St. Patrick's College

Maynooth

THE PROSPECTS OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN THE LIGHT AND TEACHINGS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS IN NIGERIA

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial Fulfilment of the Conditions for the Doctoral Degree in Theology

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DEDICATION

To the late Very Rev. Fr. JD O'Connell SPS and all deceased Bamai's family members/ deceased Priests of Minna Diocese. Also my parents; Dominic Swanta Bamai and Anna Bamai, and to all my Benefactors and Benefactresses.

DECLARATION

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

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Rev. Fr. Yusuf Dominic Bamai

Date_____.

ABBREVIATIONS

AECAWA   Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa

AGD   *Ad Gentes Divinitus*

AWR   Assembly of the World's Religions

CAN   Christian Association of Nigeria

CBCN   Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria

CCC   Catechism of the Catholic Church

DH   *Dignitatis Humanae*

DRC/DDG   Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group

ESR   Educators for Social Responsibility

FCT   Federal Capital Territory

GS   *Gaudium et Spes*

HSA-UWC   Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity

IARF   International Association for Interreligious Freedom

I.D.B.   Islamic Development Bank

IDP   Internally Displaced Persons

IED   Improvised Explosive Device

IRF   International Religious Foundation

ISESCO   Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

ISIS   *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*

JBC   Jerome Biblical Commentary

JNI   Jama'at Nasr al-Islam ('Group to Aid Islam)

KAICIID   King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and

                Intercultural Dialogue

LD   *Lumen Gentium*

NA	*Nostra Aetate*
NASFAT	NASRUL-LAHI-IL-FATHI Society of Nigeria (There is no help, except from Allah)
NIM	National Institute of Management
NIREC	Nigerian Inter-Religious Council
NSCIA	Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference/Countries
PCID	Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
RCCP	Resolving Conflict Creatively Programm
S.A.W.	*Sallallahu Alayhi wa Salaam*" (may God's prayers and peace be with him)
SECAM	Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USCIRF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom
WCF	World Congress of Faiths
WFIC	World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils
WPR	World Parliament of Religions

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Akintunde E. Akinade cited that: "With a population of over 120 million people, Nigeria has been described by Archbishop Teissier of Algiers as the greatest Islamo-Christian nation in the world. By this he means that there is no other nation where so many Christians and Muslims live side-by-side. This reality makes Nigeria an important test case for developing patterns of Christian-Muslim relations in Africa,"[1] and consequently, the entire world. The population and ratio between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is further confirmed by Emmanuel Obeng-Mireku in 2016 thus; "In Nigeria, the National Population commission estimates that the population of Nigeria stood at 182 million in 2016 ("Nigeria's Population Now," 2016). The Pew Research Centre estimates that some 49% of the population is Muslim, and 49% is Christian."[2] Nigeria estimated (population 200 million) now;[3] still continues to struggle with the problem of religious crisis. The history of religious violence/conflicts in Nigeria is traced to 1953 in Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi State. It was among the settlers of the town, (the indigenous Sayawa people and the Hausa-Fulani community) on Land related issue. Though ethnic as it appears, but it was seen as religious because it involves the Sayawas who are predominantly Christians and traditional worshipers, with the Hausa-Fulani who are generally Muslims.

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced many crises and conflicts, ranging from regional, communal and cultural. Many of these conflicts eventually became religious because they involved people of the two major religions in Nigeria, namely, Christianity and Islam. The conflicts were mostly on account of misunderstandings, rivalries, control and manipulation of religion, religious extremism and bigotry and many other remote factors. From this development, a tensed

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[1]Akintunde E. Akinade, "The Precarious agenda: Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary Nigeria" (Public Lecture, High Point University High Point, North Carolina, summer, 2002).

[2]Emmanuel Obeng-Mireku, "Christian-Muslim relations in Sub-Saharan Africa : a comparative analysis of Ghana and Nigeria," (Master's thesis, University of Lethbridge, 2017), 4.

[3]Cf. John Campbell and Matthew T. Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), 12.

relationship has been established between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria over the past thirty years.

The recent activities of Boko Haram and the nomadic pastoralists (also known as Fulani herders) in certain areas of North-East and North-Central of Nigeria open another chapter in the Christian-Muslim encounters and relationships in Nigeria. Many Christians consider this as a systematic *Jihad* being launched on these areas. This necessitated the need for an effective programme of interreligious dialogue that will provide lasting solution to Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria. Thus, consideration has to be given to studies of peaceful co-existence and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Furthermore, many Nigerians are of the opinion that the amalgamation of Nigeria by the British in 1914 may be considered to be a major factor responsible for the conflicts and crises of religion in Nigeria. There were two colonies administered by the British in the Niger areas: The Northern Protectorate and the Southern Protectorate. Before the amalgamation, these areas had a very diverse polity that made it difficult for the British to rule. The 1914 Amalgamation merged the different parts of Nigeria into one so that governance would be easier for the colonial rulers. The Northern protectorate comprised the entire Northern Region including the Sokoto caliphate and part of the Borno Empire. The Southern Protectorate on the other hand, included the coastal areas below Lokoja on the Niger River. According to Moses Ochunu;

> The amalgamation made little sense otherwise and has often been invoked by Nigerians as the foundation of the rancorous relationship between the two regions of Nigeria. Northern Nigeria, now broken into several states and three geopolitical blocs, is largely Muslim. It was the center of a precolonial Islamic empire called the Sokoto Caliphate, and its Muslim populations, especially those whose ancestors had been part of the caliphate, generally look to the Middle East and the wider Muslim world for solidarity and sociopolitical example. The South, an ethnically diverse region containing many states and three geopolitical units, is largely Christian. The major sociopolitical influences there are Western and traditional African.[4]

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[4] Moses Ochonu, "The roots of Nigeria's religious and ethnic conflict," Public Radio International (PRI), entry posted March 10, 2014, *https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-03-10/roots-nigerias-religious-and-ethnic-conflict* (accessed March 14, 2018)

As indicated above, the amalgamation was for British benefits. It was meant for colonial convenience so that the British Colonizers could generate revenue easily for its administrative costs. However, bringing people of different cultural and religious background without any unifying orientation brought more problem than peaceful co-existence. The above quotation indicates that Northern Nigeria historically has been a pre-colonial Islamic empire and center of a Caliphate, the Sokoto caliphate. The South which is largely Christian had been under the influence of Western civilization and traditional way of life. The mentality of holding to pre-colonial Islamic authority still remains with the majority of the Northern Muslims, especially the elites. Therefore, any attempt to allow Western culture in Northern Nigeria is considered a threat to Islam. Another point is the presence of the Christian minorities in Northern Nigeria. Many Muslims think that the whole North and Central Nigeria should be purely Islam, since the South is being considered as a Christian territory. To this reality, Akpanika, Ekpenyong Nyong also asserts that;

> The unfriendly and unfavourable socio-religious and political situation in Nigeria was master minded by the British Colonial Masters. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 was a ploy to deliberately enable the South serve the North. According to him, Lugard gave the North the wrong impression that they were born to rule and sternly warned the European Christians missionaries not to preach the gospel to the Hausa-Fulani, nor try to change their culture.[5]

As a result of all these, the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has been shrouded with political tussles and rivalries; competition and domination of authorities and influences; and so many other negative consequences. It is against this background that this thesis sets out to examine the Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria; in the light and teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Chapter one sets the introduction of the problems between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and seeks effective dialogue as the way forward. Chapter two provides the background and

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[5]Akpanika, Ekpenyong Nyong, "Religious and Political Crises in Nigeria: A Historical Exploration," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 9, Ver. 2, (September 2017): 67.

development of interfaith dialogue in the world as well as the promulgation of Vatican II document on interfaith dialogue. It explores the teachings of the Second Vatican Council on interreligious dialogue. Chapter three focuses on the contributions of the Post-Vatican II Popes, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and Cardinal Francis Arinze. Chapter four goes further to examine the contributions of the Catholic Church in Nigeria, as well as the inputs of theologians and scholars. Finally, chapter five presents the theological prospects of interreligious dialogue and their implication to education in Nigeria. It further suggests a new paradigm of change and conversion in Nigeria from the theology of the prodigal son.

CHAPTER ONE

CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE AND RELATIONS IN NIGERIA: SITUATING THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE

1.1 Introduction

Worldwide publicity was given to the kidnap of 276 girls from Government Secondary School Chibok in Borno State of Nigeria by Boko Haram on April 14, 2014. The recent activities of attacks and killings by the herdsmen pastoralists are another aspect of crisis in Nigeria. From 2013 onwards, herdsmen around the States in North-Central and middle belt of Nigeria have attacked and killed many people in various communities, the majority of whom were Christians. These are the latest in a series of atrocities that have brought conflict between Christians and Muslims in the northern part of the country.

It is in the light of these events that this chapter aims to examine the complexity and nature of the crises that affect the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The chapter will identify various areas in Nigeria that threatens the unity and peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. These situations and factors are also what calls for effective interreligious dialogue as the way forward for peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

1.2 Religion and the Nigerian State and Politics

Like other countries in the African continent, Nigeria was a religious nation before the arrival of the colonial masters. Traditional Religion had been the norm among many cultures and communities until the advent of Islam and Christianity. These two religions came and spread across Nigeria. This is a development that informs the claim of Nigeria being a country that is chiefly dominated by Christianity and Islam. Adesina Abdur-Razaq, among other scholars of religion posits that

> There are essentially two dominant religions in the country-the religions of Christianity and Islam are practiced side by side. Religion dominates the lives of Nigerian people. The two religions are influential in all aspects of lives. They take these religions to wherever they are-be it school, house of Assembly and so on.

Both religions preach peace, love and unity, but adherents of both faiths in northern Nigeria fail to utilize these common elements in their traditions for the common good.[1]

Islam is seen to be well populated in the north-east and north-west of Nigeria. These include Zamfara, Yobe, Kebbi, Sokoto, Borno, Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, and Jigawa States, while Taraba, Adamawa and Gombe States have a well distributed proportion of both Christians and Muslims.

In the case of the south-east and south-south geographical zones however, Isaac Terwase Sampson argues that it is the Christian religion that is more in proportion and therefore can be said to be more prominent. An exception among the states of this region is Edo State that is arguably considered to have an equal distribution of Muslims and Christians. In his opinion, the southwest and north-central zones seem to be balanced with Benue State as an exception. In the case of Benue State, it is interesting to note that Christians and traditionalists are present in greater numbers.[2]

Akintunde E. Akinade has given a clear survey of the present situation of how Christians and Muslims are spread across Nigeria, largely due to migration and business. He says that:

> The constant movement of people, especially for trade and commerce, has led to a new distribution of Christians and Muslims in most parts of the country. This has resulted in the presence of sizeable Christian minorities in some northern states like Kaduna, Adamawa, Sokoto, Kano, and Bauchi. There are some Muslim minorities in southern states like Kwara, Edo, Abia, Anambra, and Akwa-Ibom. Christians and Muslims are evenly distributed in the central parts of Nigeria, known as the Middle Belt, and in the southwest, the major ethnic group, the Yoruba, is made up of both Christians and Muslims. Yorubaland continues to present an interesting case study for understanding enduring paradigms in interreligious coexistence.[3]

Nigeria operates a system of government whose constitution guarantees freedom from the influence and control of any religion. The Federal Constitution of Nigeria clearly states that: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his

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[1] Adesina Abdur-Razaq B., "Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary northern Nigeria between 1980-2002," *Islamochristiana* 29 (January 2003): 111.

[2] Cf. Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religion and the Nigerian State: Situating the de facto and de jure Frontiers of State–Religion Relations and its Implications for National Security," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 3, no. 2 (May 2014): 312. The states of the south-east and south-south regions comprise of Imo, Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Delta, Edo, Bayelsa, Rivers, Cross-Rivers, and Akwa Ibom states, while those of the the southwest and north-central zones include Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun, Kaduna, Niger, Plateau, Nassarawa, Benue, and Kogi states.

[3] Akintunde E. Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria: A Contextual Study of Ambivalent Encounters* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 34.

religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance."[4] Consequently, Section 10 of the Constitution prohibits states or the Government of the Federation from adopting any religion as state religion.[5]

This is suggestive of the right to freedom of religion, conscience and thought. It also provides protection against discrimination on grounds of religious affiliation. Though the constitution did not directly express that Nigeria is a secular state, it provided the background for Nigeria to be considered a secular state.

Tabia Princewill argues in this sense that Nigeria is a secular state. He says that: "A multi-religious state is one that recognises the co-existence of different religions and affirms that no religion shall be allowed to take precedence over the over. In my opinion, Nigeria belongs to this category. Our Constitution declares the absence of a state religion precisely because Nigerians observe different faiths."[6]

A secular state, in the view of Charles C. Nweke, implies right to freedom from the rules and teachings of religion as well as freedom from the imposition of religion upon the people by any government.[7] Nweke argues further that a secular state "advocates neutrality on matters of belief within a state and dissuades state privileges to religion. In the other sense, secularism projects that human decisions and activities, especially political ones, should be based on empirical realities devoid of any religious or supernatural bias."[8]

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[4]The 1999 Federal Constitution of Nigeria, "Fundamental Human Rights," Chap. 4, no. 38.

[5]The 1999 Federal Constitution of Nigeria, Chap.1, part 2, no.10 (Powers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**).**
   If one is to believe Section 10 of the Nigerian Constitution which reads: "The Government of the Federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as a state religion" then it is clear that Nigeria is a secular state. Section 14(2) (a) further states: "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom Government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority (Tabia Princewill, "Should religion and ethnicity play a role in politics?" *Vanguard*, November 11, 2015).

[6]Tabia Princewill, "Is Nigeria a multi-religious state or a secular state?" *Vanguard* December 20, 2017.

[7]Charles C. Nweke, "Secularism, Secular State and Religious Freedom," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 7, no. 1 (2015): 85.

[8]Ibid 85.

Secularism also concerns the separation of the state and religion either totally or partially, to provide equality and freedom of citizens. In this sense, a secular state may refer to a nation or state that does not adopt any religion as a state religion, but operates a secular constitution and principles.

Although the constitution of Nigeria guarantees freedom of religion, religion has been politicised and this has affected the practice of religious freedom in the country. Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi argues that;

> Usually, there are three ways in which religion can influence politics, namely, by the direct involvement of religious men in politics, by fusing the two (religion and politics) as one and by subjecting politics or government to the doctrine or laws of religion, thereby carrying out politics or governance along the line of religious doctrine, ideals or laws…All these are obvious in Nigerian politics and this makes religion and politics inseparable.[9]

This creates a contradiction between the principles and foundations of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which guarantees freedom of religion as well as prohibits adoption of state religion.

On the other hand, Toyin Falola presents a point that many Islamic scholars, groups and leaders are of the opinion that Nigeria should be an Islamic state because of its prominence in the Muslim world. This, they argue, requires the imposition of the Shari'ah law, as well as the registration of Nigeria in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Falola argues against this, stating that the;

> Movement is not about the mass conversion of all Nigerians to Islam, as many Christians fear. Rather it seeks to establish moral and political control through religious law and the power to establish connection with an external organization that will offer crucial support in time of need. Should this come to pass, the government will find no difficulty in dealing with Christians, since the minority Christian community will be officially marginalized and stripped of political power.[10]

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[9]Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, "The role of religion in Nigerian politics and its sustainability for political development," *Net Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (May 2015): 44.

[10]Toyin Falola, *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 69.

This situation Falola also affirms will affect the Christians' exercise of the fundamental human right concerning freedom of religion. The Shari'ah issue in Nigeria is an area that needs special attention when exploring the Christian/Muslim relationship in Nigeria.

Falola further highlights that many Muslims in Nigeria associate Christianity with Western values and the secular state. In their view, a secular state is a state that is neutral to any religious practice and implements secular ideologies in society. Many Muslims, according to Falola, believe this was introduced in Nigeria by British rule. They regard a secular state alien, and therefore oppose its operation. Falola again affirms that most Muslims identify moral decadence and corruption in Nigeria as the influence of Western values. Thus, Falola asserts that for the Muslims, "both Christianity and Western values are criticized for making Nigeria excessively materialist, undignified, and morally decadent."[11] Therefore, since Western civilization is also associated with Christianity, Christians are considered by Muslims as supporting and responsible for the corruption in Nigeria. This problem, according to Princewill, made some religious leaders, especially Muslims, to consider Western education as promoting secularism and its principles as anti-religion. Princewill affirms that this idea is meant to protect the interest of some religious leaders and their influence on the people. As such Princewill states: "Some religious leaders will attempt to convince us that secularism means becoming "anti-religion" which is far from the truth; they do so to protect their loss of influence. But why can't we have ethics and morals which simply stem from decency and the recognition of our common humanity? One doesn't need to be a Christian or a Muslim to know right from wrong."[12] This idea of secularism and how it affects morality is another factor that has negative influence on the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Religion is a powerful institution that plays a central role in the affairs of state and politics. It is a common factor that determines so many things in the government of Nigeria. In light of these conclusions, Matthew Hassan Kukah highlights how both Christians and Muslims try to control the

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[11]Ibid, 74.
[12]Princewill, "Is Nigeria a multi-religious state or a secular state?"

affairs of the Nigeria nation. Kukah emphatically affirms that: "Both Islam and Christianity are straddled across the Nigerian polity, each no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity. In matters of religion and political competition, despite the claims to democratic procedures as spelt out in the legal and political documents, the realities belie this claim."[13] This tussle, Kukah says, dominates the politics of Nigeria and cuts across the nation between Christians and Muslims. While many people consider Christianity to control the affairs and activities of government in the South, Islam practically forms the center of everything in Northern Nigeria.

Another reality Princewill argues in this perspective is that many in Nigeria have a questionable approach and understanding between religion and secular nation as reflected in the media. He says:

> Religion is an all too sensitive topic in Nigeria, further proof that we are not a secularised nation. Even our handling of issues shows we prefer controversy and sensationalising events (which the media is unfortunately all too happy to aid) than real discussion of what methods work best for us. Many on social media have shared pictures of Muslim women who live in western countries wearing *hijabs* with their police uniforms etc.[14]

Many in Nigeria fail to realize that the reality of what is reported by the media may not be a true reflection of the situation. We fail to understand that in some of these situations reported by the media, most of these women have to go through rigorous processes to defend their fundamental human rights, and this is what the principle of secularism should enable many Nigerians to understand.

One other common factor that affects religion and politics in Nigeria goes back to the post-independence civil war of the 1960s. Jacinta Chiamaka Nwaka argues that despite the Head of States Yakubu Gowan's declaration at the end of the civil war indicating that there was no victor, no vanquished, the action of the government did not portray the declaration. Many foreign Christian missionaries were expelled from the Biafra territory, and the government took over the

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[13]Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), ix.
[14]Princewill, "Is Nigeria a multi-religious state or a secular state?"

