the country and yet another religion has the monopoly of rendering a near-24 hours religious broadcast in the same States having deliberately refused to accept and recognize the growing population of Christians in the States, thus depriving the Christians not only the rights, but also questioning their claim to being indigenes of such states as claim to be religiously homogeneous.”⁵²⁴

The Christian Association of Nigeria has branches in all the States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. All followed the same objectives of the National body in the defence of Christian wellbeing. Already aware of the intention of the Nigeria military under the presidency of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida to Islamize Nigeria, any perceived action towards this is challenged in any state of the federation. Based on this CAN’s branch in Gongola state criticized the decision of the state government to build a mosque at the state government house. I have underlined earlier on, on this work that Christians have consistently maintained that Nigeria is a secular state and has no state religion according to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and urged the governments at all levels of the federation not to involve itself in matters of religion. It then, argued for the state government of Gongola to build a mosque at the government house in disregard of the huge number of Christians in the state is a disguise to reserve the governance of the state for Muslims. And besides, it furthers the steps of Islamizing the state, and declaring Islam a state religion contrary to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

⁵²³ C.f., Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Christian Association of Nigeria, Northern Zone, *Leadership in Nigeria: An Analysis*. Kaduna: CAN Publicity, Northern Zone, 1989, 42.

Subsequently, the leadership of CAN (in Kaduna state) in 1990 protested the constitution of the federal government's appointments of federal ministers. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) maintained that, the Muslims were favoured on the appointments because out of hundred percent ministerial posts, Christians received about twenty percent whereas the Muslims were allotted approximately eighty percent of the entire ministerial appointments.⁵²⁵ To press their disapproval and dismay on this further, CAN, branches of the Northern Region organized a protest against such government's discrimination. In view of that, Kaduna state branch of CAN engaged in the protest led by the former Catholic Archbishop of Kaduna Archdiocese, Peter Jatau and then president of CAN, Kaduna; to show disapproval of government's marginalization of Christian.⁵²⁶ Government's discriminatory attitude surfaced also as, when Rt. Rev. T. E. Ogbonyimi, the Anglican Bishop of Kaduna, from his experience noted; as he applied to the government of the state for some piece of land for Church project at the government secondary school, Kawo Kaduna that was previously owned by his Church was not honoured.⁵²⁷

Precisely, on the 22nd of April 1990, when some Christian Military men and some civilians led a failed coup against the federal government of President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, the government was rapid to link CAN to it. The government indeed, Toyin Falola argued; accused Christians of the attempted overthrow. In the process, some prominent members of CAN were arrested together with some other Christians especially those who criticized government's discriminatory policies against Christians; such as Jolly Tanko Yusuf and Samuel Salifu. They were however detained and some released later, after some months while some remained longer in the military custody.⁵²⁸ On this issue, CAN confronted the military regime, because there were no other official Christian body that had courage enough to do so without being harassed or being imprisoned.

The Christian Association of Nigeria engaged the radical Islamism in Nigeria with its upsurge, immensely characterized by violence. This upsurge of Islamic aggressiveness

⁵²⁵ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 111.

⁵²⁶ C.f., Ibid.

⁵²⁷ C.f., T. E. Ogbonyomi, *The Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion, Diocese of Kaduna at St. Christopher's Church*. Kaduna, April 11, 1987, 13.

⁵²⁸ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 112.

in the Northern part of Nigeria was as a result of the immensely increasing number of Christians in the mostly perceived Muslim dominated areas of the north. Previously, Muslims, through Jama'atu Nasril Islam, JNi, asserted that Muslims are about three-thirds of the population of Nigeria, intending to imply that Muslims are in the majority. It is a figure CAN have consistently depicted as false and thus came with its own figure showing Christians in majority.⁵²⁹ It is meaningful to note that census in Nigeria has been very contentious.⁵³⁰ Nigeria has never had an accurate census. The figures are most often manipulated to favour one political agenda or the other or to promote one religion over the other.⁵³¹ In this regard had a former Chairman of the National Population Commission of Nigeria, Chief Festus Odimegwu, in August, 2013 in an interview told Journalists: "that the country has not had any credible census since 1816"⁵³². The attempts at Nigeria's census history pre and post-colonial periods to yield true population figures have not been fruitful. The attempts were either characterized by anxiety that the census was related to tax collection, by political tension prevalent in the south of the country at the time or there were no good and adequate trained enumerators or there were difficulties vis-à-vis the remoteness of the areas to be enumerated.⁵³³

CAN, re-enforced its resolve to resist the Islamization of Nigeria by whatever means and method used by any Nigerian government during the regime of President Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Previous to becoming the President of Nigeria, Shagari presented himself as one neutral to religious politicization, and so he was perceived in his first tenure as regime boss. However, in the campaign leading to his second tenure in office; he betrayed his religious bias as he told his basically Muslim fans at both Ilorin, Kwara state and at Sokoto state to vote for him and not the infidels, thus referring to his presidential opponents.⁵³⁴ Further Chuba Okadigbo linked Shagari's NPN, national policy of "One Nation with One Destiny, under One God" to the goal of the late Sarduna, Ahmadu Bello's slogan of the NPC, Northern People's Congress of "One

⁵²⁹ C.f., Ibid. 111.

⁵³⁰ C.f., Rotimi T. Suberu, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*, Washington D. C.: United Institute of Peace Press, 2001, 29.

⁵³¹ C.f., John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011, 51.

⁵³² *Population: How Many are we in Nigeria? Vanguard on Line. Accessed on Sept. 28, 2013*

<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/09/population-many-nigeria>, September, 28, 2013

⁵³³ C.f., John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink*, Op. Cit., 101-102; Nigeria – Census History. <http://countrysudties.us/nigeria/35.htm>.

⁵³⁴ C.f., Chuba Okadigbo, *The Mission of NPN, National Party of Nigeria*, Enugu, Ejike R. Nwankwo Associates, 1981, 6.

North, One People, irrespective of Religion, Tribe or Creed”⁵³⁵. On this J. N. Paden noted that Shagari was a supporter of Sarduna of Sokoto’s Islamic domination of Nigeria. The difference is in the methods being used but then the aims are the same. Shagari’s was a subtle methodology.⁵³⁶ The Organ, CAN confronted and criticized him on this and many other issues such as his proposed establishment of Bureau of Islamic Affairs in the office of the President of Nigeria. The CBCN of Nigeria equally disapproved and denounced the proposal. These were unnecessary religious politics that were nothing but fueling of religious conflict in Nigeria and at the same time make dialogue between people and different religions problematic and hard.

However, despite these tendencies towards politicization, the discriminations against the Christians by governments in Nigeria, and the aspiration of the Muslims for a theocratic Nation of Nigeria, CAN has not given up towards a good working relationship with Muslims through dialogue initiatives as we have tried to show above.

5.1.6. The Methodist and Anglican Churches in Nigeria

In this subdivision I shall focus attention on the interreligious dialogue initiatives of some Christian Churches and that of Nigerian Inter-Religious Council and the Jama’ata Nasril Islam; complimenting the contributions of CAN and CBCN, to the prospects of co-existence, peace and justice between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

The challenge of a multi-Religious society confronting the Churches led them into actions for an authentic interreligious dialogue. For this reason the Methodist and the Anglican communions established a scheme in 1959 in Ghana for both Christians and Muslims geared towards the struggle for independence from Britain. The Scheme known as the “Program for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa” (*PROCMURA*) was devoted to work with Churches in Africa to bear witness to the Gospel Message in a multi-Religious environment of Christianity and Islam and to have a fruitful encounter with Muslims for peace and peaceful living for the total enrichment of the human person,⁵³⁷ and chaired by the Anglican Bishop Josiah Idowu Fearon. It operates on three regional

⁵³⁵ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, Op. Cit., 52

⁵³⁶ C.f., J. N. Paden, *Religion and Political Culture in Kano*, Berkeley, 1973, 570-571.

⁵³⁷ C.f., Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa, (*PROCMURA*), and <http://globalministries.org/africa/projects/programme-for-christianmuslim-r.html>.

levels of: Francophone West Africa, Anglophone West Africa, and the East/South African Level or region. In Nigeria the body (*PROCMURA*) operates with the same motivation of productive commitments with the Muslim community particularly the northern part, for peace and peaceful relationships.⁵³⁸ *PROCMURA* promotes the spirit of being good neighbours, and in Nigeria to encourage Christian Churches to deepen their understanding of Islamic traditions. *PROCMURA* has organized several conferences, workshops and seminar in Kaduna State, Kano State and some middle Belt States of Nigeria for Christian and Muslim leaders to provide them with the platform to openly, frankly and committedly to discuss the problems of religious conflict and their causes towards preventing future occurrence, its resolution and to bring peace and reconciliation in the zone between Christians and Muslims.⁵³⁹

To be able to give reasonable solution to the problem, Sheikh Mahid Shehu who represented Kaduna opted to give background history of the conflict. According to him; at independence, Christians in the north lived under the control of the Muslim Emirs. However, as the population of the Christians grew and they spread; they demanded their freedom from the dominance of the rule of the Muslim Emirs. This consequently was the beginning of the religious conflict, besides; there was the introduction and implementation of sharia law.⁵⁴⁰ On the other hand some participants traced the problem to settler indigene polarization and the alienation between them, media information distortion especially in Jos Plateau State, and moreover thugs being sponsored by politicians who want to win elections at all cost⁵⁴¹ and later abandoned to fend for themselves and gradually transform into insurgents.

However, to foster good neighbourliness among Christians and Muslims, *PROCMURA* offered support centers for counselling of the victims of the religious crisis by collaborating with other support and peace-building agencies.⁵⁴² At one of its conferences in Kaduna State, October 6-10th, 2010, the body issued a communique, which summarized their recommendation for peace, reconciliation and justice in the

⁵³⁸ C.f., *PROCMURA. Programmes for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: Conference on Christian and Muslim Cooperation for Conflict Prevention/Management, Peace Building and Reconciliation, in Northern and Middle Belt States of Nigeria.* Kaduna State, Nigeria 6-10th October, 2010, I.

⁵³⁹ C.f., *Ibid.* III.

⁵⁴⁰ C.f., *Ibid.* 13.

⁵⁴¹ C.f., *Ibid.* 11-12.

⁵⁴² C.f., Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Quoting Matthew A. Ojo and Folaranmi T. Lateju's, in Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, Op., Cit., 195.

States concerned (Christian-Muslim leaders and their people) and to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: Hence PROCMURA asserted: 1. The government should take strict actions against instigators and perpetrators of religious conflicts without favours; make them accountable for such and to work solidly towards entrenchment of equity and social justice in Nigeria. However, it underlined the problems of indigene and settler. This should be systematically revisited, because till now as stated in Constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria but interpreted and implemented in a way that works against Nigeria's unity. 2. The principles of good governance should be maintained and defended; the government should be on the vanguard as well as providing all the essential peace initiatives and the opportunities for arbitration and reconciliation.⁵⁴³

PROCMURA communique further addressed the Christian-Muslim leaders thus: 1. the leaders are to constantly enable Christian-Muslim collaboration and cooperation for peace and co-existence. The leaders are called upon to translate into everyday life, the good precepts of Christianity and Islam. 2. That between Islam and Christianity, the prejudices, stereotypes and the negative perceptions should be handled. 3. To be guided by good neighbourliness to avoid polemics in preaching, use of derogatory and hate language that tends to characterize these areas between Muslims and Christians, also to make possible exchange of knowledge forums in order to dispel issues of negative solidarity. 4. The religious leaders of Christianity and Islam that made up the PROCMURA from the five northern States and the middle Belt ended up the communique resolving to commit themselves and to team up with all people of goodwill working within Nigeria and beyond to ensure that they work collectively for the sustainability of peace and reconciliation in Nigeria.⁵⁴⁴

5.1.7. Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church of Christ, resourcefulness towards Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria is devoted through the formation of a Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations Association in Nigeria. Its concern is characterized by her dedication to dialogue and openness to people of other faith commitment and the body is called the "Association

⁵⁴³ C.f., PROCMURA. *Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Op., Cit., 29.

⁵⁴⁴ C.f., Ibid, 29-30.

for Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations of Nigeria” (*ACMMRN*), founded since 1993.⁵⁴⁵ The aim of this organism is to stimulate a good understanding of Islam and Christianity by holding interreligious conferences. F.O. Segun summed up the manner of relationship that *PRCMURA* pursues in 1962, in a Report titled: “Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria”. There, he asserted: “The approach of *PROCMURA* ... should always be by love readiness for deeper understanding of each other’s point of view, and above all by living what we profess and leaving the issues in God’s hands”⁵⁴⁶. It organizes at least two conferences annually. These conferences are usually well attended by university professors, religious leaders of repute and theologians and theological institutes of both Islam and Christianity from across Nigeria.⁵⁴⁷ The echelon of interreligious dialogue is on the theological stratum, because it focuses often on issues relating among other things to; the Christian-Muslim responses to concrete issues in Nigeria, Christian-Muslim responses to morality and materialism. Moreover, themes bordering on forgiveness, reconciliation and mercy are discussed, as well as the theology of the “Word of God” from the Bible and Quran (*Koran*). These are issues most frequently pertinent among Nigerian Christian-Muslim relations on the academic levels of interreligious dialogues and on the values of respect, justice, forgiveness and peace inherent in the traditions of Islam and Christianity, in order to foster peaceful living in Nigeria.⁵⁴⁸ In this regard *PROCMURA* has greatly enhanced Christian-Muslim in the discourse of theological matters and collaboratively working together on some joint projects, for instance, organizing workshops, seminars and presentation of papers at conferences for the Position and Rights of Women in traditional religious Society.⁵⁴⁹

PROCMURA, in a communique at the close of the meeting highlighted the value of openness to the faiths of the others, the respect, forgiveness and reconciliation inherent in Islamic and Christian traditions; thus recommending: that it is in the best interest of both Islam and Christianity that the religious leaders champion the course leading to the enhancement and exchange of knowledge to overcome the legacy of hostility, to

⁵⁴⁵ C.f., Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim-Christian Women in Dialogue: The Case of Northern Nigeria. Religions Discourse*. Peter Lang, 2008, 253.

⁵⁴⁶ Johann Haafkens, *The Direction of Christian Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa, in Christian-Muslim Encounter*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad et al. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1995, 306.

⁵⁴⁷ C.f., Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue*, Op., Cit., 253.

⁵⁴⁸ C.f., Ibid. 253.

⁵⁴⁹ C.f., Ibid.

tolerance to deepen interreligious understandings at all levels of the society. For a peaceful co-existence the communique emphasized the necessity of religious education in the school curriculum based on the common foundation of the traditions of both religions, inculcating the legacy of creating interfaith Dialogue centers. Also the communique like many other communiqués in the past stressed the necessity to avoid hate and provocation languages in preaching and in media publications⁵⁵⁰.

5.2. Islamic Institution

Under the Islamic institution I shall engage myself with the commitment and the contribution of the Islamic institution of the Jama'ati Nasri Islam (JNI). Indeed, there are many Islamic organizations in Nigeria; one of them is the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) to which my interest centers in this section of the work, primarily because of the roles it played in Islamic circle, within Islam and in Inter-faith relationship in Nigeria.

JNI was suspected to have been established in 1961 by the late Sir Ahmadu Bello Sarduana of Sokoto, who was then; the first Premier of the Northern Region.⁵⁵¹ However, on the date of formation of this organization opinions have differed, with some asserting; that it was founded 1962.⁵⁵² It is an organization whose membership was open to all Muslims. It is normally headed by the Sultan of Sokoto, as the President General, and with an administrative Secretary-General, who runs the day to day activities of the organization, assisted by the sub-committee and executive committee officials. It is run with many other different departments. Moreover, there are many sub-committees within the JNI, such as social welfare the Health and also the disaster sub-committees.

The primary objectives of the JNI were principally religious; to spread Islam and to educate Muslims on Islam.⁵⁵³ The organization established many schools and as well worked for the formation of Islamic Studies faculties or departments in the Nigerian universities that initiated the study of Islam. Jama'atu Nasril Islam set itself to carry on

⁵⁵⁰ C.f., *Thaddeus B. Umaru, Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 313-314.

⁵⁵¹ C.f., Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 2003, 43.

⁵⁵² C.f., Klaus Hock, *Der Islam – Komplex: Zur Christlichen Wahrnehmung des Islams und der christlich-islamischen Beziehungen in Nordnigeria Während die Militärherrschaft Babangidas*. Hamburg. Lit., Verlag, 1996, 58; Also Toyin Falola is of the same understanding that the Association was founded in 1962, by the Sarduana of Sokoto.

⁵⁵³ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*, Op. Cit., 106.

with the Jihad of Usman dan Fodio, who led army in his time to establish Islam.⁵⁵⁴ In this context therefore, it went on to train and send forth missionaries throughout Nigeria. Hence Matthew Hassan Kukah opined, that JNI pursued the inspiration of establishing Islamic literature and weekly newspaper in the Nigerian vernacular language, it built mosques also to embolden Islamic centres of learning.⁵⁵⁵

Above and beyond this aim above, JNI had a stout political ambition. It established a political dimension in one of its sub-committees. It is observed that between 1965 and 1966, it engaged in radical politics during the military coup of 1966, that it designated as Christian attack on the Muslims, in which Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto was assassinated. This according to some records put a strain on its inter-faith relations.⁵⁵⁶ Successively it took up to hostility on Christianity, centering its attention and stance to bring all Muslims of the North together as one unity.⁵⁵⁷ Its engagement into politics was such that it constituted as the major ploy of Islam fighting for the affairs of Islam. It engaged itself arguing the policies of government which do not benefit Muslims. It did this function until the formation of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs was established in 1973. It engaged itself strongly in politics for the struggle and Islamic identity of the north against the south.⁵⁵⁸ JNI's Islamic agenda was not in doubt in the assertions of late Sarduna of Sokoto, its founder in the statements: that "I am a political leader as well as a religious one" *and so reminded his hearers of what he termed the Islamic Advisory Group, that* "the government of which I am a leader will not do anything outside of Muslim law". And besides, stated; "I myself have no strength except the strength of *Islam* our religion".⁵⁵⁹ This indeed, betrayed his religious bias and religious Islamic agenda.

JNI, to prosecute its projects needed huge financial resources; therefore it sourced its fund primarily from its staff, but then to be noted is the fact that; its entire staff (*the JNI staff*) were on the payroll of the government as civil servants of the northern region. Moreover, JNI was for him; like a religious Affairs department of the ministry of

⁵⁵⁴ C.f., Ibid. 105.

⁵⁵⁵ C.f., Matthew H. Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 43.

⁵⁵⁶ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria*. U. S. A. Lanham Maryland: Scarecrow Press Inc., 178.

⁵⁵⁷ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 106.

⁵⁵⁸ C.f., Ibid. 106.

⁵⁵⁹ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, Op., Cit., 44.

Education in the regional civil service, and one of them was the Chairman of the Regional Civil Service Commission.⁵⁶⁰ This undeniably, buttressed the Christian argument of the usual government bias against Christians in the governance of the northern region. Further, it was prominent; the publications of its much Islamic literature were done at the cost of the Gaskiya Publishing Company Zaria, a government Printing Press.⁵⁶¹ This was the background of his assertion that he will not do anything outside of what his religion demands. Toyin Falola, on the financial resources of the organization remarked; that through its link to Pakistani businessman, major fund raising from the Ministry of Education and other prominent Muslims in the country raised money enough to engage into the mass-conversion campaigns throughout Nigeria.⁵⁶² On this, Kukah further upheld that this international honour from these Muslim countries for Sardauna heightened in crowning him the vice President of the World Islamic Council and in his acceptance speech he, Sardauna, “announced dubious numbers of conversion and the existence of a million Koranic schools in Northern Nigeria”⁵⁶³. It’s worthwhile, to note that Nigeria is not an Islamic country and has never been one, yet most ruling Muslim elites from the northern Nigeria have presented Nigeria as one. Here then lies most of Nigeria’s religious conflicts. And this has brought JNI into bitter collision with the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, especially CAN’s leadership who understand the maneuver JNI has been using to make Nigeria Islamic country. To hide this disguise, JNI reproached Christian Association of Nigeria, Jos branch of conspiring with the southern Christians to annihilate the north, meaning by the north Islam; in order to lay the way for the southern control of Nigeria.⁵⁶⁴

To shore up his Islamic prospects and to show how Islamic a nation Nigeria is; Sardauna turned his attention now outside of Nigeria to raise more fund for his Islamic programme especially to Muslim countries. This was an aspect of his foreign programme that orbited within the Muslim world.⁵⁶⁵ Hence his conversion campaign appealed to the Islamic world and captured their interest to invest in the project of Islamizing Nigeria as well as

⁵⁶⁰ C.f., Ibid. 44.

⁵⁶¹ C.f., Ibid.

⁵⁶² C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 105.

⁵⁶³ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, Op., Cit., 21.

⁵⁶⁴ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 107.

⁵⁶⁵ C.f., Femi Ajayi, *The Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, New York: Bloomington, iUniverse, Inc, 2009, 41.

earned him much honour from Muslim countries.⁵⁶⁶ In the same vein he approached some Islamic countries for support. This procured him from Kuwaiti government some donation amounting three hundred thousand British pounds and long-term commitment of fifty thousand further British pounds annually from Saudi Arabia.⁵⁶⁷ According to Matthew Hassan Kukah, countries such as Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Senegal, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Sudan, Lebanon among others sang the praises of Sarduna and awarded him honours as the Defender and Champion of Islam in Nigeria, and the King of Saudi Arabia in 1963 donated a plot of land at Medina to him to build a personal house.⁵⁶⁸ This honour was moreover translated into millions of dollars for him for the promotion of Islam in Nigeria.⁵⁶⁹

To gain more political ground it was able to galvanize support from the Yoruba Muslims in the south, by recasting its objectives and mission as the representatives of all Muslims in Nigeria irrespective of their particular belief. This exploit was successful such that JNI merged with the Yoruba Muslims known as Western Joint Muslim Organization (WESIOMO) to establish a powerful joint organization, Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). This Council for Islamic Affairs had been accorded recognition by the Government of Nigeria as the only Muslim organ that represented the organization of Islam Nigeria wide and on any issues on Islam,⁵⁷⁰ and also “reflected the crucial overture in the political calculation of the Muslims in Northern Nigeria to be precise and the rest of Muslims in Nigeria in general beyond the contour of the Caliphate”⁵⁷¹.

JNI's role in the service of Islam and on behalf of Muslims was concretized on its championing Nigeria's entrance in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, OIC, and its strong support on the sharia legal system implementation in Nigeria. Its political ambition and the campaign to make Nigeria an Islamic country has brought it into strong collision with the Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, represented then by the Northern Christian Association. This organ, Northern Christian Association of Nigeria (NCAN) was established as result of the prevailing political situation; the dominance in

⁵⁶⁶ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op. Cit., 107.

⁵⁶⁷ C.f., Ibid, 105.

⁵⁶⁸ C.f., Femi Ajayi, *The Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, Op., Cit., 41.

⁵⁶⁹ C.f., Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, Op., Cit., 21.

⁵⁷⁰ C.f., Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power*, Op. Cit, 45.

the north by the ruling Hausa-Fulani elites.⁵⁷² However, aware of their religious future and freedom from domination from the ruling elites, they demanded the freedom to run their own affairs. To this the Sarauwa of Sokoto echoing the ideological stand or beliefs of the member of the Northern House of Assembly derogatorily or disparaging them asserted: “as for slaves, it is only because Islamic power is not strong *enough* here that we have not got slaves to sell”⁵⁷³ apparently referring to the Christian groups and practitioners of Traditional Religion.

To maintain the dominance and then being strengthened by the British administration in the north, the Northern Regional House of Assembly became hostile and intolerant to the Christians. It therefore resulted into what Matthew Hassan Kukah termed the “Dandogo motion” that press for the suspension of all missionary activities in the entire region of the North coated in the allegation that the missionaries were causing confusion in the Northern Region.⁵⁷⁴ This supports the argument of Femi Ajayi who contended that: “Sarauwa *and his JNI* operated under a political framework that had religion on its roots or foundation”⁵⁷⁵. In addition, he believed in the philosophy of Jihad and the supremacy of Islam; he hence relentlessly fought in order to Islamize Nigeria.⁵⁷⁶ Ajayi furthermore argued, this ambition led him to maneuver grouping all the northern ethnic groups into a Hausa/Fulani block so as to have an upper hand to the Hausa leadership of Nigeria.⁵⁷⁷

These were the political and religious platforms on which the JNI has operated and allegedly operates in Nigeria and have put it into a collision path with Christians in Nigeria and more especially, Christian Association of Nigeria, and more even when the Christian organizations entered into Nigerian political arena. We have to bear in mind that Islamic representatives body, such as the Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, SCIA; and Jama’atu Nasril Islam, JNI had long been in politics and had pushed the Nigerian government to abide more to Islamic models which govern Islamic countries. In this regard they group pressed the government to abrogate Sundays as weekly day of

⁵⁷² C.f., Ibid. 48.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ C.f., Ibid. 49.