Mission schools from the missionaries. Nwaka says that "in addition to the loss of mission schools, the Church faced a shortage of personnel. Foreign missionaries were expelled at the end of the civil war. The federal military government of Nigeria believed that the missionaries in Biafra took a pro-Biafra stand during the war, which, it argued, was largely responsible for prolonging the war."[15] The taking over of mission schools and expulsion of missionaries made the Christians react in opposition to the government.

From such government actions after the civil war, many in the south thought the government was taking sides with the north and promoting the growth and spread of Islam. On the other hand, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), was created in the 1970s, and many political leaders in the North according to Afalobi;

> Regarded it as the political wing for Christians. Since the mid-1980s, however, tension between Christians and Muslims has become consistent feature of Nigerian politics. The reaction of the northern political leaders towards this development strengthened against the consciousness of the Christians for greater involvement in the political arena. They became aware of the inspiration and support which Islam provides for Muslim politicians and strived for a reciprocal situation among Christian politicians.[16]

The Christians, for their part, believe that they have a responsibility in contributing to the common good in society, by being involved in the government and politics of the nation.

Furthermore, Falola argues that tension between Christians and Muslims in the Nigerian state and politics heightened in 1986, when General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, then Military head of states, made Nigeria join the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Christians immediately reacted to such movement as a deliberate attempt to make Nigeria an Islamic state. The Christians therefore compelled the government to create a formal diplomatic relationship with the state of Israel in the early 1990s. This development created the struggle for importance and recognition of the two religions in Nigeria. Christians and Muslims try to dominate and control the State and

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[15]Jacinta Chiamaka Nwaka, "The Catholic Church, the Nigerian Civil War, and the Beginning of Organized Lay Apostolate Groups Among the Igbos of Southeastern Nigeria," *The Catholic Historical Review* 99, no. 1 (January 2013): 89.

[16]Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, "The role of religion in Nigerian politics and its sustainability for political development," *Net Journal of Social Sciences* 3, no. 2, (May 2015): 45.

politics of territories where they are the majority. Thus according to Falola, "religion and politics have been bedfellows throughout Nigerian history. In the precolonial era, religion was integral to the state; it was part of identity construction, a means for power legitimation, and a determiner of economic might."[17] However, the influence of religion in Nigerian politics seems to have a negative impact on the secular nature of the Nigerian state.

From the discussion above, two basic facts can be mentioned. Namely that religion plays a significant role in the affairs of Nigeria. Secondly, that both Christianity and Islam try to dominate and control the nation, thereby leading to tensions and crises between Christians and Muslims. Thus, religion and politics are mixed together in an attempt to gain control and dominate regions where a particular religion is the majority. Princewill advocates in this regard that: "Nigeria must develop secular morals: one does not need to be a practising Muslim or Christian to know it is wrong to kill or to steal. Ethics, civics, not religion should be taught in government owned classrooms. Those who wish their children to further their religious studies have the option of private schooling, as is done all over the world."[18] Therefore, the need to separate religion from politics is required to achieve the secular nature of the state in Nigeria.

1.3 Cultural Diversity and Ethnicity in Nigeria: The Role of Religion

Nigeria is identified as a multi-ethnic nation, with diversified cultures, in the North and South, East and West of the Nation. It is believed that Nigeria has over five hundred and twenty (520) languages, with over one thousand one hundred and fifty (1150) dialects and ethnic groups. Lizzie Williams affirms that:

> Nigeria has a rich and diverse cultural history that extends back to at least 500BC, when the Nok people first inhabited the area. The ethnicity of Nigeria is so varied that there is no definition of a Nigerian beyond that of someone who lives within the borders of the country. The ethnic variety is both dazzling and confusing, and there are more than 250 ethnic groups with their own language and distinct cultural heritage.[19]

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[17]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 1.
[18]Princewill, "Should religion and ethnicity play a role in politics?"
[19]Lizzie Williams, *Nigeria: The Bradt Travel Guide* (Guildford: Bradt Travel Guides, 2007), 6.

On a general aspect Williams emphasizes three main cultures and major languages that made up the three geographical regions and locations of Nigeria: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Christianity and Islam, Williams highlights, are spread across these three languages, with Islam dominant among the Hausas, Christianity among the Igbos, while Yoruba is densely populated by both religions; and a small population of Traditional Religion among the three languages.

Cultural diversity and ethnicity posed some challenges to national unity and interreligious dialogue in Nigeria. This is because they encourage cultural and ethnic rivalry and tensions among the people. Every culture wants to be considered the best to the detriment of others. Some people only support the interests of the members of their culture and ethnic background, while neglecting the interest of others. These have affected national integration and development because the control of power and governance seems to be one sided, belonging to a few cultural and ethnic groups. A typical example of this is the dominance and control of the Nigerian politics and government by the Hausa-Fulani ethnic group and culture. This is among the causes of the crises and conflicts in Nigeria, and by extension, it affects religion because of the Hausa-Fulani ability to promote their religion which is Islam. Princewill argues that religion does not unite the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. He says that "Bridges between religions and ethnic groups are constantly being destroyed, particularly by the same religious organisations that should be working to protect them. The Constitution allows every Nigerian to propagate their religion but rather than manifest conscience and spread goodwill, our religious pronouncements are now almost warlike."[20] This is why there is the need for cultural and ethno-religious dialogue in Nigeria.

Furthermore, cultural and ethno-religious dialogue is supposed to enable all the cultures and religions to integrate and contribute to the common good of the nation. However as Sulaimon Salau observes; "There is disunity within and among religious groups and this exacerbates disunity within the nation. The leadership (political, religious, cultural etc) is essentially responsible for the

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[20]Princewill, "Should religion and ethnicity play a role in politics?"

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disunity that is currently bedevilling Nigeria."[21] Therefore, there is a need to seek unity through collaboration by both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Thus, from the above point, it is necessary to strengthen interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims through ethno-cultural dialogue. As a diversified cultural and religious nation according to Yushau Sodiq, ethno-religious dialogue is an indispensable process of nation building and development in Nigeria. Sadiq also argues that because Christianity and Islam have a long standing history and tradition of complex relations in Nigeria, there is a need to learn how to live together as people who share common cultural identities. He states that;

> Islam and Christianity are not foreign religions in Nigeria; both are indigenous. Indeed, the adherents of both religions number more than the adherents of the indigenous traditional African religions. . . Muslims and Christians have lived together as neighbours, friends and occasional rivals. After independence, both religions competed for leadership of the country. Christians pressed for the separation of the state from the church, while Muslims insisted on the application of Islamic law.[22]

It is also important to note that both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria share a common belief in God and are devoted to their religion. Christians and Muslims in Nigeria according to Sadiq, are also loving and hospitable people, who enjoy living in peace. On the contrary, ethnicity and religion have been used by some people in recent times to cause mischief such as hatred, disunity, tribal hostilities and wars. Sadiq argues that the Qur'an admonishes Muslims and people of other religions to make agreement and understand one another. *'Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God; erect, from among ourselves, lords and patrons other than God.' If then they turn back, you say: 'Bear witness that we (at least) are bowing to God's Will' to reach a common word in order to move the world forward.*[23]

This concept of the 'common word' is found not only among religious beliefs, but also in the different cultures and traditions of Nigeria. Christians and Muslims in Nigeria should therefore

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[21]Sulaimon Salau, "Muslims urged to move against disintegration of Nigeria," *Guardian*, December 1, 2017.
[22]Yushau Sodiq, "Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?," *The Muslim World* 99, no. 4 (October 2009): 646.
[23]Qur'an 3:64.

focus on what promotes love and peaceful co-existence based on their cultural identity. This will create more unity and understanding among the people. Christians, according to Mahmut Aydin, should be guided by the principle taught by Jesus on mutual correction and reconciliation.[24] From a Christian perspective, ethno-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria should be approached in the spirit of 'brotherhood.' Aydin emphasizes that "there are two essential foundations of the brotherhood of all people. The first, God is creator of all people. That is, all people have been created by the same God; the second, the dignity of the human being because of his/her creation in God's image."[25] This point of religious brotherhood has also been stressed in *Nostra Aetate*.[26] Furthermore, Khurshid Ahmad also argues that Muslims share similar beliefs with Christians that man is the masterpiece of God's act of creation. In other words, Ahmad asserts that man is the "most complete manifestation of the attributes of Allah, and as such he is Allah's representative on Earth. Islam, therefore, teaches the sanctity of human personality, confers equal rights on all without any distinction of colour, sex or language and subjects the highest and the humblest, the richest and the poorest, the king and the commoner to the sovereignty of Allah."[27] Both Christian and Islamic perceptions suggest religion is only an affiliation, what matters most is that all human beings have the same source who is God.

Brotherly spirit entails one to embrace all despite religious or cultural differences. It calls for mutual acceptance of the principle of common human identity. David Foster made it clear that the Christian prayer known as the 'Our Father' signifies that we are all brothers and sisters. Foster says: "We are

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[24] Matt 18:15-17. *If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.*

[25] Mahmut Aydin, "The Catholic Church's Teaching on Non-Christians: With Special Reference to the Second Vatican Council," in *Multiple Paths to God: Nostra Aetate, 40 Years Later*, eds. John P. Hogan and George F. McLean (Washington , D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), 36.

[26] *Nostra Aetate* no. 5.

[27] Khurshid Ahmad, "Islam: The Essentials," in *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad (London: Islamic Foundation, 1992), 25. "All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non Arab nor a non Arab has any superiority over an Arab, also a white has no superiority over black nor black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim, which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly." (*The sermon of the* Prophet Mohammed: Muslim Aid Serving Humanity, https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/.../the-prophets-muhammed-saw-last-sermon...).

his own children and reflect in our lives something unique about him. We are not our own; we belong to God as children whom he loves. This makes everyone our brothers and sisters; no one can be excluded from our concern."[28] John A. Ottuh therefore emphasizes the fact that brotherhood is not a strange concept in Nigeria, but seems to be pushed aside. Ottuh contends that;

> The African people including Nigeria believe in brotherhood. Sometimes inter-tribal and intra-tribal conflicts arise as a result of one problem or the other but deep down in our hearts brotherhood rings louder. One reason why brotherhood is strong in Nigeria is the ties of inter-tribal or inter ethnic marriages going on in Nigeria. Another reason why brotherhood is strong in Nigeria among religious adherents is the inter-marriages going on between different religious adherents in the community.[29]

Being a Christian or a Muslim does not mean one reserves and shares his love with his fellow Christians or Muslims only to discard or reject others. The fact that Christians and Muslims in Nigeria share the same cultures and belong to one nation makes them brothers and sisters of one another. Therefore, this should make Christians and Muslims embrace themselves and live in peace with one another.

One main factor in this section is the fact that Christians and Muslims are divided by cultural and traditional identities based on their locations in Nigeria. This also provides the need for ethno-religious dialogue in Nigeria. Ethno-religious dialogue can serve as a tool towards authentic interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims if approached sincerely in Nigeria. It should help break the walls and barriers of disunity, hatred, and national conflicts between the various cultures and religions in Nigeria. Therefore, religious, cultural and ethnic domination and control to the detriment of others must be discarded in Nigeria. The different religious and various cultures/ethnicity in Nigeria should aim at creating national unity and cohesion for peace and development of the nation.

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[28] David Foster, *The Catholic Prayerbook* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 10.

[29] John A. Ottuh, "Religious Conflict Resolution In Nigeria (Matthew 18:15-22): A Hermeneutico - Inculturation Approach," *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 7, iss. 6 (January-February 2013): 24.

1.4 Religious Freedom and Equality in Nigeria

This is an area of concern for both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The United Nations charter highlights the fundamental human rights to freedom of religion and equality. The Nigerian state sets laws to protect against religious discrimination. As earlier indicated, though the 1999 constitution of Nigeria did not directly express Nigeria to be a secular state, it prohibits the government at States and Federal level to adopt any religion as a state religion. The constitution therefore guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of thoughts, religion, and conscience, without discrimination on any ground. The constitution again (under the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in chapter 2, section 17, no. 3b) states that: *conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life*. Therefore, the constitution urges government to ensure facilities which promote religious practices are provided.

From the above premise, the constitution of Nigeria guarantees every individual or group in Nigeria to have free access to their religious beliefs and practices. It also protects everyone from coercion in matters of religion and beliefs. The Christian notion of freedom and equality develops from the Bible. Gen. 1:27 affirms that God created man in his own image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.' Deut. 10:17, 'For the Lord, your God, is God of gods, the LORD of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who has no favourites, accepts no bribes.' *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus'*.[30] From this background, Nicolaas Vorster therefore argues that the Christian perspective on religious freedom is rooted in the very nature of man who is created by God and endowed with the free will to act and to make choice. This freedom Vorster posits;

> Is part of the created structure of the human being, and is therefore an inviolable part of being human. True freedom does not find its expression in license and anarchy, but in the privilege of participating in God's destiny for humankind. Freedom is, in the Christian view, a positive concept that is always exercised

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[30]Gal. 3:28.

within the framework of justice. True liberty is not the freedom to do whatever one wants to do, but to do whatever one wants while respecting God and the basic rights of others.[31]

Although the situation of religious freedom and equality in Nigeria as held by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is promoted by the constitution of Nigeria and other nations and conventions, the practice is difficult between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This is because these rights often do not provide citizens with legal redress. John Onaiyekan observes that fanatical activities pose great challenges to the practice of religious freedom in Nigeria: Onaiyekan argues that:

> Islamic fanaticism constitutes at least a nuisance value in the society. It is a real threat to peace, harmony, security and unity in the country. It should be obvious by now to everyone that any attempt to formally declare Nigeria an Islamic state will provoke a major upheaval that will injure Muslims at least as much as it will injure Christians. But there are dreamers and visionaries who cannot see the obvious. They and their blind followers are dangerous. They must be restrained.[32]

Onaiyekan therefore considers 'fanatical exclusive' as a contributing factor to the abuse of religious freedom in Nigeria. This is a situation when fanatics view their own religion as the only authentic religion and make no room for others who have different beliefs from them. Such fanatics exist among Christians and Muslims.[33] These are people who are intolerant to any religious structures or organizations that are not of their own religion and disrupt any activity of the religions of others. In the same vein, Simon Mary Asese Aihiokhai observes that "while many Muslim and Christian leaders in Nigeria continue to advocate for an exclusive society reflecting only their own religions traditions, the ordinary people are faced with the realities of coexisting with members of other

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[31]Nicolaas Vorster, "Are Freedom And Equality Natural Enemies? A Christian-Theological Perspective," *The Heythrop Journal* 51, no. 4 (July 2010): 600.

[32]John Onaiyekan, The Challenge of Islamic Expansion in Nigeria: Suggestions for a Christian Response," *Islamochristiana* 14 (January 1988): 231.

[33]Khalid Abubakar Aliyu, "Religious Freedom: An Islamic Perspective," Carefronting Nigeria, entry posted December 12, 2012, *carefronting.org/religious-freedom-an-islamic-perspective/*. Many Nigerians have chosen to award themselves the monopoly of right and freedom to practice their own religion while denying the same freedom for those whom they consider as "others". Today, materialism, eye service, pretenses, false prophesies and the claim of unsubstantiated miracles, greed and penchant for power, rivalry and envy are the psycho-complexes suffered by Nigerians, while, ironically, these are the very evils which religion seeks to correct. One is forced to assert that, because the indices of religiosity are more apparent in proclamations rather than in practical terms, Nigerians are people of religion and not religious people.

religions."[34] Onaiyekan continues to argue that the situation is such in Nigeria that sometimes it is difficult to make a demarcation between the exercises of one's right to religious freedom, and when such exercises create a nuisance to others in society. For example, the noise and yelling made during religious activities from both Christians and Muslims. They are all forms of disturbance in the neighbourhood. Also the blocking of major roads and stopping of movements on Friday afternoon for the Juma'at prayers; or the use of the television and radio media by Christian preachers as means of conversion are all issues to be pondered on regarding religious freedom. All these create problems and challenges to religious freedom in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a country with a huge population. The effort to live together in peace with one another Aihiokhai states should never in any way be underrated.

> What is needed is a concrete gesture of love and friendship among religions, as well as the recognition of the fact that all religions have at their heart the human aspiration to respond adequately to divine love and care for humanity. Also, there must be a place for recognition of the religious other in the worship of each religion. This practice will legitimize and concretize the intellectual gesture of openness to the other religions.[35]

Freedom of religion and equality must be encouraged for the sake of justice in the country. Through such practice, an Islamo-Christian nation that will serve as a model to the world could be created. Issues of religious freedom must be given due consideration and attention in Nigeria. It must also form the agenda of interfaith dialogue. If the new paradigm and educational curriculum on interfaith dialogue needs to make an impact on Christian-Muslim dialogue and relationship in Nigeria, it must consider all the factors that will encourage love, unity and peace.

1.5 Religious Discrimination in Nigeria

Religion as previously discussed is a powerful institution and controls almost every aspect of life in Nigeria. While many seem to benefit from the activities of their religion in the affairs of society, others are disadvantaged. They suffer from discrimination on account of their religion. Some again

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[34]SimonMary Asese Aihiokhai, "Love One Another as I Have Loved You: The Place of Friendship In Interfaith Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 48, no. 4 (January 2013): 496.
[35] Ibid, 493.

cannot freely exercise their rights to freedom of religion and worship in some parts of Nigeria. Thus, Hyacinth Kalu argues that discrimination has been a major factor against religious freedom and tolerance in Nigeria. This extends from private to public matters in relation to religion in some areas of the country. Kalu pointed out clearly that;

> Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations . . . All States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. . . All States shall make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation where necessary to prohibit any such discrimination.[36]

Nigeria is a member state of the United Nations; however these principles have not been fully implemented. Discrimination on religious grounds according to Kalu is seen in political appointments, admission processes to institutions, erection of places of worship, residential settlements, and even marriage cases. Kalu therefore emphasizes that: "Discriminations are noticeable in the labour market, admission into tertiary institutions, the award of government contracts and elections and appointments into political offices and posts."[37] According to Kalu, these pose challenges to religious freedom and fundamental human rights, and to interfaith dialogue.

On the political platform, Kalu again argues religion is very central in Nigeria. This is because many politicians get their position based on their religious identity. If one is living in a Muslim populated area and he/she is not a Muslim, it is almost impossible for him/her to be appointed to any government position. It is also a similar situation in a Christian populated area. Your religion determines your suitability or acceptance to an office or appointment as the case may be. Kalu

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[36]Hyacinth Kalu, P*rinciples and Practicalities of Interfaith Relationships in Nigeria: Interfaith Series, Vol. III* (Bloominton: iUniverse Books, 2011), 21. Discrimination between human beings on grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and shall be condemned as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and enunciated in detail in the International Covenants on Human Rights, and as an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations between nations. (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, Article 3)**.**

[37] Ibid, 126.

confirms that, "appointments to political office are made in line with religious identifications. In some parts of the country, a person has to strongly manifest a tendency towards a particular religion before he is offered a job or employment."[38] Religion should promote unity and acceptance of one another, not division and discrimination.[39] In some parts of Nigeria, the minorities experience such discrimination and are usually placed in the lower position. Princewill posits in this regard that:

> In Nigeria, the intermingling of government, traditional rulers and religious organisations has only served to ensure the poor remain the prisoners of a system working against their interests. One can't imagine the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope, campaigning for a particular candidate, yet one finds that in Nigeria religious leaders endorse candidates and promote division when it serves their interests.[40]

In this regard, many tend to abandon their religion, not with the real intention of being converted, but for the sake of the appointment or office they desire.

In educational arena, religious affiliation is also being used as a criterion to gain admission into universities and higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Higher and tertiary government owned institutions are open to all. This implies that all citizens have access and rights to enter these institutions provided they meet the requirements and qualifications. The National Policy on Education in Nigeria states that: "every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability"[41] This implies that all citizens have equal opportunities and access to free education from primary to tertiary levels everywhere in the country as provided by the Constitution of the nation in chapter 2, paragraph 18, no. 3. It means that children can acquire education within or outside the formal

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Lauren Poole and Vihara Dharmaratne, "Freedom of Religion in Nigeria?," Office of Religious Freedom, entry posted June 17, 2014 www4.carleton.ca/cifp/app/serve.php/1498.pdf (accessed March 15, 2017). "Religion acts as an excuse for political discrimination, a means to define ethnic identity and as a form of legitimacy for violent means to seek power. . . Nigeria is one of only nine countries in the world without a clear religious minority."

[40] Princewill, "Is Nigeria a multi-religious state or a secular state?"

[41] Federal Republic of Nigeria, "National Policy on Education, 2004, 4th edition, section 1, paragraph 4c.
Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide
(a) free, compulsory and universal primary education;
(b) free secondary education;
(c) free university education; and
(d) free adult literacy programme. (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

system of education in order to be empowered and contribute to the development of the nation. But this right is being denied in certain areas based on religious affiliation. Kalu again argues that, "a Muslim in Zaria, Kaduna State and in Sokoto, for example, with a very low score in an entrance examination is considered first before a Christian indigene of the same States."[42] This relegates the indigenous Christians to the status of 'second class citizens', having no equal treatment with the Muslim citizens. There are instances where Muslim students are also denied admissions in some private Christian owned Institutions and Colleges. Sampson pointed an example, stating that "the Covenant University Ota, an institution owned and run by a renowned Pentecostal fellowship, Living Faith Chapel, was embroiled in controversy over its refusal to admit a Muslim student who met all the admission criteria."[43] This is an unfortunate situation that one should be denied the opportunity to study in a religious university that offers secular courses, based on his/her religious affiliation. Such discrimination poses a challenge to the principle of unity and the common good.

Other related religious discrimination in Nigeria concerns issues of indigene's rights to residency. This is a situation where religion has become a determining factor of where to reside or settle down in some parts of Nigeria. Human Rights Watch, an independent international organization for upholding human dignity and advancing the cause of human rights, provides the evidence that: "Local officials in at least some parts of Kaduna have been accused of refusing to issue certificate of indigeneity to people who do not share their religion. Such complaints are especially widespread in some districts in Kaduna city, where Christians complain that it has become impossible for them to obtain certificates of indigeneity in recent years."[44] There are also issues of religious discrimination on building places of worship, dress code and public facilities. Frieder Ludwig cited

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[42] Kalu, *Together as One*, 126.

[43] Sampson, "Religion and the Nigerian State," 328.

[44] Human Rights Watch (Organization), "They do not own this Place: Government Discrimination Against "Non-Indigenes" in Nigeria," *Human Rights Watch* 18, no. 3 (April, 2006): 48. A leading Muslim figure in Kaduna went so far to say that he found Christian complaints about discrimination "amusing" because "if you go to their part of the state . . . the majority of Muslims are always regarded as non-indigenes. And one prominent Christian community leader admitted to Human Rights Watch that outside Kaduna town Christian local governments are doing the same thing in retaliation-refusing to issue certificates of indigeneity to Muslims. (Human Rights Watch, 50)

Musa Gaiya in an interview that "if a Christian wants to buy a piece of land to build a house he must sign a clause that the place would not be turned into a Church or a hotel,"[45] and yet no piece of land has been provided for the churches to be built in those areas.

With the introduction of the Shari'ah law in some States of Northern Nigeria in 1999, Zanfara State for example imposed certain laws that were discriminatory in nature. Such laws according to Kalu include:

> A particular dress code considered as decent in Islam and the use of public transportation that forbids men and women to ride on the same bus or motor-cycle popularly known as *kabu-kabu* in Northern Nigeria and *Okada* in the South. It must be emphasized that these discriminatory tendencies in Zanfara affect not just the Christians who complain aloud, but painfully affect more the small minority of traditionalists in the state who suffer in silence.[46]

Kalu argues that by implication of the Shari'ah law, dresses that expose one's body, especially females are considered as sexually provocative and against the law. Again, males and females mingling publicly is termed moral decadence and not to be tolerated by the law. Such restrictions hinder the exercise of one's rights and freedom. This is also a challenge and an abuse to the individual's rights and dignity of the human person.

Discrimination also affects freedom of religious conversion and interfaith marriages. Joseph Fuwape, Felix Obayan and Taiwo Orebiyi argue that it is a risk for many to change religion in Nigeria, as the implications may be devastating. One must be ready to face challenges of rejection, denial, and persecution. These may come from family members as well as from the community, depending on the religious influence of the area. Both Christianity and Islam accept there should be no compulsion in matters of religion, implying freedom of choice of religion. The principle of religious freedom enshrined in Nigeria's constitution is vague. In practice, Fuwape, Obayan and Orebiyi further highlights that the nature of discrimination "varies in different geographical zones and states in Nigeria depending on the major religious group and their level of tolerance. The

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[45] Musa Gaiya, Cited by Frieder Ludwig, in "Christian-Muslim Relations in Northern Nigeria Since the Introduction of Shariah in 1999," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion,* 76, no. 3 (September 2008): 621.
[46] Kalu, *Together as One*, 127.

Christians who are in the majority in the southern part of Nigeria are more liberal and tolerant of people of other faiths and are not aggressive in proselyting or imposing sanctions on their followers who decide to change their religion."[47] Some Muslim faithful in Nigeria take an interpretation of the Qur'anic injunction that says: *You will not find any people who believe in God and the last day loving those who exhibit contempt for God and His people.*[48] They comprehend it is only themselves that will be admitted into the presence of God. Fuwape, Obayan and Orebiyi further highlight that; "The wrong interpretation of this verse has caused a lot of hostility and intolerance by some Islamic adherents to those who they classify as infidel. This disposition has negative impact on the practice and observance of religious freedom in different parts of the country."[49] In this situation it is difficult to be married outside one's religion. Muslims are obliged not to marry a non-Muslim, unless the non-Muslim spouse who is regarded as an infidel is converted to Islam. There are also many Christian families who will not allow their children to marry outside Christianity, or even their own Church. Thus, interfaith or interdenominational marriages in this sense become difficult in Nigeria. A survey undertaken by M. Christian Green of '*Pew,*' (a research centre on social issues) reported in 'Emory International Law Review' that in Nigeria; "when it comes to family matters, specifically the selection of marriage partners, Christians and Muslims in most of the countries in the Pew study show a very strong tendency toward religious endogamy . . . with 97% of Nigerian Christians and 98% of Nigerian Muslims married or living with a partner of the same religion."[50] In conclusion therefore, interreligious marriage also concerns religious conversion and poses a challenge to religious freedom.

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[47]Joseph Fuwape, Felix Obayan and Taiwo Orebiyi, *Religious Freedom and National Security in Nigeria*, (Lokoja: Salem University, 2016), 4.
[48]Quran 58:22.
[49]Fuwape, Obayan and Orebiyi, *Religious Freedom and National Security in Nigeria*, 4.
[50]M. Christian Green**, "**Religion, Family Law, and Recognition of Identity in Nigeria," *Emory International Law Review* 25, no. 2, (2011): 957.

1.6 The Problem of Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria

The problem of bribery and corruption has been an old ill confronted by both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It is an 'endemic' in every aspect of life and society in Nigeria. Bribery is also reflective of corruption in Nigeria. 'Bribery and Corruption' is a common slogan in Nigeria. According to R.O. Anazodo, C. J. Igbokwe-Ibet., and B.C. Nkah, "corruption originates from the Latin word '*corruptus*' meaning an aberration or a misnomer. However, in Nigeria today, corruption has become so common a word that it's actual meaning needs no explanation to an average citizen"[51] Monty Raphael Qc considers bribery as: "the offer, promise, or gift of a financial or other advantage, intending to influence a person to perform a relevant function improperly or to reward a person for the improper performance of a relevant function."[52] Funso E. Oluyitan argues that corruption "simply means the perversion of integrity or state of affairs through bribery, favour, or moral depravity… the injection of additional but improper transactions aimed at changing the normal course of events and altering judgements and positions of trust."[53] Hence, the result of every act of bribery is corruption. This has a serious impact on the Nigerian society because it affects the progress and development of the nation as many Nigerians divert the nation's resource for their selfish and greedy interest.

The background and development of bribery and corruption in Nigeria according to Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah, can be dated back to the period of independence.

> Since the flag of political independence in 1960, Nigerian leaders and their regimes have been deeply engrossed in excessive acts of corruption and bad governance. All available means have been employed by Nigerian political leaders to 'grab' power including the blatant rigging of elections, manipulation of census figures, violence, thuggery, arson, vandalism, gangsterism, corruption, religious bigotry, regionalism, tribalism, ethnic sentiments and acts of brigandage.[54]

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[51]R.O. Anazodo, C. J. Igbokwe-Ibet., and B.C. Nkah, "Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria: Issues and Categorical Imperatives," *African Research Review (An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia)* 9 (2), no. 37 (April, 2015): 47.

[52]Monty Raphael Qc, *Bribery: Law and Practice* (Oxford: University Press, 2016), 2.

[53]Funso E. Oluyitan, *Combating Corruption at the Grassroots Level in Nigeria* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2.

[54]Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah, "Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria," 43.

Many graduates from the universities in Nigeria cannot defend their degrees. Selling exam results is believed to be practiced in many higher institutions in Nigeria. Therefore, Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah, contends that;

> Corruption in Nigeria has become so pervasive to the extent that young men and women do not see the essence of doing the right thing or going to school to learn because they see daily how illiterates and half-baked educated ones control billions of naira while the highly educated ones conducting research that is contributing to advancement of knowledge and the society are looked at with scorn. In this context, the people can hardly believe and respect their leaders.[55]

This goes to show that there is a lack of justice in Nigeria. Those who make the effort to contribute more to society are not treated fairly according to their merits. A common example is a university professor who gets a salary of two hundred thousand naira (an equivalent of five hundred euro) while a local politician, with a simple diploma gets almost a million naira (an equivalent of two thousand five hundred euro). In such a situation many university lecturers get involved in some corrupt practices to augment their standard income, because what they get cannot meet up with their basic needs. Tayo Olafioye argues against corruption in Nigeria poetically in the following statement: "They awarded contracts to the dead and themselves the living, and for that, a bullet each to their heads. They made millionaires of their mistresses, concubines and sycophants and for that, a bullet each to their hearts. They gave 'Christmas bonuses' in their millions to themselves, for no justifiable rationale, in the oven of penury and intractable poverties and for that, a bullet each to their throats."[56] This scenario makes corruption a case of serious concern and dangerous for many in Nigeria.

Economically, corruption has eaten deeply into the Nigerian society. It is from this point that Fagbadebo states clearly that;

> Unconventional and fraudulent trade, misappropriation or diversion of funds, kickbacks, under and over invoicing, bribery, false declarations, abuse of office, and collection of illegal tolls, among other malfeasant practices, are the forms that corruption take in Nigeria. In the international system, Nigeria is rated as one of

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[55]Ibid, 51.
[56]Tayo Olafioye, The Parliament of Idiots: Tryst of the Sinators, (Ibadan: Kraftgriots, 2002), 90.

the most corrupt nations of the world, a ranking that has denied the country its pride of place in the international economic system.[57]

The Nigerian market, according to Fagbadebo, is full of fake products and items. Many business men and women make excessive money to the detriment of the services they render to the public. If Christians and Muslims claim their religions promote moral values, then they must be able to combat and eliminate bribery and corruption in Nigeria.

1.7 Religious Insurgences/Terrorism and Fanaticisms in Nigeria

Christians and Muslims co-existed with one another and managed to curtail their differences in many parts of Nigeria. However, the events of recent years coupled with the challenges of insurgences and terrorisms have battered the little mutual trust that existed among Christians and Muslims especially in Northern Nigeria. Paul Kangkai puts the situation so rightly in the following statement;

> In most parts of northern Nigeria, Muslims and Christians live together without discrimination on the basis of religion. As it is in any normal society they work and, sometimes, do their business together. Unfortunately, owing to the infiltration of many northern communities by terrorists and militia groups, coupled with incessant unprovoked attacks and reprisals in villages, towns and cities, we are beginning to see a gradual segregation of communities.[58]

An insurgency can be described as an illegal and forceful attempt to take over the control of the nation. It usually takes a form of terrorism and violent attacks. Religious insurgency therefore may be described as an attempt by a religious group to take over a nation and impose its ideologies and principles. Some parts of Nigeria according to Ahmad F. Yousif, currently are experiencing some forms of religious insurgence as a result of fanatical activities. Yousif therefore argues that;

> Fanaticism in today's literature stands not for the content of any particular religious position but for a mentality and attitude; one that can attach to the content of any ideal or ideology, an attitude of radicalism, rigor, and extremism. A feature of this mentality is the religious assurance of the establishment of belief through dogmatic and moral legalism, often founded on a fundamentalist positivism in matters touching revelation.[59]

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[57]Omololu Fagbadebo, "Corruption, Governance and Political Instability in Nigeria," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 1 no. 2 (November 2007): 31.

[58]Paul Kangkai, "Challenging times in Nigeria," *The Furrow* 69, no. 6 (June 2018): 341.

[59]Ahmad F. Yousif, "Fundamentalism and Fanaticism: A Comparative Analysis," *Religious Studies and Theology* 30,

Two movements in Nigeria will be discussed in the light of the insurgences that challenge the peaceful co-existence of Nigeria: the Boko Haram, and the Herdsmen militia.

1.7.1 Boko Haram Fanaticism and Insurgency

A brief descriptive background of the Boko Haram movement and its philosophy is required to clarify what is actually responsible for the insurgence and terrorism. Salisu Salisu Shuaibu and Mohd Afandi Salleh state that: "Boko Haram is an Islamic sect like Maitatsine sect of 1980 believes that northern politics has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by Sharia Laws"[60] The Maitatsine according to Jarlath Walsh are the first dangerous religious group that started religious riots in Nigeria.[61] The original name of the *Boko Haram* group in Arabic according to Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa is '*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad*.' In English it means, 'People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and *Jihad'*. The group was locally nicknamed and popularly known as *Boko Haram*. The English translation of *Boko Haram* simply means 'Western education is forbidden'. Agbiboa therefore argues that *Boko Haram* does not only stand in opposition to western education, but western values as well. He says that;

> Across northern Nigeria, Western education continues to be associated with attempts by evangelical Christians to convert Muslims, and fears of southern economic and political domination . . . The term *Boko Haram* implies a sense of

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no. 1 (January 2011): 5.

[60]Salisu Salisu Shuaibu & Mohd Afandi Salleh, "Historical Evolution of Boko Haram in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions," *Proceedings of International Conference on Empowering Islamic Civilization in the 21st Century* (Malaysia: Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, September, 2015), 218..

[61]Jarlath Walsh, "Religious Riots in Nigeria," (Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham: Selly Oak Colleges, 1993), 2. Maitatsine is the nickname of Muhammad Marwa, founder of the group known as the Maitatsine, an Islamic sect in Northern Nigeria during the 1960s and 1970s. "His abolition of the sunna or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, as a guide for life and its replacement by his own quranic interpretation and guidelines placed him outside the parameters of the Islamic community. His rejection of anything outside the Qur'an including the government structures of the secular state, brought him into a collision course with the Kano State government." Following this encounter of Marwa and rejection of anything outside the Qur'an in Kano State, he gathered his followers of about 10,000 people who adhered to his laws without any regard for the state laws and regulations. A riot broke out in December 1980 when he was asked by the Governor of Kano, Abubakar Rimi to relocate from the State. The death toll of this riot was 4,177 people. Lots of property was destroyed, including the destruction of the old Kano City. Maitatsine himself died in this riot. However, the movement spread to other parts of Northern Nigeria; Maiduguri, Kaduna, Gombe and Yola.

rejection and resistance to imposition of Western education and its system of colonial social organisation, which replaced and degraded the earlier Islamic order of the *jihadist* state.[62]

The ideology of the group spread rapidly around the North-East of Nigeria.

Boko Haram, according to Abdulbasir Kassim and Micheal Nwankpa, originated as an Islamic group and was coordinated under the leadership of Muhammed Yusuf. Yusuf, a charismatic Islamic preacher, formed a community of Muslim brothers in the Capital city of Maiduguri, Borno State in 2003. The community sought to establish a pure kingdom of God here on earth and separate itself from society. The movement became hostile to the Nigerian government and opposed western education as non-Islamic. Kassim and Nwankpa affirm that "Yusuf takes the line that anything which cannot be attested in the Qur'an or the *Hadith* (tradition literature) is an innovation, and needs to be excised."[63] This philosophy set the background on how the movement operated in propagating its principles.

The group, according to Agbiboa, is estimated to have a number of 4,000 to 6,000 militants from the Kanuris and other bordering regions. In 2009 it launched its first attack in Borno and Yobe States. "*Boko Haram* has spearheaded many violent attacks in Nigeria. The attacks, show evidence of increasing sophistication and coordination, and are strategically targeted at Nigeria's ethnoreligious fault lines as well as national security forces in a bid to hurt the nation's stability."[64]

Boko Haram continues to spread and extend its violent and turbulent activities across Northern Nigeria, particularly the North-East States. "A spate of attacks against churches from December 2011 through July 2012 suggested 'a strategy of provocation' through which the group seeks to 'spark a large scale of sectarian conflict that will destabilize the country'."[65] Agbiboa argues that from 2009 *Boko Haram* became very fierce and violent. This was because of the arrest and

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[62]Daniel Egiegba Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram Exists: The Relative Deprivation Perspective," *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review* 3, no. 1 (April 2013): 146.