⁵⁷⁵ Femi Ajayi, *The Effect of Religion on the Political Process*, Op., Cit., 43.

⁵⁷⁶ C.f., Ibid, 43-44.

⁵⁷⁷ C.f., Ibid. 44.

rest to Fridays and also to remove all symbols of Judeo-Christian traditions from the Nigeria public arenas.⁵⁷⁸ With this the religious rhetoric went thus further on.

Despite all the rhetoric and polemics characterizing politicization of religion that have occurred between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria; recent development underlining religious conflicts in Nigeria have made people to challenge JNI and CAN to collaborate proactively in nurturing accord through dialogue . In this regard, JNI and the council of Ulema which were under the Nigeria Supreme Council of Islam Affairs, established as educational, missionary along with advisory committees⁵⁷⁹ have cooperated for peace. To that effect, JNI therefore had in collaboration with NSCIA, CAN, Non-Governmental organizations, Faith-based Organizations and Conflict Management Stakeholders Network under the supervision of Interfaith Mediation Centre and Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum (*IFMC/MCDF*)⁵⁸⁰ sponsored by the Unites States Institute of Peace (USIP) held some peace and security dialogue in preparation of the then 2003 national election. The dialogue was a pre-emptive scheme to avert any possible tragedy in assisting leaders, and youths face up any false impression, correct their prejudice, stereotypes and misconceptions. The participants of the conference were drawn from a wide range of influential Muslim and Christian leaders at the grassroots levels so as to initiate living dialogue on this level.⁵⁸¹ The conference war organized to educate youths on the dangers and evils of violence in order to transform them into partners in resolving conflicts through dialogue forums. This was important with the intention of transforming youths who are easily rallied into willing instruments for religious conflicts.

5.3. Interreligious Institution

The discussion here will focus on the Nigeria Christian-Muslims representatives which forms the Nigerian Interreligious Council.

⁵⁷⁸ C.f., Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 222.

⁵⁷⁹ C.f., Ayegboyin Deji, *Religious Association and the New Political Dispensation in Nigeria*, *Journal for Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 15, no. 1, 2005, 103-104.

⁵⁸⁰ C.f., Interfaith Mediation Centre, Committed to Building Peace, Building Interfaith Cooperation and Good Governance, 2009. <http://www.imcnigeria.org/history.html>. Accessed on October 20, 2013.

⁵⁸¹ C.f., Davis Smock, Ed, *Religious Contributions to Peacemaking: When Religion Brings Peace, Not War*. Washington: United Institute for Peace, 2006, 21.

5.3.1 Nigeria Interreligious Council (NIREC)

The Nigeria Inter-Religious Council is a body of Christian-Muslim Religious Leaders in Nigeria. This organism was started at the instance of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1999. Although, some argue it was established at the initiatives of Christians and Muslims, with the generous support of the government of Nigeria.⁵⁸² It was instituted in order to foster a proper understanding of the traditions of Christianity and Islam among the practitioners of both religions in Nigeria. The council comprises 50 members made up of twenty-five Christians and twenty-five Muslims.⁵⁸³ The Christian members are usually appointed by the Christian Association of Nigeria (*CAN*), whereas the Muslim members are appointed by Nigerian Supreme Council of Islam Affairs (*NSCIA*), the Sultan of Sokoto who is usually the Chairman of Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs is always a member from the Muslim side and Co-Chairman with always the President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (*CAN*). It is financially depended on the Federal Government of Nigeria for her financial functions and this incapacitates most of its activities and expansion, since the fund may not be coming promptly when most needed. It has been further argued that the council's intimate tie with the government has made it difficult to achieve some of her purposes without undue influence. Consequently, the council is seen to compromise on some important national issues. Among the Christian members consists of two women representatives. Moreover, since 2004 some Muslim Women, the Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (*FOMWAN*) have been invited to attend the Council meetings.

In the course of the sharia crisis in Nigeria, 2002, the council was able to organize some conferences and seminars through which they later issued a robust formulated communique. In the communique both Muslim and Christian leaders of the council reiterated the huge commitment to work together so as to achieve the objectives of peace and peaceful co-existence. However, the Christians re-emphasized their non-acceptance of absolute sharia implementation that bears greatly to infringe on the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. But in reply to the fears of the Christians, the Muslim

⁵⁸² C.f., John Onaiyekan, *Muslim and Christians in Nigeria: The Imperative of Dialogue*, 2001, 3 <http://www.sedosmission.org>. Accessed on sept. 28, 2013.

⁵⁸³ C.f., Michael J. Opkalanozie, *Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion in Nigeria: Conflicts and Challenges to Peaceful Co-existence*. Germany: Edition of Sankt Ottilien, 2011, 231; Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue*, Op., Cit., 250.

side countered that sharia is for Muslim, even though it infringes on the Rights of freedom and Religion of the Christians,⁵⁸⁴ and that the adoption of sharia in some states of Nigeria is tantamount to adopting Islam as a state religion contrary to the Constitution. However, the proponents of sharia maintained, sharia adoption is compatible to the Nigerian Constitution. But then there is not actually any middle or meeting ground between the two groups.

NIREC, 2000 in the pursuit of its objectives to enhance solidarity, dialogue and good neighbourliness between Christians and Muslims has collaborated with Christian Association of Nigeria (*CAN*) and the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (*JNI*) in holding seminars, dialogue sessions, conferences, public lectures and workshops on Islamic sharia, in which discussion session was an integral part. In addition, the council through its efforts has been able to establish the birth of a new beginning of Christian-Muslim encounter and friendship. To this effect some group of Christians and Muslims are reported to have prevented hooligans who went on a display of burning down Churches and Mosques not to be burnt, but have to suffer some physical pains and inflictions for their good gestures.⁵⁸⁵ Among others, the council has organized some activities for the youths: termed "Nigerian Youth Summit" in which about two hundred and fifty Christian and Muslim youths were in attendance in the capital City of Niger State Nigeria – Mina. The Summit was successful and through it many youths who would have been willing instruments in the hands of inciters to cause religious crisis have refrained and understood the need to foster peaceful co-existence, dialogue to resolve misunderstandings.⁵⁸⁶

NIREC further pursued a constructive, respectful and fruitful dialogue between Christians and Muslims in 2010. This was organized in Abuja for all the African Religious Leaders. The agenda was to discuss the manners in which theology, politics, interfaith, religious harmony, religion, peace and security in Africa could be advanced. The encounter was a boost by the council to policy makers and politicians to take up the resolution of issues of religious conflicts in Africa seriously. After underlining the problems of religious dialogue, politics of manipulation for selfish gain, it therefore

⁵⁸⁴ C.f., Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue*, Op. Cit., 260.

⁵⁸⁵ C.f., NIREC- Nigeria Inter-Religious Council. <http://www.nirecng.org/achieve.html> accessed Nov. 2010; See also Michael J. Okpalanozie, *Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion*, Op., Cit., 234.

⁵⁸⁶ C.f., Ibid.

admonished and urged religious leaders and politicians to prioritize peace-building, dialogue, justice and reconciliation between people of various religions in their environment.⁵⁸⁷

The council had indeed, in company with some agencies gone into social services - in Inter-faith projects - by establishing a Nigeria Interfaith Action Association to fight Malaria (*NIFAAM*), as well as campaign for the awareness and against HIV/AIDS. They motivated both Christians and Muslims to collaboratively work in this axis. Indeed, with this project the council primarily mobilized and involved churches and Mosques to effectively and properly handle the problem.⁵⁸⁸ Moreover, the council regularly after plenary meetings issue out communiques to enlighten Christians and Muslims and keep people abreast with information on National and common issues of interest for the peace and stability of the country and consistently make recommendation to the Federation of Nigeria on affairs nurturing the vital development of the Country.⁵⁸⁹

5.3.2. Christian-Muslim Initiatives

The religious conflicts which occur commonly and persistently in ferocious violent fashion in Nigeria require a change at all levels for a peaceful resolution. The change or shift that is required sometime had taken the shape of Christian-Muslim initiatives. Despite the many religious conflicts which have engulfed the Nigeria religious scene, Christian and Muslims engaged themselves in some worthy initiatives to manage the situation. These initiatives are based on the concept of dialogue that takes off from the background that we can talk to one another and understand one another. It is further based on the conviction that we can scheme a common language to communicate and on the persuasion that there are also some common grounds within the different groups. The diversity therein ought not to be obstacles for hard conversation rather create opportunity and advantage for understanding each other's perspectives. Indeed because the two religions have common grounds; dialogue can take advantage of these to bring about peace initiatives and constructive engagements.

⁵⁸⁷ C.f., Thaddeus B. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, Op., Cit., 112.

⁵⁸⁸ C.f., Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue*, Op., Cit., 262.

⁵⁸⁹ C.f., *NIREC – Nigeria Inter-Religious Council*, Op., Cit.

This process is found and underlined in commonality during religious holidays, such as during Christmas and the Id-el-Fitir,⁵⁹⁰ when felicitations are exchanged through their religious leaders with one another, which cuts across religious lines. The felicitation is not just limited to sending best wishes to Muslims or Christians on the occasion of their feasts, but opens a horizon for reflection and exchange of views on current themes of common interest. Equally it constitutes a bridge of friendship between the two communities which it is important to consolidate. This attitude is totally in line with the call of Pope John Paul II in his address during the 6th World Conference on Religion and Peace, 1994. His appeal on Religious Leaders was that: "...religious leaders must clearly show they are pledged to the promotion of peace precisely because of their religious belief."⁵⁹¹ Moreover, this clarion call is reinforced by the *Nostra Aetate* Document on Muslim –Christian relations to pursue a common objective which will defend and nurture social justice, freedom and peace in the world.⁵⁹² This appeal has been underscored by the people of Nigeria, who have had many different religions but have lived and worked together for several years in offices. They have lived as tenants in houses as well as having intermarried. What's more, besides religious conflicts, efforts have been made ever since 1992 in the direction of Christian–Muslim good relation.

This effort has been both at the grassroots and the national levels. It is an effort that is redefining Christian-Muslim situations toward adopting a creative response for a religious simultaneity. At the grassroots' level, we have the example of Imam Muhammed Ashaf and Pastor James Wuye.⁵⁹³ Both were sworn enemies leading their various communities in Kaduna Nigeria. Each led a militant group dedicated to defending his community in a vicious religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna, Nigeria. In the violence pastor James Wuye lost one of his hands, besides some deaths of members of his community, meted on them by the Muslim fighters; whereas Imam Muhammed Ashaf lost his spiritual mentor and two close relatives in the same fight. The ensuing battle of religious conflict spread to other parts of the city of

⁵⁹⁰ C.f., *In some texts the word Id-el-Fitir are written as Eid-el-Fitir or Id-el-Kabir. However in this work I write it as Id-el-Fitir.*

⁵⁹¹ John Paul II, *Address delivered on the 6th World Conference on Religion and Peace*, November 3, 1994, in *L'Osservatore Romano English ed.* Rome, November 16, 1994, 2.

⁵⁹² C.f., *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.

⁵⁹³ C.f., Muhammad Ashafa and James M. Wuye, *The Pastor and the Imam*. Kaduna and Lagos: Christian/Muslim Youth Dialogue Forum, 1999.

Kaduna with an enormous loss of human lives.⁵⁹⁴ However, since both were urged by the civil leaders after their battle, they reconciled, agreed working together and worked out a kind of dialogue, so as to promote understanding and respect among Muslims and Christians.

They thus, through dialogue environment have co-founded Inter-faith Mediation Centre and Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum in Kaduna (IFMC-MCDF)⁵⁹⁵. The organization coordinates some series of workshops and mediations promoting peace and reconciliation, and published “The Pastor and the Imam” in which they called on people that: “we, as Muslim and Christian Youth leaders who have played significant roles in past conflicts and became victims through the physical and psychological injuries that we sustained, came to realize that there is a need for a better approach to our conflict situation”.⁵⁹⁶ Their organization targets extremists, youths, student groups, teachers, traditional and local government officials and ethnic groups appealing and teaching them to admit religious differences and refuse violence of any sort, through dialogue. The dialogue forum approach of peace building techniques; using the Bible and the Quran with a combination of traditional Nigerian approach and a western conflict oriented method had won them worldwide attention.⁵⁹⁷ Under the supervision of Imam Ashaf and Pastor James Wuye, Muslim and Christian youths had jointly rebuilt Churches and Mosques that they through violence once destroyed. Through the initiative of the Interfaith Mediation Centre and Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum in 2002 some Christian and Islamic leaders signed a Peace Declaration that condemned all forms of violence and incitements that could spread and cause the same. The forum goes round Nigeria to sensitize and create a high level of tolerance, trust and understanding among the different faith practitioners and ethnic nationalities.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁴ C.f., David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 259-274; James Wuye and Muhammad Ashafa, *The Pastor and the Imam*. Lagos: Ibrash Publications Ltd, 1999. See also, *James Wuye and Muhammed Ashafa*, <https://www.ashoka.org/fellow/mohammed-ashafa>. Accessed on Sept. 13, 2013.

⁵⁹⁵ C.f., In this work, “The Interfaith Mediation Centre/Muslim Christian Dialogue Forum” will be addressed as IMC/MCDF.

⁵⁹⁶ Muhammad Ashaf and James M. Wuye, *The Pastor and the Imam*. Kaduna and Lagos: Christian/Muslim Youth Dialogue Forum, 1999, ix.

⁵⁹⁷ C.f., Imam Ashaf and Pastor Wuye receive Scottish Honorary Degree. <http://www.iofc.org>. 1-2. Accessed on Sept. 13, 2013.

⁵⁹⁸ C.f., Little, D. ed., *Introduction: The Peacemakers in Action, Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution in, Peace Makers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge:

Another aspect of the Muslim-Christian initiative that provide the necessary ferment for peace and reconciliation has been on the leadership level; with the president general of the Nigeria Supreme council for Islamic Affairs, the Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad appealing to Nigerians to shun and ignore violence. In his untiring efforts in the promotion of interfaith dialogue, noble causes of peace and reconciliation initiatives between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, they enjoined leaders of religions thus: "we must as religious leader champion the cause of truth, honesty, accountability and justice and ensure that our followers embody these virtues and put them into effect. We must serve as a source of succor...in our societies and provide hope and confidence to our people to face the societal crises which they are bound to encounter in their collective existence."⁵⁹⁹ However, it has to be stated clearly that this initiative and publication does not in any way ignore the fundamental disagreements concerning Islam and Christianity nor does it repudiate the significance of the work of advancing either Islam or Christianity.

Nonetheless, they (IFMC/CMDF) employed several Scriptural texts from the Bible and the Qur'an which made available common grounds for the beginning of dialogue. The laid down platform for dialogue created the bases fostering mutual respect, trusting one another and each other's religious understanding and tradition. It went on to forestall forced conversion, but then drawing them into shared forgiveness, reconciliation initiatives as well as fighting against injustice. This foundation found an alternative response to violence in the Nigerian context. It advocates respect toward diversity and the freedom of the individual person. However, it has to be stressed that simple recognition of the differences and the learning about the other person may not principally lead to dialogue, that is engagement to the highest level, which I would say is about discovering and learning from each other and hence bringing relationships to that level which transcend religion and brings dialogue to shared identity of being human.

This understanding is succinctly observed by Robinson, when he highlighted this level of dialogue as: "the development of ultimate life meaning based upon awareness and

Cambridge University Press, 2007, 3. See also Tanenbaum Centre of Interreligious Understanding Program on Religion and Conflict Resolution, 2007.

⁵⁹⁹ Muhammed Lawal S., in, *Daily Trust as 50 Leaders Met in Abuja, October 18, 2007*, in <http://www.allafrica.com/stories/200710180440.html>, As quoted by Hyacinth Kalu in, *Together as One: Interfaith Relationships between African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity in Nigeria, Vol II*. USA: iUniverse, Inc. Bloomington, 2011, 198.

appreciation of, and response to the other”⁶⁰⁰. This appeal, to me seems to underline and builds on the call of Karl-Josef Kuschel on the religions that stem from Abraham to an “Abrahamic ecumenicity” in his book: “Abraham: Sign of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims”.⁶⁰¹ Accordingly he stated: “...that Christians and Muslims can achieve an Abrahamic brotherhood and sisterhood if they together practice Abrahamic ecumenicity.”⁶⁰² Moreover he argued that Jews, Christians and Muslims could become a blessing to the whole of mankind thereby making the world “that much richer in friendliness, righteousness and humanity.”⁶⁰³ This initiative of Abrahamic ecumenicity is a basis for interfaith religious dialogue and policies in many Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria. It stresses further belief that all human beings are children of God and that Muslims and Christians, in particular share similar basic faith in the patriarch Abraham. Hence the motivation for instance is established and seen in the goodwill messages to Muslims when they mark the end of the celebration of – Id el Fitri – Ramadan. Therefore Christians and Muslims go beyond their differences into recognizing the dignity of the human person bestowed with rights and duties. Hence they think that intelligence and freedom are definitely gifts which must impel believers to recognize these values which are shared because they rest on the same human nature.⁶⁰⁴ Advancing this initiative further, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Abuja, Nigeria, Cardinal John Onaiyekan, at a forum on promoting inter-religious dialogue in Abuja reiterated the need for a community based approach of dialogue between religious leaders in Nigeria. Such community based oriented dialogue will build confidence and trust amongst practitioners of various religions as well as reduce significantly religious conflicts. This would equally support peace building at the basic levels.⁶⁰⁵

In continuation of this dialogue forum initiative, had a former Nigerian President, General Yakubu Gowon charged Christians to rid themselves of the spirit of violence by not offering to violence in self-preservation and never to inspire religious warfare, but then to look beyond self by seeking answers to the various challenges facing Nigeria

⁶⁰⁰ Simon Robinson, *Spirituality, Ethics and Care*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008, 36.

⁶⁰¹ Karl-Josef Kuschel, *Abraham: Sign of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims*. New York: Continuum, 1995.

⁶⁰² Ibid. 253.

⁶⁰³ Ibid. 253.

⁶⁰⁴ *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.

⁶⁰⁵ *Nigeria: Onaiyekan (Sic) calls for Interreligious Dialogue to Address Insecurity*, in, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201309041460.html>: Assessed: October 6, 2013.

through dialogue. This appeal enjoined on Nigerian to reject violence because those who use violence are or could be described as those who have run out of ideas and feel that they only means to their goals is through violence. The means to achieve good goals is through dialogue, and this dialogue Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua contended is above all:

“a dialogue *that* has been used in Nigeria to help people resolve long-standing conflicts and to build deeper understanding of contentious issues. *It is a* dialogue which is not about judging, weighing, or making decisions, but about understanding and learning. *A* dialogue which dispels stereotypes, builds trust, and enables people to be open to perspectives that are very different from their own. A dialogue that is one sure way to heal memories and wounded hearts. In dialogue, education, formation, awareness and understanding are key words.”⁶⁰⁶

Additionally he continued that because Nigerians have gone through many faces of violence, slavery and colonialism the value of trust has been replaced with prejudice, bias and mutual suspicions; hence the significance of the appeal to the initiative of dialogue forum to resolve, to seek and to understand the outlook of one another.⁶⁰⁷

There has been further collaboration among Muslims and Christians in some other areas. They have awakened a dialogue of life, by which interactions are strengthened by which, many live in the same family, belong to the same club, attend the same school, go to the same market places and work in the same business centers. In this perspective they engage into those things that bring better understanding among them. Explored here are common interests and common values that bind each of the participants. Besides, they meet each other in different life situations of social engagements. They had stood by each other in many situations of mourning and sorrows. Therefore, when Christians and Muslims meet in dialogue, narrate their faith journeys and community experiences, it thus becomes instantaneously apparent that within each community there are a variety of different experiences of faith. Consequently the recognition of such diversity is crucial to humanizing the “religious other.”⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Cornelius Afebu Omonokhua, *The Need for Inter-Religious Dialogue*. <http://carefronting.org/the-need-for-inter-religious-dialogue/> accessed on Nov. 20, 2013.

⁶⁰⁷ C.f., Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*. Maryknoll: New York, 1995, 4.

5.4. Similarities and Differences

It is undeniable that the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship had often in the past been deeply impaired by violence, cultural, prejudice, hatred, historical suspicion and misunderstanding. And most often discussions on the Christian-Muslims relationships had invariably tended to obviously concentrate on these apparent and common narratives as said above (on the conflicts, hatred, and suspicions between the two religions). We are aware today and have experiences of the mood on Islamophobia as well as the religious radicalism and extremism. This perspective absolutely underscores fundamentally the effort towards a new paradigm of tolerance, good neighborliness and understanding between Christians and Muslims.

These facts of the past historical suspicions and what have you had been acknowledged by Ghazi bin Muhammad the Prince of Jordan. But then there is a new current in that, this perception is gradually changing with the acknowledgement that Christianity and Islam profess to be a religion of peace. The Catholic Church also acknowledged this new current when it appealed and implored that the many quarrels and dissensions over the centuries between Christians and Muslims should be forgotten and then appealed to both religions to make a sincere effort for the achievement of mutual understanding for a committed dialogue for the benefits of all people and ultimately to promote peace, liberty and social justice.⁶⁰⁹ Hence, it is vital for both religions to make peace and then live in harmony with one another. Moreover, the proponents of the new perception argue that both the Quran of the Muslims and the Bible of the Christians teach and instruct the believers of both religions to worship the one God and to love the one God and one's neighbor.⁶¹⁰

In this perspective, there are common grounds between the Christians and the Muslims on which grounds collaborative capacity commitment for the promotion of peace, justice and reconciliation are enhanced and achieved. At the same time there are some differences on the work for commitment between the Christian institutions and the

⁶⁰⁹ C.f., *Nostra Aetate, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, Vatican II, 28, October 1965, No. 3, Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, New Revised Edition*, 1992, 740.

⁶¹⁰ C.f., Ghazi bin Muhammad, *On a Common Word between Us and You*, in Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammad and Melissa Yarrington eds., *A Common Word Muslim and Christiana on Loving God and Neighbour*; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010, 6-12.

Muslims institutions engaged in the well-being and reconciliation of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. There are some goals in both which cause some frictions between the two different institutions of Christianity and Islam. In this subsection I shall outline some similarities and differences and how they are able to overcome the difference among them to work together with each other for the benefit of the people. In what follows I shall highlight a few of the common grounds and differences.

Both Christianity and Islam hold common ground on love of God and the love of neighbours. Love of God and of neighbours was one the major issues outlined in the letter “A Common Word Between Us and You” signed by about 138 leading Muslims scholars and intellectuals⁶¹¹ addressed to Pope Benedict the XVI and the Christians. The letter was indeed, an invitation to dialogue between Christians and Muslims. It emphasized the Bible and the Quran have foundations of love of God and of neighbours to be bases of the foundation of relationship and dialogue amongst Christians and Muslims. This scheme bases its argument on the verses of Quran and of the Bible that share the commandment for the Love of God and Love of neighbor and on this ground the “A Common Word Between Us and You” urges for peace and harmony amongst Muslims and Christians.⁶¹² It contends that Islam and Christianity share these values – of love of God and love of neighbor are of highest importance - as enunciated in the “Common Word”, thus the letter “A Word Between Us and You” quoting section of the Quran said:

“O people of the book, come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, lords patrons other than Allah. If they turn back, say: Bear witness that we at least are Muslims bowing to Allah’s will.”⁶¹³

The passage of the Qur’an above pictures and acknowledged Muslims encounter with people of other religions, especially Christianity and Judaism. Moreover, in Islam there are numerous verses in the Qur’an that establishes the rule of freedom of religion such as in Qu’ran 2:256. It states that there is no compulsion in religion. Hence, it observes

⁶¹¹ C.f., *A Common Word Between Us and You, 5 Year Anniversary Edition, English Monograph Series – Book No. 20*, Amman: Jordan, 2012, 7.

⁶¹² C.f., Ghazi bin Muhammad, *On A Common Word Between Us and You*, in Miroslav Volf, Op. Cit., 3.