[63]Abdulbasir Kassim and Micheal Nwankpa, *The Boko Haram Reader: From Nigerian Preachers to the Islamic State* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), 2.

[64] Agbiboa, "Why Boko Haram Exists," 145.

[65]Ibid.

subsequent killing of their leader Mohammed Yusuf on July 30, 2009. Abubakar Shekau then took over the leadership of *Boko Haram* in 2010. The group also extended its operations to other neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Niger and Chad Republic. Shekau became more radical and charismatic in promoting the ideologies of the sect.

The initial system of operation of *Boko Haram* was the guerrilla tactic of hit-and-run, to harass and oppress people. Its weapons of operation were locally made guns, swords, machetes, clubs, knives, and Molotov cocktails. This has changed from 2010, with the use of sophisticated weapons. How the group is financed is of a great concern. It was alleged that some Muslim elites and top government officials are the sponsors of *Boko Haram*. However, Agbiboa says that a report in February 2012 from an arrested *Boko Haram* member revealed that the group rely on the support of members, and donations from its link with Al-Qaeda which has more funding from Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. The arrested member also revealed support of the group from Al Muntada Trust Fund and the Islamic Society.[66] Agbiboa also argues that:

> *Boko Haram* also derives its finances from robbing local banks. For example, on January 12, 2010, four Boko Haram members attempted to rob a bank in Bakori Local Government Area of Katsina State, according to the local Police Commissioner Umaru Abubakar. On December 4, 2011, Bauchi Police Commissioner Ikechukwu Aduba claimed that members of Boko Haram had robbed local branches of Guaranty Trust Bank PLC and Intercontinental Bank PLC.[67]

John Campbell describes the mode of operation of the Boko Haram in his article.[68]

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[66]Ibid, 148
[67]Ibid, 149.
[68]John Campbell, Online Articke: "Boko Haram: origins, challenges and responses," entry posted October 2014 under, Norwegian Peacebuilding and Resource Center, https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/184795/5cf0ebc94fb36d66309681cda24664f9.pdf (accessed April 25, 2017). Vehicles used for suicide attacks and car bombs are usually stolen. The large number of weapons in radical hands that come from government armouries implies that radical Islamic groups have infiltrated the military and other institutions of government, as senior military officials and even President Jonathan have acknowledged. It was also alleged that their membership comprises university lecturers, bankers, political elites, drug addicts, unemployed graduates, *almajiris*, and migrants from neighboring countries. Perhaps they are the sponsors of Boko Haram. John Campbell says that the: Funding for Boko Haram and other radical groups comes from bank robberies, kidnapping ransoms, the theft of weapons from government armouries, and – especially in the case of criminal groups – smuggling. Remittances from overseas appear to play no role

It is difficult to provide appropriate facts and figures on the total damage and destruction caused by *Boko Haram* in Nigeria. However Isidore U. Nwanaju says that international reports suggest more than 15,000 people have been killed since the outbreak of the insurgencies, and more than 2.5 million people displaced as refugees, to say nothing about the destruction of properties. According to Nwanaju, *Boko Haram* is considered the deadliest terrorist group in Africa and perhaps the world. Nwanaju argues that "*Boko Haram* as a fundamentalist Islamic sect is forcing its tenets down the throat of Nigerians-to embrace Islam as the only true religion. In other words, Islam is the only veritable means to attain salvation."[69] Islam as a religion must vindicate itself from such mischievous teachings and propaganda of *Boko Haram*. To this claim, Nwanaju opines "that Boko Haram is fundamentally antithetical to the mainstream of Islamic teachings just as one can classify Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army-globally acclaimed as a terrorist Christian group-cannot be accepted as a true representation of Christianity. No religious ideology based on bloodletting can convince any rational person to be truly religious or godly."[70]

The Nigerian military has been working hard to end *Boko Haram* insurgency. However, activities of the group are not totally eradicated in Nigeria. In light of this, Armsfree Ajanaku asserts that Nigeria committed so much in fighting against insurgences. "The gallant men and women of the Nigeria's armed forces, civilians in areas which fell under *Boko Haram* control, as well as several other segments of society, are quite relieved that the threat of armed and deranged elements bent on establishing an Islamist State within Nigerian territory, has been vanquished,"[71] though not totally eradicated. DRC/DDG Global Risk Education Technical Advisor report that:

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[69]Isidore U. Nwanaju, "Religious Insurgency - Pathway to Disintegration in Nigeria," *Public Policy and Administration Research* 5, no.11, (2015): 93..

[70]Ibid. Boko Haram propagates a dangerous ideology rooted in the wrong and bizarre interpretation of Islam. In Boko Haramism, Islam becomes an ideology, not really a religion. In this lopsided projection of Islam, the hitherto orchestrated Muslim Brotherhood ideology, Al-Qaeda ideology, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, ISIS/ISIL ideology, or even Boko Haram ideology disappear into thin air. All of them tend towards a common explanation – an Islamic ideology whose singular goal is to islamise the four corners of the Globe. With the kind of picture, which these ideologies are spreading like virus about Islam, the onus lies on the "good" Muslims to teach the "bad" ones that Islam is not just a wild goose laying contaminated eggs. It sounds hard and severe. But the challenge cannot be overlooked without dangerous consequences for both non-Muslims and "good" Muslims.

[71]Armsfree Ajanaku, "Tackling root cause of Boko Haram beyond military campaigns," *Guardian*, January 29, 2017.

As the counter insurgency operations have intensified, many civilians are caught in the conflict resulting in serious protection risks and violations, particularly in Borno State. While large areas of territory have been recaptured by the Nigerian army, the insurgency continues to target civilians in villages, IDP camps and urban centres including markets, education facilities, places of worship and health facilities. Large areas of Borno remain unsafe and inaccessible.[72]

This form of guerrilla attacks is often launched in one form or another around the North-East of Nigeria. One of the common forms of such attacks is suicide bombing by young girls believed to be abducted and indoctrinated by the *Boko Haram* sect. Recently, there have been video clips released from *Boko Haram*, threatening attacks on certain parts of the country, including the federal capital territory. *Boko Haram* still insist people be converted to their form of Islamic beliefs and doctrines as the only solution to Nigeria's problems. This position has a lot of implications for the peaceful co-existence and interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. It challenges the principles of unity, tolerance, security and justice. It also contradicts the principle of religious freedom that restricts coercion on issues regarding religion.

Apart from the religious affiliation of *Boko Haram* there is another fundamental aspect that needs to be looked into in the fight against the insurgence of the group. This is the original root cause that gave rise to the movement itself. It is associated with political agenda than religious affiliation. A central issue connected to this factor is the high rate of poverty around the area where the movement originated, and the inability of the government to alleviate this poverty. Ajanaku argues that if this background is well checked, it will help in eradicating extremisms in Nigeria. Ajanaku says "that the war against Boko Haram was a reaction to the symptom of a much more fundamental problem. The next phase of the war against *Boko Haram* and other forms of extremism, is therefore about digging deep to understand the root causes of such strands of religious extremism. This diagnosis would then give birth to a curative policy, which would in turn stamp out religious extremism."[73] In the case of the *Boko Haram* group, many of the initial members were thugs that

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[72]DRC/DDG Global Risk Education Technical Advisor. 2016. *Nigeria: Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Survey: Danish Refugee Council / Danish Demining Group*.

[73]Armsfree Ajanaku, "Tackling root cause of Boko Haram beyond military campaigns," *Guardian*, January 29, 2017.

were used by politicians and then neglected by these same politicians when they got into government. It is against this background that Ajanaku again argues that: "Truth be told, in the face of non-existent governance, *Boko Haram* provided these young people with a false sense of provision and security. They succeeded in selling their hateful and blood thirsty philosophy by first filling a void that governments for decades allowed to exist."[74] This factor should not be neglected in any way, because it is also central to the cause of the problem. The government of Nigeria must be sincere in their commitment and dedication to better the lives of their people.

1.7.2 Herdsmen Activities of Terrorism in Nigeria

Another form of insurgency and terrorism in Nigeria is the "Herdsmen" (nomadic) attacks and killings. The Fulanies are traditionally nomads who travel from place to place in search of grazing pastures for their animals. From a historical perspective, the Fulanies, according to M.O.M. Akpor-Robaro and F.O. Lanre-Babalola, are said to be;

> A part of the Peul or Fula ethnic group in Nigeria and other parts of Africa which has existed in some form, for thousands of years. They are called 'Fulani herdsmen' because of their engagement in animal rearing as their major occupation and a source of livelihood. While the Fula tribe is found in the whole of Africa except Liberia, their herdsmen are mainly in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, Sudan, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Benin, Cote d"Ivoire and Cameroun.[75]

According to Robaro and Babalola, the Fulanies have spread to every corner of Nigeria, across the African continent and trans-Sahara. Bolaji Omitola argues that the Fulanies have lived peacefully

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[74]Ibid. A close scrutiny of the literature on Boko Haram would reveal how the bureaucracy of the then fledging terrorist sect went as far as providing food and distributing motorcycles to win thousands of youths into their fold. Till date, the terrorists have a vast base to recruit their cannon fodder from because there is a large population of unemployed and restive waiting to be recruited for these kinds of evil ventures.

[75]M.O.M. Akpor-Robaro and F.O. Lanre-Babalola, "Nomadic Fulani Herdsmen Turn Terrorists? Exploring The Situation and the Security Implications for Nigeria," *Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 23, iss. 7(4) (July 2018): 48. The Fulani herdsmen are all Muslim (99.9%),with pure nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, and Islamic jihadist fundamental orientation by which they have lived since the period of the early Islamic jihads. Historically the Fula ethnic group from which Fulani herdsmen originate has a culture of warfare and conquest approach to livelihood and survival. Although this may be seen as a characteristic of all early African societies as a means of territorial expansion, protection and survival, but this tradition and culture have been dropped ages back by virtually all African societies and replaced with civilized and cooperative way of life and living within the boundaries of their territory. But the Fula people have found it difficult to change from this old tradition to the new way of life as a modern society devoid of the early African tradition of conquest. This makes them a radical departure from other African societies and a special case for African transitional history particularly considering that the Fula people are found in all African countries except Liberia.

and on friendly terms with most of their host-communities and neighbours until recently. Omitola says that "evidences from diverse scholarly works suggested that the Fulani in Nigeria enjoyed peaceful coexistence with their neighbors before the escalation of various conflicts with farmers in different communities."[76] Many traditional rulers and community's leaders confirm this reality, except in few places where there have been land and grazing clashes. What then must be responsible for the recent development? Why are the Fulani herdsmen attacking and killing their host-communities and neighbours?

Omitola again argues that the nomadic herdsmen killings also have some affiliation to religious insurgence and connection to the *Boko Haram* agenda. According to Omitola;

> The consistent denial by the umbrella Fulani Miyetti Cattle Breeders Association that the members of the group are not responsible for the wanton killings and destruction going on in various areas of conflicts is a further evidence to suggest that trans-human Fulani from neighboring countries and their connection and exposure to terrorist ideas and organisations are interested in opening new front of operation for *Boko Haram* in the North-central Nigeria.[77]

Many have expressed the conviction that the Fulanies who attacked and killed were not the settled Fulanies in Nigeria, but from foreign and neighbouring countries. However, the settled Fulanies harbour and shelter the foreign Fulanies. This has posed the challenge as to who are actually doing the attacks and killings? Omitola affirms that: "The influence of foreign Fulani groups in search of pasture accounts for the irreconcilable conflicts being witnessed between the Fulani and their host communities. Due to cultural and religious affinity, it is practically difficult to distinguish between Nigeria Fulani and Fulani from other countries across the Sahel region moving into Nigeria."[78] This has made it difficult to differentiate the peaceful Fulanies from the ones carrying out the attacks. The attacks and killings being carried out show they are not mere community's clashes as it used to be. There are several occasions in the past when Fulani engaged in communal clashes with certain

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[76]Bolaji, Omitola. "Between Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen: Organised Crime and Insecurity in Nigeria" (A Paper Presented at the 5th Institute of Security Studies Conference on Crime and Crime Reduction, Sandton-South Africa, August 14-15, 2014).
[77]Ibid.
[78]Ibid.

groups in Nigeria, especially the Jukuns, the Tivs and the Eggons. Most of these clashes were as a result of disputes over grazing land, though sometimes there is religious influence because the Fulanies are 99.9% Muslims while the other tribes are a mixture of Christians and traditional believers. However, in the midst of all these communal clashes, never has it escalated to a level of fierce attack and terrorism like it is being experienced in the country at the moment.

> The activities of the contemporary Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria in recent times have become worrisome and a source of great concern to many Nigerians both within and in the diaspora. To many Nigerians their activities are beyond what can be termed as mere crimes or pockets of killings by unidentified individuals. Consequent upon their activities, many people now live in fear and under great psychological trauma.[79]

These attacks and killings are mostly carried out around central Nigeria (the middle-belt), the east and south of Nigeria. These are areas dominated by Christians in Nigeria. This is why many Christians believe it is not just Fulani attacks and killings, but a systematic form of *jihad* in Nigeria. The incident of April 24, 2018, where the herdsmen killed two priests and seventeen parishioners in St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Ukpor-Mbalom Parish, Gwer-East Local Government Area of Benue State, (Makurdi diocese), during an early morning Mass, 5.30am, gave the situation a religious tone.

However, Akpor-Robaro and Lanre-Babalola emphasize that it is important to clarify the misconception that Fulanies are militia and terrorists. Generally most Fulanies enjoy good relationships with their host communities and are not connected to the activities of the militia. The problem is that even these good numbers of innocent and peaceful Fulanies are being viewed with anger and suspicion. In the midst of these ,according to Akpor-Robaro and Lanre-Babalola, a lot of conceptions and questions are put forward;

> Among others have argued vehemently against the view that the herdsmen have turned into another terrorist group in Nigeria. They argue that the Fulani herders have been wrongly characterized and labelled and what exists between them and host communities are mere occupational clashes over grazing lands, which have no resemblance with terrorist tendency. Now the question is what is terrorism?

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[79]Akpor-Robaro and Lanre-Babalola, "Nomadic Fulani Herdsmen Turn Terrorists," 47.

What are the features of terrorist groups and their attacks? What makes the Fulani herders attacks on their victims terrorist attacks or not?[80]

These are the questions that have left many in confusion and doubt in their relationship with Fulanies across the country. Thus, many areas affected by the herdsmen attacks and killings still treat the Fulanies with disdain and suspicion. It has created some barriers and negative relationships between the indigenous people of these areas and the Fulani nomads.

Looking at these realities presented about extremism and insurgences in Nigeria, two factors are central: the inability of religious leaders to give proper education about their religious doctrines, and the failure of the government to provide the basic needs of their people. This calls for the collaboration of both Christians and Muslims to fight against extremism and insurgences in Nigeria. In order to tackle this issue, Ajanaku emphasizes the need;

> To counter such extremists positions through aggressive and superior information flow. Already, efforts are being made in some quarters to work with clerics who would work to counter extremism and create understanding across faiths. Since this bothers on national security, the Office of the National Security Adviser could give fillip to all such efforts by working with grassroots movements to make the message sink.[81]

Inter-religious dialogue should therefore play a central role in this regard.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the remote factors responsible for the conflicts and tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It centers on issues of religion and politics, religion and culture and also abuse to human rights and dignity which includes religious freedom, religious discrimination, and respect for human life in Nigeria. Religion has been entangled in so many areas in Nigeria. These have been the cause of tension between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This tension has escalated to crises and conflicts on so many occasions. The recent religious insurgences in Nigeria depict the fact that some Islamic fanatical groups want to take control of some parts of the country with their ideologies and principles. The chapter highlighted this with activities of

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[80] Ibid, 49.
[81] Ajanaku, "Tackling root cause of Boko Haram beyond military campaigns."

Boko Haram and the Herdsmen militia and killings around the central parts of Nigeria. All these affect the peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims, especially in Northern and Central Nigeria, and make interfaith dialogue difficult and unsuccessful.

There are three main points that stand out clearly in this chapter. The first is the fact that religion has failed in its principles and obligations to the people of Nigeria. This is because religion is at the center of affairs in Nigeria and is supposed to promote good and moral values, yet we see the opposite. There is competition and rivalry between Christians and Muslims, leading to hatred among them, discrimination and abuse of human dignity and religious freedom. Above all, religion is meant to influence politics and the life of the people, but rather, there is a high level of bribery and corruption in Nigeria. The second aspect is that Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are not truthful and living according to their religious teachings. Both religions preach love, forgiveness, tolerance, peace and justice, yet all these principles are not being seen in practice among Christians and Muslims. All these pose challenges and make inter-religious dialogue difficult in Nigeria. Manipulation by political and criminal elements is also a major factor of tension and conflict between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Both Christians and Muslims need to distance themselves from the bad practices, but not disengage from genuine politics and working together. True religion makes Christians and Muslims foster human and community growth.

Violence and terrorism have been in existence for more than thirty years in Nigeria. Religious extremism has been on the increase with abuses and violations of the principles of the fundamental human rights and religious freedom. One fact must be mentioned-that a lot of effort is required from the side of the Muslims regarding Christian-Muslim dialogue and relations. This is because of the influence associated with Muslims in most of the issues discussed in the chapter. Be it religion and politics, or religion and culture, Muslims are at the center of the problem. The insurgences are mainly connected to Islamic principles of *jihad*. A kind of religious crusade is systematically being launched in Northern Nigeria. On this account, Islamic authorities in Nigeria must take

responsibility and confront the problem of Islamic radicalism and violence which is spreading fast in the country. Therefore, there is the need for Islamic leaders to do all that is possible to rescue Islam from the extremists often urging violence.

Religious leaders in Nigeria again have obligations in implementing what have been presented by theologians and scholars. Religious leaders must do all that is possible to promote human values. Such values include the promotion of social justice and welfare, human dignity and equality, and the principles of unity and peaceful co-existence. They must therefore educate their members on the principles and theology of non-violence. For example, Princewill says that: "If we showed the same religious commitment to ending poverty as we did to our religious beliefs (or to what passes for belief in Nigeria), our country would find itself much improved."[82] Looking critically at the situation in Nigeria, drastic actions need to be taken for Christians and Muslims to live in harmony. Yakubu Gowon also advocates Nigerians to seek God's intervention in Nigeria. "God loves Nigeria and made us Nigerians. Nigerians must resist any circumstance that would lead to the division of the country. I enjoined the leadership of the country at all levels to rule the people with the fear of God."[83]

The issues highlighted in this chapter form the central problem of the thesis, and necessitated the need for effective dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This will be done in the light of inter-religious dialogue movements and the teachings of the Catholic Church in the Second Vatican Council.