⁶¹³ *The Quran Chapter 3,64; A Common Word Between Us and You, The Royal AAL AL- BAYT Institute for Islamic Thought, Jordan, 2009, 7.*

further that “Unto you your religion, unto me my religion – Qu’ran 109: 6. Islam recognizes and regards the Bible and the Torah as sources of light and guidance for Christianity and Judaism. The frequent references in the Qu’ran on the People of the Book attest to this acknowledgment of the truth and authenticity of the sources of Light and Guidance for Christianity and Judaism. This teaching of Islam teaches Muslims to be good neighbours and besides, it emphasized that Islam does not teach one to do evil. Furthermore this opinion maintained that there is not even the room in Islam to look wrongly at a person and neither is the abuse of the other allowed.⁶¹⁴

In as much as the love for God could be a common ground and invitation on good relationship, dialogue invariably is changing the dynamics of past historical common narratives of suspicion between Christians and Muslims, yet there is a difference in the Christian love for God and the neighbor. In Christianity the love of God is in the first instance a response to God’s love to his people. God loved us first because God is Love according to (1 John 4:8 and 16). Hence Christian understanding of God is relational because our love for God is primarily a response to His Love for us. However, despite the differences in the understanding of love God and love neighbor, love I think has always been and will always be the strongest force in the world. Therefore, its commonality is strong enough for Christian-Muslim relationship enrichment and a beautiful paradigm to change the several historical narratives of suspicion between both. I premise this on the understanding that God is a God for all. He is not limited and confined to a particular race or group of people. Hence Jesus’s challenge to his hearers Luke 4:16-30 is significant when the people of Nazareth did challenge his messiahship. This also expresses Christian attitude to people of other faith commitments. Indeed, it further underscores the fundamental teaching of Christianity that centers on the concept of love, justice and tolerance.

Furthermore, Christian understanding of the love of neighbor climaxes with Jesus’s teaching on the new order (love), the new order of mercy, compassion and sacrificial love in which he replaces the old order of hatred, violence and vengeance amongst people. Thus he says as in Luke 6:27-38: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Besides, he continued, bless those who curse you, pray for those who persecute

⁶¹⁴ C.f., A Common Word Between Us and You, Op. Cit., 7.

you. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. This is radical love as taught by Jesus and an ethic of loving generosity as lived by Him. This perspective of love is quite different from the Islamic perception of love of neighbor. Thus, Christians offer love because they have been indeed beneficiaries of God's marvelous love. All the same this difference in understanding of love of neighbor is not a hindrance to an authentic Christian-Muslim collaborative capacity commitment for peace, justice and reconciliation amongst them. It makes Islam open for quite a less biased rapprochement to the revelation of God's love as given by Christ and could offer some solution to how to handle their problem of disagreement between them.

Hospitality is another factor in both Islam and Christianity. Islam teaches hospitality towards stranger and people of other religions. Hospitality in Islam and Christianity is quite a central issue and often identical. Strangers are to be treated finely and if anyone does treat strangers otherwise; such invites the fury of God.⁶¹⁵ Accordingly in both religions hospitality offers a paradigm for dialogue and peace-building.⁶¹⁶ However the Qu'ran and the hadith are the chief source of the Islamic perspective on hospitality.⁶¹⁷

5.4.1 Preliminary Conclusions

If JNI, CAN and the other Islamic organizations stick to collaborate with NIREC, CBCN, CSN as well as the institutions mentioned above with the Interfaith Mediation Centers besides, the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forums in persistent dialogue engagements involving the government; it will hugely enable find reasonable solutions to the endemic religious conflict in Nigeria, which to my thinking would resourcefully manage politicization of religion and religious rhetoric. Moreover, Christians and Muslims ought to use every opportunity effectively in harnessing dialogue of day to day interaction which resonates in forgiveness, tolerance and reconciliation at the grassroots levels. Therefore we need to understand what dialogue engagement underlines, so as to

⁶¹⁵ C.f., Miriam Schulman and Amal Barkouki-Winter, *The Extra Mile as Quoted by Isreal Adelani Akanji, Towards a theoplogy of Conflict Transformation: A Study of Religious Conflict in Contemporary Nigerian Society*, Edinburgh, University, 2011, 283.

⁶¹⁶ C.f., Jayme R. Reaves, *Safeguarding the Stranger. An Abrahamic theology and Ethic of Protective Hospitality*, Eugene Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016, 73-76.

⁶¹⁷ C.f., David Herber, Islam and Reconciliation: *A Hermeneutic and Sociological Approach in David Tombs and Joseph Liechty eds., Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, Alderhot: Ashgate, 2006, 37.

commit constructively, respectively and fully to it. Consequently engaging in interreligious dialogue implies a commitment to meeting of heart and mind among the followers of different religions at religious level and working together in projects of common concern⁶¹⁸ getting involved in love with the life of the neighbor next door.⁶¹⁹ Indeed, common project demands working and collaborating that involves the promotion of mutual understanding that enriches through sharing of experiences and reflection. Through this approach they –the institutions - can deepen a common realization of truth and equally a common commitment to assure a religious dimension to the quest for a fuller life of peace in freedom and justice for the people.⁶²⁰ St. John Paul II captures what these institutions ought to do as he stated that:

“Today religious leaders must clearly show that they are pledged to the promotion of peace precisely because of their religious belief. Religion is not, and must not become a pretext for conflict, particularly when religious, cultural and ethnic identities coincide, *therefore*, no one can consider himself faithful to the great and merciful God who in the name of the same God dares to kill his brother *or sister*. Religion and peace go together *however*; to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction.”⁶²¹

Indeed, to wage war in the name of religion or God is a disservice to God himself and to humanity. For this reason, religious Institutions, governments, groups and individuals should arise above mere words that are not consequently followed by positive and constructive actions. Practical and functional actions deeply committed to eliminating the institutional roots of religious violence, ethnic and racial discrimination in our society.

⁶¹⁸ C.f., Francis Arinze, *Church in Dialogue: Walking with Other Believers*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990, 332-333.

⁶¹⁹ C.f., A. Poruthur, *A Decade of Dialoguing: A Non-Elitist Approach*, in *Mission Today*, II, 4, 2000, 490.

⁶²⁰ C.f., M. Zago, *Dialogue in the Mission of the Church*, in E. B. Silsilah, *Interreligious Dialogue: A Paradox*, Philippines: Silsilah Publications, 1991, 120-121.

⁶²¹ John Paul II, *To the Participants in the Sixth Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace*, in F. Giola, ed., *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church, 1965-1995*, Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997, 815.

6. Perspectives for Nigeria based on the model of Reconciliation

6.1. Perspectives in the light of soteriological arguments based on life experiences

So far in this work I have discussed religious conflict in Nigeria and the challenges thrown there up Nigeria as a nation. The discussion has led us to know the characters that have been involved, in the many years since the independence of Nigeria and in its democratic journey.

This section shall endeavour to categorize the bearing of reconciliation for peace, justice, development and well-being of Nigerians, especially a Nigeria that has been plagued by brutality, bloodshed of innocent citizens, endemic and violent religious conflicts leashed by two major religions in Nigeria. Experience in Nigeria of today is characterized by the people, who are injured, marginalized, children seeing their parent murdered in their presence, parent having their children being kidnapped or killed even in their presence. People have seen their entire life savings being destroyed, or are living with harm or deformity and experiencing insecurity ensuing from the hostilities and brutality we have so far discussed in this work. Besides, the political arena has plethora of problems. In the bid to rule or win elections at all cost corrupt politicians manipulate the religions to bribe people in order to alter election results, even to the extent of recruiting thugs to murder political opponents, some of these thugs graduate into the members of brutal, radical terrorist Islamist sect - boko haram. Hence one is deeply worried or “shocked by the misuse of religion by both Christians and Muslims in committing grave acts of violence against humanity. We believe that this is against the essence of both faiths, since both advocate peace and harmony for all peoples, regardless of religious affiliation”.⁶²²

In circumstances such as these, it is indeed necessary to address the brokenness and divisions by healing through reconciliation, so as to restore harmony and install a habit and culture of peace in justice in which everyone will get involved in. When almost everyone gets involved to play his or her part, then, it would enhance moving everything

⁶²² Jerald D. Gort, *Quoted, Crisis in the Moluccas, in, Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Ecumenical Initiatives Amidst Human Brokenness and Community Division, in Journal of International Association for Mission Studies, Vol. XIX – 2, 38, 2002, 90-109.*

towards the path of dialogue for peace and diplomacy. This is consequent on the fact that conflict can never be managed or resolved simply by protecting the maintenance of injustice with merely the showers of toning sweet words. By so doing it underscored the habit of disregarding the sufferings of the victims of violence. Hence Robert Schreiter succinctly summed it up as a hasty reconciliation which brings faulty peace. This calls and encourages the forgetfulness of the suffering of the victim that in turn makes the causes of the suffering never be uncovered and be confronted.⁶²³ It trivializes and ignored a history of suffering and the memory of suffering of the victims, thereby ignoring and marginalizing their human dignity.⁶²⁴

In Nigeria there is indeed need to mobilize the masses to incorporated reconciliation in their daily activities and in government institutions so that the people can surely be reconciled. Consequent to the foregoing understanding of the notion of reconciliation as already shown in this work, it becomes absolutely necessary to remove the structures which shield perpetrators, structures and sources which dehumanize human identity, structures responsible for disharmony among the religions and among people in Nigeria, structures that cause discriminations or racial divisions, causing the shattering of relationships, institutional structures erected for the increasingly violent political campaigns of religious manipulation of the country,⁶²⁵ and a structure of corruption, greed and disunity that have become dominant feature of the national life and Nigerian federalism,⁶²⁶ as well as a structure of an ideology of mind poisoning. These are the true sources of the intensely conflictive realities that create violence and confuse situation of peace, justice and reconciliation. There is indeed the requirement to build the structure which mobilizes people for justice otherwise it will be a cessation or truce to the violence which serves no good purpose. Therefore, humanity – Nigerian people’s relationship with God and with their fellow human beings is broken. As a result every relationship needs to be restored. Consequently, as we shall note below on the discussion on the concept of reconciliation, for the faith communities; reconciliation is not something that is in isolation from the divine, hence as the concept revealed from the Christian perspective; it is something initiated by God and it is through him as divine gift activated

⁶²³ C.f., Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 18-19.

⁶²⁴ C.f., *Ibid.* 19.

⁶²⁵ C.f., Yusuf Bala Usman, *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria, 1977-1987*, Nigeria, Kaduna: Vanguard Printers and Publishers Ltd, 1987, 9.

⁶²⁶ C.f., Areoye Oyebola, *The Black Man’s Dilemma*, Ibadan: Board Publications Limited, 1982, 94.

and ultimately achieved by God through Jesus the Christ.⁶²⁷ This inspires a call to us on the possibilities of changing our society radically for the better, and the brokenness of the society to be repaired and division be healed. Everyone is called to take part in it and to play a constructive role in it as well.

Indeed, in Nigeria, it is problematic to make a perfect difference between economically, ethnically and religiously influenced conflicts. This is because all of these are mixed in most conflicts in Nigeria. However, one thing seems clear that whatever was the primary cause of conflicts, religious coloration often comes first especially the conflicts in the north of Nigeria. These conflicts as noted above have created much hatred, destruction and suspicion amongst Christians and Muslims and people in Nigeria. We have noted that many lives were lost and property destroyed. In addition, conducive environment for development in the country has been taken several years backwards, human relations and development have either been lost, broken or destroyed, human rights, freedom of movement and religious liberty have been violated and people are discriminated, manipulated and exploited and so on.⁶²⁸ These and so many other violations necessitate management or resolution. Hence justice needs to be restored and reconciliation about the restoration of justice. Here, Christian theology which is predicated upon the idea of reconciliation is very helpful⁶²⁹. Indeed, as we shall indicate below, St. Paul's concept of this term, reconciliation enhances our understanding and importance of reconciliation in Nigeria today.

Reconciliation presents the mode by which, it is effected as the way God in Christ deals with humanity. In this sense, we are situated in the entire huge context of the past and future of creation and redemption. Hence, reconciliation focuses most importantly on all people and our relationship to God. It is the way of reconciliation through Christ's death and resurrection which is also determined by that relationship and can be explained also in term of it. Here, we mean that decisively Christ took the place of the new humanity, through his death and resurrection. Christ therefore, had to bear the burden of humanity in his cross and death. He did not simply only bear it as the victim of human wickedness

⁶²⁷ C.f., Jarvis J. Williams, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology*, U. S. A. Nashville, Tennessee: Published by B & H Publishing Group, 2010, 88-89.

⁶²⁸ C.f., *See section II above.*

⁶²⁹ C.f., Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision of Justice, Crime and Punishment*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, 45-58; Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992.

and ill intent (as people experience today, and as is also seen in conflicts –religious, ethnic, economic and political)⁶³⁰ but also as the one who took upon himself to break the hostilities in the world. In this profound sense, reconciliation shows us Christ's willingness to be led to death for the sacrificial offering for the hostilities of the world and to take the burden of humanity and the world on himself, the root cause of the enmity. He died in the Christian understanding to take away our sin and heal the wound thereof. In this way he dealt with the enmity between God and man. He put it out away and made the way wide open for men to come back to God.

This is what we term reconciliation. Indeed, in this sense reconciliation was effected outside and within man. And so, Paul the apostle spoke in Rom 5: 11, of Christ, through whom we have received reconciliation. This underscores the fact that human life, development cannot find fulfilment in itself except in communion with God who declared: "I am the Way, the Truth and the life; No one comes to the Father except through me" (*John 14: 6*). This then brings us to the question, to what extent reconciliation affects Nigeria today? For this, it is necessary to underline that the message of reconciliation has universal scope, and therefore should not be cheapened strictly to the personal relationship between God and individual human being, because God's reconciliation affects really our relationships – It has effect on us both spiritually and morally, as moral beings. It underscores also the important activity between us human beings, and in some sense between us and our governments. Reconciliation is not an abstract issue which exists in a vacuum; it has a concrete face: It is a concrete phenomenon which enhances development of man; covering a wide range of issue, stretching from physical perspective to spiritual, psychological and the emotional perspectives. By reconciling us to himself God underlined in us a new relationship to the world around us. He underlined in us a relationship that is no more administered via hostilities and fears rather now by love and peace towards God and our neighbours. Hence Paul noted that God in Christ has broken down the hostility between us people and as a result has become our peace, our hostility towards each other has been put to death, (the letter to the Ephesians applied).⁶³¹ Indeed, St Paul added:

⁶³⁰ C.f., *See Section II above.*

⁶³¹ C.f., *Ephesians 2: 14-17.*

“Once, you were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus you have been brought near through the shedding of Christ’s blood. For he is himself our peace. Gentiles and Jews, he has made the two one, and in his own body of flesh and blood has broken down the barrier of enmity which separated them; for he annulled the law with its rules and regulations, so as to create out of the two a single new humanity in himself, thereby making peace. This was his purpose, to reconcile the two in a single body to God through the cross, by which he killed the enmity.”⁶³²

Reconciliation thus, highlights and institutes peace between us human beings. Indeed, reconciliation with God has the overriding weighty purposes and services to outdo all manners of mutual suspicion, prejudices and discriminations between people etc. Hence, Nigeria as a country with a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society and most significantly with violent religious conflict and its attendant hostility, wounds, bruises, the waste of lives, resources and property, partakes in this redemption and is to be healed. Indeed, there is instituted the reestablishment of friendships that can inspire sufficient trust across the religious, ethnic, cultural, political, linguistic, and traditional splits.⁶³³ This study generates the conviction through ecumenical initiative and contributions for a call for a theology of hospitality to bring about peace and justice in Nigeria and thus enhances and proposes the imperative of dialogue in Nigeria. Hence these proposals are important for sustainable and better Co-living in a society bewildered with relationships of oppression and conflicts. In the light of this the Nigerian legislature, executive and the judiciary arms of governance have some significant roles here to play. They can truly work together and effectively to entrench peacebuilding through legislative process for good governance as I have often on this work emphasized. Through authentic policies in legislative process they can prevent and resolve conflicts before it snowballs into violence. This is absolutely less expensive in human and financial terms, because to prevent violence implies the action to handle the fundamental causes of conflicts. I mean all the activities which reinforce governance, develop and

⁶³² *Ephesians 2:13–17*, *The Oxford Study Bible New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, 1483*. In *South Africa this conception of reconciliation was included into the Belhar Confession*. See <http://www.bethel.edu/~letnie/AfricanChristianity/SABelhar.html>, June 22, 2006. Accessed on October 13, 2013.

⁶³³ C.f., D. Marrow, *Seeking peace amid memories of war: Learning from the peace process in Northern Ireland*, in R.L. Rothstein Ed., *After the peace: Resistance and reconciliation* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, pp.111-138.

enhance the access to human rights, which in turn cultivate a culture of non-violence conflict management, support economic and social development.

6.2. Christological Aspects

Conflicts of any nature furthermore necessitate some resolution and management or some way out of violence, fighting or bloodshed, the consequent of conflict. This then calls for a way of understanding one another and as well as to discover and see in each and every one of us humanity's value. The second Vatican Council expressed this succinctly when it maintained we are required to treat each other on equal basis.⁶³⁴ To treat each other on equal basis is to see humanity in every person; thereupon underscored, is the truth of upholding the dignity of every human person. It indeed, underscored further the understanding that for any genuine exchange between different persons or people to have meaning, it ought to have free, equal and full access given to all.⁶³⁵ That is the beginning of understanding one another. By so doing we learn to get along with one another and thereby enhances living in peace with others. Consequently, it highlighted the significance of reconciliation process. Then this process demands the clarification of some theological concepts employed in the discussion. Hence it surveys in some general perspective of the concepts involved which are necessary to appreciate the issues of the process of reconciliation, beginning with the theological concept of reconciliation.

Although reconciliation is a concept with great value and significance in our contemporary time, it is also overladen with ambiguity in some usages, such that, its significant import is at times blurred or denied of meaning. In such contexts one marvels if it still has the importance given to it in our existential time. However, this notwithstanding; its significance is rather revealed in situations and circumstances in which we are seeking to overcome enmity and hostility frequently characterized by violent conflict dynamics which need solution. In circumstances such as this consensus agreement does not relief the problem. Although consensus could be an aspect pleasant and important to the reconciliation process, nonetheless reconciliation is more than

⁶³⁴ C.f., *Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 9.

⁶³⁵ C.f., Gregory Baum, *The Socio Context of American Catholic Theology*, in, *Catholic Theology in North American Context: Current Issues in Theology*, CTSA Proceeding, Ed. George Kilcourse, Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986, 92.

reaching an accord. It necessitates to move deeper and goes beyond consensus, which could imply a relation of a superficial form of stability. This underscores the significance of reconciliation. It is thus a fundamental shift in the structural bases of conflict, in personal and power bases within the relationship between former enemies.⁶³⁶

Therefore reconciliation implies a deeper sense of rebuilding a moral community. It refers to the building of a non-racial or discriminating community or society whereby all are committed toward some common and shared values. Reconciliation involves many levels. In so speaking, it applies in relation to international conflicts, to national conflicts, social as well as interpersonal conflicts. Reconciliation as implies in the context of this exploration, argues for the restoration of justice which calls for the restoration of humanity through social and as equally through interpersonal healing, thus underlining the connectivity between the various layers of reconciliation. In this sense I am implying the levels of interrelatedness of reconciliation that designate disabling hostility, alienation and enmity. Reconciliation on this level involves mending and establishing good relationship between God and humanity. Consequently reconciliation is the result of the action of God, who begins the action. It is the action of God who takes away our separation from him and restores us to oneness with him. Jesus' Incarnation clearly underscores this fact with the words: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10: 10). Observed here is fullness of life. It implies wholeness that involves "Shalom"⁶³⁷ Here also; it underlines and entails harmony and friendship. It does not imply enmity and bitterness. Thus St. Paul observed that God's disposition is working for the vanishing of all whatsoever goes along with separation. Therefore in the letter to the Romans he stated: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption for our bodies" NRSV (Romans 8: 22-23).⁶³⁸ God's design ought to have reconciliation; since according to Paul, everything is gearing toward the fulfillment that he has in stock for humanity and his blueprint for the fullness of life. Shalom here, communicates clearly

⁶³⁶ C.f., John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Op., Cit., 25.

⁶³⁷ *Shalom is a Word from Hebrew for peace. It comes from a verb meaning "to make complete" it designates wholeness, health, prosperity and harmony. It is the ideal situation of life for God's people and it comprises the related concepts of justice and reconciliation. In these books of the Bible is the idea of Shalom also communicated: Leviticus 26:4-6, Jeremiah 29:10-14; Isaiah 1: 16-17; Ezekiel 34:25-31; Micah 4: 2-4; Amos 5: 14-15. Also see Luke 4: 16-21, Ephesians 2: 12-14.*

⁶³⁸ C.f., *The scriptural Quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible.*

the wholeness which God pursues to convey in all the broken zones of humanity. Shalom announces God's peace in the world. It announces the outbreak of God's primary and initial wholeness broken through the "fall"⁶³⁹ as well as to God's answer to initiate the restoration in covenant in Christ bringing down the walls of barriers between peoples. In Christ, God obliterates the barriers and the destructive dividing Wall of hostility. So "he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and can reconcile both group to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father" (Eph 2: 14-18). The fundamental resource for reconciliation is Jesus Christ. It is through him and in him that God's act of reconciliation binds all who are reconciled to God himself. And this is at God's own cost.

Reconciliation is thus God's initiative in reestablishing a broken world to his plans through reconciling "to himself all things through Christ" (Col 1: 20). It then creates the relationship between God and humanity, thereby inviting us to take part in this transforming initiative into ambassadors of the good news of reconciliation. This theological reconciliation is central to faith in Jesus Christ and all reconciliation comes from God the Father through Christ. Thus Schreiter stated: "God begins" reconciliation "with the Victim, restoring to the victim the humanity which the wrongdoer has tried to wrest away or to destroy. This restoration of humanity might be considered the very heart of reconciliation. The experience of reconciliation is the experience of grace-the restoration of one's damaged humanity in a life-giving relationship with God. Humans are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). It is that image by which humanity might mirror divinity, by which humanity comes into communion with divinity that is restored."⁶⁴⁰ From this view point it is further significant for deeper

⁶³⁹ By fall is here referred to the Story in Genesis which talks about the original breaking of the deepest tie with God. It was that defiance of the ordered life God offered. It was that deliberate disobedience that was virtually for the sake of curiosity. This resulted into the rupture of that most critical relationship in human life that God gave. Further, It was the disregarding of that parameters God presented for an ordered living.

⁶⁴⁰ Robert J. Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, Op., Cit., 15.

understanding of this theological concept to examine reconciliation through the person in whom God restored his image to humanity in the offer of peace through Christ.

Here the attention is focused on the knowledge and understanding that for us Christian, reconciliation is nothing but God's Gift to us. Discussion on reconciliation is not the exclusive preserve of only Christian. Nonetheless, in other traditions there are as well talks about reconciliation. Indeed, Christians have distinguishing mark of experiences and story of enriching value of reconciliation which they would like to share with other people. Hence reconciliation is procedure of mission that we share with others. Consequently reconciliation arises from relationship. As has already been argued reconciliation depends on issues and context because there is no draft for bringing it about. One aspect of it that will not alter; that is necessary, is the need for relationship. This is a relationship with Jesus and the preparedness to get involved or embrace those we want to be reconciled with. Reconciliation may not be achieved until we certainly are prepared and want to stake ourselves in for it. However, we have to recognize also that reconciliation is not easy and it is costly.

This is consequent to the fact that reconciliation is never an abstract event. And on the fact further, that there are actual occurrences of the violation of human rights issues to be tackled, especially when we are confronted with survivors to be taken care of. And there are moreover, pardon and amnesties which make the issues more multifaceted. Thus, in the light of all this, reconciliation does appear to be endlessly further away unfeasible. Situations such as these cannot but make us realize as Christians that, reconciliation is ultimately the work of God and a gift from God. God, it is who initiates reconciliation and helps us to bring it to fruition. This calls for caution because; it in no way negates the fact of our human determination to strive to engage in reconciliation. For this reason, it is a prompt up call to realize how serious the task of reconciliation is, and of the hopelessness of any effort on the part of human beings to cover it wholly. Therefore central to the Christian involvement in reconciliation is the realization that we are cooperating with the work of God; so that we become God's instruments in the work of reconciliation. So when we respond to the invitation of the grace of God, we become aware of the tragedy of our actions. It is then in the light of this, that one could interpret Peter's confession to Jesus: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Lk 5: 8).

To understand the point being made here; let us cast our mind back to the story of the trauma of the disciples of Jesus. Their trauma exemplifies the trauma of all those who have suffered the harm and trauma of violence. The disciples in Jerusalem encountered and were met with the horror jolt of the arrest, torture as well as the execution of Jesus. They latter left Jerusalem, probably as a result of fear; to go to Galilee perhaps to get back to normal simple life., to a life of fishing which was their business before they were called and followed Jesus. Now Jesus who spoke and made a promise of the reign of God that he himself would usher in had been executed. Hence for them, the story of Jesus appeared to be over. Their story and situation is typified by the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. This story is narrated in Luke's gospel chapter 24: 13-49.

However they realized; they would have to gather together once again the life which they had before encountering Jesus. Peter in company of some of the disciples of Jesus went fishing. They labored throughout the night but caught no fish. All their labor was in vain. It has to be stated here again it did not work out for them. Hence they were discouraged, since despite all their laborious effort they had nothing. In situation such as they were in can one really understand the great trauma they were going through, (cf. John 21: 1-3). The trauma and horror are simply similar to those people experienced in atmosphere of dictatorship or governments of authoritarian regimes. They would want as soon as possible to move away from such experiences. It is possible that the more they tried to get over it the more it would come back and the more the aftereffects of harms, trauma and pain linger in their lives and haunt them. Because such negative experiences are registered in the memory. Certain things one hears or and encounter or heard; could prompt them to go back to the memory. The burden of the past could then go on and on. This was the experience of the disciples after the execution and death of Jesus and is also the experience of the victims of violent conflicts.

But then a relief came to their rescue. John's gospel told the story further how Jesus appeared to the disciples while they were still fishing. Now the day is broken. He requested them to try to cast their nets on the other side of the sea of Galilee. Although they have labored on the same side previously; nevertheless they obeyed him. Their nets were full of fish, such that they need help to drag it to the shores. (cf. John 21: 4-19).

The story of the disciples miraculous catching of fish shades light to the fact of effect on the response to God's grace. On the invitation of Jesus Christ to cast the nets the other side of the sea opened up the moment of grace. It is that moment which unexpectedly shifts the perspectives such that there is the birth of new meaning, this new meaning creates the corridor that shows the way out of the twist of memories and traumas of violence. This moment of grace is found in the reconciliation process. Our response to the expression of grace makes us open to the tragedy of life which motivates us for active engagement for justice and peace.

Peace here is in tandem with Jesus greeting to the disciples: "Peace be with you" (John 20: 19). This was the words with which Jesus greeted the disciples after his resurrection. On the first day of the week, when the doors where they met were locked for fear of the Jews he –Jesus- came, stood among them, then greeted as stated above. It is necessary to note that Jesus came to communicate to the disciples the experience of peace. The disciples may not have in any way anticipated a greeting such as this; since they were aware they deserted Jesus. Possibly they may have expected a rebuke. But then it was the other way round. The peace that Jesus conveys to the disciples is a peace of place of safety of trust of truth and of justice; it is a peace of a place of joy and, of well-being and of love. It is above all the definition of the reign of God. This was the type of peace that the disciples were yearning for after the event of the execution and death of Jesus.

Jesus now gives his followers peace which arises from his resurrection. Hence it is equally a peace which has tasted suffering. It is the peace that restored to humanity its dignity. Of this peace St. Paul said: it is the knowledge of the experience he "wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection" (Philippians 3:10) through the sharing of his suffering which brings peace.

A further illustration on this point comes from Schreier who maintained reconciliation to be the characteristically initiative work of God and that as St. Paul claimed we are "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor 5:20) in the project of reconciliation. Hence chiefly reconciliation necessitates nurturing a relationship with God who concludes reconciliation. On this relationship Schreier declared thus:

"That relationship expresses itself in spiritual practices that create space for truth, for justice, for healing, and for new possibilities. Such practices lead to creating communities of memory, safe

places to explore and untangle a painful past, and the cultivation of truth-telling to overcome the lies of injustice and wrongdoing. They lead also to creating communities of hope, where a new future might be imagined and celebrated.”⁶⁴¹

Reconciliation from this perspective is understood as God’s engagement with the world in Christ, entrusted to those who believe in him as the potential to change and transform human relationships in our society. In addition reconciliation with the world in Christ emphasizes the importance of the God who shares the distresses, sorrows and miseries of victims. This in effect, energizes and empowers Christians to take up the struggle for justice and peace for all people and this struggle for justices and peace must always take the Christians to travel to places that many would not think are important enough to visit at all.⁶⁴² Hence its implication to interpersonal relations cannot be over emphasized.

6.3. Socio-anthropological aspects

Reconciliation has an interpersonal aspect; hence it is reconciliation between persons. It indeed designates the relationship within individual; Jesus alluded to this when he in Matthews Gospel 5: 24, said first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Thus it means to break down the walls and barriers which separate one from the other. Besides, it is an endeavor positive so as to accomplish trust and friendliness. See also 1 Corinthians 7: 10-11. Here referred to the reconciliation between married people. Relationship and reconciliation with other people in the Christian tradition go hand in hand. The implication is that it goes deeper than mere verbal exchange of pleasantries and the shaking of hands. Reconciliation on this level is costly because it involves the restoring of relationship between perpetrators and the victims. What is called for in this regard is nothing short of genuine reconciliation that begins from within. It starts from the heart. Attention is here called for that reconciliation is not so much bringing together two people or two groups in conflict. Rather it means re-establishing each into love and letting inner healing take place, which leads to mutual liberation.

⁶⁴¹Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation. Op., Cit., 16.*

⁶⁴²C.f., Olav Fykse Tveit, *Ecumenical Chronicle. Free to Speak, Believe and Serve*, in eds. Theodore A. Gill and Olav Fykse Tveit, *Ecumenical Review. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. A Publication of World Council of Churches*, Vol. 66, No. 2, 2014, 231.

Interpersonal reconciliation is that level at which the broader society starts to be aware of reconciliation. It involves the private and the public realms. This, most at times can occur devoid of notice. Most times it happens that little by little people or neighbours start to interact one with another in a smaller but then progressively broader significant manners to trust themselves. This is often observed within Married people, and thereby the relationship between them begins once more to be functional. This perspective of reconciliation builds the situation in which reconciliation may occur devoid of forcing it upon anyone, such that there is no obligation to get reconciled.

On the other hand, contrary to this approach of reconciliation that flows freely between neighbours, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission had to seek people out through some agents, in order to invite them to participate in its process; as witnesses during its Human Rights Violation Commission hearings. At some other times they are invited as opponents to amnesty hearings. This approach of invitation portrays the primed premium that the government of South Africa placed on the triumph of the interpersonal reconciliation; that the success of its transition also partly hinges on the ability of perpetrator and survivors of gross human rights violations and abuses are able to reconcile. This goes further to outline the difficulty and costliness of reconciliation. Besides, interpersonal reconciliation process could be complex due to the fact that it involves forgiveness, healing and reconciliation whose dynamics are intensely personal. This underlines the point that each person's need and reactions to peace, reconciliation and truth telling could however be diverse.⁶⁴³

However, there is an aspect of the truth telling which buttresses the significance of reconciliation conversation and that is forgiveness. Indeed, for several years, forgiveness has been a key issue of conversation in the world. Discussion on it has hugely linked it; in the same gasp as reconciliation. For this reason, it was the focus of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South African. On his work on the TRC in South Africa Desmond Tutu wrote a book titled *No Future without Forgiveness*. He was hugely influenced by his experience and the testimonies of people to the TRC. And in the book he contended that forgiveness is central to reconciliation. Based on his experience and commitment as the Chairperson of the commission he narrated: "I have looked into the

⁶⁴³ C.f., Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Confronting State Terror and Atrocity* New York: Routledge: 2001, 155.

abyss of human evil and seen the depth to which we can in fact plumb. But paradoxically one comes away from it exhilarated by the revelation of goodness of people. You encounter people who, having suffered grievously, should by right have been riddled with bitterness and lust for revenge and retribution. But they are different.”⁶⁴⁴ He further narrated the experience of a woman who was extremely battered that she had to have open-heart surgery. She suffered to the extent that her children had to bathe her, clothe her, and feed her.⁶⁴⁵ But then the woman stated: “You know, I can’t walk through the security checkpoint at the airport because I think there’s shrapnel in me, and if I were to walk through, all kinds of bells and alarms would go off.”⁶⁴⁶ However to realize or perhaps have an insight into Desmond Tutu’s *No Future without Forgiveness*; the woman of our discussion succinctly on forgiveness told the TRC: “I’d like to meet the perpetrator... the guy who threw the hand grenade! I’d like to meet him in the spirit of forgiveness, which is wonderful! I’d like to forgive him.” But the mind – boggling fact of the episode was when the woman added “I hope he forgives me.”⁶⁴⁷

At play here is not denying the trauma or harm or physical suffering suffered rather what Lederach suggests that “the basic paradigm of reconciliation involves paradox.”⁶⁴⁸ This paradox suggests that a focus on relationship will provide new ways to address the impasse on issues; or that providing space for grieving the past permits a reorientation toward the future, and inversely envisioning a common future which creates new lenses for dealing with the past.⁶⁴⁹ With the forgoing; it would seem that forgiveness and justice are two forms of actions which oppose each other in the pursuit of truth⁶⁵⁰ but they are not; bearing in mind that truth is the longing for the acknowledgment of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experience but as well involves mercy. Justice on the other hand represents the search for individual and group rights, for social restructuring, and for restitution, but it is linked with peace, which underscores the need for

⁶⁴⁴ Desmond M. Tutu, *Forward in Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, eds., Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Peterson, USA: Philadelphia Templeton Foundation Press, 2002, XI.

⁶⁴⁵ C.f. Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ John Paul Lederach, *Build Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Op., Cit., 31.

⁶⁴⁹ C.f., Ibid. 31.

⁶⁵⁰ C.f., Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin., *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground*, 152.

interdependence, well-being, and security.⁶⁵¹ To buttress this argument that forgiveness in no way goes against or contradicts justice; John Paul II observed:

“Forgiveness is in no way opposed to justice, as if to forgive meant to overlook the need to right the wrong done. It is rather the fullness of justice, leading to that tranquility of order which is much more than a fragile and temporary cessation of hostility, involving as it does the deepest healing of wounds which fester in human hearts. Justice and forgiveness are both essential to such healing”.⁶⁵²

In forgiveness moreover the common humanity of the perpetrator or the victim involves embracing the perpetrator back into the society.⁶⁵³ This has been shown on our story of the woman victim of violent conflict above through forgiving her oppressor.

There have been arguments against forgiveness. Some argue that to forgive the oppressors brutalizes the victims of human rights violations. Whoever is merciful to the cruel will end by being indifferent to the innocent. Therefore to refuse to forgive gives power. In other words if those who suffer harms, traumas, torture, or physical harms or the indirect physical violence for example the withholding of resources to the point of starvation, or the oppression of people economically are prompted to forgive; it results into more harms on them because they are subjected to suppress their anger.⁶⁵⁴ In forgiveness the victims are not pressured into suppressing their harms; rather the “narrative of the lie”⁶⁵⁵ which was created to rub them of their humanity and identity has to be replaced by creating and embracing a redeeming narrative. The redeeming narrative is to be found in the right way to suffer; this Schreiter called “*orthopathema*”.⁶⁵⁶ Central to this right way to suffer is the fundamental trust of the reestablishment of our ability to trust and faith in the new narrative.⁶⁵⁷ It is the regaining of our humanity through the reconstruction of memory. Memory it should be admitted is the central repository of our identity. So we turn to memory in order to know who we have been as group and as individuals. We have to realize that the older memory which was created by the narrative of lie (the suffering) has to be disengaged and overcome

⁶⁵¹ C.f., John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation*, 29.

⁶⁵² John Paul II, *Message for 2002 World Day of Peace*, n. 3.

⁶⁵³ C.f., Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 152.

⁶⁵⁴ C.f., *Ibid.* 153.

⁶⁵⁵ Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry*, 35.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 37.

⁶⁵⁷ C.f., *Ibid.* 38.

from the acts of violence.⁶⁵⁸ Since the instrument of evil must be taken out of the hand of the lie. And the hope for a world infested by the evil of exclusion is indeed in people, who notwithstanding the outrage committed against them, will take courage and strength too to want to invite the perpetrators to themselves to enquire from them as human beings what has brought them to the violent actions. Hence the hope for our world worn-out by exclusion lies in those who in spite of being humiliated and suffering, have not given up the will to embrace the enemy.⁶⁵⁹ This is the line of thought the woman in our story has exhibited. She refused to let the violence committed against her contaminate her. Hence as Miroslav Volf noted is one of the heroic acts a human being is capable of.⁶⁶⁰

Christian perspective of forgiveness extended its deepest and fullest insight in the New Testament. Here one can call to mind that Jesus communicated to us its central character in reconciliation. Reconciliation is succinctly and characteristically at the heart of Christian faith. Although it does not have the monopoly, but then, distinctively it is Christian such that it characterizes its self-understanding, because Jesus gave an understanding of it that was hugely radical in an atmosphere of retaliation that he lived in.

John Paul II on his message for 2002 world day of peace reiterated the significance of forgiveness by linking it to justice and love in the world. He emphasized that the real justice capable of fulfilling and uprooting violence requires a soul, and that soul is love: love expressed in the form of forgiveness. Hence forgiveness completes the effort of human fragile and imperfect injustice.⁶⁶¹ Moreover, forgiveness streaming from the inexhaustible forgiveness of God; is above all else, a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil. Further he argued that it is fundamental condition for reconciliation for human relationship with God and human beings with themselves.⁶⁶² It is besides argued that “to forgive and to be reconciled means to purify one’s memory of hatred, rancor, the desire for revenge; it

⁶⁵⁸ C.f., Ibid. 38.

⁶⁵⁹ C.f., Miroslav Volf, *A Theology of Embrace for a World of Exclusion*, in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, eds., David Tombs and Joseph Liechty, 31.

⁶⁶⁰ C.f., Ibid. 32.

⁶⁶¹ C.f., John Paul II, *Message for 2002 World Day of Peace*, n. 2.

⁶⁶² C.f., John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Dives in Misericordia*, n. 14.

means acknowledging as a brother even those who have wronged us; it means not being overcome by evil but overcoming evil with good.”⁶⁶³

Forgiveness faces a delicate problem and is noted for being a difficult task. However, its discussion and treatment somehow varies from culture to culture.⁶⁶⁴ The challenging task of forgiveness is underscored in these words of John Paul II:

“It is not easy to forgive, but it is urgent and necessary for the good of all. It is true that one cannot erase from memory what happened in the past, but hearts can and must be freed from bearing grudges and planning revenge. The memory of the past errors and injustices should be a strong lesson not to let them happen again, so as to avoid new And perhaps even greater tragedies.”⁶⁶⁵

Forgiveness is not according to the pope a suggestion that can be instantly understood or that is easily accepted, rather in several ways it is a paradoxical message. These difficulties notwithstanding the part of forgiveness that is sometimes heroic ought to be followed in the pursuit of authentic and stable peace. Hence it is the way that requires only some tangible and interior conversion. It needs the courage of humble obedience and path that is made accessible by the healing power of love. The enormous trials caused through the traumas of the “narrative of the lie which keep us subdued and in a subhuman state” and that distorted the stuff of human society need the restoration of the moral and social order of the society for the attainment of true peace lies on the inseparable collaboration of justice and forgiveness. Thus there is no peace without justice and equally no justice without forgiveness.

So far we have argued that reconciliation is broadly referred to as a journey and as a process of repairing damaged relationships. This journey is one at the heart, and one that engages conflict from within; which demands us to uncover the places of our vulnerability and brokenness with the understanding and longing to see God’s power of transformation in our lives and equally to empower us for the effectiveness of his gifts,

⁶⁶³ John Paul II, *Homily in Mass in Croatia, 24 October 1998, No. 5; L’Osservatore Romano English edition*, 7 November 1998, 2.

⁶⁶⁴ C.f., *See on this issue, Evertt L. Worthington, Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Bridges to Wholeness’ and Hope, Illinois: Downers Grove, IVP Books, University Press, 2003.*

⁶⁶⁵ John Paul II, *Address to Mr. Ivan Misit, Ambassador for Bosnian and Herzegovina to the Holy See, 30 November, 2002, n. 2; L’Osservatore Romano, English Edition, 11 December 2002, 3.*

love and forgiveness.⁶⁶⁶ Most of the times the unwillingness to talk or discuss issues bordering on violent conflicts, harms and violation of human rights matters depict unresolved matters of the heart, thus resulting or mirroring into brokenness in the society. The brokenness is hence reflected in relationships in varying different degrees. Reconciliation work then cannot be restricted only to the arena of social concerns. Nonetheless, we should hang our trust then in God; with the guarantee that we are in Christ reconciled (Col 1: 17-22, 2 Cor. 5: 20).

Reconciliation as a journey is a route which is fundamental to all of our life. One could choose not to acknowledge it deliberately. However, reconciliation needs a mindful determination so as to put our foot firmly for it. John Paul Lederach strongly observed this when he expressed: “The journey toward reconciliation is not a path for the weak and feeble. Facing oneself and one’s fear and anxieties demands an outward and an inward journey. Along the journey of conflict, we always encounter ourselves, and in doing so, we come face to face with God, our Maker, whose image we bear, and who calls to turn *to him*.”⁶⁶⁷

Through the presence of God and Christ we are in the position to turn around the tensions, harms, and divides and consequently all the brokenness is healed and we are able to forgive with trust in him. The embrace of this transforming truth is reconciliation as a journey and as a process. Furthermore, as journey reconciliation directs to the explicit goal to which our journey leads and at the same time outlines the particular way of our journey as we engage the profound brokenness of real places and lives in societies. Here Scripture helps because it is central to the ministry of reconciliation. Through the unique stories of the scripture, we can cultivate deeply the imaginative thinking important in order to embrace and live the challenges and gifts of reconciliation as a journey.

Another dimension of reconciliation as a journey is that; it is beyond the feeling of being at peace with God. It is not cheapened as to reduce it merely to the social and personal dimensions of life. The goal upon which reconciliation as a journey gears toward is the transformation of the structural dimension of life in societies. On this level reconciliation

⁶⁶⁶ C.f., John Paul Lederach, *The Journey toward Reconciliation*, Canada, Ontario: Herald Press, 1999, 22-26.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid. 24.

should not be an instrument in the power that be, to boast their ego. On the contrary it must be at all times a journey aiming at transformative future of communion between God and the people. In this perspective reconciliation is “seen as a process of encounter and as a social space” that create the environment “where both truth and forgiveness are validated and joined together, rather than being forced into an encounter in which one must win over the other or envisioned as fragmented and separated parts.”⁶⁶⁸

With this understanding of reconciliation as a journey, as one can read the story in the book of Genesis 25: 19 – Genesis 33 of two brothers; Esau and Jacob who were in conflict and got separated into going different ways. We can perceive in this story, a window into a theology of conflict and reconciliation. John Paul Lederach shared equally this understanding.⁶⁶⁹ The two brothers were the sons of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau being the firstborn son whereas Jacob was the second born son. On the request of Isaac his father Esau went out for game hunting to prepare for Isaac his father before he could bestow on him Esau his generational blessing (Genesis 27: 1-5). However, as he went out for the hunt, his mother who heard Isaac’s discussion with Esau tricked Jacob into receiving the blessing from Isaac who was blind and could not see (27: 6-29).

Esau returned and brought the meal to his father; only to his greatest surprise that Jacob through his mother’s disguise had received the only blessing his father reserved for him (27: 30-31). In this situation Esau “cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, bless me, me also, father. But his father said, you brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing” (27: 34-35). He moaned the deprivation, that Jacob took away his birthright. As a result of the stolen birthright of Esau both brothers parted company in bitterness and rage. Their relationship was thus harmed and broken. Each of the brother journeyed in a different direction and Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him to the degree of wanting Jacob killed (27:41-42). As a result of the plot to kill him, Jacob fled for his life.

The incident of Jacob tricking his brother outlines deep questions that arise in conflict situations; the injustice committed, the brotherly relationship broken, and the trauma

⁶⁶⁸ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. 29.

⁶⁶⁹ C.f., John Paul Lederach, *The Journey toward Reconciliation*. Op., Cit., 17-23.

experienced. The injustice done brought about the journey of separation and here Lederach strongly stated one of the main points in reconciliation often overlooked. For proper and an authentic reconciliation there is need to “allow for spaces of separation as an acceptable stage in the spiritual journey toward reconciliation.”⁶⁷⁰

In the episode of conflict and reconciliation of the brothers, Lederach stated that the journey of their reconciliation demands to walk the road without knowing the actual destination we will arrive at what he called “wonder and wander”.⁶⁷¹ We are to trust that God is walking before us and with us. Therefore, the journey of reconciliation equally calls on us to wonder, that is to keep our eyes, ears and heart open in order to seek understanding. In this habit the journey requires as well, us to hold on for something good to occur for better understanding. According to Lederach we are to hope which implies that expecting some good changes to occur.

Esau and Jacob undertook the necessary journey of reconciliation in order to reach the place of reconciliation. They took the journey of reconciliation which “is understood as both the flight away and the daring trip back.”⁶⁷² They were able both to go the journey to the place where “truth, justice, peace and mercy meet” “where concern for exposing what has happened and for letting in favour of renewed relationship are validated and embraced.”⁶⁷³ Thus working to reconcile with each other and healing their brokenness means following God’s will or mission to bringing people together. Moreover, in reconciliation as a journey God organizes people, encourages and supports efforts to go through, handle, and overcome our suspicions.

Another socio-anthropological aspect of reconciliation process is the willingness of former enemies to anticipate a common future in conjunction with each other. An issue such as this involves an insightful redefinition of the personal as well as the collective identity in relation to the other to a new meaning and relationship which recognizes difference rather on the basis of a mutual identity as survivors and as human beings. Hence, there is need for people to get along and free themselves from being imprisoned in the past. This requires the people to know what happened to their beloved ones.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid. 20.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁷² Ibid, 23.

⁶⁷³ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Op., Cit., 31.

Consequently, those who have suffered trauma, or those who were wronged or suffered bereavement ought to feel that their harm or loss have been aptly documented. In order to acknowledge this then; their truth ought to be heard and validated.⁶⁷⁴ Such truth telling is an important component of reconciliation process; since reconciliation is a transformative process. Truth telling then “is the longing for the acknowledgment of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experience”⁶⁷⁵

Now back to the questions posited above. Erin and Jeremy argued in the book, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies* that the obligation and right to tell the truth arises from the demand of international laws and that of constitutions. It stated that: “the right is sometimes subsumed under the more general right to free expression, though in some constitutions and international treaties it is identified as a right in and itself. The international nongovernmental organization Article 19 has found that there is some growing body of international and comparative jurisprudence confirming an obligation on governments to provide the public with certain types of information.”⁶⁷⁶ Furthermore this Article declared “there is a “right to know the truth” which is contained within the right to “seek, receive and impart information” which is guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”⁶⁷⁷

Besides, Lederach underscored this point of truth in the context of opportunity for peace in reconciliation process where: truth and mercy have to meet together and justice and peace equally kissed each other: Hence “Truth is the longing for acknowledgement of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experience, but it is coupled with mercy, which articulates the need for acceptance, letting go, and a new beginning. Justice represents the search for individual and group rights, for social restructuring, but is linked with peace, which underscores the need for interdependence, well-being and security.”⁶⁷⁸ In this regard truth telling has the power of healing. Truth telling which opens up what previously has been hidden could in fact imply new pain, but nonetheless can equally enable society and persons to deal with the past and realize new pathways

⁶⁷⁴ C.f., Andrew Rigby, *Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc*, 2001, 186.

⁶⁷⁵ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace*. Op., cit., 29.

⁶⁷⁶ *Article 19 of Global Campaign for Free Expression: Who Wants to Forget? Truth and Access to Information about Past Human Rights Violations Quoted by Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, 'in Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground.* 141.

⁶⁷⁷ Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, *Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 141.

⁶⁷⁸ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace*, 29.

for the future. The importance of truth telling or truth seeking in reconciliation process was also strongly observed by Bishop Juan Gerardi of Guatemala through the Catholic theological perspective in the “Recovery of Memory Project” of 1995. He stated:

“It is a liberating and humanizing truth that makes it possible for all men and women to come to terms with themselves and their life story. It is a truth that challenges each one of us to recognize our individual and collective responsibility and to commit ourselves to action so that those abominable acts never happen again... Discovering the truth is painful, but it is without doubt a healthy and liberating action.”⁶⁷⁹

There are certainly several forms of truth and truth telling; such as the truth obtained through the scientific laboratory experiment, the religious truth coming from the religious traditions or truth coming from or about historical events or their reporting etc. However many more could come to the mind. Moreover, Robert Schreiter, outlining the outstanding understanding of truth telling in the process of reconciliation, identified three different shades of meanings that are relevant to reconciliation. According to him, these are Truth on the correspondence level, on the coherence and truth on the existential level.

First and foremost, on the level of correspondence; A correspondence theory of truth maintains that truth is whatever corresponds to reality. Thus, an idea that corresponds with reality is known to be true whereas an idea that does not correspond with it is false. Truth on the correspondence level for Schreiter can be understood as “a correspondence between what happened and what is said about the event *that happened*.”⁶⁸⁰ This level stresses the need when the account of events apparently agrees with the evidences that are put forward to the events or when the events so talked about corroborate or correspond to the facts that occurred.