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[82]Tabia Princewill, "Is Nigeria a multi-religious state or a secular state?" *Vanguard* December 20, 2017.
[83]Yakubu Gowon, reported by John Akubo, "Gowon restates prayer is only antidote to myriads of challenges," *Guardian*, November 1, 2017.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO INTERFAITH DIALOGUE: PROMULGATION AND

TEACHINGS OF *NOSTRA AETATE* AND VATICAN II ON INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

2.1 Introduction

Religion is an institution or movement for uniting people all over the world. Religion has also been a major factor of conflicts and division in the world. The previous chapter exposes the crisis of religion in Nigeria, in which Christians and Muslims are caught up at the center of the whole affair. It ranges from the crisis of religion and politics to the crisis of religion and cultural diversities, and other factors like religious freedom, discrimination and the crime of bribery and corruption in Nigeria. All these emphasize the need for effective dialogue in Nigeria, and provide the background for discussions in this chapter and subsequent chapters that will follow in the thesis.

This chapter will therefore discuss the foundation of interfaith dialogue in the world and the theology and teaching of interfaith dialogue that emerged from the Second Vatican Council. The chapter will be divided into two sections. Section A will discuss the history of interreligious dialogue, and show how interreligious dialogue developed before the Second Vatican Council. It will also examine the processes and stages that led to the development and promulgation of the document on interfaith dialogue at the Second Vatican Council.

Section B will further present the theology and principles of interfaith dialogue from the Second Vatican Council. It will also examine the common characteristics of the documents of the Council in relation to interfaith dialogue and religious freedom. The principal document to be examined is *Nostra Aetate*. Other documents to be examined include: *Dignitatis Humanae, Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. The central theme emerging from all the documents regarding interfaith dialogue and religious freedom is focussed on religious unity. This theme of unity also extends to other aspects such as peace and justice, freedom and equality, human respect and dignity, human welfare and the common good. These ideas run through the thesis in different ways, and eventually they

will, I hope, provide the basis of education for effective interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

SECTION A: HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

2.2 Background and Foundation of Interfaith Dialogue

Interreligious or interfaith dialogue is considered to be the interaction between people of different faiths or religions for the purpose of achieving some positive objectives. Terrence Merrigan states that, "the theology of interreligious dialogue, understood as critical reflection on the attempts by religious traditions to determine where they stand vis- à-vis other claimants to truth and wisdom regarding humanity and our relationship to the transcendent (or ultimate) reality, is (and will remain) a discipline in the making. This is inevitable since the religions themselves are continually obliged to reappropriate their own traditions in the light of the challenges thrown up by history."[1] Consequently, there are many challenges, especially in contemporary times, that provide the basis for the different religious traditions to express their convictions and beliefs, vis-à-vis how to come to common agreement and understanding of each other. For example, some common modern trends such as secularism, globalization and pluralism are common to all religious traditions and beliefs, and need the cooperation and understanding among all religious. Merrigan therefore posits that; "in our age, these challenges are largely the fruit of an unprecedented level of globalization and pluralisation and all that these phenomena bring with them, including, among other things, the mystical clash of cultures, the spectre of secularization (and secularism)."[2] Since religion is a global affair it must seek for solutions to global issues, and therefore, the need for interreligious dialogue in the world.

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[1] Terrence Merrigan, "Introduction: Rethinking Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue*, eds. Terrence Merrigan and John Friday(Oxford: University Press, 2017), 13. "Interreligious dialogue takes many forms, but is essentially a conscious attempt to build bridges of understanding, respect, harmony, and friendship among religious communities. Those involved in dialogue tend to focus on common ground rather than that which divides them to overcome stereotypes and historical grievances." (New World Encyclopedia, s.v. "Inter-Religious Dialogue").

[2] Ibid. (See also, Gavin D'Costa, "Engaging with a 'clash of civilisations': liberal views of religion in the public domain and Catholic approaches" *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 17, no. 1, January 2007: 33)

However, there are other particular issues that also affect the different religions of the world on the matters of beliefs and faith practices. Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur highlight that such issues concern matters of doctrines and teachings, human life and existence, and the challenges of religious identities. All these provide the basis for the necessity of interreligious dialogue in the world. According to Merdjanova and Brodeur, dialogue is a process and every religion should understand that;

> There are various levels of dialogue and it is a process of growth. An initial requirement is an openness to and acceptance of the other. It takes time to build trust and to deepen relationships. This is why some continuity in a dialogue group is helpful and why patience and time are necessary-all of which are particularly difficult to ensure at an international level. Too easily, we find ourselves imposing our presuppositions on the conversation.[3]

Interreligious dialogue should not be on issues that need a compromise, but a process of unfolding the truth about each other's faith and beliefs.

The history of interreligious dialogue can be traced back to 1893 when the World Parliament of Religions (WPR) met in Chicago for a period of two weeks. Merdjanova and Brodeur highlight two points that characterized the nature of that meeting, "a broad diversity in the religious composition of its main participants as well as an emphasis on understanding each other rather than converting one another. In other words, communication for better understanding was prioritized over 'winning' theological arguments."[4] According to Merdjanova and Brodeur the meeting also gave the basis of understanding the theology of interreligious dialogue, and the unity in diversity of various religions.

Following this meeting, some participants saw the need to come to common agreements on issues raised at the meeting. This led to some informal gathering among individuals of different religious background, and eventually, the creation of the first interreligious organization, known as the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) in 1900. The organization, according to

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[3]Ina Merdjanova and Patrice Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), 16

[4]Ibid, 11. See also Marcus Braybrooke, *Widening Vision the World Congress of Faiths: The Growing Interfaith Movement* (London: Braybrooke Press, 2013), 7.

Merdjanova and Brodeur, "focused on religious freedom, bringing together a number of liberal wings of various religions in different parts of the world. They had discovered at the Parliament and during the course of subsequent encounters how much they each struggled to be recognized by mainline, orthodox groups within their respective religions."[5] After the formation of IARF, the progress of interreligious dialogue was slow and gradual. It was not until 1933 that the World Fellowship of Faiths had its first International Congress in Chicago again. "It was called unofficially the 'Second Parliament of Religions' under the legacy of the first Parliament held in that city. This gathering had also been stimulated by another recent event, the 'Religions of Empire Conference' held in London in 1924."[6] This conference shifted attention of the world interreligious movement to the religious activities in the British Empire.

The next interfaith movement was the World Congress of Faiths (WCF) held at London in 1936.[7] Marcus Braybrooke says the congress was in association with the world socio-political emergence, which had a different vision from the first WPR. This movement, Braybrooke argues, has made much impact in contemporary world religious associations. According to Braybrooke, the movement;

> However tentative and hesitant, is the most significant religious fact in our contemporary world society. Undoubtedly there are many who have committed themselves to this significant development of faith in all parts of the world. The World Congress of Faiths has during its sixty years of life devoted time, energy, thought and prayer to breaking down human barriers and working in a fellowship.[8]

Such movement became necessary for Britain especially because the Empire was opening up to a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society, and saw the need to begin to break barriers of divisions among people. Thus Merdjanova and Brodeur again argue that, "the World Congress of Faiths promoted a kind of intellectual and experiential dialogue that was very far from the activist language that was

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[5]Ibid.
[6]Ibid.
[7]Cf. Braybrooke, *Widening Vision the World Congress of Faiths,* 2013, 8.
[8]Marcus Braybrooke, *Widening Vision the World Congress of Faiths: The Growing Interfaith Movement* (London: Braybrooke Press, 2013), 5.

to develop another generation later, after most of the mainline Christian Churches embarked officially on the interreligious dialogue journey."[9] On a general level, the congress promoted the place of religion, especially Christianity in the British Empire, as the religion that will solidify and protect the Empire.[10]

Many other activist organizations sprang up following the World Congress of Faiths in order to address the needs of the world's growing interests in different areas. These movements include the Temple of Understanding in New York, which was developed from 1968. It targeted the international peace agenda in conjunction with the United Nations programme of peace in the world. The World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils also started in Kerala, India in 1981. This council was meant to address the growing tensions in the world. The important aspect of this development was in 1988, when the Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions was established in Chicago. The Council was in preparation to celebrate the centenary of the first that took place in 1893. However, it became a significant council according to Merdjanova and Brodeur, "leading to a permanent office that continues to provide an umbrella space for interreligious dialogue organizations and individuals to meet every five years or so (Chicago: 1993; Cape Town: 1999; Barcelona: 2004; Melbourne: 2009),"[11] and 2015 in Utah. Finally, in 1995, an interreligious event was organized in San Francisco to celebrate the golden jubilee of the United Nations. It was focused on facilitating the new approach to internet technology.

Rev. Sun Myung Moon was an important figure in the interreligious movement. He established the International Religious Foundation (IRF) from the framework of Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (HSA-UWC) in 1983. He also supported and encouraged interreligious initiatives bringing people of different faiths together to interact, organise and finance interfaith seminars. Yanni (John) Maniates appreciated the effort and contribution of "Reverend

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[9]Merdjanova and Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter*, 12.
[10]Cf. Douglas Pratt, "The Dance of Dialogue: Ecumenical Inter-religious Engagement," *The Ecumenical Review* 51, no. 3, (July 1999): 274-276.
[11]Merdjanova and Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter*, 13.

Moon for his vision to support these events with the incredible generosity and resolve that he had. He was way ahead of his time and initiated important events, projects, friendships and more that either directly came out of the conferences that the International Religious Foundation (IRF) organized or that were offshoots of the fertile environment these events provided."[12] The first meeting of the largest gathering of religious leaders was convened by the IRF in America in 1985. The same year, the Assembly of the World's Religions (AWR) gathered more than 1,000 of the world's most prominent religious and spiritual leaders in McAfee, New Jersey. The Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion was also founded in 1990 at Gobind Sadan, Delhi in India by Sikh guru and Baba Virsa Singh. It is an avenue of interfaith contact where the different religions of the world will come to share ideas and study together. Merdjanova and Brodeur argue that "this brief overview of major worldwide interreligious dialogue organizations is not exhaustive by any means, other organizations having appeared over the last 40 years or so. It gives a taste of the initially slow and then more rapid increase in organizational structures, itself a result of the growing need for cooperation across religious and spiritual traditions."[13] It is remarkable how the progress in interreligious activities and dialogue over the years was recorded in the number of organizations and movements. Many scholars and individuals have also developed an interest in this subject over the years through studies and participation in conferences of interreligious organization.

In all the early interfaith movements and organization, the Catholic Church never participated. This was because of the old tradition of triumphalism of the Catholic Church over other religions and Christian denominations. Before the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church believed she was the only authentic religion and means to salvation. As a result of such a position, interfaith activities were never in the agenda of the Catholic Church prior to Vatican II. This is the position Douglas Pratt affirms when he argues that: "Until the 1960s Roman Catholicism lived, to all intents

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[12]Yanni John Maniates, "A Brief Narrative History of the Genesis of the Ecumenical Work of The International Religious Foundation," *Dialogue & Alliance* 30 no. 2 (January 2016): 31-32.
[13]Merdjanova and Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter*, 13.

and purposes, wholly within the framework of its own worldview. Acknowledgment of the 'religiously other'-even other Christian churches-was muted. Certainly no salvific value was accorded to any other religion; and the notion of establishing any kind of dialogical relationship with any other religion was an idea on the fringes. Religious exclusivism held sway."[14]

From Vatican II onwards, the Catholic Church had a central role in the development of interreligious dialogue in the world, through the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. Because *Nostra Aetate* is the heart of the Catholic Church's teaching on relations with other religions, it also serves as a guide to interfaith dialogue in the Catholic tradition. The development of this document and its teachings will be considered.

2.3 Developments Leading to the Publication of *Nostra Aetate*

Nostra Aetate is the official document of the Church on interreligious dialogue. The document was promulgated by the Church on October 28, 1965 as one of the three Declarations of the Church. *Nostra Aetate*, (literally meaning 'in our time'), is the Declaration on the relation of the Church with non-Christian Religions. Since Vatican II was all about renewal and change; this renewal and change is also an important aspect of the new paradigm on interfaith dialogue which this thesis proposes. Four drafts were prepared in stages. It is important to consider the process of the development.

1.   Preparation and Planning of the Draft

It was on September 18th, 1960 when the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity was commissioned by Pope John XXIII to prepare a draft on the relation between the Church and the Jewish people. Cardinal Augustin Bea was appointed to be in charge. Several factors were behind the decision of the Pope to present this issue at the Council. Therefore, from this background, Edward Idris Cassidy states that "before the council, 'interreligious dialogue' was not high on the agenda of the Catholic Church. It was once again the Pope who wanted the council to make a

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[14]Douglas Pratt, "The Dance of Dialogue: Ecumenical Inter-religious Engagement," *The Ecumenical Review* 51, no. 3, (July 1999): 279.

statement on relations with the Jews, and Cardinal Bea who was entrusted with preparing a document. The story that unfolded proved to be one of the most dramatic of the council, and attracted the attention of the world's press."[15]

The key factor that opened up discussion on the document *Nostra Aetate*[16] came in an audience with the Pope on June 13th, 1960. At that audience the French historian, Jules Isaac, gave the Pope a dossier of his studies on the evolution of anti-Semitic myths under three headings. First, was a program designed to rectify Christian teaching regarding the Jews. The second concerned the theological myth that the scattering of Israel was a punishment from God for crucifying Jesus. Third, was an extract from the Trent catechism stating that the Jews do not belong to the tradition of the Church.

Another essential factor was the desire of the Pope to support the Jews and restore their hope after the Second World War. During World War II, while he was apostolic delegate to Turkey, John XXIII saved several Jews from the Nazis. Howard E. Root also confirms that the inclusion of the Jews in the schema on ecumenism came from the interest of Pope John XXIII and the determination of Cardinal Bea. According to Root, John XXIII;

> Expressed this to Cardinal Bea and was deeply concerned with the progress of the text right up until his death. But we can also properly surmise that the subject was always very close to the heart of Cardinal Bea himself. Quite apart from the general merits of a statement repudiating any kind of anti-Semitism, the sufferings of the Jews under Hitler would touch very deeply a man of the character and sensitivity of the German Augustinian Cardinal Bea.[17]

It is not a surprise therefore that Cardinal Bea insisted the document should be considered by the Council.

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[15]Edward Idris Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 125.

[16]New World Encyclopedia, s.v. "Inter-Religious Dialogue." With *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic open the door of friendship and acceptance of other religions. "The Second Vatican Council, especially as stated in the document *Nostra Aetate* (1965), implicitly abandoned the centuries-old Roman Catholic teaching of 'outside the church, no salvation.' In 1964, Pope Paul VI created a special department within the Roman Curia for relations with people of other religions, which, in 1988, became the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue."

[17]Howard E. Root, "The Church and Non-Christian Religions," in *The Second Vatican Council: Studies by Eight Anglican Observers*, ed. Bernard C. Pawley (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 233-234.

The first consideration of the document was to change the Good Friday prayer that referred to the Jews as *'infidels'* in 1959. In this regard, John T. Pawlikowski argues that "the controversy over an appropriate prayer for the Jewish people in Catholic liturgy has been with us since the time of John XXIII. Even prior to the Second Vatican Council, he removed the term "perfidious" from the Good Friday prayer. Then in 1965, just before Vatican II's 'Declaration on the Relationship of the Church and Non-Christian Religions' (*Nostra Aetate*), John's successor, Paul VI, eliminated the negative language about the Jews (the reference to their "blindness," for example)."[18] To consider the Jews as infidels is an attitude of discrimination against them, and *Nostra Aetate* opposes any act of religious discrimination.

Alongside the above factors for the inclusion of the Declaration on the Jews, were the petitions of the Council's Central Preparatory Commission, and that of the African and Asian bishops on their relationship with other religions in their continents. Because of these two petitions, John P. Hogan and George F. McLean argue that "the document quickly evolved into a treatment of all the world's religions. As Bea wrote, it was the first time the church made an official pronouncement on non-Christian religions. The document moved the church further away from exclusionary model of *'extra ecclesia nulla salus'* toward the possibility, at least, of non-Christian religions being vehicles of salvation."[19] The initial plan of the Council was to work on the theology of relationship with Jewish religion. However, it ultimately began to extend to other non-Christian religions. This background provided the basis for the inclusion of the subjects of both Jews and other religions in the Council's deliberations. A brief summary of the stages and development of the document's drafts are presented. The first saw the challenges the text went through during the Council.

a)   **The First Stage**: In November 1960, the first stage of the development of the Declaration began. Fr. Gregory Baum, O.S.A was appointed by Cardinal Bea to provide a summary survey on

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[18]John T. Pawlikowski, "Praying for the Jews Two Views on the New Good Friday Prayer," *Commonweal* 135 no. 5 (March 2008): 10.

[19]John P. Hogan and George F. McLean, *Multiple Paths to God: Nostra Aetate 40 Years Later* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), 2.

the problem of the relationship between the Jews and the Church. John Borelli affirms that: "Baum's report was handed out at the second plenary in February 1961, and discussed informally after the given business of the day had concluded. . . Baum's report was filed in the folder for the third plenary in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano."[20] Borelli further states that Baum's report provides the foundation for further consideration on the relationship of the church and the Jews. Borelli affirms that "Baum's report first pointed out that the relationship of the church to the Jews is a theological matter, and that certain ancient and medieval views are incompatible with that theology. It then made three points aimed at clarifying what St. Paul says about the Jews in his Letter to the Romans in order to enable Christians to better appreciate Jews and so to stem the tide of anti-Semitism."[21] These three points that Baum identified can be summarised thus:

1. The connection between the Church and the old Israel.

2. The notion that the Jews were a cursed people rejected by God.

3. A condemnation of anti-Semitism and a focus on the hope of Israel's final reconciliation.

Baum's report was followed by a discussion in three plenaries. It was then observed that the text on the relationship of the church and Jews is needed not only because of the urgency of the topic, but also on solid theological grounds.

b)   The Second Stage and the First Draft: At the second stage, a sub-commission was formed to consider the Jewish issue. John Oesterreicher, a leading theologian of Jewish and Christian reconciliation, and Abbot Leo Rudloff, a Benedictine monk, were to join Fr. Baum as members of the sub-commission. By early 1961, the sub-commission began to work under the chairmanship of Abbot Leo Rudloff. The first meeting of the sub-commission began on April 6th until 21st 1961. Both Abbot Rudloff and Oesterreicher gave their views on why the Church must anticipate the reunification of the old and new Israel, as well as the role of Jews in salvation history. Baum's

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[20]John Borelli, "Nostra Aetate: Origin, History, and Vatican II Context," in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multi-Religious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, eds. Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhangen (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), 30.
[21]Ibid, 19

preliminary presentation on the above subject was welcomed and applauded by the audience. Three general meetings of the Commission were held in April, August, and November 1961. The sub-commission, according to Raymond Canning, "prepared a substantial preliminary study that highlighted the Jewish roots of the church, presented the Jews as forever favoured by God, looked towards the eschatological reconciliation of Jews and Christians, and called for the condemnation of anti-Semitism."[22] This was the first draft to be presented by the sub-commission. The draft was prepared at the general assembly in Ariccia from November 27th to December 2nd, 1961. The draft traces the roots of the Church with the Jewish people as children of Abraham in the faith. It also expresses how both Jews and Gentiles are one. The Church also believes in the union of the Jews as an integral sign of hope for the attainment of final salvation.[23] Finally the Church condemns any form of injustice done to Jews. This first text was full of enthusiasm, but did not survive to the final stage of the draft. Before that, the text went through a slow process of development.