On the other hand, truth on the coherence level argues that truth is enclosed in any articulate system of interconnected propositions and ideas. Moreover, if a claim could be incorporated in such system without inconsistency, therefore it meets the requirements to be true. Furthermore it ought to be consistent, in standard, such that

⁶⁷⁹Quoted by David Tombs, *The theology of Reconciliation and the Recovery of Memory Project in Guatemala*, in *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions in Theology*, Edited by David Tombs and Joseph Liechty. England: Ashgate Publishing Lt Gower House, 2006, 91.

⁶⁸⁰ Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*. Op., Cit., 117.

every idea in the system must essentially involve every other idea. Such theory of truth enables us to illuminate complex events where no single act can demonstrate or contradict a judgment.⁶⁸¹ Through the accumulation of evidence gathering truth of this degree works where no particular item can control the judgment one way or the other.⁶⁸²

There is truth also at the existential level, in which Eugene Webb argues that truth “is the “openness” of consciousness in act.”⁶⁸³ Eugene Webb underscores further by appropriating from the theological insight of Thomas Aquinas on the human case and then states that: “the openness of existential truth is the “first truth” of the human consciousness, on which all objective knowledge that can be humanly developed necessarily developed.”⁶⁸⁴ Schreiter in addition strongly observed that “truth is existential truth, which is a truth that is felt as illuminating human experience.”⁶⁸⁵ Webb explained further that knowledge of truth on this level must imply interpretations which are advanced as an honest determination to understand reality and those interpretations such as these need contend with others and to be tested against the evidence of experience. We ought also to realize that, even though through the revelation of new hypothesis as well as evidence and critical procedures in order to test appropriateness, interpretations could be inadequate and therefore be issue for revision. Nonetheless they still constitute the only genuine knowledge of reality that is possible to the human knowing.⁶⁸⁶

The concern for truth telling in the reconciliation process particularly that carried out in the open is to document on the public sphere an account which is as correct as possible of the policies of the practices of past regimes. As with what happened in South African TRC to underline the new establishments or the new Government’s determination to take measures that will assure of security, confidence and the addressing of the violation of human rights issues of previous regime and identify those who were responsible for

⁶⁸¹ C.f., Ibid 117.

⁶⁸² C.f., Ibid 117.

⁶⁸³ Eugene Webb, *Objective and Existential Truth in Politics, in the Colloquium on Philosophy of the Centre for Theoretical Study, Charles University, Prague, 1994, 3.*

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid. 3-4.

⁶⁸⁵ Robert Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation. Op., Cit., 118.*

⁶⁸⁶ C.f., Eugene Webb, *Op., Cit., 4.*

the crimes and acknowledge the victims. It is to expose what Schreiter called the “narrative of the lie”.⁶⁸⁷

According to Schreiter this narrative of the lie robs the victims of their identities by substituting it with a narrative of its own through a sustained lie that the wrongdoers perpetrate in situations of violence. This creates an atmosphere of untruthfulness. It is an intentionally created lie manufactured by the perpetrators not only to destroy the narrative of the victims but as well to launch in the narrative of the oppressors. The oppressors use the narrative of the lie to make legitimate the violence with which they control the society.⁶⁸⁸

Truth telling that is thus sought for in Reconciliation process seeks to repossess what actually had happened; by exposing the secrecy that surrounded the events around the facts. It cuts open the lie which tends to subdue one into an inhuman form, if it had been acknowledged and replacing it with the capacity to trust.

There are some growing concerns and arguments that based on the limitations of our human understanding, and in particular the particularity of our perspectives molded through our social situations, as well as loyalties, value interests, past experiences and the nature of truth itself; whether actually we can reach or have a grip on the whole of truth. It has to be said that though there may be some unavoidable difference on what happened and how it could be perceived or narrated. There is equally no need to absolute skepticism. There is the possibility therefore to some ways to know some great truth and as well enough that could help grasp and reach objectives. The South African TRC whose goal was to promote national reconciliation through the uncovering of truth in order that the past could be recollected and dealt with in suitable ways, were to some degree through the telling of the truth to establish immediate ways that fostered a spirit of reconciliation. However, no one could completely demand from the TRC to unearth the whole truth.

Some critics also argue that the unearthing of truth does not always lead to reconciliation, but can simply lead away from it. This however cannot be denied, but then truth telling undeniably is the road to reconciliation. It is further important because

⁶⁸⁷ Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in A Changing Social Order*, 34.

⁶⁸⁸ C.f., *Ibid.* 36.

when government deeds uphold truth, it exhibits to the people that the government desires to move the society forward on the road of an authentic appraisal of the past. Truth telling in reconciliation processes helps to inaugurate a pattern of truthfulness on which a new society can be rebuilt. Moreover, truth telling exploration enables the re-establishment of public trust, a new culture of transparency and accountability. This exposes the code of silence which enshrouds policies of violence and methods of control that brutalizes people which characterizes many oppressive regimes. Thus, it is maintained that truth telling search is a precondition for the providing of redress for victims of human rights violation.

It is moreover contended that truth telling in reconciliation is particularly essential in situations where there are likely to be little justice. Truth therefore, in such situation could be the simply justice which the dead can get. This is underscored in the statement of Eugene de Kock, a South African victim of the Apartheid. When she stated: “the only thing she really wanted was for him “to confess. I want him to sit in front of that cassette recorder and tell me what he did – not just to me, everything, to everybody – and then have him write it out in his own handwriting and sign it and I would keep a copy forever – with all the information, the names and dates, all the details. That’s what I want.”⁶⁸⁹

Arguing further in favour of the significant role truth telling plays in reconciliation processes Erin Daly contended that truth telling could have a preventive consequence. This is demonstrated by that fact that propagating the truth engenders changes of the moral situation by deflating the mental fundamentals that justified criminality, thus thwarting its duplication in the future.⁶⁹⁰ John Paul Lederach scored this point furthermore by maintaining that truth in the reconciliation process “is the longing for the acknowledgment of wrong and the validation of painful loss and experiences, but that it is coupled with mercy, which articulates the need for acceptance, letting go, and a new beginning.”⁶⁹¹ Pope John Paul II captured the significance of truth to justice in the reconciliation process which in particular relates also to forgiveness in his message to the World day of peace 1997. Hence he observed: that “respect for the truth and

⁶⁸⁹ Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, *Quoting David Luban, “On Dorfman’s Death and the Maiden,” in Yale Journal of Law and Humanities 10, 1998, 115, 121, in Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground, Op. Cit.* 142.

⁶⁹⁰ C.f., Erin Daly and Jeremy Sarkin, *Ibid.* 144.

⁶⁹¹ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace, Op. Cit.* 39.

justice that is not limited to that which is right among the parties in conflict, but looks above all to reestablish authentic relations with God, with self, with others.”⁶⁹² Therefore truth prepares the atmosphere for justice.

On the importance of truth in reconciliation Pope John XXIII in his Encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* saw ignorance as a reckless non-acceptance of the truth. He admonished we should therefore seek for the peace that makes no concessions to error, falsehood; truth demands from its seeker the rejection of self-interest and advantages for the sake of truth and justice.⁶⁹³ In order to arrive and achieve real peace and posterity; he advised all men and women should frankly love truth. Hence Pope John Paul II maintained that Truth “serves the cause of peace.”⁶⁹⁴ And indeed for him truth is the power of peace and therefore the key resource in the pursuit and establishment of peace.⁶⁹⁵ He saw truth as the tranquil motivating force of peace since it dictates the factors of truth in the others. This motivating force of peace reveals itself and brings about the unity of man with God, with himself and with the others⁶⁹⁶ in justice and peace..

6.4. Ethical Aspect

Justice is a fundamental ethical concept. Therefore, it is a basic criterion of the uprightness of human conduct and actions. Based on this, justice has persistently been observed as a moral virtue or rather the principle of good behaviour that is entrenched in the will of man. Thus, justice as a virtue is identical with the rectitude of the will.⁶⁹⁷ It has been further argued that justice is that constant and permanent will to render to everyone what is due to him.⁶⁹⁸ As from the foregoing above, justice being an ethical notion is thus clear; it's equally a social concept in value and magnitudes. Besides, justice is rudimentary to social dimension of life. Hence a society without justice would therefore be a wretched group of wrongdoers and perpetrators. Because of its social aspect, it has been argued and seen from its centrality as the foundation of peace in societies. This fact was captured by Rommen in his *Book on Natural Law*, that: “Justice

⁶⁹² John Paul II, *1997 Message for the Celebration of World Day of Peace in L'Osservatore Romano Rome: 18 December, 1996*, 5.

⁶⁹³ C.f., John XXIII, Encyclical: *Ad Petri Cathedram*, 29 June 1959, nn.1, 111.

⁶⁹⁴ John Paul II, *Message for the 1980 World Day of Peace*, n. 1.

⁶⁹⁵ C.f., *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁶ C.f., *Ibid.*, n. 10.

⁶⁹⁷ C.f., *Summa Theologiae, Pars IIa IIae Marietti Rome: 1952, Questionae 58.*

⁶⁹⁸ C.f., P. J. Glenn., *A Tour of the Summa: B Herder Book Co., London: 1961*, 222.

is the foundation of the state.”⁶⁹⁹ As an ethical notion justice is seen from the perspective of its huge importance as involving the concept of fairness, moral integrity and righteousness in the affair, transactions of social life.

Justice represents furthermore the search for individual and group rights, for social restructuring, and for restitution, however it is linked with peace that underscores the need for interdependence, well-being and security.⁷⁰⁰ Peace and justice are linked here not by accident but necessarily connected. For one to be a peacemaker, one has to be a champion or promoter of justice. Without justice there can be no peace. Thus Jesus said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Mat 5:9). This was the reason Jesus criticized the Scribes and the Pharisees simply for their external observance of the Jewish law. But then they failed to uphold its spirit: that were justice, mercy and faith. The morals they enunciated was right but their attitude was wrong. Jesus underscored this when he said. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy (Mt 5: 7). Besides, he told his hearers to love their enemies and do good to those who hate them and as well as to pray for those who persecute them (see Mt 4: 44). Thus it is essential for Christians not simply to act justly rather to display mercy to all people. It is in this regard that justice is regularly linked to righteousness and ethical behaviour. In the Hebrew standpoint, justice then is righteousness grounded on the contentment of the demands of specific affiliations.

Justice is thus employed with reference to the right relationships between human beings, as well as between human beings and the environment- And it is above all between the human beings and God. Right relationships here, referred to the relationships between the members of the society. It necessitates that an atmosphere is thus created in the society that stimulates the thriving of economic activity, public debate, media freedom as well as harmony in the society. A responsible government creates such an environment, whereby social justice stresses the need for government to offer the people - its citizens – with protection for both personal and for their private property done through an unprejudiced law enforcement agency and an unbiased legal system. Justice, it is moreover argued; is echoed wherever and whenever the citizens are obliged in an

⁶⁹⁹ H. A. Rommen, *The Natural Law: A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy*, London: Herder Book Co., 1966, 243.

⁷⁰⁰ C.f., *Ibid.* 29.

unbiased style and the rights of adversaries are treasured and the authentic use of common funds.

The African Synod underscores some good scores to bring comes Home and also Simplifies the Text of the Ecclesia in African. It summarized this understanding and requirements of Social justice as an ongoing struggle that: “promote the common good through good governance and the rule of law; to uphold human dignity and fundamental rights of persons, families and peoples; promote an economic system that provides for the basic needs of all; work for peace and reconciliation in situations of conflict; contribute to the protection of the environment and the integrity of creation; defend groups that are most easily exploited.”⁷⁰¹ It is therefore in this regard that justice which is an integral part of the gospel message is involvedly linked to liberation and the liberation struggle in less developed countries of the world.⁷⁰² Justice however cannot be in places where there are massive break between the rich and the poor. In such situation is thus never favorable to have right relationships that are needed by justice. From this perspective it could be seen that helplessness and systemic violence challenge justice struggles.

Justice from the Old Testament perspective is in relation to the marginalized of the society. It is in relation to the plight and fate of strangers, orphans, and widows. Justice besides, is intimately giving the voiceless a voice and strength to the weak of the society as well as shelter and care to the homeless and strangers. The prophets protested against the outrages that are committed against the poor by the rich and the powerful. Thus the prophet Isaiah said: “What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? (Is 3: 15)”⁷⁰³ The prophets really underscored the fact that the earth and the resources of the earth were created by God and for all to share. These thus should not be arrogated by groups or individuals for their exclusive use only. It is moreover argued that human beings are only the stewards of the resources created by God and not their proprietors.

⁷⁰¹ *The African Synod Comes Home: the simplified text of the Ecclesia in Africa, 1995, Chapter 7, 34.*

⁷⁰² C.f., Fabella, Virginia, and Sugiritharajah, R.S., eds., *Dictionary of the third World Theologies, New York: Orbis, 2000, 115-116.*

⁷⁰³ *See also Amos 4:32-37; 5:12; Ezekiel 22:29.*

Justice is a value that is needed to be entwined into the reconciliation process. Therefore in order to lay open the painful past some kind of justice has to be advanced that detect the perpetrators who were answerable for cruelties and human rights violations. Nonetheless it is argued that identifying and naming of the perpetrators and wrongdoers imply shaming and that this in itself is a procedure of justice, since that challenges the cultures of impunity through making perpetrators face some form of consequence for their past activities. Some form of penalty for past brutalities in the initial period of transition might not be realistic due to risk to stability and peace and the fear that the exposure of cruelty could be jeopardy to the democratic structures. But then, it is to be realized that as time passes on and as the democratic measures assume steadier foundation and the people take on more confidence in their retrieved rights; then the tussle to name the perpetrators can go on without a relapse into the past, brutality and disarray.

In reconciliation processes therefore, justice is not a univocal concept. It is a concept that we ought to scrutinize cautiously. In how the concept is actually employed and the meaning it does communicates. More often than not it tended to chiefly put justice in term of the apprehension, trials, conviction or and the punishment of perpetrators or wrongdoers. We ought to make effort so as not to portray justice in term revenge, but to see it from the perspective of seeking a sincerely punitive justice. However it has to be stated that “the demand for vengeance or *revenge* or retribution is a very natural inclination for those who have been grievously hurt and, indeed, for all of us who, in the face of gross violations of human rights, have any sense of morality.”⁷⁰⁴ The longing for vengeance is explicable in the perspective of the atrocious brutality executed and more importantly in the atmosphere in which vengeance is approved. Besides, De Gruchy further argued that the plea for vengeance is not something that should be dismissed as purely primitive or without warrant, for it arises out of the aversion of that which is patently evil and for a desire to make sure that justice is achieved.⁷⁰⁵ But then caution is here stressed there is no permit for anyone to engage into malicious revenge.⁷⁰⁶ On the question of vengeance Hannah Arendt reminded us and cautioned on what he called the *Predicament of partiality* which should be put to a halt and thus maintained:

⁷⁰⁴ John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice. Op., Cit.*, 167.

⁷⁰⁵ C.f., *Ibid.* 167.

⁷⁰⁶ C.f., *Ibid.* 168

“Vengeance acts in the form of reacting against an original trespassing, whereby far from putting an end to the consequences of the first misdeed, everybody remains bound to the process, permitting the chain reaction contained in every action to take its unhindered course; . . . , *that is*, *vengeance* encloses both doer and sufferer in the relentless automatism of the action process, which by itself need never come to an end.”⁷⁰⁷

Here Hannah captured the point that answering violence with more violence will not in any way enable the reconstruction of the society. This would rather inflame conflict in the future. However, this predicament of partiality according to Hannah Arendt is only overcome through forgiveness. Thus forgiveness for her breaks the power of the remembered past and hence goes beyond the assertions of the acknowledged justice and moreover puts the spiral of vengeance grind to a stop. This underlines the social significance of forgiveness. Miroslav Volf arguing on the important of truth and justice in his book “Exclusion and Embrace” attested to this essential when he contended: “there is far too much dishonesty in the single-minded search for truth, too much injustice in the uncompromising struggle for justice.”⁷⁰⁸

Apart from the punitive justice already talked about there are some other categories of justice which are equally important to the process of reconciliation. Such categories are namely: Structural justice, Restitution justice, Legal justice and Retributive justice. There are also Personal justices, distributive justice as well as Restorative justice. These forms point however to the complex nature of justice.

Structural justice involves the pursuit of justice through the restructuring of the structural inequalities of the society that gave rise to the conflicts which are the sources of violation of human rights and violence. For justice on this level to be achieved, there is need therefore to make thoughtful determinations in changing the structures and conditions in which people live that constantly prompt them remembering all that have agonized them in the past. In this way a sure and genuine hope for the future is being assured. It engenders to let go of their grievances and harms, if the institutions which personified the past perpetrated division became issues of the past or mere memory of the past. Hence, revenge compulsions are renounced and consequently a shared common future

⁷⁰⁷ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition: A Study of the Central Dilemmas Facing Modern Man* Garden City: Doubleday, 159, 216.

⁷⁰⁸ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996, 29.

through the forgiveness of the past starts to be foreseeable. This implies the demand for sustained constant and consistent reforms which could involve areas such as structural justice of the economy and the legal systems. However, it should be noted that it is a long and difficult task that would usher in lasting reconciliation initiatives for sustainable peace.

Another form of justice is the restitution justice, when the turning away from the brutal past is as result of acts of restitution and reparation.⁷⁰⁹ This aims at making compensation by providing reparation for victims. This could imply to provide some reparation perhaps to those victims whose relations or parents have disappeared in the violent conflicts. It could be in form of providing funds for the education of their children. It could also be in form of health care facility being provided to those whose health suffered irreparable harms or who were tortured etc.

Legal justice is another category of justice. It is the perspective that is geared toward the reformation of the judiciary system. In this case it underlined the fact that justice is a principal foundation of law and order in society. Law is the apparatus for the realization of justice, general welfare and public order in the social life organization of people in societies. It is to be noted that in the period of violence and human rights violations the judicial system are usually compromised. Hence the need to assure the people of open, equitable and fair legal system becomes an important perspective of justice for the reconstruction of the society for a long-term sustainable peace. This category of justice helps the legislature to ensure justice as well as the attainment of the shared good in the society by the enactment of laws that are honest and fair. It is therefore consequent to the justice system of any society that guarantees the fundamental human rights and freedom of the citizen's exercise. Thus legal dictatorship and tyranny are gross aberration and violation of this category of justice.

Following this category is personal justice. It is that form of justice that contains the regulation and the harmonization of the free powers of people and their temperaments. It is justice in the form of personal honesty and moral righteousness. Justice such as this carries the personal character and readiness to do works of righteousness.⁷¹⁰ Distributive

⁷⁰⁹ C.f., John W. De Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice. Op., Cit.*, 29.

⁷¹⁰ C.f., N.S.S. Iwe, *Christianity, Culture and Colonialism in Africa: Nigeria*: 1983, 236.

justice on the order hand is the justice that demands functionaries of public works and those in the position of authority as well as power to discharge their functions in an atmosphere of impartiality, with fair-mindedness and with sense of proportion the distributions of namely: benefits, jobs, rewards, resources, amenities etc. in the society in a fashion commensurate with the dignity of the people. Hence Kavanagh succinctly stated: “Distributive justice is that which regulates the dealings of the ruler or rulers of a community with the members thereof – rewards and position and honors and burden and punishment should be meted out with impartiality, with no exception of persons.”⁷¹¹

Restorative justice on its part argued Howard Zehr engages in the ultimate concern about the restoration and the reintegration of both victims and offenders, as well as the well-being of the whole society. It is thus approximately the balancing concern for all involved parties.⁷¹² It is thus a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who are stakeholders in some unambiguous offense as well as to collectively identifying and addressing harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things in the right direction as much as conceivable.⁷¹³ In the light of this process victims who are engaged, are intended to come out of it being satisfied. Offenders on the other hand recognize the extent in which their actions have affected others and therefore take accountability for those deeds. These results are understood to aid to repair the harms executed and discuss the reasons for the offense.

6.5. Perspectives on the level of political action

In the preceding pages I have argued that reconciliation highlights and institutes peace between us human beings. Undeniably, reconciliation with God has the overriding weighty purposes and services to outdo all manners of mutual suspicion amongst, discriminations of all manners, etc. between people⁷¹⁴. Hence, Nigeria as a country with a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society and most significantly with violent religious conflict and its attendant hostility, wounds, bruises, the waste of lives, resources and property, partakes in this redemption and is to be

⁷¹¹ D.J. Kavanagh, *Manual of Social Ethics*. Quoted in *N.S.S. Iwe Christianity, Culture and Colonialism in Africa*. Op. Cit., 239.

⁷¹² C.f., Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice USA: Good Books Intercourse*, PA. 2002, 32.

⁷¹³ C.f., *Ibid.* 37.

⁷¹⁴ See above page 197.

healed. Indeed, this does in effect institute the reestablishment of friendships that can inspire sufficient trust across the religious, ethnic, cultural, political, linguistic, and traditional splits.⁷¹⁵ This study generates the conviction through ecumenical initiative and contributions for a call for a theology of hospitality to bring about peace and justice in Nigeria and thus enhances and proposes the imperative of dialogue in Nigeria. Hence the proposals are important for sustainable and better Co-living in a society bewildered with relationships of oppression and conflicts. In the light of this the Nigerian legislature, executive and the judiciary arms of governance have some significant roles here to play. They can truly work together and effectively to entrench peace-initiatives and build it through legislative process for good governance as I have often emphasized on this work. Through authentic policies in legislative process they can prevent and resolve conflicts before it snowballs into violence. This is absolutely less expensive in human and financial terms, because to prevent violence implies the action to handle the fundamental causes of conflicts. I mean all the activities which reinforce governance, develop and enhance the access to human rights, which in turn cultivate a culture of non-violence conflict management, support economic and social development.

6.5.1. Legislature

In a democratic system of government the legislature is an essential arm of the government. Without the legislature, to achieve Good governance; which implies the manner in which government or administration develops the standard of living of the people of a society via the creation and accessibility of the critical amenities of life; also providing the people security and the possibility of healthier life, as well as inculcate in them the hope of a promising future on an equitable foundation.⁷¹⁶ Moreover, it gives access to the possibility for personal growth and presenting both the involvement and the ability to influence in the decision making in the public arena. It furthermore underscores the sustenance of a responsive judicial system that dispenses the value of

⁷¹⁵ C.f., D. Marrow, *Seeking peace amid memories of war: Learning from the peace process in Northern Ireland*, in R.L. Rothstein Ed., *After the peace: Resistance and reconciliation* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999, pp.111-138.

⁷¹⁶ C.f., David K. Wangutusi, citing, Y. K. Sabharwal, *Role of Judiciary in Good Governance*, in *The Role of the Inspectorate in Promoting Good Governance in the Judiciary: A Paper presented at the 18th Annual Judge's Conference at Commonwealth Speke Resort: Munyonyo* January, 19-21, 2016; www.judiciary.go.ug/.../Role%20of%20Inspectorate%20-JUSTIC.. Sourced June 30, 2016.

justice on whoever deserves it. Besides, it delineates the profound value and unbiased fashion of maintaining honesty and accountability in all sections of the government.⁷¹⁷ Good Governance is thence an unclassified term used in advancement literature to define in what way public institutions operate public affairs and manage public resources so as to guarantee the realization of Human Rights. Hence it describes the process of decision-making and the process through which decisions are implemented.⁷¹⁸ This section considers therefore, the legislature as a channel/*instrument* of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, crisis management and the consolidation that leads to a stable peaceful order and reconciliation. This harps on the understanding that the legislature through legislative processes should be at the vanguard of preventing conflict through the provision of avenues for dialogue and compromise. And as such is the guarantor of civil peace because the legislature is a result of the expression of the will of the people. By its working nature and its very nature of composition the legislature should reflect the successful reconciliation as well as the reflection of the diversity of the nation. This is why the legislature is the gathering of the representatives of the people elected under the legal framework to make laws for the well-being of the society. And as such it is the institutional body in charge for making laws for a nation and a body by which the collective will of the people are articulated or expressed and implemented and or realized.⁷¹⁹ Hence in the legislature the people feel they are playing a part in the democratic process through their representatives who must certify they give voice to the concerns of the people they embody. Even though the legislators in the legislature are elected into the parliament on party lines, they must make sure that they transform themselves into legislators who embody all of the electorate for peace and stability of the society or the country. This requires an effective and transformative legislature. A transformative legislature possesses the independent capability to mold and transform proposals from whatever source into good laws for the well-being of all the society or country. Such legislature is essential so as to equip the legislators with the enhancement and ability to manage conflict, build compromise and stability. Besides, it is transformative in the sense that the legislators represent numerous and various public

⁷¹⁷ C.f., Ibid.