The commission had barely started to work when they were confronted with opposition as a result of leaked information from the curia. The main opposition came from the Arab governments. Their protest was that the declaration being positive to the Jews would affect the politics of the region and eventually lead to the diplomatic recognition of the State of Israel by the Vatican. This was an opening to an attack on the declaration by many members of the council. As a result, the initial report of the sub-commission was not considered by the Council's Central Preparation Commission held in June 1962. Therefore, the report did not appear on the agenda of the first session of the

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[22]Raymond Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965): Historical Genesis, Key Elements, and Reception by the Church in Australia," *The Australasian Catholic Record,* 93 no. 4 (October 2016): 393..

[23]Ariel Ben Ami, "The Origins and Development of *Nostra Aetate*," Catholics for Israel, entry posted July 1, 2004, www.catholicsforisrael.com/.../229-the-origins-and-development-of-nost... (accessed November 18, 2015). The following seven points were put forward for consideration by the sub-commision: 1. Any definition of the nature of the Church should teach that the Church is rooted in the Israel of the patriarchs and prophets. 2. The Church is the Church of Jews and Gentiles; the reconciliation of the two in Christ prefigures and proclaims the reconciliation of all men in the Church. The Jewish people are not accursed but remain forever dear to God. 3. The reconciliation of the two Israels is an integral part of Christian hope. 4. Anti-Semitism should be condemned as a sin against justice, love, and the bond of human brotherhood. 5.The feasts of the just of the Old Covenant, as presently celebrated in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, might be extended to the whole Church. 6. Guidelines might be given on the best ways of teaching Israel's role in salvation history. 7. Paintings and sculptures that preserved the slanders accusing the Jews of ritual murder should be removed; liturgical passages offensive to the Jews should be corrected.

general Council of 1962. Canning posits that "the reasons for this were mainly political. There were objections from the Arabic world that the Catholic Church was unwarrantedly supporting the Jews in the Jewish-Arab conflict. Such a consideration would continue to impact on the fortunes and shape of the declaration throughout all phases of its development."[24] Therefore, petitions were discussed and criticisms were given. In summary, two main factors delayed the debate on the declaration according to Canning. These were the objection of the Arab governments and the unwillingness of some theologians to prepare a statement on the Jews. The second factor was based on the fact that prior to Vatican II there was no official teaching of the Church on the mystery of the existence of the Jews.

c)   **The third stage and the Second Draft:** According to Canning Cardinal Bea made a request for the rewrite of the draft to come under "the schema on the Jews as part of the council's program. Other voices were strongly supportive of this move, not least those of the German bishops. Subsequently, two months into the second session of the council, on 8 November 1963, a new (second) draft was issued entitled 'On Catholics' Relation to Non-Christians and especially to the Jews'. At that time this text was located at chapter 4 of the schema 'On Ecumenism'."[25] At this stage, the Council fathers made their observations on the draft in writing and many of them responded with various views.[26] Canning again emphasizes that based on the response of the Council's fathers and "the reworking of the text during the period between the second and third sessions meant effectively that relations with the Jews were no longer to be considered within a strictly ecumenical framework, but within the broader context of relations with other religions and

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[24]Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965): Historical Genesis," 393.
[25]Ibid.
[26]Ami, "The Origins and Development of *Nostra Aetate.*" Many efforts were made by various theologians to include the declaration on the Jews within the declaration on ecumenism. They all "rose up in defence of the inclusion of the Declaration on the Jews in the schema on ecumenism, pointing out the common roots, the common writings, a common history, and a unity of goal and predestination of Israel and the Church. In the spring of 1964, it was relegated to the appendix of the same schema, and then subsequently separated altogether from the decree on ecumenism."

of universal brotherhood."[27] This stage has now widened the horizon of concentration, not mainly on the Jews but to include other religions.

A remarkable development of the document came with the visit of Dr. Chaim Wardi, of the Ministry of Religious affairs of the State of Israel. Being a senior official, he was sent as a delegate to Rome to serve as an observer at the Council. The visit of Wardi as an observer, Borelli argues, also created a protest from the Arab governments and representatives of Islamic government. The Arab governments and representatives of Islamic government Borelli says "linked a draft on relations with the Jews to steps by the Vatican towards establishing diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Thus, when the Central Preparatory Commission convened and looked at the draft 'On the Jews,' prepared by the secretariat, Cardinal Amleto Cicognani, made it clear that such a draft could not be considered for the Council's agenda."[28] Cardinal Bea explained the reason behind the removal as being due to the political perception associated with it. It was also anticipated that the Declaration might result in the persecution of Christians in other parts of the world, particularly in the Arab countries. A passionate appeal was made by the Chief Rabbi of Rome to include the Declaration on the Jews in the Council's documents. Therefore, the best way of including it in the Council's documents was to place it in the schema on ecumenism, alongside the other religions which was done in the third draft.

d)   **The fourth stage and the Third Draft:** The third draft brings us to the fourth stage in the development of the declaration. At this stage, the draft became chapter five of the schema on ecumenism instead. The most important aspect of the draft was the emphasis placed on correcting the teaching that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christ, and to condemn anti-Semitism. Based on this, the draft has to be separated from the schema on ecumenism. Thus, the draft on the Declaration of the Church in relation to Non-Christian Religions Canning argues, "was intended to put an end to every form of anti-Semitism within Christianity and to express the church's

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[27]Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965): Historical Genesis," 393-394.
[28]Borelli "Nostra Aetate: Origin, History, and Vatican II Context," 19.

acknowledgment of its own Jewish roots. What ultimately ensured that the council was able to make its statement on the Jews was the broadening of perspective to incorporate other religions. The declaration shows that, on the basis of sound biblical and historical arguments, the church was able to set aside centuries of traditional animosity towards the Jews, and also to create a space for genuine interreligious dialogue more broadly."[29] This draft was approved at the Secretariat meeting, February 25th to March 2nd, 1963. It was presented to the Council at the second session on November 16th, 1963.[30] The first objection came from leaders of the Eastern Churches, who demanded its removal from the schema on ecumenism. They were supported by the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Armenian Patriarch of Cilicia, who demanded that the declaration should mention all non-Christian religions. Opposition was also mounted by the Arab governments, with critical anti-Semitic pamphlets and publications. A historical point in the development of the Declaration was the visit of Pope Paul VI to the Holy Land after the second session of the Council on December 4, 1963. This was to bridge the gap of reconciliation and peace on both sides of the Israeli and Arab borders.

The draft was then presented to the Council by Cardinal Bea on September 25th, 1964, with the title; 'Declaration on the Jews and non-Christians'. This sounded more acceptable to its opponents. The focus was no longer specifically on the Jews. At this point, there was a plan to separate the chapter on the Jews completely from the schema on ecumenism. Root argues that "the solution took the form of placing the statement on the Jews in an entirely new context, i.e. a declaration 'On the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions.' It is a brief document (only 1,117 words), divided into five sections. It is wholly admirable, doing precisely what it sets out to do."[31] It was Archbishop Pericle Felici, the Secretary General of the Council who wrote officially to Cardinal

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[29]Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965) : Historical Genesis," 395.

[30]*Nostra Aetate* No. 4. *Nostra Aetate* furthers reiterated that: "Even though the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. John 19:6), neither all Jews indiscriminately at that time, nor Jews today, can be charged with the crimes committed during his passion. It is true that the Church is the new people of God, yet the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as if this followed from holy Scripture."

[31]Root, "The Church and Non-Christian Religions," 236.

Bea, stating that the declaration on the Jews would be shortened to a paragraph in the draft on the Church. Bea and others made an appeal to Pope Paul VI directly, requesting that the declaration on the Jews should not be an appendix of any document, but an entirely separate declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions.[32]

2.   The Final Draft *and Promulgation of the Declaration*

The intention at this stage was to develop an official brief paragraph to center on non-Christian religions. Verifications and implementation of the changes were made and presented in November, 1964. It excluded the schema on ecumenism, and opened a new horizon for the Church to examine the separation of the Church and the people of Israel in Christ.

The final criticism from observers was that the Church was dissociating herself from the teaching on the divinity of Christ. This posed a threat to the declaration as it was perceived that the position of the Church was more diplomatic than concerned with truth and justice. Thus there was need for an amendment to the fourth section regarding the Jews, and the paragraph that ruled on anti-Semitism.' However, Cassidy highlights that "in the end, a large consensus had been achieved. Perhaps, looking back, we might find the declaration rather general and abstract in dealing with religions other than the Jewish religion, but as we shall see, the foundation had been laid for future dialogue."[33]

At this point, the draft was put to a vote. Canning affirms that;

> On 14-15 October 1965, 2023 council fathers took part in the final voting on *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Church's Relation to Non-Christian Religions. There were 1763 votes in favour, 250 against, and ten invalid. Two weeks later, on 28 October, the declaration was definitively approved for promulgation. In this vote, 2312 fathers took part, with 2221 in favour, 88 against, two approving with reservations, and one invalid.[34]

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[32]Ami, "The Origins and Development of *Nostra Aetate*." "The positive values of Buddhism and Hinduism were now explicitly presented, and the paragraph devoted to the Muslims now totalled 25 lines. The title of the declaration had been changed to: Declaration on the Relation of the Church To Non-Christian Religions. Though the Jews had disappeared from the title, the text concerning them was not only retained, but amplified and strengthened according to the wish of the majority."

[33]Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue: Unitatis Redintegratio, Nostra Aetate*, 128.

[34]Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965)," 392. (See also Godfried Danneels, "The Ongoing Agenda," in *The Second Vatican Council*, 2013, 21).

These votes show that the document had been thoroughly studied and approved by majority of the Council's fathers. The Declaration thus provided the guidelines on the relationship of the church with non-Christian religions.

2.4 Section's Conclusion

This section first discussed the foundation of interreligious movements in the world prior to the Second Vatican Council and the involvement of the Catholic Church in interfaith activities. Before the gathering of the World Parliament of Religions in 1893, every religion was only concerned about itself and how to propagate. Perhaps that may have led to contempt and competition among the various religions. The idea of unity was the intention of the Church during the Second Vatican Council. The Council focuses on what unites rather than what divides.

Thus, the chapter briefly discussed the foundation and development of interreligious dialogue. It then described the process that led to the promulgation and publication of the Roman Catholic document on interfaith dialogue at the Second Vatican Council, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian religions - *Nostra Aetate*.[35] The rigorous processes in the devolvement of *Nostra Aetate* are all preparations for the rich theology and doctrine of interfaith dialogue that will eventually emerge. The central points that ran through the process of the development of the document concerns common belief in one God, unity of all religions, reconciliation, religious dignity and respect. These areas are important to interfaith dialogue and provide the basis of education to Christian and Muslim.

In promulgating the document *Nostra Aetate*, the Church saw the need to respect and appreciate Judaism together with the other religions. Even though more emphasis was given to Judaism and Islam, the teachings and principles of *Nostra Aetate* extends to other religions. The emphasis on

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[35] Ariel Ben Ami, "The Origins and Development of *Nostra Aetate*." Catholics for Israel, entry posted July 1, 2004, www.catholicsforisrael.com/.../229-the-origins-and-development-of-nost... (accessed November 18, 2015)"Though there was slightly less support for the paragraph on the Jews than for the section dealing with non-Christian religions, the number opposed to the declaration was reduced to 99, with 242 requests for amendments - one of the most favourable results registered during the Council. It seemed like the greatest difficulties were now of the past."

Judaism and Islam is based on their common ancestral origin with Christianity. Therefore, the Church saw the need to concentrate more on the relationship of these three religions.

In summary, there are two important points that led to the foundation of interreligious movements. There was the global search for the truth by the different religions of the world. There was also the need to understand, appreciate and respect each other's faith and religion.

Again there are two factors responsible for the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* from a theological perspective. First there is the factor that concerns the teaching of the church on the Jewish people. Secondly there is also the factor that concerns the relationship of the Church with other religions in the world. The next section will look at the teachings of *Nostra Aetate* and the principles of interfaith dialogue in line with other documents of the Second Vatican Council.

SECTION B: THEOLOGY OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

2.5 Overview of *Nostra Aetate*

The previous section provides the background and intention of the Catholic Church to promulgate *Nostra Aetate.* This document highlights the importance of dialogue with other religions, which is contextually known as interfaith or interreligious dialogue. Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli argue that "in interreligious relations, formal meetings and learned discussions certainly have their place, but these relations involve much more than theological discussion. Theology arises from experience, and the wish to situate the whole question of interreligious dialogue within the context of everyday life."[36] It is a reality that theology stands at the center of interreligious dialogue. However, from this theological discourse, other issues and factors emerge. In other words, it is from a theological context that the foundation of interreligious dialogue was established, and it is the main reason behind the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. From the theological background came the issue of relationships, reconciliation, unity, peaceful co-existence, and so many other factors

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[36]Michael L. Fitzgerald and John Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View* (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 27. (See also Merrigan, "Rethinking Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue," 13).

that built up the study of interreligious dialogue. All these are integrated and reflected in the theology and teaching of *Nostra Aetate*.

An overview of *Nostra Aetate* shows that there are rich theological points that strengthen the bond of the Catholic Church with other religions of the world. It primarily focuses on the Jewish people, and led to the possibility of dialogue between the Catholic Church and other religions.[37] The basis for the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, according to Cassidy are summarised in five points:

1.   The end of the long-standing tradition of "deicide".

2.   The religious bond and spiritual legacy shared by the Jews and the Catholic Church.

3.   The covenant between God and Jews extending to the Church.

4.   Condemnation of anti-Semitism.

5.   Collaborative biblical interpretation and studies between the Catholic Church and the Jews.

It is from these five points Robert P. Ericksen highlights the old claim by Christians to supersede the Jews as the actual covenant people, who now have inherited God's blessing. He argues that *Nostra Aetate* "rejected this longstanding and momentous claim of Christian supersession. Finally, *Nostra Aetate* told Catholics that they no longer could preach or teach contempt toward Jews: The Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures."[38] This position also provides a new vision in the 'Christian-Jew' theology and relationship, and opens up the possibility of dialogue with other religions.

Looking at the content of *Nostra Aetate*, John P. Hogan and George F. McLean gave an insight that;

> Though the shortest document emerging from the council, it might prove to be the Church's passport to the world of globalization. . . The six pages of *Nostra Aetate* (*Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*) speak to the issues of today-our fears and divisions, our hopes and our efforts towards unity. Most importantly, along with other documents of the Council, it recognizes the importance of the other great religions as multiple paths to God.[39]

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[37]Cf. Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, 125-126).

[38]Robert P. Ericksen, "Jews and 'God the father' after Auschwitz: American responses to *Nostra Aetate*," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* 29 no. 2 (January 2016): 325.

[39] Hogan and McLean, *Multiple Paths to God*, 1.

Nostra Aetate can be seen as a document that brings to focus the attention of the Church to world's reality as she engages with people of other faith in searching for the truth about human reality and solutions to problems that challenges human existence.[40]

In order to have a clear vision of the contributions of *Nostra Aetate,* it is important to explore the entire structure of the document. The whole document has five sections, dealing with different issues and subjects.

Section one: Introduction to the Document

This section opens up the discussion on the unity of humankind in the world. It expresses the fact that the Church has a task and responsibility of promoting unity and love among humankind all over the world. In his commentary on the documents *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*, Petrus Johannes Van der Merwe argues that;

> The document is presented as being born from the task of the Church to improve unity and love amongst people, with the purpose to build bridges and increase agreement. At least two issues are important, namely, (1) the declaration is not grounded in the creation of the Church and (2) the declaration is not meant to contain issues of essential meaning in the relationship between the Church and non-Christian religiosity.[41]

The section further provide the basis of this unity and love of humankind, coming from the fact that all people have one origin and final destiny; namely that we all came from God, and shall return to God. It therefore lays the foundation why the Church must collaborate with other religions of the world in the search for human yearnings and aspirations. Van der Merwe further highlights that in this section, "an investigation is made into the most basic correspondence in the human religious search for reality and truth. It comes as no surprise that this approach is utilised as the Bible never presents humans as religious beings or addresses the phenomenon of religion. Whosoever wants to

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[40]Cf. Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue* , 2005, 129-130.
[41]Petrus Johannes Merwe Van der, "Commentary on the documents Nostra Aetate and *Lumen Gentium*," *Hervormde teologiese studies* 73, no. 6 (January 2017): 20. (See also Dermot A Lane, *Stepping Stones to other* Religions, 2011, 65-66).

investigate this matter must follow a phenomenological approach."[42] This challenge of the search for religious truth is taken to the next section which emphasizes the search for the truth in relation to God.

Section two: The Hidden Truth in Every Religion

This section focuses on the meaning of religion generally. The section indicates the fact that every religion centers on the Supreme Being who is the father of all. Therefore, every religion tries to provide a basic concept that explains the nature of truth in relation to God. Mahmut Ayden emphasizes in this perspective that the search for truth in relation to God includes the search for salvation. He attests that "*Nostra Aetate* considers all religions as expressions of the human search for truth. In this respect, it implies that both the moral and the religious aspects of any religion may be acceptable as means to reach salvation. Thus, for the first time the Roman Catholic Church acknowledged as legitimate both the search for God by those outside herself and the kernel of truth in non-Christian religions."[43] A critical issue is raised in *Lumen Gentium* number 14 that declares the Church as a means of salvation. Prior to this in number 13, *Lumen Gentium* states that all are called by God's grace to salvation. Number 16 then goes further to clarify that *those who have not yet accepted the Gospel but are nonetheless related to the people of God in various ways*, are included among the Church. Thus Van der Merwe emphasizes the fact that "the doctrine of God's universal salvation is one of the cornerstones of the theology of religions of Vatican II. God wants to save all, so it must be assumed that he will construe ways to save all. The Roman Catholic Church declared at Vatican II that religiosity is a phenomenon directly related to God's salvific plan for humankind."[44] *Nostra Aetate* therefore confirms that God's salvation is open to all who search for him in various ways through their different traditions and cultures.

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[42]Ibid, 24.

[43]Mahmut Ayden, "The Catholic Church's Teaching on Non-Christians with Special Reference to the Second Vatican Council," in *Multiple Paths to God*: *Nostra Aetate, 40 Years Later*, eds. John P. Hogan and George F McLean (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005), 37.