⁷¹⁸ C.f., *The Role of Parliament in Promoting Good Governance: Economic Commission of Africa*, Rwanda: Kigali, June 4-5, 2012.

⁷¹⁹ C.f., Simbine Okoosi, *Understanding the Role and the Challenges of the Legislature in the Fourth Republic: The Case of Oyo State House of Assembly*, in *Nigeria Journal of Legislative Affairs*, vol. 3, Nos 1, and 3, 2010, 1.

interests and also functions as a free agent of policy changes that are catalyst for peacebuilding, good governance and development⁷²⁰. Here, I mean a legislature that engages itself as an institution or place where societal divergences are formulated and conveyed into debates and speeches to transform the society for the well-being of the people. Such a transformative legislature needs an effective representation that in itself requires good leadership which will be in the vanguard to discover and establish the essential needs of the society as well as stimulate and uphold enterprises which give answer to these essentials and the peace initiatives purposes.⁷²¹ Nevertheless, Boutros Boutros Ghali, a former UN secretary general, as quoted by Mitchell O'Brien opined that leadership in the context of the parliament demands that the legislators require making hard judgments so that there may be sustainable peace. These hard decisions are necessary because the legislators are frequently faced with situations, criticism and adversity that could demean and hugely discourage working for the well-being of the people or faced with people who would stop at nothing in their bid to use destructive channels to escalate violent conflict for their personal aggrandizement.⁷²² By such posture and position the parliamentarians could stimulate and promote a change of mind-set in the society from the state of mind of conflict into that of peace-mentality. It requires furthermore that the effective leaders are those who represent the aspirations of their people in the process of change and of the stability of the society as well as their capacity to reconcile conflicting interests, the sustenance of a responsibility and dedication to public service.⁷²³ The legislators in all legislative institutions will always be confronted with the challenges of having to resolve conflicting interests. Hence the hard decisions they have to constantly be engaged in making. In this function they have to eye and arm themselves with the leadership founded on universal shared guidance of human values and ideals. Often they may fall short of this values, nonetheless, these leadership essential skill are important and ought to be a constant cultivation and reinforcement of the legislature.

⁷²⁰C.f., Mitchell O'Brien, Rick Staphenurst and Niall Johnston, eds., *Parliaments as Peacebuilders in Conflict-Affected Countries: World Bank Institute Learning Resources Series*: Washington, D.C., 2008, 4.

⁷²¹ C.f., Mitchell O'Brien, Making Parliament More Representative, in *Parliaments as Peacebuilders in Conflict-Affected Countries*, Mitchell O'Brien, Rick Staphenurst and Niall Johnston, eds., *World Bank Institute Learning Resources Series*: Washington, D.C., 2008, 38.

⁷²² C.f., Mitchell O'Brien, *Making Parliament More Representatives*, Op. Cit, 38.

⁷²³ C.f., Adel Safty, ed., *Leadership and Global Governance*, Washington, DC: USA, 2002, 31.

In the Nigerian context the legislature does this function of peacebuilding by the legislative duty assigned it by the constitution. Hence, it states that the “the legislative power of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be vested in the National Assembly of the Federation which consist of the senate and House of Representatives.”⁷²⁴ Furthermore, the constitution empowers the legislature – the National Assembly to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the federation of Nigeria. Thus, it provides that “the power of the National Assembly to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the federation with respect to any matter included in the exclusive list shall serve as otherwise provided in this constitution to be the exclusion of House of Assembly of States.”⁷²⁵ Of interest here is the manner in which the section four of the constitution in concentrating power of making laws on the National Assembly in the Exclusive list⁷²⁶ and on the Federal executive – the president of the country. The contraction of power to the State House of Assembly ambushed, short armed as well as incapacitated the Government at the state and local levels from power to work on so many imperative and important issues of governance. The Exclusive list has 68 items whereas the concurrent list which the state and the National Assembly share has 30 items. The constitution prescribed Federalism but contradicted it equally with the designation on the Exclusive list. It removed power function of serious legislative process from the state and local governments and made the National Assembly and the president have a monster of power. By so doing made the state and local governments subordinate. The national and local or regional governments should stand to each in a relation of meaningful independence resting on balanced division of powers and on resources. Each ought to have resources sufficient to support the structure of a functional government and be able to stand on its own against the other. The government at the state or local levels must not be a beggar to the federal government. The constitution has reduced the power sharing and placed such a preponderance of power in the hands of the national thus making it so powerful that it is able to bend the will of the state and the local government to its own.

⁷²⁴ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, As Amended, 1999, Section 4, no. 1.

⁷²⁵ Ibid, Section 4, No.3.

⁷²⁶C.f., Second Schedule Part 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999; See also Charles Mwalimu, *The Nigerian Legal System*, Vol.2, Private Law, New York, Peter Lang, 2009, 13-16.

In this regard the legislature so authorized by the constitution is no longer the guarantor of diversity and as such its huge role to play to safeguard the proper working of government at all levels and at the same time protect the interest of the minorities as well as disenfranchised groups cannot be achieved. Since they are the representative body for the people who elected them and the government in which they are a major institution in a proper and true federalism has the capacities to be an extremely effective institution for conflict management and reconciliation. The legislature therefore works as the “eyes and the ears as well as the voice of the people”⁷²⁷. In this case the foremost characteristic of the legislature is its intrinsic link to the people who elected them and they are representing.⁷²⁸ By working together and exhibiting the care necessary to ensure that all voices in the community are heard, legislature enhances and contribute to the de-escalation of conflict in the society. Such a constructive legislature and leadership enables prevailing conflicts to be managed and thereby making sure that violent conflict is replaced with sustainable peace deals. Such an effective representation is a panacea that strengthens the rule of law through the building of legitimacy of the legislature and the government. The checkmating of violence prevents the breakdown of the rule of law because violence is the breakdown of the rule law. Hence, such rebuilding and change is the cornerstone for conflict management and the capacity of good governance. Besides the legislature working as the eyes and the ears as well as the voice of the people is to make laws for peace on how the country can be formed on the basis of shared commitment and collective responsibility. It is challenged to make laws about how to create a society which honours the human person in all his dignity as one created in the image and likeness of God. It fashions laws about the vision of a society based on justice and compassion that will not harm one another. Thus, based on its intrinsic link to the people and as one of the essential columns of democracy and democratic good governance, the legislature stands on transforming policies and structures into laws for the well-being of the people and a vision of the future that keeps inspiring others and many generations to come. The legislature work is greatly enriched and enhanced by the help of its committee to speedy up the load of works which may pile up for deliberations.

⁷²⁷ John Stuart Mill, quoted by Norman Ornstein in *the Role of the Legislature in a democracy*: <http://www.4uth.gov.ua/usa/english/politics/freedom/freedom3.htm>; Sourced January 20, 2016.

⁷²⁸ C.f., M. M. Lawan, *Corruption and the National Assembly: Subverting democracy in the Fourth Republic, 1999-2007* in A. M. Jega, H. Wakili and I. M. Zango, eds., *Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects*, Kano, 2009, Cited in Ozy B. Orluwene, *Nigerian Legislature and Public Accountability in Presidential Democracy: An Overview*, in *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 5, No. 27, Rome, 2014, 1412.

This indeed underscores the significance of the committee of the legislature. In what now follows is some discussion on the theme committee.

The Nigeria legislature is a bicameral one that is basically centered on the presidential system of government, identical to the American presidential system of government and the legislature shoulders extensive authorities and exerts genuine powers on the issues of wide ranges on the processes of decision making. The bicameral legislature of the Nigerian national assembly has the Senate known as the upper chamber or House with 109 lawmakers and the House of Representatives , the lower Chamber – lower House with 360 elected representatives members representing the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja. To effectively and efficiently deliberate on matters of national importance, public issues, the problems and the needs of the society, the Nigeria Legislature has committees for detailed legislative work on behalf of the Assembly. So the Nigerian legislature like it is customary all over the world shared the entire National Assembly into parts – committees – which task is to handle specific concerns or assignment.⁷²⁹ It is thus, in the light of this that the Senate has about 56 committees, whereas the Lower house – the House of Representative has about 91 committees tasked with definite responsibility of national well-being, for peace and good governance on behalf of the National Assembly. Working in the best interests of the National Assembly, the committees receive legitimacy so as to develop and get some definite legislative assignments structured out in a better resourceful and workable fashion. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria giving legitimacy to the House Committees creation hence affirmed: “The Senate or the House of Representatives may appoint a committee of its members for such special or general purpose as in its opinion would be better regulated and managed by means of such a committee, and may by resolution regulation or otherwise, as it thinks fit, delegate any functions exercisable by it to any such committee”.⁷³⁰ Thus Yinka Aashagba underscored the significance of the committees as being the filtering device and a legislative stethoscope by which policy proposal and other related activities are not only scrutinized but also utilized to access the desirability, feasibility, sustainability and healthiness of government policies”.⁷³¹

⁷²⁹ C.f., Joseph Yinka Fashagba, *The Role of the Committee System in Enhancing Legislative Efficiency in Nigeria: The Case of Kwara State House of Assembly*, in the *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, Vol. 10. No. 4, Clarion: Pennsylvania, 2009, 427.

⁷³⁰ *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chapter V, no. 62, 1999.*

⁷³¹ Joseph Yinka Fashagba, *Op. Cit.*, 429-430.

In line with this purpose the Nigerian National Assembly 2007 created the Millennium Development Goals. It mandated it to handle, examine, scrutinize and to supervise the implementation of the United Nations Development Program. The prime factor for the UNDP was: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women. It was further to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases also to included was to ensure environmental sustainability and to develop a global partnership for development.⁷³² Previously, the handling of this program was integrated into the country's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy.⁷³³ Later the function of the committee was broadened to include the consideration and appropriation of annual budget assessments.

In 2012, the bicameral legislature had each a committee on the Millennium Development Goals. A member could serve on a number of different committees due to the high demands of the committees and besides, there are some joint committees on which members of both Houses serve. In this regard the provision of the Constitution drafted and promulgated by the military affirmed that both legislative Houses shall engage in a combined committee on finance comprising an equal number of persons from each legislative chamber.⁷³⁴ Moreover, it continued to indicate the circumstance, systems and justification to establish committees as well as the extent of power such committees could exert. Then, it asserted: "A House of Assembly may appoint a committee of its members for any special or general purposes as in its opinion would be better regulated and managed by means of such a committee and may by resolutions, regulation or otherwise as it thinks fit delegate functions exercised by it to any such committee".⁷³⁵

However, it is dismal to note that the approaches of the chamber have not produced any appreciable developmental change to the challenges charged them. The men and women of the legislature fail to embrace peace by not looking at the issues militating against Nigeria's cohabitation. Indeed, the first stage to peace process ought to be good democratic system attainable through a citizen's oriented peace and security focus.

⁷³² C.f., *UN, General Assembly, Fifty-Sixth Session: Item 40 of the provisional Agenda. Follow-up to the Outcome of Millennium Summit: Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration*, 6, Sept, 2001.

⁷³³ C.f., *Nigeria Millennium Development Goals, Report*, 2010.

⁷³⁴ C.f., *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 62, no. 3, 1999.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.* Chapter V, no. 103.

Indeed, reliable democratic and peacebuilding process depends on the accommodation of all political relationships that usher in development for Nigeria for the reason of the diverse ethnic, as well as its multicultural and religious welfares. This system ought to give rise to transparency, fairness, the encouragement of equal participation and accountability of the people. This is the process under which confidence and acceptance could be maintained. Certainly, this calls for good leadership and here lies the highest challenge facing Nigeria. It has deficiencies of quality leadership.⁷³⁶ Definitely, the failure of the leaders to blend an integrated country from a disjointed geographic and cultural component in Nigeria – out of the geographic expression designating Nigeria.⁷³⁷ Nigeria indeed did not hold on to a strong sense of unity either before and after independence. The legislature has continually played alone into this process and lack the will and courage to go into the hard conversation needed so as to change the unstable government structure inherited from the colonial then into the direction of alternating elected and authoritarian administrations. The game of play groups against each other is unabated. There have been nonetheless many electoral laws designed and promulgated, but none have been functionally implemented.

One of the important committees created was the House committee on Peace and National Reconciliation of the Lower House – House of Representatives. This committee is the workhouse of the legislative process charged with of the responsibility for building a genuine structure of bond of responsibility, care, and of confidence between the ethnic-religious peoples of Nigeria and placing great concerns on the shared cultural values among the people of Nigeria. It was created to underscores the essence of sinking prejudice and turns the problems of the tribal groups or religious groups into vital prospects of commitment and improved inclusivity for the well-being, reconciliation and good governance of the society. Further again lip service is paid to it. If this function is properly carried out, it enhances and transforms into actuality the potential of the Nigeria components to come together in the spirit of solidarity and hospitality, a solid spirit of openness to diversity, friendliness and respect for the needs of all the groups in Nigeria. This attitude and engagement prevents violence and promotes reconciliation; it equally prevents violence during election and works towards

⁷³⁶ Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, Oxford: Heinemann, 1983, 1.

⁷³⁷ Martin Meredith, *The State of Africa: A History of the Continent since Independence*. London. Op. Cit, 73.

national unity. Besides, it is a system that integrates all groups or individuals in such a way that they benefit from it and thus move on to perpetuate and respect the institutions which present such facilitation. Among other things this workhouse of legislative process may undertake dialogue with aggrieved ethnic groups or communities to some reconciliation among them and or the government. The efforts have not been positive, to bring Nigerians across the country away from ethno-religious conflicts and sectional sentiments into a national stable course through dialogue and reconciliation.

The importance of these committees cannot be over emphasized, for research and relative studies have attested to their uniqueness. Indeed, the committees are major contributing factors to the procedures of policies and of the values and advantages which reign in the developments of legislative policy making. Thus, the committee structure of the legislative system maintains and strengthens the legislature's capacity in legislative processes⁷³⁸. For the achievement of the legislature is essentially depended on the viability and the efficacy of the constituted committees. Undeniably, J. P. Mackintosh underscored the import when he opined that the committees of the legislature are microcosm of legislature.⁷³⁹ This indeed, is underlined by the fact that National Assembly members meet in the plenary most often to approve the decisions and conclusions of the committees' works and in this committee system the bicameral House does the huge bulk of the legislative functions. The committees moreover, work as control a clause by clause examination of the legislative bill process.

The legislature ought to be a forum that epitomizes tolerance and order and where these values are entrenched.⁷⁴⁰ It is the forum and organ of government for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the mediation of differences wherein the principles of respect and the acceptance of one another is fundamental. Therefore, the legislature is an institution that symbolizes society in the diversity of its constitution and its views as

⁷³⁸ C.f., Sebastian M. Saiegh, *The Role of Legislature in Policymaking Process. A paper delivered at the Workshop on State Reform, Public Policies and Policymaking Process, Inter-American Development Bank*, Washington: D.C., 2005, 19.

⁷³⁹ C.f., J. P. Mackintosh, *The Government and Politics of Britain, 5th edition*, London, 1985, 15.

⁷⁴⁰C.f., L. Salas Salazar & Kobsak Chutikul, *Furthering Parliamentary Democracy in Order to Protect Human Rights and Encourage Reconciliation Among Peoples and Partnership among Nations: Being a Draft Report foe an Inter-Parliamentary Union, 110th Assembly and Related Meetings*, Mexico, City, 15-23April 2004.

well as an institution which spreads and networks the diversity in the political process.⁷⁴¹ Moreover, the occupation and craft of the forum is basically to manage tensions besides upholding equilibrium among the contesting claims of diversity and collectivity and uniformity as well as individuality so as to boost social harmony and solidarity.⁷⁴² This understanding underscores the significance of the legislature in peacebuilding and good governance.

6.5.2. Judiciary

This section focuses on the creative development of the judiciary as one of the major pillars of a true democratic government that ensures rule of law is achieved for peace. By peace I contend of a disposition, process and an outcome, of the state of mind to nonviolent engagement, conflict resolution between people or communities or nations and or harmonious interactions.⁷⁴³ Indeed, for adequate harmonious interactions to exist demands the existence of the rule of law. Rule of law thus signifies a principle of governance safeguarding the reign of the law espoused through an established procedure, responsibility and accountability of public authority under the law, equality of all before the law and also to an impartial and autonomous system of justice.⁷⁴⁴ Consequently rule of law projects in Good Governance and peacebuilding and is devoid of arbitrariness but enhances and advances the administration of justice and accountability. However, the administration of justice may take different forms; as it could be attested by records of the ancient time. During the period one person had the exclusive responsibility to execute the administration of justice, in resolving conflicts – in the hand of a sovereign king. Indeed, as the society advanced and developed it became absolutely essential to separate the function of power into: legislation, adjudication, and implementation. The complexity, expansion and development of the society have necessitated a huge corresponding response to differentiate as well as devolve authority for adequate dispensation of justice. Consequently, it summoned the progression of an

⁷⁴¹ C.f., *Inter-Parliamentary Union: Guidelines on the Rights and Duties of the Opposition in Parliament, Libreville, Gabon, 17-19 May, 1999*. <http://www.ipu.org/splz-e/gabon.htm>, Sourced on June, 2016.

⁷⁴² Ibid.

⁷⁴³ C.f., James F. Leckman, Christine Panter-Brick, and Rima Sala, eds., *Path to Peace: The Transformative Power of Children and Families*, London, 2014, 254.

⁷⁴⁴ C.f., Vera Gowlland-Debbas and Vassilis Pergantis, *Rule of Law*, in Vincent Chetail, ed., *Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, USA : Oxford University Press, 2009, 320.

authorized structure or legal system that has distinct courts to address emergent concerns of economic expansion and political burdens on large scope⁷⁴⁵. The rule of law therefore, implies inseparably interrelated principle making it deficient that, there is no power without accountability.⁷⁴⁶

In the light of this we focus attention on the Nigerian judiciary, an arm and a key pillar in democratic government for Good Governance. The role of the judiciary arm of government is essential that it should be independent for the legal framework to enhance responsible administration for the respect of the rule of law and human rights at all levels of government, because governance is the manner in which power is applied in the management of a country's economy and also social resources for the development and well-being of all. Since governance makes a noteworthy contribution in achieving sustainable nation building and peace in any country; hence all the three arms of government, judiciary, the legislature and the executive should work harmoniously to achieve Good Governance. The violation of the fundamental right of a citizen as affirmed by the constitution is a form of breach of the rule of law and should be adequately handled in order to enhance and sustain peace initiatives.

In Nigerian constitution, there is separation of power that has the suitable means of the check and the balances in the various structures of government. The constitution of Nigeria assigns the Judiciary the power to interpret laws and the reviews of decisions of the legislature and the executive.⁷⁴⁷ It further stipulates the hierarchy of the judiciary. The Supreme Court of Nigeria is at the head of the grading⁷⁴⁸. In addition there are the Court of Appeal⁷⁴⁹, Federal High Court, and the National Industrial Court. The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria created the National Judicial Council – as one of the Federal Executive Bodies⁷⁵⁰ for the development of common judiciary value in order to further strengthen judicial solidarity and good governance. It is moreover, created so as to safeguard the judiciary from the whims and caprices of the executive; to strengthen and ensure the independence of the judicial organ of governance. For proper good

⁷⁴⁵ C.f., Harold J. Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983, 54.

⁷⁴⁶ C.f., *Ibid.*, 321.

⁷⁴⁷ C.f., The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, 232, 1-2 and 323, 1

⁷⁴⁸ C.f., *Ibid.*, 230.

⁷⁴⁹ C.f., *Ibid.*, 237, 1.

⁷⁵⁰ C.f., The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria: As amended, 1999, Paragraph 21 of Part One of the third Schedule, 1999.

governance in any democratic government, although there is separation of power between the three organs of democratic regimes, their functions overlap. There is indeed, no unqualified distinction that is implied in the doctrines of the separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Besides, as Justice Z. M. Yacoob, the Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa acknowledged; there is small discrepancy; nevertheless there is no vivid line that delineates the separation of powers between the legislature and the executive as well as the judiciary.⁷⁵¹ But then, the judiciary plays pivotal role to ensure that government adheres to the constitution; hence the central requirement of good governance entails that the legislature and the executive must guarantee that they submit to the implementations of the constitution in all aspects.⁷⁵² On its part the judiciary must ensure that they fulfil this constitutional requirement for good governance as I already described earlier on this section. Therefore, any government which falls short of executing this constitutional prerequisite in a democratic government is not into good governance and in effect creating and enhancing conflicts in failing on its constitutional responsibility to the country in respect with the spirit, the objectives and sense of the constitution. Here, one needs to be careful for this can be misconstrued and manipulated for some selfish interests. But then, it is important to note that for the judiciary to discharge its duty very well it needs to be independent. Below is thus, the examination of the issue.

Indeed, for the judiciary to uphold and to stick to good governance through the interpretation of the laws, giving meanings to the laws, reviews of the laws, repealing of laws, the adjudicating of disputes of fact in civil and criminal proceeding in the process of enforcing the laws must be independent⁷⁵³, nonetheless bearing in mind the no absolute distinction between the powers of the arms of government in a constitutional democracy. Undeniably, a rudimentary criterion of the judiciary for any democratic society is the independence of the judiciary and for good governance it is also a basic principle.⁷⁵⁴ It is absolutely importance that if the judges are to deliver free decisions for good governance that is devoid of fear and harassment, such that the laws are to be obeyed; the judiciary ought to be independent. If the judiciary is thus independent, the

⁷⁵¹ C.f., Z. M. Yacoob, *The Role of the Judiciary in Good Governance: A Paper Delivered by Z. M. Yacoob at the International Judicial Conference in Islamabad*, Pakistan, 13-15, April, 2012.

⁷⁵² C.f., *Ibid.*

⁷⁵³ C.f., *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999, 153.

⁷⁵⁴ C.f., Abubakr Hassan Kargbo, *Governance and the three Arms of Government in Sierra Leone*, Indiana, USA: Bloomington, 2015, 37.

courts of the land can interpret, apply and also enforce the laws thereby giving protection and rights to all. In its Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, the United Nations acknowledged the independence of the judiciary as it opined that the judiciary relishes institutional independence and at the same time the Judges relish personal independence in the performance and discharge of their functions⁷⁵⁵; the thriving defined jurisdiction of ordinary courts over all judicial controversies. Moreover, there must be sufficient funding and remunerations; well defined career path and security of tenure and extensive grounded legal education as well as a sustained legal education based on an operational and open-minded and unbiased enforcement of judgments.⁷⁵⁶ Hence it affirmed: “The independence of the judiciary shall be guaranteed by the state and enshrined in the Constitution or law of the country. It is the duty of all governmental and other institutions to respect and observe the independence of the judiciary.”⁷⁵⁷ This enhances the efficiency of good governance and the rule of law for the peace, solidarity and well-being of the people. Consequently, it is simply everywhere there is an independent judiciary that judges can unambiguously and impartially decide cases since the rule necessitates that judges are not to be frightened of consequences from outside forces.

The problem that has endangered and influenced independence of the judiciary in Nigeria has been Military interference into the politics. This has encroached into the activities of many things in Nigeria. From 1966 down to 1999 the judiciary in Nigeria was commandeered by the Military through coup d'état. The constitution was in consequent suspended and replaced by laws made through military decrees and promulgated also by decrees. When democracy resurfaced in 1979 to 1983 the constitution was drafted and handed over by the military to the civilian democratic government, but was shortly afterwards taken again by the Military, to the magnitude

⁷⁵⁵ C.f., John Adebisi Arewa, *Judicial Integrity in Nigeria: Challenges and Agenda for Action*, in the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Studies. *A Journal of Reform and Transformation in Nigeria: A Tribute to the Honorable Justice Dahiru Musdapher*, 2012, 228 and 227-271.

⁷⁵⁶ C.f., *The Council of European Union on the Independence of Judges: Recommendation no. 94 R 12 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Independence, Efficiency and Role of Judges, Principle, 2b, 13 October, 1994 cited in International Principles on the Independence and Accountability of Judges, Lawyers and Prosecutors. A Practitioners' Guide*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2004, 15-16.

⁷⁵⁷ *United Nations, Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, and as adopted by the 7th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, Milan: Italy August 26-Sept., 6 1985. The General Assembly resolution endorsed, 40/32 on November 29 1985 and of 40/146 of December, 13 1985.*

that right to 1988, 1995 down to 1999 the constitution invoke the diktats of Military repressions intermingled with and interrupted by civil rules that till today suffer the crises of acceptability, justice and sincerity.⁷⁵⁸ The constitution was not as a result of the inspiration and aspirations of the people of Nigeria; hence it represented in greater part the interests of some groups. It is against this background that a plethora agitations calls to restructure Nigeria, calls for the Sovereign National Conference, calls for Constitutional National Conference to draft a new Constitution that would reflect the people's desires, aspirations and interests of the various nationalities that constitute Nigeria. People believe that the present federal laws, principles and values do not fulfil the purpose. It moreover snowballed into the federal system witnessing and encountering severe recurrent tensions from religious and ethnic conflicts.