[44]Van der Merwe, "Commentary on the documents Nostra Aetate and *Lumen Gentium*," 24.

Section three: The Church and Islam

Under this section, the Church pays particular attention to the Muslim people and the common aspect that bind Christianity with Islam. The Church thus considers three important areas in this regard. First she acknowledges the monotheistic aspect that Christianity shares with Islam. That they both believe in one true God creator of heaven and earth. Maurice Borrmans also affirms that "Christian-Muslim encounter finds its deepest motivation, and its platform, in faith in the One God, Almighty and Merciful, Creator of the world and Lord of history."[45] Secondly the church appreciates the position Islam accords to Jesus. Though Muslims do not regard Jesus as God, they revere him as a great prophet that existed in the history of mankind. Thirdly is the honour that Muslims give to Mary the mother of Jesus as the most holy woman in the whole Qur'an, (Qur. 3:42). These three and other elements form a connecting link between Christianity and Islam. From this background therefore, Aydin argues that Muslim and Christian traditions provide the basis of Christian-Muslim dialogue. Ayden says that it is necessary to consider "the monotheistic character of Muslim belief, Abraham as the common father, Muslim veneration of Jesus and his mother Mary, the eschatological belief of Muslim, the religious and moral life of Muslims, and the possibility of salvation for Muslims, so as to expose their implications for Christian-Muslim dialogue."[46] Therefore Christians and Muslims can see in these areas, a common platform of unity and collaboration. Consequently through this unity and collaboration they can form a bond of friendship and peaceful co-existence through dialogue.

Section four: The Ancestral Root of Christianity with Judaism

This section is the longest of the document, focusing on the spiritual ties linking the Church as the people of God under the new covenant that sprung from the stock of Abraham through Isaac. In this section, the Church justifies her stance on counteracting her former position and teaching regarding the Jews. The Church therefore looks into the positive aspects of Judaism that provide

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[45]Maurice Borrmans, *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1981), 2.
[46]Ayden, "The Catholic Church's Teaching on Non-Christians," 39.

the basis of her Christian faith and mutual relationship. Patrick McInerney argues in support of this view, stating that the fourth section "affirms the links that Christians have with the Jewish people, including common ancestry, the Old Testament and the Jewishness of the first generations of Christians, reproves indiscriminate accusations of Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus and Christian claims of supercessionism, and repudiates all hatred, persecution and anti-Semitism as contrary to God's universal love."[47] From a positive angle therefore, the Church acknowledges the plan of God's salvation as the foundation of her Christian faith and selection into the covenant God made through the patriarchs, beginning from Abraham, Moses and all the prophets. Thus, "the declaration acknowledges that 'the pillars on which the church stands, namely the Apostles, are Jewish, as were many of the early disciples.' It states that the Jews remain very dear to God since 'God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choice he made.'"[48] From this view, there is a divine background set for both Christians and Jews, coming from the scripture, which points to the reality that there is a linkage between the two religions.

Section five: The Brotherhood of all Religions

Section five is a summary conclusion of the document. It gives the main objective of the document on the unity of all the religions of the world. Thus according to Aydin, *Nostra Aetate* in this section "stresses the brotherhood of all people irrespective of their race, colour, religion, and other perspectives of life."[49] This point goes back to the earlier discussion on the common human origin and destiny and the search for the truth. Therefore the unity of the human race takes root from this teaching. In this final section, McInerney asserts that it provides the equality of all human beings as children of the One God, and therefore no discrimination among people. Thus, *Nostra Aetate* according to McInerney "opens out to all peoples, that since we call God 'Father' then we are all sisters and brothers, made in God's image, so there should be no unjust discrimination and

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[47]Patrick McInerney, Nostra Aetate: the Catholic Church's journey into dialogue," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 90, no. 3 (July 2013): 260.

[48]Dermot A. Lane, *Stepping Stones to other Religions: A Christian Theology of Inter-Religious Dialogue* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2011), 66.

[49]Ayden, "The Catholic Church's Teaching on Non-Christians," 36.

Christians should live peaceably with all."[50] Because all people are created in the image and likeness of God, *Nostra Aetate* concluded by seeking to unite into one family of God, the people of all religions of the world and to ensure no discrimination at any level is allowed among people.[51]

Approaches to Interfaith Dialogue

Nostra Aetate gives us the basis on how interreligious dialogue should be approached from a Christian perspective. The fruitful ways of looking at this is through the three principles which Lane gave under the headings known as the 'three-fold typology'. They are: Exclusivism, Inclusivism and Pluralism. This three-fold typology also forms the center of debate at the dawn of Vatican II on approaches to other religions. According to Lane, the three-fold typology "has helped to sharpen the focus of this debate in the last three decades. However, many hold the belief that the time has come to move beyond this stage of inter-religious dialogue, which might be labelled as 'phase one', into a more flexible framework."[52] It is however important to examine what these three-fold typology means.

Exclusivism: Exclusivism in dialogue takes into consideration only one side without looking at what the others have to offer. Exclusive dialogue from a Christian perspective concerns God's salvation based on faith in Jesus Christ. This theology according to Daniel Strange reveals that, "God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to bring salvation into the world and that this salvation is both judgement and mercy to all human beings who are deeply estranged from God. Salvation comes from faith in Christ alone- *solus Christus*."[53] Lane also asserts a Christian stand of those who believe in exclusivism. He states that those who promote exclusivism "claim that salvation is only available to those who embrace explicit faith in Jesus Christ and that this faith comes from hearing the Gospel of Christ (*fides ex auditu*). For exclusivists, Christianity is the one true religion and all

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[50]McInerney, "Nostra Aetate: the Catholic Church's journey into dialogue," 260.
[51]See also Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, 130.
[52] Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 107.
[53]Daniel Strange, "Exclusivisms: Indeed their rock is not like our rock," in *Christian Approaches to other Faiths,* eds. Allan Race and Paul M. Hedges (London: SCM Press, 2008), 37.

others are in error."[54] This position is a very difficult approach to interfaith dialogue, as it focuses on those who believe in Christ alone. It poses a challenge to the principle of unity and common good which *Nostra Aetate* sets out to achieve. Exclusivism therefore provides the basis for discrimination and separation from one another, because those outside the Catholic Church or Christianity generally will find this position of 'no salvation outside the Church' intolerable and unacceptable. From the principles of *Nostra Aetate*, exclusivism is therefore not the best approach to interfaith dialogue.

Inclusivism: This is a more positive approach to dialogue. According to Neal Punt, "inclusivism is the teaching that all persons are elected in Christ except those who the Bible expressly declares will be finally lost, namely, those who ultimately reject or remain indifferent to whatever revelation God has given of himself to them, whether in nature/conscience (Rom. 1 & 2) or in gospel presentation."[55] Inclusivism therefore moves further away from the position of exclusivism and embraces all who accept God's revelation and are motivated by the dictates of their conscience to live according to the gospel teachings.[56] *Nostra Aetate* succinctly accepts this position when it states that "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ."[57] Inclusivism is therefore a way forward in interreligious dialogue as it opens the way for others to be considered among those who share in the promise and blessing of God.

Pluralism: Pluralism in religious concept considers the diversities of religions as embracing one another. In this sense, Perry Schmidt Leukel opines that pluralism is "the self-understanding of one's own religion in relation to other religions, and with the understanding of these other religions

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[54]Lane, *Stepping Stones to other Religions,* 99.
[55]Neal Punt, *A Theology of Inclusivism: A Treatise on the Generosity of God* (Allendale: Northland Books, 2008), 6.
[56]Cf. Merrigan, "Rethinking Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue," 2017, 202.
[57]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 2.

in relation to the self-understanding of one's own. Therefore it is rooted, on the one hand, in the beliefs and doctrines of one's own tradition and, on the other hand, is based on the concrete knowledge of and acquaintance with other religions."[58] By the very fact of giving consideration and providing the platform of dialogue, pluralism forms the center of *Nostra Aetate*. In the concluding paragraph of section two, it captures the mind of the Church to consider pluralism at the heart of dialogue. "The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men."[59] Pluralism therefore gives consideration to human respect and dignity, justice and the common good. It is important to state that *Nostra Aetate* promotes 'inclusive-pluralism', and provides the basis for religious equality and non-discrimination. Other aspects of theology and teachings that emerge from *Nostra Aetate* can be seen under the following perspectives.

2.5.1 Theology and Principles of Interreligious Dialogue from *Nostra Aetate*

The theology of dialogue with other religions first focuses on the relationship with other religions in a general sense. It concerns God's revelation of Himself through and in various religions. The truth and faith of other religions involved in dialogue are brought forward to strengthen the bond of relationships. Religion is about God revealing Himself through human experiences in history. It is also the human response to God through faith in relation to salvation. Why a theology of interfaith dialogue? What are the aims or goals of dialogue? To answer these questions, we need to turn back to the Second Vatican Council as the source of reference. Paul F. Knitter argues that in Vatican II, the council fathers clearly reaffirmed the necessity of the church as a means of salvation. Knitter says that the fathers of the council:

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[58]Perry Schmidt Leukel, "Pluralisms: How to appreciate Religious Diversity Theologically," in *Christian Approaches to other Faiths,* eds. Allan Race and Paul M. Hedges (London: SCM Press, 2008), 85. (See also Merrigan, "Rethinking Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue," 211-212).

[59]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 2.

> Extended the universal possibility of salvation-even atheists could be saved. Yet the council, as is well known, took a definitely new turn when, for the first time in the history of official church statements, it praised individual world religions for the way they reflect that Truth which enlightens every person. The majority of Catholic thinkers interpret the conciliar statements to affirm, implicitly but clearly, that the religions are ways of salvation.[60]

From this position, we can say that the principle of interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church perspective requires reasoning together across the worlds of religious differences and openness to one another. This is because as the various religions engage in reasoning and dialogue, their different faiths are enlightened through the process of revelation.

The understanding of Pluralism from the previous discussion brings the Christian perspective of dialogue to focus on the theology of interfaith dialogue. In this regard, Fitzgerald and Borelli contend that: "If theology is *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding), this faith has to try to come to grips with the reality of religious pluralism, and attempt to make some sense of it."[61] Whether dialogue is approached from an exclusive or inclusive perspective, it must come to a meeting point where people reason together and focus on the ideal of unity and understanding in their interaction. They must also bear in mind that they share a common identity of human nature, created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, despite our religious variations, our "commonness" is also included in our faith identity. Human beings usually turn to their religions for answers to their unresolved riddles and challenges that confront the human conditions in the world. *Nostra Aetate* therefore raised these fundamental questions that confront every religion at the center of interreligious dialogue: "What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we

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[60]Paul F. Knitter, "Roman Catholic Approaches to Other Religions: Developments and Tensions," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8, no. 2 (April 1984): 50.

[61]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 38.

going?"[62] Every religion seeks to respond to these questions according to its faith and tradition. However, it is through dialogue that each religion can share with others their own experiences as they try to unravel the mystery that lies behind these fundamental questions.

Consequently, dialogue leads to some theological exchange between the different religions. This is an important aspect of dialogue, since theology and faith can be communicated in various ways through the various religions. In this perspective, Jo O'Donovan asserts that theological exchange "does not accentuate difference. But it is the way we hold these differences that matter. The dialogue of religious experience or spiritual exchange is fruitful because through it we already entrust ourselves to the communalities that we share."[63] What is important in this theology is the application of reason. Reason is applied to the understanding of others' faith and religion. So it is not just knowing about what they believe, but also trying to understand their faith through reasoning.[64]

The theology of interfaith dialogue does not just end in theoretical principles, but extends to the basics of human reality and existence. Thus *Nostra Aetate* deals with some fundamental principles and issues such as the unity of humanity, the search for religious truth, and the dignity of the human person. These can also be reflected under three headings:

  I.   Theology of Human Origin and Destiny,

 II.   Theology of faith and Revelation,

III.   The Principle of Peace and Justice.

   a) Theology of Human Origin and Destiny

The theology of religious dialogue shows that all religions share common factors as human beings. One of these common factors is our origin and destiny as human beings. On this point, Fitzgerald and Borell argue that "it is interesting to note that *Nostra Aetate* does not immediately focus on the

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[62]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 1.
[63]Jo O'Donovan, *Understanding differently: Christianity and the World Religions* (Dublin: Veritas, 2012), 26.
[64]Cf. Lane, *Stepping Stones to other Religions*, 124.

differences between the Catholic faith and other religions, but concentrates first on what they have in common and on the fundamental unity of the whole of humankind. In a nutshell, the teaching based on Scripture, and especially on the Acts of the Apostles, is that all peoples are created by God, come from one stock and share the common destiny that God has prepared for them."[65] God is the creator of the universe and everything in it. He created the Jewish, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and the Christians as well as the atheists. *Nostra Aetate* express that, "we cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God."[66] This theology also reflects the unity of the human family. Dialogue is meant to foster the bond of this unity of our common humanity, to be brothers and sisters to one another, since we are all children of God, brothers and sisters of the one Father. We must therefore live in harmony, and be at peace with one another.

Nostra Aetate also stresses the fact that our various religions also have a common source or origin. Judaism, Christianity and Islam particularly traced their ancestral root in the 'Abrahamic' faith. The Church confirms this position in *Nostra Aetate*, stating that, "as the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock. *Nostra Aetate* further affirms that: The Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets."[67] However, following the principle of "inclusive pluralism" which provides the basis of dialogue and equality of faith expressed in different ways by the three religions; these three religions should not exercise superiority over the other religions that have no direct link with Abraham, neither to relegate and make them inferior. Monotheism simply means that all people believe in one God who is Father of all, who is also the source and origin of all religions. This principle should form the foundational basis of dialogue, and should always

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[65]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 59-60.
[66]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 5.
[67]Ibid, no. 4.

prevail over all. It should build religious solidarity and enhance harmonious living among the various religions.[68]

An important aspect of the theology of human origin and destiny concerns the universal salvation of all God's people which was highlighted under inclusivism. *Nostra Aetate* declares:

> Humanity forms but one community. This is so because all stem from the one stock which God created to people the entire earth (see Acts 17:26), and also because all share a common destiny, namely God. His providence, evident goodness, and saving designs extend to all humankind (see Wis 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6-7; 1 Tim 2:4) against the day when the elect are gathered together in the holy city which is illumined by the glory of God, and in whose splendor all peoples will walk.[69]

It further confirms, "that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage."[70] Invariably, Christianity for instance sees itself as a prototype of the new Israel, springing from Christ. "For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."[71] (See also, Rom. 10:12, Col. 3:10-11; Isaiah 40:5 also is a prophesy of a universal salvation of all mankind).

Furthermore, God does not have favourites, but every person who obeys and does the will of God is included in the family of God. Therefore Gavin D'Costa argues in this perspective that "the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the creator. In the first place among these there are the Muslims, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind."[72] Thus, God's salvation is universal and extends to all who worship and serve the one true God in truth and sincerity. This is an important principle in interfaith dialogue. It may be regarded as a 'theology of hope for all', revealing and creating hope in other religions, and promoting the unity of all religions.

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[68] (See also Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, 131).
[69] *Nostra Aetate*, no. 1.
[70] Ibid, no. 2.
[71] Galatian 3: 26, 28.
[72] Gavin D'Costa, "Vatican II on Muslims and Jews: The Council's Teachings on other Religions," in *The Second Vatican Council: Celebrating its Achievements and the Future*, eds. Gavin D'Costa and Emma Jane Harris (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 109.

b) Theology of faith and Revelation

Faith is an important prerequisite of every religion. Religious faith provides a link of interaction and understanding with the divine. On the other hand, the process of communicating God's truth to humanity, takes place through revelation. The theology of faith and revelation according to David Cheetham, seeks to ponder on sharing faith together with others, and understanding how this faith is revealed in every religion. Cheetham asserts, that "the effort to find ways of affirming and including the 'rays of truth' in other religions is to exercise charity towards them."[73] Therefore interfaith dialogue must bring this to the forefront and focus on religious encounter. It must realize as Fitzgerald and Borelli opine that, "the goal of interreligious dialogue is not to urge our partners to change their beliefs to match ours. Such dialogue is not a debate or argument. There is need for each side to comprehend as much as possible and understand correctly the beliefs of the other side in their own terms."[74] This process will encourage more openness and sharing of each other's faith, not in contradiction to our own faith, but to grasp the common characteristics of the different faiths and theology. This will also be beneficial in understanding one another and building friendship. Gideon Goosen supports this in his article, and argues that:

> If God speaks to us through many prophets and religions, then they will have something to teach us too. We are therefore required to follow this up and learn what might be revealed in these religions. There is an obligation to do so. At the same time, Christians believe that Christ has revealed many things to us of great importance that are not revealed in these other religions. What we might learn from these religions will complement, not contradict, what Christ has revealed.[75]

Each religion has something to offer to the others, and therefore interreligious dialogue should be established for the purpose of sharing the truth of faith in every religion.

Again on the basis of what the various religions share in common, this should strengthen their unity and relationships and should be cherished through interfaith dialogue. O'Donovan contends that

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[73]David Cheetham, "Inclusivisms: Honouring Faithfulness and Openness," in *Christian Approaches to other Faiths,* eds. Allan Race and Paul M. Hedges (London: SCM Press, 2008), 78.
[74]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 101.
[75]Gideon Goosen, "The Rationale behind Interreligious Dialogue," Compass*: A Review of Topical Theology*, 42, no. 1 (Autumn 2008): 42.

because "real dialogue occurs between persons who are grounded in their faith tradition . . . it is from the very particularity of one's faith that one is enabled to authentically relate to the other with freedom and choice."[76] Interfaith dialogue is never a competition about faith. It is rather a comprehension of each other's faith in an intelligible manner. This is a point of consideration in interfaith dialogue which could help in preventing discrimination against other religions.

c) The Principle of Peace and Justice

In the principle of peace and justice, the tension and enmity among different religions are discussed and resolved cordially. The principle of non religious discrimination in *Nostra Aetate*, provides respect for human dignity and peaceful co-existence, and suggests the importance of justice and peace to be promoted through interfaith dialogue. In this regard, *Nostra Aetate* states that

> The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to maintain good fellowship among the nations (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.[77]

Unfortunately, it is a fact that our world is full of turbulences and conflicts on account of religious identities and affiliations. Therefore, interfaith dialogue has a prominent role to play. In this regard, Fitzgerald and Borelli assert that religious identities and affiliations should not become barriers to human relationships. They opine that "as believers in God, are we not called to make our voices heard in society in this way? It is surely an obligation on our part to demand respect for the fundamental rights of human beings. There is a vast field here for common endeavour."[78] Interfaith dialogue can become a useful antidote to the many social crises and challenges that arise in society. There is a need for the various religions to come together and discuss issues that affect the social welfare and create peaceful co-existence. This is why Allan Race opines that: "Religions coming together for the sake of justice and peace in the world is certainly one highly laudable aim of

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[76]O'Donovan, *Understanding differently*, 20.
[77]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 5.
[78]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 167.

interreligious dialogue."[79] This objective is very relevant for the educational basis of interfaith dialogue.