Earlier on this work I have argued that conflicts in Nigeria have created enormous lack of peace and created insecurity. However, the concomitant effect of this as Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan observed is that these conflicts have generated social tension and new patterns of settlement in Nigeria; Muslims are moving to Muslim populated areas and Christian migrating to Christina dominated areas⁷⁵⁹ and this promote division among the people and makes integration more difficult. Nigeria is a multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious country; for that the earnestness to educate on peaceful coexistence and tolerance. Muhammed Ladan besides, views peace development in terms of the acceptance we are part and parcel of a changing world such that the process is a continuing one from which fresh and exacting challenge will emerge from time to time ought to be issues of national concern, discourse and understanding.⁷⁶⁰ It makes people become internally displaced people or foreigners in their country. This compounds an already existing problem of citizenship and indigeneity; that was a mixture of the 1979 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria and the framing of these words in the 1999 Constitution. Indeed, Muhammed Tawfiq furthermore observed that the indigeneity clause as written in the 1979 Constitution and copied into the 1999 lean towards authorizing discriminatory practices in Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution failed to amend the disagreement spawned by the clause of indigeneity in the bid to argue for a federal

⁷⁵⁸ C.f., John Adebisi Arewa, *Judicial Integrity in Nigeria: Challenges and Agenda for Action*, Op. Cit, 232.

⁷⁵⁹ C.f., Muhammed Tawfiq Ladan, *Constitutionalism and the challenges of Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Nigeria Which Way Forward for Peace. A Paper presented at a Tow day National Stakeholders' Conference for Peace in Nigeria*, Abuja, 24th - 24th May, 2010.

⁷⁶⁰ C.f., Ibid, 12-13.

character principle on the appointment of personnel at the federal level of government to promote national unity and inclusiveness – a sense of belonging to the nation of Nigeria.⁷⁶¹ Thus the constitution on appointments based on indigeneity specified: “Provided that in giving effect to the provisions aforesaid the President shall appoint at least one Minister from each State, who shall be an indigene of such State”⁷⁶². On the strength of this section a Nigeria who cannot prove being an indigene of a state in Nigeria is thereby denied the right to be ministerial appointed of the federal government’s work. The legislature, executive and the judiciary have left the problem unsolved, thus the conflict, controversy, contradiction and instability it generates goes further unchecked and obstacle to good governance. The legislature in particular has either failed to leave up or underplayed the constitutional function of translating policies, reviews of bills, representation and oversight function and repeal of laws for well-being of the people and promotion of good governance. This is essential because an effective and efficient legislature contribute to operative governance through performing the important tasks necessary to nurture democracy in a diverse, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious society like Nigeria. Certainly, the judiciary as well as the legislature could make the tribunals established to investigate conflicts; religious or ethnic in nature more effective and efficient by conferring on the necessary powers as may appear essential to the tribunals to enable them be more effective in the discharge of the tasks as may be given them, by act of parliaments not only as the goodwill of the executive or the president. Hence, the constitution authorizes the National Assembly – the Legislature to make laws in line with the provisions of the constitution in relation to the establishment of some bodies for good governance.⁷⁶³ Although, there is indeed separation of powers and function between the legislature, executive and the judiciary in a presidential system of government comparable to Nigeria and for optimal reliable result of democratic governance, the three organs of government need to cooperate; but more in particular between the executive and the legislature; for they depend on each other to a certain degree for success; nevertheless, they have to respect the boundaries of the limit of the exercise of the authority. Indeed, their cooperation is urgently necessary for the task of some tribunals government established and charged with the responsibility in the past, present and perhaps in the future to handle conflicts in Nigeria; for the benefits of all

⁷⁶¹ C.f., The Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, 18, 1.

⁷⁶² The Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, 147, 1.

⁷⁶³ C.f., Ibid., 153.

and good governance to be achieved. Herein it is necessary to briefly say few words on some tribunals charged with the responsibility to investigate violence and such related issues. Then in the next section I shall focus on them.

In the aftermaths of violence; religious or civil and related issues in Nigeria, the government established tribunals to handle them. The part they play is very vital for reconciliation. The tribunals are created to investigate these problems, at times by the act of parliament and to submit reports of their investigations and equally advice the government on the line of actions to take in resolving and managing religious conflicts.

However, these tribunals are not established through the legislative processes. The executive arm of the government establishes them. Here absolutely, lies the problem of none implementation of their recommendations to the government at different levels. Nonetheless, it has to be stated, Nigeria since after her amalgamation in 1914, by Britain had used commissions of Inquiry to probe and manage the problems of religious disturbances. In 1940 for instance, there was the promulgation of the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance Act no. 1 that took effect on the 22nd of February 1940.⁷⁶⁴

The commissions of inquiry or peace summits as they are called hold meetings and conferences across Nigeria with the cross section of the stakeholders to find solutions to the Nigerian religious conflicts. Notable among these commissions of inquiry are the Commission of Inquiry into the Affairs of Certain Statutory Corporations in the Western Nigeria headed by Justice G. B. A. Coker – tagged, Coker Commission of Inquiry of 1962 and 1963.⁷⁶⁵ Although this commission of Inquiry was not strictly speaking on Religious Conflict, it however was a model of many of the Commissions of Inquiry on religious conflicts inaugurated to investigate religious crisis in Nigeria. Setting up of Commissions of Inquiry is approved by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the section of Tribunals of Inquiry Act, Chapter 447.⁷⁶⁶ Hence, it outlined and recognized three kinds of Inquiries. They are: (a) a Judicial Commission of Inquiry, (b) an Administrative Panel of Inquiry and (c) a Tribunal of Inquiry under the Tribunals

⁷⁶⁴ C.f., Gani Fawehinmi, *Probing Corruption in Nigeria*, in *Nigeriaworld Featured Article*, in <http://nigeriaworld.com/feature/publication/fawehinmi/012604.html>: January 21, 2004. Accessed on October 14, 2013.

⁷⁶⁵ C.f., Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic*, London, 1988, 104.

⁷⁶⁶ C.f., *The Tribunals of Inquiry Act: Law of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990*, Chapter 447; 1-5.

of Inquiry Act or a tribunal of Inquiry law or any other law. It is believed therefore, that when religious conflicts are investigated by commissions and their findings implemented; by punishing those instigating, sponsoring and perpetrating conflicts; then harmony and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria may be enhanced and be achieved.

Consequently, acting on the powers invested on him, by the Tribunals of Inquiry Act, a former Nigerian President Shehu Shagari, in 1980 instituted a Tribunal of Inquiry to probe the Maitatsine religious crisis. The Tribunal was headed by Justice Anthony Aniagolu.⁷⁶⁷ According to Toyin Falola, this commission was empowered among others things to investigate and determine: I.) If any person or group of persons by their conduct or negligence or otherwise however in any way caused or contributed to the breaking out of the disturbances and make, in the light of its findings in that behalf, recommendations as to measures to be taken against any such persons. II.) To ascertain if there had been incidences of breaches of the peace or of threats to, or actual breakdown in the maintenance of law and order in the areas affected prior to the breaking of the disturbances and involving any of the persons aforementioned. III.) To ascertain if any person or group of persons propagating or holding religious, political or other beliefs, or any movement or association led by any person or grouping such person contributed to or participated in any way in the disturbances; IV.) To determine if any person or group of persons, not being citizens of Nigeria encouraged, contributed to or participated in the disturbances; V.) To make recommendations in the light of its findings pursuant to the foregoing paragraph as to measures for the effective control of the entry into Nigeria of aliens of such description or where such aliens operate outside Nigeria, measures designed for countering their influence on the course of events in Nigeria. VI.) To ascertain if the areas affected by the disturbances and sections, classes or group of persons directly involved therein. VII.) To determine the actual and remote causes of the disturbances and suggest measures for the avoidance of similar incidents in the future and also measures designed to promote peace and harmony amongst the various sections, groups or classes or persons and communities involved and, VIII.) To examine

⁷⁶⁷ C.f., Felix Ikeagwuchi Agbara, *The Possibility of Convivence in Nigeria: Towards Intercultural Hermeneutics' and Religion in Dialogue*. Zürich: Lit Verlag GmbH, 2011, 102.

any other matter incidental to the foregoing and make recommendations thereon.⁷⁶⁸

On the terms of reference for the probe of the Justice Aniagolu's Inquiry, the government appeared already to be suspicious of foreigners being involved in the religious crisis. At the time there were speculations that Libya, Saudi Arabia and Israel were some of the sponsors of the crisis and more so the belief that Marwa Muhammadu, the leader of the Maitatsine group was a Cameroonian. However, in their assignment the panel visited several of the affected areas in the violence. They met the leaders of various groups to gather evidences, spoke to the emirs, governors and the police men involved in quelling the violence, in an effort to collect real information so as to resolve the crisis.⁷⁶⁹

In its reports and recommendations the Tribunal found no solid suggestion that any political party sponsored the violence for at the time the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) at the Federal was very suspicious of the State government under the watch of the of Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). These two political parties raised accusing fingers at each other with regard to the sponsorship of the conflict. The government of the federation did not in fact understand the most basic reason of the conflict, the definition of the problem and the human agents fundamental to the religious conflicts in Nigeria.

The Panel however, assigned most of the blame of the religious crisis on the leader of the Maitatsine, Marwa. It described him as lawlessness and disordered person and one whose recklessness is characterized by his dogmatic adherence to his own interpretation and version of the Islamic faith.⁷⁷⁰ It further argued that Marwa exhibited and practiced the highest level of intolerance and was guilty of the religious crisis and riots. Thus, the Tribunal added that Marwa recruited children as "almajiri"⁷⁷¹ and multitude of unemployed, susceptible and idle citizen in the cities.⁷⁷² Furthermore as stated by the Tribunal, Marwa, the leader of the Maitatsine group, was able to recruit adherents from across some West African countries to boost his fellowship. However out of about one thousand arrested members of the Maitatsine group the Tribunal established that only

⁷⁶⁸ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria, Op. Cit. quoting the Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry on the Kano Disturbances*: Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1981, Vol. 1, 2, 158.

⁷⁶⁹ C.f., *Ibid.* 158.

⁷⁷⁰ C.f., *Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry on the Kano Disturbances: Lagos: Federal Government Printer*, 1981, § 188.

⁷⁷¹ *The meaning of the word „Almajiri” has already been explained confer Section II above.*

⁷⁷² C.f., *Ibid.* 302.

about 185 were foreigners. But then the question in the mind of critics was; could this number of foreigners raise the magnitude of havoc and damage that occurred during the crisis or violence? Could the Tribunal not have overstated the bearing of the foreigners in the violence done by the Maitatsine? Toyin Falola was very critical of the manner in which the police identified and arrested these foreigners as members of Maitatsine sects. He based his contention on the fact that police records showed, most of them were arrested outside of Kano, the city of the violence, and moreover, most of them were arrested not during the disturbances, but at some police roadblocks outside of Kano.⁷⁷³ They were believed to have been invited by Marwa to join in his uprising. And more so the Tribunal indicated that about ten thousand members of the Maitatsine sects took part in the insurgency.

Further recommendation of the Tribunal stated that to avoid a reoccurrence of the religious conflict was to prevent the rise of religious leaders such as Marwa and to create the atmosphere for religious leaders to tolerate and accommodate one another. Besides, the State ought to prevent the recruitment of Children as “almajiri” by creating labour-incentive occupational projects as well as creating some small scale industries that would employ these youths.⁷⁷⁴ Here, it has to be said that this recommendation lacked substance and seriousness as to solve the problem. To me, an intensive engagement in the education of these children could only integrate and move them away from being used as instrument of violence for future occurrence. The Tribunal endorsed the fact that the Nigerian border needed to be properly handled so as to control and document the influx of foreigner into the country. It discovered that there was prevalent negligence on the enforcement of the rules and regulations of entering the country. Also, there was obviously inadequate gazetted entry points as well as complete nonattendance of border patrol divisions. There were insufficient provisions for the registration of Foreigner, particularly Africans and the equipment for checking activities and movement at the border which influence the life and the economy of the Country at large. It, therefore, advised the government to engage into a continuous state of scrutiny of foreigners before they are allowed into the country.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷³ C.f., Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, Op. Cit. 159.

⁷⁷⁴ C.f., Ibid. 159.

⁷⁷⁵ C.f., Ibid. 160.

Here, it has to be stated that the emphasis on the control of foreigner and border controls tend to ignore the internal factors which provoked the flourishing of violence in Nigeria and focusing more on the foreigners make them the scapegoats of the crisis. Consequently the report led to the expulsion of many West African Citizens from Nigeria in the 80s. And this reflected the belief of the government of Nigeria, accusing foreigners of being responsible for her internal religious problem. It thus did damage Nigeria's relation with the countries involved. Another aspect of the Tribunal's recommendation centered on the failures of some people, especially the law enforcement agencies namely the police and the National Security Organization or Agency. They were not able to control the Maitatsine build-ups to the crisis, and moreover, the security Organization could not police the Nigerian border effectively. The lack of coordination between government Agencies was for the major part, an aspect of the problem.

Continuing the Tribunal recommended that the negligence and lapses of Kano State government on issues of internal security caused the insurgency. Subsequent to this it argued: when the leader of the Maitatsine group, Marwa dishonoured a deportation laws, the State government did nothing. Hence it was accused of not taking the security of life and property of the people highly important and moreover, it knew of the dangers posed by Marwa. It, therefore, disregarded Marwa's criminal actions. Also some officials of the government of Kano State, especially the commissioner for special duties shared blame according to the tribunal for disregard of duty, for failing to order the arrest of Maitatsine sect's leader, Marwa, even when there were evident serious reasons to do so. The state governor was criticized and accused of neglecting the imperative security issues of the state while dining with the envoys of Marwa when they visited him and for writing personally to Marwa that implicated the government in enhancing the arrogance of Marwa.⁷⁷⁶

Nigeria is familiar with commissions of Inquiry being established by both federal and State governments in response to eruptions of violence and religious conflicts. To this effect, in 1987 the Commission of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Justice Mohammed Uwais was constituted to investigation on the Jimeta religious conflict in Gongola State

⁷⁷⁶*C.f., Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry on the Kano Disturbances: Lagos: Federal Government Printer, 1981, 114.*

as well as the Commission of Inquiry into the Zango Kataf disturbances⁷⁷⁷ under the supervision of Justice Karibe Whyte.⁷⁷⁸ Many such Commissions have been instituted by the Nigerian government to consider and unearth the immediate and remote origins of religious conflicts and related violence in various parts of Nigeria. During the religious crisis that erupted following Nigeria's secret enlistment into the Organisation of Islamic Conferences under the regime of President Ibrahim Babangida, the government inaugurated another Inquiry/Tribunal comprising twenty people each from both Christians and Muslims to represent their faith community.⁷⁷⁹ In addition, there was the Judicial Commission of Inquiry, under the Civil Disturbance Special Decree 1987. It was established at the State level headed by Justice H. N. Donli for the Kafanchan/Kaduna/Zaria religious conflict.⁷⁸⁰ Virtually, apiece every religious crisis in Nigeria there has been a commission of inquiry. This necessitated both the State and Federal governments to constitute two separates inquiries in 1992 on another Zango/Kataf religious crisis. The Federal panel was chaired by Justice Benedict Okadigbo, whereas the state panel was under the chairmanship of Justice Rahila Cudjoe.⁷⁸¹ Along the same line of Inquiry and under the Tribunals of Inquiry Act Chapter 447, President Olusegun Obasanjo on the 7 of June 1999 inaugurated the famous National Reconciliation Committee and the Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission, known commonly as the (Justice) Oputa Panel.⁷⁸²

Based on many past commission of inquiry Nigerians were very doubtful of the Commission. The reason was, many believed that the commission would be as unproductive like the previous commissions inaugurated by past regimes, particularly by the military governments. Many of the past reports were never published or implemented by the governments that set them up. In addition, the nomination of the Commissioners was contentious. The majority of the commissioners were Christians,

⁷⁷⁷C.f., *The Zango-Kataf Religious Conflicts of 1902, 1904-1905-1907, 1946, 1953-1958 and 1992 were treated on Section II above.*

⁷⁷⁸C.f., A. M. Ahanotu, *Muslim and Christians in Nigeria: A Contemporary Political Discourse*, in, A. M. Ahanotu, ed., *Religion, State and Society in Contemporary Africa*. New York, 1992, 11-60.

⁷⁷⁹C.f., M. O. Opeloye, *The Qu'ranic Guidelines on Inter-religious Relations: An Overview*, in J. K. Olupona, Ed., *Religion and Peace in Multi-Faith in Nigeria*, Ile-Ife, 1992, 89.

⁷⁸⁰C.f., Iheanyi M. Enwerem, *An Assessment of Government's Formal Responses to Ethnic/Religious Riots, 1980-1990s*, in Ernest E. Uwazie, Isaac O. Albert and Godfrey N. Uzoigwe, eds., in *Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria*, USA: Maryland, 1992, 128.

⁷⁸¹C.f., Ibid. 128.

⁷⁸²C.f., Nneoma V. Nwogu, *Shaping Truth, Reshaping Justice: Sectarian Politics and the Nigeria Truth Commission*, New York, 2007, 109.

but only one Muslim. This raised questions and suspicion from the Muslim community. In a multicultural and religious milieu such as Nigeria, the constitution of the commissioners disregarded the ethno-religious geography. It also did not take into cognizance the preponderance of political dialogues in Nigeria. The skepticism of the composition of the commissioners and the Commission was articulated thus by Nneoma V. Nwogu:

“In a fractious federation requiring reconciliation, religious and geo-ethnic sensitivities should have been reflected in selecting the membership of the panel. For the various religious and ethnic divides to repose confidence in the panel, it is necessary for the composition of the panel which was to serve as umpire to reflect the ethnic and religious strength and diversity of Nigeria. Of the seven-member *panel* only one inconsequential bench warmer, Alhaji Lawal Bamali was a Muslim.”⁷⁸³

This criticism was indeed in order. Considering it from the ethnic groups in Nigeria, out of about 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria, Obasanjo chose from only seven of them. The proportional representation of the groups was unsatisfactory and awkward which would in actual fact affect the outcome of the report of the HRVIC⁷⁸⁴. A huge lack of enthusiasm was accorded the inauguration of the Commission by majority of Nigerians; despite several years of Military dictatorship, in which people’s human rights and dignity were severally trampled upon and violated with brutality; this was the consequent effect of this gross inadequate representation. Hence, the commission, many thought, may not bring in the anticipated result. Another contention to the panel was it not being enacted by the act of parliament; rather, it was instituted by the presidential order as already indicated above by the Tribunals of Inquiry Act of 1990 Chapter, 447. General opinion was in favour of it being enacted by the Parliamentary Act. This together with the contentious constitution of the members of the commission made some previously high ranks government officials, particularly the military generals summoned to the panel; refused to attend the sitting of the commission without any consequential outcome, because the tribunal for them has no legal power to subpoena any person.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸³ Nneoma V. Nwogu, *Quoting Karfe Oputa’s Scale of Justice, in Shaping Truth, Reshaping Justice*, Op., Cit., 30.

⁷⁸⁴ C.f., HRVIC, signify: *Human Rights Violation Investigation Commission, set up by the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, in 1999.*

⁷⁸⁵ C.f., Ibid. 33.

The panel's terms of reference was like the previously established commissions of Inquiry, but with the amendment to investigate the Violations of Human Rights, committed in Nigeria since the 15th of January 1966 to the 28th of May, 1999.⁷⁸⁶ The commission has to deal with the entire violation attendant almost within the entire history of Nigeria's independence. In its sittings the Chairman of the panel according to the head of the legal counsel of the commission acknowledged the sensitivity of the ethnic public, thereby making extra effort in this respect. For this reason the commission selected cases bordering principally on the gross violations of human rights.⁷⁸⁷ In her sitting the commission received over 10,000 petitions from people. It had a team of legal advisers to help it in its deliberations and sittings. They travelled to different regions of Nigeria hearing and investigating gross violations of human rights. Its sittings were aired live on the national televisions in order to enhance public participation and the following of its proceedings to intensify openness, and transparency.

In its proceedings, the HRVIC investigated the human rights violations which characterized and ensured the emergence of military regimes. Within the period spanning about thirty four years, the commission has to probe, among other things: about two mass killings in Nigeria that precipitated the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970, several infamous military rules and attempted gory military coups d'état, mysterious kidnappings, killings and torture as well as several hundreds of political and civilian assassinations, several hundreds of extreme ethno-religious insurgencies and an annulment of a presidential election of 1993; which was adjudged the most fair and free election in Nigerian history.⁷⁸⁸

Although the commission in its public sittings, received more than ten thousand petitions with several other hundreds of petitions that did not meet its criteria for acceptance. However it sorted and treated the most important of the petitions; it deemed best pertinent to its objectives. The commission investigated "200 most grievous petitions with the widest implications for Nigeria."⁷⁸⁹ There were petitions on human rights violation against some past military presidents of Nigeria, mainly: former Head of States

⁷⁸⁶ C.f., Ibid. 31.

⁷⁸⁷ C.f., Ibid. 31.

⁷⁸⁸ C.f., Nneoma V. Nwogu, *Sharing Truth, Reshaping Justice*, Op., Cit., 35.

⁷⁸⁹ Nneoma V. Nwogu, *Quoting Chinwe Uwandu in Today of January 2-8 2000 in Sharing Truth, Reshaping Justice*, Op., Cit., 33.

- Generals Mohammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Abdulsalami Abubakar. Some were on other high standing military officers such as; Lt. General Theophilus Danjuma, Lt Colonel Togun and Colonel Akilu. These military officers refused to appear before the commission to answer and give details of the version of the endeavours under their watch and controls.⁷⁹⁰ Nigerians interpreted their refusal to appear before the commission as regarding themselves to be above the law. However, they could not be compelled to do otherwise, since the commission lacked such powers. This was actually a clear display of the reluctance of offenders to play a part or involve themselves in the process which values the reconciliation and restoration of all in the Nigeria project.

There was a high profile petition sent by the Igbo ethnic group of south eastern Nigeria; represented by the “Ohaneze Ndi Igbo”. In the petition the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo presented a comprehensive account of injustices meted to the ethnic-region. It included all the issues of marginalization and of crucial human rights abuses perpetrated against the Igbos from 1966 down to 1999.⁷⁹¹ The Ohaneze Ndi Igbo’s petition was presented to designate the military coup of 1966 as the beginning of and also the foundation of the deceitful validation for utmost human rights violations against the Igbos down to 1999. It, however, saw the coup of 1966 as a popular non-ethnic coup which strove for solution to the problems of the first republic. Nevertheless, its petition read in part thus: “Injustices and atrocities immediately before the civil war (1966-1967), the injustices and atrocities during the civil war (1967-1970), atrocities and disempowerment immediately after the civil war (1970 to the mid-seventies), and atrocities and disempowerment from the mid-seventies to 1999.”⁷⁹² Moreover it argued of the extermination of the Igbos who lived in Northern Nigeria at this period. And the petition moreover stated:

“The massacre of Igbo women and children who were deceived into flocking to railway stations in search of passenger trains to take them home, forcible collection of Igbo female students from schools and herding of them into leper colonies, to be defiled by lepers; the slaughtering in the transit zone of the Middle Belt of Igbo refugees who managed to escape the wrath of the far North; the refusal virtually of all Nigerians to give protection to any Easterner; the active involvement of law-enforcement agencies in the pogroms; and the exodus of 2 million people

⁷⁹⁰ C.f., Ibid. 36.

⁷⁹¹ C.f., Ibid. 52-53.

⁷⁹² Nneoma V. Nwogu *quoting the “Ohaneze Ndi Igbo’s” Petition in Sharing Truth, Op. Cit.*, 53-54.

in flight from a country that has rejected them and that has offered them nothing but a mass grave. Indeed, the future of no future confronting Ndi Igbo at this time was symbolized by the fate of Igbo babies at the Kano railway holocaust.”⁷⁹³

In the course of the event, the Arewa Consultative Forum group, representing the Northern Nigeria region reacted to the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo petition; it understood the 1966 military coup as both culturally motivated and the source of the illegal military entrance into the politics of Nigeria. On the Military entrance in Nigerian politics John Odey, argued, that the military inflicted on Nigerian people incalculable harm. He credited the greater part of Nigerian problems to the military, with its leadership failure, corruption and the lust for power, exploiting and manipulating Nigerian people and politics.⁷⁹⁴ An aspect of the Arewa response re-enacted an already make belief in some quarters of Nigeria that the Igbos organized and executed the military coup of 1966.⁷⁹⁵ And the response in part reasoned: “*That* Nigeria’s march towards military rule and the incessant political instability has (sic) been the direct consequences of the actions of a cabal of military officers largely of Igbo extraction.they took the first critical action to uproot the democratic culture and consensus upon which the Nigeria Federation was built when they overthrew the government led by a prime Minister of Northern extraction, on the 15th of January 1966 through a mutiny that imposed a Unitary government on Nigeria.”⁷⁹⁶ But then some have argued that the same people lamenting the unitary type of government are the supporters and beneficiary of the system, thus being criticized. They held it firm as long as it served their purpose. However, this belief of the AREWA was allegedly reinvigorated by realities of the victims of the coup who were largely non-Igbos, whereas the Igbos they alleged escaped been killed. Besides, at the time, three Igbos; one a commander of the Nigerian Army, Major General, Johnson Thomas U. Aguiyi-Ironsi and the other two the President of the country, Nnamdi Azikiwe and the Senate President, Nwafor Orizu, escaped death. This conspiracy theory by the Arewa group was discredited by the Ohaneze; who countered that the coup d’état was not an Igbo coup. It argued that “the military intervention which subdued the coup was led by a group of Igbo officers. Subsequently Igbos intervened to save the country. Too, the group contended; the president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Igbo man and the Prime minister,

⁷⁹³Ibid. 59.

⁷⁹⁴C.f., John Odey, *Christians, Politics and the Nigerian Dilemma*, Enugu: SNAAP Press Ltd, 1999, 79.

⁷⁹⁵ C.f., Nneoma, Op., Cit., 58.

⁷⁹⁶ C.f., Ibid. 58.

Tafawa Balewa, a Hausa man were individually aware of the imminent coup d'état. But whereas the president chose to travel out of the country, the prime minister decided to stay in the country".⁷⁹⁷ Therefore, both, since fully informed they seem to argue could have chosen to escape the fate or taken some proactive measures against the coup planners.

Entrenched in the arguments of the two groups is the protracted nature of the Nigerian conflicts, in a country divided by ethno-religious problems and the interplay between religion and politics in Nigeria. There is the consensus in some quarters that both being an integral part of the culture; religion influences politics and is in turn formed by it. Therefore, the quality and range of these impacts in a multi-religious society such as Nigeria may well be harmful or constructive⁷⁹⁸ depending on how one uses it. However, it is incumbent upon the government of Nigeria which is in the habit of instituting Commissions of Inquiry to develop and advance politics which upholds interreligious affiliation.

An intervention to the Igbo petition came from Matthew Hassan Kukah who argued in the perspective of justice in Nigeria. He underlined that the Igbo argument re-focused Nigeria to the centrality of injustice which have long been forgotten. Consequently he opined:

"The struggle against injustice has been with us a long time, and the highest expression of that injustice is the civil war. No sincere policies were established to actualize the elimination of those injustices, and Ohaneze drew attention to that. To have a commission deal with issues of a war 40 years after it was fought shows that the issues still persists".⁷⁹⁹

The event underscored the yawning of justice which persistently lacks in Nigeria. And endeavours made to inquire into them and to promote justice most often than not meet with heavy stoppages.

The usual government of Nigeria's response to the outbreak of religious conflicts has been to inaugurate a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the remote and immediate

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid. 58-59.

⁷⁹⁸ C.f., Afe Adogame, *Politicization of Religion and Religionization of Politics in Nigeria*, in *Religion, History and Politics in Nigeria: Essay in Honour of Ogbu U. Kalu*, eds. Chima J. Korie & G. Ugo Nwokeji. New York: University Press of America, 2005, 35.

⁷⁹⁹ *Nneoma Quoting Matthew Kukah she interviewed*, Op. Cit., 53.

causes of disturbances. Commissions of Inquiries are hence not lacking. Subsequently, ever since 1990, several of them have been established. The foremost commissions are basically the Commission of Inquiry chaired by Justice Aribiton Fiberesima, into the April 1994 Conflict, the Judicial Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice Niki Tobi to investigate the crisis of September 2001,⁸⁰⁰ and besides, the Federal government of Nigeria set up a parallel commission headed by Justice Suleiman Galadima.⁸⁰¹ Added was the 2004 Alhaji Shehu Idris, the Emir of Zaria Presidential Peace Initiative Committee into the Plateau State crisis.⁸⁰² We have also the Plateau Peace of the 18th of August to the 21st of September 2004, the Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry of the November crisis of 2008 and the Jos crisis, Presidential Advisory Committee of March to April of 2010.⁸⁰³ The Tribunals of Inquiry have almost the same terms of references and the reports are similar.⁸⁰⁴ All have submitted their reports to the government, either to the state or federal government depending on which tier of government that inaugurated the Commission. Indeed, the various governments of the country easily inaugurate and charge commissions of inquiry to investigate cases, problems and crisis. But then, there has been reluctance on the part of the same government to take seriously the outcome and recommendations of the commissions. The government finds it difficult to implement the findings or take practical functional actions on the output of the commissions.

6.5.3. Executive

The executive is one of the three arms of government in a democratic system of government. Indeed, it occupies quite a vital standing in governmental administration of a state.⁸⁰⁵ Besides, the executive has the sole responsibility in government for the day to day management of the state. The executive formulates the various policies of the government and takes responsibility they are carried out fully. In addition the executive of the arm of government takes responsibility to decide on the first instance the manner

⁸⁰⁰ C.f., Shedrack Gaya Best, *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State, Nigeria*, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., 2007, 87.

⁸⁰¹ C.f., Ibid. 84.

⁸⁰² C.f., Ibid. 248.

⁸⁰³ C.f., *Curbing Violence in Nigeria, 1: The Jos Crisis, in International Crisis Group: Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide, Africa Report N° 196, December 17, 2012, 20.*

⁸⁰⁴ C.f., Shedrack Gaya Best, *Conflict and Peace Building in Plateau State, Nigeria*, Op., Cit., 88-94; 141, 154 183, 186 and 248. See also the Justice Anthony Aniagolu Commission of Inquiry above.

⁸⁰⁵ Harold Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1992.

and type of policies he submits to the legislature. Moreover, he takes also responsibility in ensuring that the public administration services abide by policies passed into laws by the legislature. It is the duty of the executive as well to administer and supervise the various activities of the state public service systems. These functions hence underscore the role the executive plays and or ought to exercise for good governance, for peace – implementing policies that ensure management, resolution of conflicts in a multicultural, multi-religious and multiethnic society such as Nigeria. Through good policies he is to and ought to stabilize the nation thereby creating a continued developmental progress of the state.

The executive power of the federation governments of Nigeria is conferred by the constitution of Nigeria on the President of Nigeria because Nigeria operates a presidential system of government identical to the USA presidential system of government.⁸⁰⁶ And for the executive at the state levels of democratic government the task resides with the governors of the states.⁸⁰⁷ Political scientists also argue that their work extends to deep handling understanding of inventing creative approach to peace and reconciliation in the state in the function as the sole authority and responsibility for the day to day administration of government.

The present executive of the Nigerian federation has not done much to change the military mentality of rule dominant in Nigeria. In the period of military rule, overt use of power was exercised and most often brutal forces were in vogue. The rule of law was under huge erosion of pressure that was near wipe out of it. The longstanding outcome of this was thus a generation of young people who grew up in the country who have no respect of human life and dignity of the human person. This established a culture of violence characterized by lawlessness, ambiguity, insecurity and crimes. This is the aftermath of the trail left by series of conflicts in the country, and most certainly now in the northern part of the country where the reign of Boko Haram terrorist dominate and in the south west and south east of Nigeria; where kidnappings, human trafficking, ritual murder and arm robbery are daily occurrence. The aftermaths are present in a wide range of human behaviors and experiences upsetting confidence *and many other crimes*.⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁶ The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, no. 5 as well as 1 & 2 of no. 130.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid, no. 176.

⁸⁰⁸ C.f., Lord Alderdice, *Creating a Shared Parliament in a Divided Society: Lessons from the Northern Ireland Experience*, in *Parliaments as Peacebuilders, in Conflict-Affected Countries*, Op., Cit., 73-74.

Indeed, teamwork by these pillars of presidential system of government in Nigeria truly adopting the notion of a separation of roles and powers promotes their independence and also backed up by the principles of checks and balances to promote interdependency work for the benefits of all and instill system of management of conflicts. Then, the degree in this regard of fruitful governmental development will be contingent on the healthy relationships of these levels of government based on the principle of democratic governance.

6.6. Ecumenical and interreligious perspective

In this sub-section I intend to emphasize the urgency of building a collaborative capacity among those involved in dialogues and peace initiatives. Building a collaborative capacity involves overcoming a mindset which is characteristic of leaders in divided societies. This further includes trust and confidence building⁸⁰⁹ in the management of interreligious conflicts in Nigeria and among institutions for peace, the makers of peace and the promoters of democracy. Moreover, it is worthy to note that the ethical dimension to conflict resolution is important. To this effect trust and confidence are ethical values of international significance both in social relations, religious and secular milieus. The various stake holders on the project of reconciliation in the ecumenical and interreligious circles are to imbibe and embody such aptitude. This aptitude is necessary in management of conflict scenarios since I think and like some others have equally observed that conflict is unescapable in the life of people based on the fact that our knowledge is limited and imperfect. Consequently diverse people could perceive diverse things not in the same way based on their understanding and also their perspectives could also be different. We need thus the help and direction of one another to move forward especially in conflict scenarios. Therefore, there is the need to advance through peace advocates. Peace initiative is present and principal in almost all the religions and in particular prime in Christianity and Islam. Conflict scenarios are to be exploited through the advocacy of peace. This is the genuine apparatus for handling conflicts. This is the tool of engagement of the commitment of the Nigeria Inter Religious Council, the Christian Association of Nigeria, the Christian institutions and the Nigerian Supreme

⁸⁰⁹ C.f., Reinhard Slenczka and Gunther Wenz, editors, *Is Christ a Christian? On Inter-Religious Dialogue and Intra-Religious Horizon*: Göttingen, 2002, 46-48. *On this section more information could be obtained on the theme of Confidence building.*

Council of Islamic Affairs and other Managers of religious motivated conflicts in Nigeria.

On the part of Christians and the Christian institutions involved; their ecumenical commitment is rooted in the common faith in Jesus Christ. Indeed, it is moreover entrenched in the shared gratitude of baptism of all Christians that made all Christians members of the body of Christ – the ecumenical conviction of the universal brotherhood of Christians.⁸¹⁰ Besides, Ecumenism as a pilgrimage towards justice and peace as I already said earlier above reminds us once more here that the Churches are challenged as the people of God on the way together confronting all divisions of race, gender, age and culture striving to realize justice and peace, upholding the integrity of creation. As the people of God freed by God's forgiveness and journeying together in the midst of the brokenness of the world we are emboldened by the ecumenical conviction of our brotherhood of Christians to proclaim the good news of healing, justice, peace and reconciliation in Jesus Christ.⁸¹¹ Journeying together as pilgrims stresses the essential theme of our relationship, of discovering and rediscovering ourselves or each other as pilgrims as people on the move motivated by the same call⁸¹² to be ambassadors of peace, justice and reconciliation who before then have left the safe zones behind but are now prepared to be transformed and renewed by our encounter⁸¹³ so as to affect the others. Consequently, there are some tasks ahead; to pursue the inauguration of the reign of peace and non-violence in our various spheres. Then as pilgrims profoundly concerned vis-a-vis the widespread situation in our world, there is indeed, the need to identify certain areas of concerns to work together on. As pilgrims on the same journey coming from different angles; the ecumenical colleagues ought to focus and be committed in building communities consistent on justice, love and peace. To achieve this, the ecumenical colleagues would have to work in partnership with other ecumenical agents and as well as people of other faith communities to educate their communities for transformation. Needed also is to search for the prospects to cultivate and develop modalities for peace education – a culture of peace – for use within the member Churches

⁸¹⁰ C.f., John Paul II, *Encyclical, "Ut Unum Sint": On Commitment to Ecumenism*, 1995, no. 42.

⁸¹¹ C.f., David Field and Jutta Koslowski, editors. *Prospects and Challenges for the Ecumenical Movement in the 21st Century: Insights from the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute, Globalethic.net International Secretariat*: Switzerland, 2016, 60.

⁸¹² C.f., *Ibid*, 61.

⁸¹³ C.f., *Ibid.*, 61.

and the ecumenical institutions.⁸¹⁴ A similar manner of thought had already been expressed by the *Nostra Aetate* when it affirmed in the other religions; this commitment that steams from the conviction of the ray of truth that enlightens all people, but then according to *Nostra Aetate* is fully simply revealed in Jesus Christ.⁸¹⁵

This veritable apparatus of managing conflicts or religiously motivated conflicts inspired Nigerian Government under the former present of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 to establish the Institute for Peace and conflict Resolution (IPCR). The IPCR is principally a research center. It is an organization that works towards the strengthening of the capacity for the promotion of peace, conflict prevention, management and resolution. It is further charged with the responsibility to engage in collaboration with other people involved in peace advocates and resolutions and to constantly offer germane information and advice to the policy makers of Nigeria. However, many bottlenecks have diminished the capacity of the IPCR to work effectively in the face of the many conflicts the country had experienced.

The Project for Christians and Muslims in Africa (PROCUMURA) inspired by this veritable tool and understanding the historical dimensions of mutual perception in the world of today organized seminars and conferences for Christians and Muslims and via the seminars and conferences to promote religious love and tolerance. Indeed, being concerned deeply about the prevailing situational scenarios of religiously inspired conflicts and to reconcile people motivated the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs to organize seminars which gear towards promoting good neighborliness and good understanding of Islam however too underscoring the urgency for religious forbearance in Nigeria. Equally in the commitment for peace, justice and reconciliation is the NIREC whose organized conferences are designed to promote mutual understanding and establish a culture to make religious people of different background and of different religions to appreciate one another.

⁸¹⁴ C.f., *Towards a Culture of Peace in the 21st Century: Our Responses as Christians to Social Advocacy of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference: Christian Conference of Asia. Thailand, 2001, 3.*

⁸¹⁵ C.f., *Nostra Aetate*, no. 2.

6.3.1. Peace-Building amongst Christians and Muslims through a theology of Love

In this section I consider a conversation or theology which would make Christian and Muslims to be aware of and recognize the need for each other in order to understand their scriptures and traditions for the respect of the others Or a theology of love that strengthen the process of interreligious dialogue and peaceful coexistence or co-living of Christians and Muslims by opening the doors to survey collectively and mutually the traditions of the two religions so as to find ways they could live peacefully in a multi-religious environment in Nigerian. I think this is also a theology enhancing the relationship that is frequently motivated by passionate desire to seek to enter into a profound communion with the other. Indeed, in this sense, love is appropriate and essential in view of the fact that it encompasses something which one does not have nevertheless considers it worth having and enjoying.⁸¹⁶ This approach primes understanding the uniqueness of one another religious beliefs. It equally recognizes the values, the differences, the connections and relationships in the different religious traditions and thus promotes harmony through the respect and acceptance of the treasure of these differences. Definitely, this approach is a model of respecting the otherness, of dialoguing as well as a model of love.⁸¹⁷

This engagement calls for an outright shift from the exclusivist mentality of religion to the embrace and hospitality of the other. Hence, in both Islam and Christianity, the traditions price essentially the love of God and the love of neighbours. Indeed, Ghazi bin Muhammed opined that there is no true faith in God starved of the love of neighbour.⁸¹⁸ The two faith communities in Nigeria cannot live parallel lives in the same country, hence the necessity for tolerance and non-interference from both religions. Indeed, this approach of love imposes on both Christians and Muslims to be neighbours to one another, to respect the dignity, honour and integrity of the other faith adherents. As already underscored, the scriptures of the two traditions (the Quran and the Bible) occupy essential place in the day to day lives of both practitioners. Christian tradition calls for the love of God and the love of neighbours. It urges us for the deep-seated

⁸¹⁶ Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response*, New York: Harper One, 2011, 154.

⁸¹⁷ Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love*, London: T & T Clark International, 2010, 1-4.

⁸¹⁸ Ghazi bin Muhammed, *A Common Word between Us and You*, in Miroslav Volf, Ghazi bin Muhammed and Melissa Yarrington, eds., *A Common Word Muslims and Christians on Loving God Neighbour*, Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010, 30-46.

commitment and yearning to love God more than every other thing in the world. It indeed, calls for the love of our neighbours because of God. Consequently, Werner G. Jeanrond added that every honest commitment and relationship is a chance to form a stronger relationship with God. Therefore, loving our neighbour and one's self eventually becomes a duty of one's love for God.⁸¹⁹ This enhances the work to challenge and to discover new techniques or methods of hospitality to the others and as well call for a deep seated and challenge the varieties of forms in which our powers align with the oppressive structure of various domains of our presence. The theology of love, for us Christians, is a gift of God himself to us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ; bestowed on us through the power of the Holy Spirit of God. As it is, owing to this love, we grow in the likeness of God because such love leads us close to God. Hence the more we practice this love, the greater we grow in the image of God,⁸²⁰ the God of life, who leads us to justice and peace,⁸²¹ in the areas where there are relationships of oppressions, religious conflicts, areas where the dignity of the human person is discriminated and denied,⁸²² and to be open to how God can inspire and help us to serve one another and be accountable to the common calling of all, be it Christian or Muslim,⁸²³ and as such opens the doors to religious togetherness.⁸²⁴ Indeed, in this wisdom, we are never limited by the problems of the past, be it the crusades of the Christians or the jihads of the Muslims, or are ignorant of the difficulties and differences also in traditions but then the efforts to work together overrides all because they realize that they have suffered together. This was the experience of both Pastor James Wuye (a Christian Pastor) and Imam Muhammed Ashafa (a Muslim Imam); both had previously very strong similar negative perspective about each other's neighbour and religion as well as being deeply moved by hatred of the other's group; both realized that they were victims of violent religious conflict in Kaduna Nigeria and later became champions of peacebuilding, forgiveness, justice, peace and reconciliation of their communities in and beyond Nigeria.⁸²⁵ Hence it is a common concern in solidarity and *hospitality* according to

⁸¹⁹ Werner G. Jeanrond, *A Theology of Love*, Op., Cit., 53.

⁸²⁰ Barvel J. Von Tarsicius, *Love in Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopaedia*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, 508-515.

⁸²¹ *World Council of Churches, 10th Assembly Report*, Busan South Korea, 2013.

⁸²² Olav Fykse Tveit, *The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*, *Ecumenical Review*, Op., Cit., 127.

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*, New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1995, 143.

⁸²⁵ David Little, ed., *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge: University Press, 2007, 259-264.

Edward Schillebeeckx for the poor and oppressed that reunites people of different faith commitments in the “ecumene of suffering humanity”⁸²⁶, into the new and renewal treasures of difference and which now sees, hears and understands their own and each other’s scriptures and beliefs with new eyes and new heart.⁸²⁷ This attitude or approach of new heart and new eyes will enhance the realization and comprehension as well as an essential call, in both religions to inspire the leaders of the religions to teach their adherents the need, for authentic interpretation of the Christian and Islamic traditions that after all, the frequent demand for a coming back to unpolluted Islamic traditions and or the call by some Christians to return to a strict observance of the Bible literally as if these tradition were in fact unbroken, eternal, universal and static sources which are to be followed in all circumstances at all times is never being sincere to the traditions themselves,⁸²⁸ rather , it is to run the constraint risk of losing credibility. Indeed, it is so in view of the fact that people know fully well that other traditions through their education have long and honourable histories and produce well-rounded and kind-hearted citizens. Hence, boundaries everywhere is caving in to what John Keenan called cultural and religious “osmosis”. Thus, Christians, Muslims and all, read and know about the teachings of Monks of other religions (especially Buddhist Monks). Hence, he argued that people of different backgrounds, today meditate in yogic manner and engage in praxis seated meditation, of the Buddhist tradition and on the other hand Buddhists especially, Tibetan lamas are beginning to learn Christian thoughts.⁸²⁹ People are no longer ethnically or religiously tied.

As I indicated above, the Christian practice of the love of God and the love of neighbours as motivated by the Spirit of God reflects love since love as a gift of God bequeaths us with the deep seated endeavour to pursue the transformation that brings in pilgrimage of justice and peace and love. Thus, love is the arena where people can come to, in and out without being threatened. It inspires to drive away hatred no matter the causes of it, because, it is always a factor that creates new wars or violent conflicts. This approach, the theology of love here being proposed is an aspect in the conflict transformation

⁸²⁶ Edward Schillebeeckx Quoted in Paul F. Knitter, in, *One Earth, Many Religions*, Op., Cit., 143.

⁸²⁷ Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth, Many Religions*, Op., Cit., 143.

⁸²⁸ Akintunde E. Akinade, ed., *Fractured Spectrum. Perspectives on Christian-Muslim Encounters in Nigeria*, New York: PETER LANG, 2013, 17.

⁸²⁹ John Keenan, *The New Interfaith Context and Shifting Agenda for Religious Thinking*, in, eds., *Alan Race & Jim Kenney, et al., Interreligious Insight, A Journal of Dialogue and Engagement*, Vol. 1, No. 2, New York, April 2003, 27-36.

process which enables and move us (individuals and groups towards a more equitable and stable future required that people who are challenged and ready to take up changes in their lives and also to take up risks challenging members of their own religious backgrounds or ethnic backgrounds to as well do the same thing. This approach is the creator of change that provide the welcome and hospitality I discussed earlier in this work.

On further advancing the practice of Christian love of God and neighbours the story of the Good Samaritan⁸³⁰ already discussed somewhere above remains classical and comprehensive paradigm for the relationship of Christians with the others. In this sense thus, love should be the central hallmark of communities and the distinguishing mark in relationships with one another. Indeed, succinctly David Schindler argued that it is the responsibility of the Christian to love God and the neighbours.⁸³¹

The Quran on its part urges and outlines for the Muslims the practice of love of God and of the neighbours and relationships with others, to overcome mistrust and intense violent conflict thus, “O mankind, we created you from a single (pair) of male and female and made you into nations and tribes that you know each other (Quran 49: 13)” Furthermore Shaikh Ibrahim Menk an Islamic scholar from Nigeria reiterates the Islamic obligation to live in peace and harmony in the tradition of Hadith. Hence according to him the Quran embraces non-Muslim neighbours and these have a prerogative on the understanding, compassion and kindness of all Muslims.⁸³² Indeed, it is in this background that the document signed by 138 Islamic scholars known as “a Common Word Between Us and You”, a request and invitation for dialogue⁸³³ underscored a central point on the love of God and of neighbours. Besides, the Quran affirmed that those who are good and kind to the neighbours on earth that Allah will indeed be generous to them on the day of Judgement. Indeed, Prophet Muhammed proclaimed according to the (Surah, 5: 32).

⁸³⁰ Luke 10: 25-37.

⁸³¹ David L. Schindler, *The Way of Love in the Church's Mission to the World*, in, Livio Melina and Anderson A. Carl, eds., *The Way of Love Reflections on Pope Benedict XVI., Encyclical Deus Caritas Est*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006, 33.

⁸³² Shaikh M. Ibrahim Menk, *Islam Demands Good Neighbourliness*, in, *Daily Trust of Nigeria*, <http://www.dailytrust.com>, April 18, 2011.

⁸³³ Miroslav Volf, *A Common Word for a Common Future*, Op., Cit., 18-19.

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8. Abbreviations.

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis.
AG	Ad Gentes.
ACMMRN	Association for Christian-Muslim Mutual Relations of Nigeria.
AECAWA	Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa.
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria.
CBCN	Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria.
CFRCN	Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria.
CSN	Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria.
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria.
FRSC	Federal Road Safety Commission.
GS	Gaudium et Spes.
IFMC/MCDF	Interfaith Mediation Center and Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum.
JDPC	Justice, Development and Peace Commissions.
JNI	Jama'ata Nasril Islam.
LG	Lumen Gentium.
NA	Nostra Aetate.

NBA	Nigeria Bar Association.
NCAN	Northern Christian Association of Nigeria.
NIFAAM	Nigeria Interfaith Action Association to Fight Malaria.
NIREC	Nigeria Interreligious Council.
NLC	Nigerian Labour Congress.
NPC	Northern Peoples Party.
NPN	National Part of Nigeria.
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs.
NUJ	Nigeria Union of Journalists.
NUNS	National Union of Nigerian Students.
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference.
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.
PROCMURA	Program for Christian-Muslim Relations of Nigeria.
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party.
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
UMBC	United Middle Belt Congress.
UR	Unitatis Redintegratio.
WCC	World Council of Churches.
WEA	World Evangelical Alliance.

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