It is also appropriate to identify the theology of peace and Justice within the salvation plan of God. By divine providence, D'Costa maintains that "the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life,"[80] are also assured a position in God's plan. Justice demands that those who do not belong to our faith should never be condemned or discriminated against, as if this was a fault of theirs. This is why tolerance is recommended in interfaith dialogue. Religious tolerance enables people to overcome religious discrimination, condemnation and rejection.

In summary, the contents and theology of *Nostra Aetate* shows that the Catholic Church in conformity with the general theme of the Second Vatican Council on renewal, decided to go outside the boundaries of her wall to consider the unity of the whole human race. The Church gives due consideration to creating a theological harmony and provides the principles of religious and human dignity in the world. Consequently Van des affirms that it becomes clear from *Nostra Aetate*, "that the Roman Catholic theology of religions is grounded in an understanding of the unity of humankind. This unity is based on, (1) unity as an empirical fact, (2) unity as the result of God's providence and (3) unity as a result of humankind's search for the truth. This analysis provides guidelines on how to think about the existence of other religions and the relationship between these religions."[81] The Catholic Church therefore, looks forward to a fruitful theological dialogue and harmonious relationship as she engages with other religions of the world in the search for truth and human yearnings and aspirations. For a wider application of the principles and teachings of *Nostra Aetate*, it is also important to consider its contributions and relevance in relation to other documents of the Second Vatican Council.

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[79]Allan Race, "Theology of Religions in change: Factors in the shape of a Debate," in *Christian Approaches to other Faiths,* eds. Allan Race and Paul M. Hedges (London: SCM Press, 2008), 6.
[80]D'Costa, "Vatican II on Muslims and Jews," 109.
[81]Van der, "Commentary on the documents Nostra Aetate and *Lumen Gentium*," 25.

2.6. Declaration on Religious Freedom '*Dignitatis Humanae*'

Dignitatis Humanae was published in 1965. It is the primary document that reflects the official teaching of the Catholic Church on freedom of religion. It was issued in line with the universal demand for fundamental human rights, and a response to the United Nations' Declarations in 1948. Article 18 of the United Nations' Declaration highlights the fundamental rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. On the development of the document, Herminio Rico argues that;

> The declaratin of Vatican II on religious freedom had a long tortuous process of elaboration. The way to its final approval was paved with spirited arguments, constant tensions, and skilful tactical manoeuvring and counter manoeuvring by disagreeing factions. At each stage of the discussions there were groups opposed to each other on the basis of entrenched conflicting views, either on the fundamental goals or on the methodologies.[82]

Dignitatis Humanae is also relevant to this thesis because of its significant contribution to issues of fundamental human rights and the dignity of the human person. The structure of *Dignitatis Humanae* is built on three points under two chapters with fifteen sections. The first paragraph is an introduction, and focuses on the dignity of the human person. Chapter one is on the general principles of religious freedom; it covers sections two to eight of the document. It covers the right of the human person to freedom of religion without coercion. It emphasizes this right within divine law as a duty from man's conscience to seek religious truth. It further demands this freedom be expressed in collaboration with others in society without hindrance of the law. The chapter also emphasizes the role of parents to guide and teach their children religious truth. There is also the need for this right to be protected as the chapter emphasizes. On this point, the chapter also emphasized the incompetence of the state to regulate the truth and therefore, the state cannot stand against religious truth. "Government therefore ought indeed to take account of the religious life of the citizenry and show it favor, since the function of government is to make provision for the common welfare. However, it would clearly transgress the limits set to its power, were it to

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[82]Herminio Rico, *John Paul II and the Legacy of Dignitatis Humanae* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 27.

presume to command or inhibit acts that are religious."[83] In line with this, Patrick T. Brannan and

Michael Camacho emphasize that;

> It is wrong for the public power to impose by force or fear or any other means the profession or rejection of any religion on its citizens, or prevent anyone from entering or leaving a religious community. All the more is it against God's will and the sacred rights of the person and the family of nations to use force in any way in order to destroy or repress religion, either in the human race as a whole or in a particular region or in a specific religious group.[84]

The first chapter of *Dignitatis Humanae* also clearly states that the rights to religious freedom are

to be exercised within certain regulations to maintain law and order. Finally, the chapter called on

all to do all that is possible to live according to law and order for the common good.

Chapter two of the document focuses on religious freedom in the light of revelation and natural law

known through reasoning. The chapter covers sections nine to fifteen, and highlights the fact that

the right of humankind to religious freedom has in its foundation the dignity of the person, with its

roots in divine revelation.[85] It teaches that religious freedom is man's response to God's call which

must be embraced freely without any force. The chapter also highlight the role of the Church in

keeping and handing on the tradition and doctrines she received down through the ages. Among

what is expected of the Church is her responsibility for the welfare of all in society and the care for

the salvation of souls.[86] The chapter made the call for the Church to remain faithful to her sacred

tradition and thus prays that freedom of religion will be recognized everywhere in the world.

The main points of the Declaration on religious freedom are on Conscience, Truth and Human

Dignity at the center. *Dignitatis Humanae* focuses on conscience as a guide to human judgement

and evaluation in decision and choice making. The role of conscience accordingly is to enable every

rational individual of good will to have self introspection and become conscious of his/her own

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[83]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 3.
[84]Patrick T. Brannan and Michael Camacho, "The Declaration on Religious Freedom: On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Religious Matters," in *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom: A New Translation, Redaction History, and Interpretation of Dignitatis Humanae*, eds. David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy Jr. (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2015), 13.
[85]Cf. *DH.* no. 9.
[86]Ibid, no. 10.

being in a mysterious conversation with his/her creator (God) so as to arrive at a vital decision. In this way as Ladislas M. Orsy opines, for a "conscience, to be alive and to function well needs freedom-no less than a plant needs space to bloom, a fish needs water to swim, and a bird needs air to fly. Conscience and freedom are naturally and organically bonded together."[87] Conscience and freedom according to Orsy, lead and direct one in the search for the truth. Furthermore, Orsy states that:

> After the Council-following the Declaration on Religious Freedom-the church's position is that the innate dignity of a person is not diminished by his or her honest religious convictions-misconceived as they may be. The person remains endowed with divine qualities, namely intelligence and freedom. He has a right to converse with his Creator within the sacred space of his or her conscience.[88]

According to David L Schindler, the Second Vatican "Council did indeed shift the focus of discussion regarding religious freedom from truth as the subject of rights to the person as subject. Second, the Council thus affirmed, not that error has rights, but that the person has rights even when he errs."[89] From the debate on the Declaration on religious freedom there was a gradual shift of emphasis from the principle of freedom generally; to the notion about truth and rights, that should be defended, while error is to be tolerated. It was based on this point that attention was placed on the truth as a right in relation to human dignity, and hence provided the background to the title of the document. Schindler affirms this position and states that:

> Catholics are generally aware of certain approach to the question of religious freedom leading up to the Second Vatican Council emphasized that truth alone had rights, and that error was at best to be tolerated. Catholics are also generally aware that, after the early debates regarding religious freedom, the Council shifted its emphasis away from the formal question of truth to the rights of the human person.[90]

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[87]Ladislas M. Orsy, "Declaration on freedom of religion *Dignitatis humanae*: the divine dignity of human persons," Centro Pro Unione Semi-Annual Bulletin 83, (Spring 2013): 22.

[88]Ibid, 21

[89]David L. Schindler, "Freedom, Truth, And Human Dignity: An Interpretation Of Dignitatis Humanae On The Right To Religious Liberty," in *Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom: A New Translation, Redaction History, and Interpretation of Dignitatis Humanae*, eds. David L. Schindler and Nicholas J. Healy Jr. (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2015), 40.

[90]Ibid, 39.

It is from this background that freedom, truth and the dignity of the human person are considered in the declaration.

From the opening chapter it clearly expresses that the freedom of religion is a right accorded to an individual and group or institution. Kenneth L. Grasso and Robert P. Hunt in their article affirm that the existence of the right to religious freedom is at the center of the first section of the declaration. They opine that the declaration;

> Outlines the scope of this right, affirming that it extends not merely to individuals but to 'religious bodies.' Since such bodies 'are a requirement of the social nature both of man and of religion itself,' religious liberty encompasses the right of religious institutions and communities to govern themselves according to their own norms; to attempt to show the special value of their doctrine in what concerns the organization of society and the inspiration of the whole of human activity.[91]

The scope and meaning of the right to religious freedom can be seen all through the document, especially from section one to seven. Section six of the document particularly expresses the meaning of religious freedom to concern the common welfare of the members of a society. It states: "Therefore the care of the right to religious freedom devolves upon the whole citizenry, upon social groups, upon government, and upon the Church and other religious communities, in virtue of the duty of all towards the common welfare, and in the manner proper to each."[92]

Because the declaration focuses on the dignity of the human person, Grasso and Hunt further highlight that it "explores the foundations of religious liberty, arguing that this right has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself, as well as in the social nature of man."[93] The document itself affirms that, "the right of man to religious freedom has its foundation in the dignity of the person, whose exigencies have come to be more fully known to human reason through centuries of experience. What is more, this doctrine of freedom has roots in divine revelation, and for this

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[91]Kenneth L. Grasso and Robert P. Hunt, "Dignitatis Humanae And The Catholic Human Rights Revolution," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 3, no. 3 (January 2005): 4.
[92]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no.6.
[93]Grasso and Hunt, "Dignitatis Humanae And The Catholic Human Rights Revolution," 4.

reason Christians are bound to respect it all the more conscientiously."[94] *Dignitatis Humanae* explains that though the right of the individual person to be free from coercion is not explicitly affirmed by revelation, it does state that the dignity of the human person in all dimensions is the core of religious freedom. Based on this background of the right to religious freedom from external coercion and the dignity of the human person endowed with freewill and reason, the declaration in section two linked this right to the moral obligation of seeking religious truth and living by it. It states: "It is in accordance with their dignity as persons-that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility-that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth."[95] Schindler argues in this regard that;

> Men cannot satisfy this obligation in keeping with their nature unless they have psychological freedom and are immune from coercion. Because the right to religious freedom is thus founded in the very nature of man (in ipsa eius natura), the right is objective and not merely subjective: it is retained by every person regardless of whether he or she lives up to the obligation, as long as the just requirements of public order are observed.[96]

Therefore, freedom of religion promotes the dignity of the human person in relation to religious truth, and to live according to this truth for the good of all in society. This brings us to the search for the truth in *Dignitatis Humanae*.

The search for religious truth is an obligation enshrined in the depth of man's conscience. It is therefore imbued in man's nature and is a fundamental right of every individual. This truth taught by *Dignitatis Humanae* Grasso and Hunt assert, "must be sought in a manner consistent with the social nature of man (which) requires that he should give external expression to his internal acts of religion; that he should participate with others in matters of religious; (and) that he should profess

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[94]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 9.
[95]Ibid, no. 2.
[96]Schindler, Freedom, "Truth, And Human Dignity," 53.

his religion in community."[97] This search for the truth requires that one engages with others in society in an attempt to come to true knowledge of the truth. To this fact, Schindler again posits that "given man's social nature, this search for truth must include the right to free inquiry, along with instruction, dialogue, and the like, as well as the right to external expression of man's interior religious acts. Protection of this right is warranted as long as its exercise preserves the just requirements of public order."[98] This aspect of the search for religious truth also signifies the importance of religious dialogue since the truth is open to all religions of the world. It therefore points to the relevance of the Declaration on Religious Freedom to interreligious dialogue.

2.6.1 The Limits to Religious Freedom

The limit to the exercise of religious freedom is also to be considered accordingly. It is not enough to admit that the state should coordinate the practice of religious freedom for the sake of law and order, and the common good. There have to be certain conditions within which the limits to regulate religious freedom by the state are to be legitimately formulated. To this reality, A. F. Carrillo De Albornoz laid down three conditions: "(1) that any limitation in the exercise of religious liberty should be expressly regulated by law and by no means left to the discretionary power of the civil authorities or of the police; (2) that any limitation should always be based on grounds of the temporal common good of the civil society; (3) that it must be made without any discrimination between citizens or between the different religions."[99] *Dignitatis* Humanae also affirms these limitations to the exercise of religious freedom, stating that: "Society has the right to defend itself against possible abuses committed on the pretext of freedom of religion. It is the special duty of government to provide this protection. However, government is not to act in an arbitrary fashion or in an unfair spirit of partisanship. Its action is to be controlled by juridical

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[97]Grasso and Hunt, "Dignitatis Humanae And The Catholic Human Rights Revolution," 5.
[98]Schindler, Freedom, "Truth, And Human Dignity," 53.
[99]A. F. Carrillo De Albornoz, "Religious Liberty and the Second Vatican Council," *The Ecumenical Review* 16, no. 4 (July 1964): 402.

norms which are in conformity with the objective moral order."[100] This brings us to the point of the actual limits of religious freedom, which is the maintenance of 'public order'. This includes promotion of justice, peace, moral and other positive virtues. All these are necessary for the common good in society. This notion of the common good Albornoz opines has to be considered by the state in order to avoid;

> Denial of fundamental freedoms. First, and in spite of Christian insights, in the sphere of civil rights when the question is one of religious liberty in all kinds of states, we cannot give to all of them a Christian notion of common good. We are demanding that religious liberty should be recognized and respected by all states, be they religious, non-religious or anti-religious. We must therefore employ notions and formulations which can be understood and accepted by all men and all states.[101]

The common good must therefore be for the welfare of all in society.

2.6.2 The Principles of Religious Freedom in Relation to Interfaith Dialogue

The principles of religious freedom are also important to interfaith dialogue. These principles concern the good of religion itself. It should be noted that religion itself contributes to the common good, because it helps people to flourish and blossom together. Religion also enables people to search for the truth and to seek meaning and fulfilment in this search for the truth. Three principles are considered:

a.   The Dignity of the Human Person and Its Importance to Interreligious Dialogue;

b.   The Search for Religious Truth and Interreligious Dialogue;

c.   The Common Good and the welfare of all in Relation to Interreligious Dialogue.

a) The Dignity of the Human Person and Its Importance to Interreligious Dialogue

The very meaning of the title of the declaration, *Dignitatis Humanae,* suggests the theme of human dignity. Religious Freedom therefore, "has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself."[102] The origin of

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[100]*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 7.
[101]Albornoz, "Religious Liberty and the Second Vatican Council," 402.
[102]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 2.

human dignity is God Himself. The dignity of the human person as the masterpiece and summit of God's creation is at the center of this theology. God created the human person in His own image and likeness, and endowed him with free will to live according to the dictates of his conscience. Christ who is the image of the unseen God also gave priority to the dignity of the human life during his ministry on earth. His proclamation was never an imposition, but a free and loving invitation. All these pointed to the reality of God's revelation and respect for the dignity of the human person. *Dignitatis Humanae* states that: "Revelation does not indeed affirm in so many words the right of man to immunity from external coercion in matters religious. It does, however, disclose the dignity of the human person in its full dimensions. It gives evidence of the respect which Christ showed toward the freedom with which man is to fulfil his duty of belief in the word of God and it gives us lessons in the spirit which disciples of such a Master ought to adopt and continually follow."[103] Christ Jesus Himself therefore is a model of religious freedom both in principle and practice. He therefore wishes all his followers to regard and respect the truth of the beliefs of others. Furthermore, *Dignitatis Humanae* declares that: "A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man."[104] It is important to note that human dignity does not just end with respect for and freedom of the human person and his religion. It also extends to other principles like justice, peaceful co-existence, equality, the common good and respect for individual conscience. The promotion of these principles requires the collective effort and contributions of all religions. Therefore, there is the need for interreligious dialogue to be effected among all the religions of the world. This is why Brannan and Camacho state that "the Catholic Church earnestly urges each man and all men, who have been predestined for adoption as children of God, to direct all their energy in the present circumstances of culture and customs to defending the honour of God and the dignity of the human person created

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[103]Ibid, no. 9.
[104]Ibid, no. 1.

and redeemed by him."[105] Therefore, the dignity of the human person is an important aspect of interreligious dialogue among all the religions of the world.

b) The Place of Conscience in the Search for Religious Truth and Interreligious Dialogue

Conscience according to Judith A. Dwyer is simply defined "as a dictate of practical reason which tells us that an action which appears to us to be morally bad must be omitted, that an action which is here and now commanded must, if possible, be performed."[106] It is the inner voice that communicates within the human mind.[107]

Dignitatis Humanae declares that: "God calls men to serve Him in spirit and in truth, hence they are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion. God has regard for the dignity of the human person whom He Himself created and man is to be guided by his own judgment and he is to enjoy freedom."[108] Through the mystery of the incarnation (Jn 1:14), God reveals Himself to humanity. Christ Jesus is the image of the unseen God, and the first born of all creation, (Col. 1:15). Consequently, *Dignitatis Humanae* clearly affirms that through the role of conscience, "all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth."[109] The search for religious truth is part of man's yearnings and aspirations to reach to his fulfilment and this should be guided by the dictate of the conscience. In relation to human freedom and dignity, Kenneth D Whitehead asserts that the "truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his

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[105]Brannan and Camacho, "The Five Conciliar Schemas: On Religious Freedom," 245.

[106]Judith A. Dwyer, "Vatican II and the Dignity of Conscience," in *Vatican II the Unfinished Agenda: A Look to the Future,* eds. Lucien Richard, Daniel Harrington and John W. O'Malley (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 162.

[107]Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Pastoral Letter on Freedom of Conscience and Religion," entry posted May 14 2012, www.cccb.ca/site/images/.../Freedom_of_Conscience_and_Religion.pdf (accessed October 20, 2018). Conscience is not, however, an absolute placed above truth. Rather, by its very nature, conscience has a relation to objective truth, a truth which is universal and which all must seek. Freedom of conscience is justified because of this relation, inasmuch as this freedom is a necessary condition for seeking the truth and for adhering to that truth once it is sufficiently known. For this reason, each individual's conscientious search for+ truth must always be respected. This freedom to respond to the truth of one's nature as a being created by God and destined for fulfilment in him is essential to a democratic society

[108]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 11.

[109]Ibid*,* no. 2.

social nature."[110] Freedom of conscience is therefore associated with the dignity of the human person and to provide a sense of sacredness to the beauty of human life. Therefore according to Dwyer "the human person is bound to follow conscience faithfully in all activity, in order to come to God, who is the human being's last end."[111] Furthermore, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops highlight that "the right to act according to one's conscience must therefore be accompanied by accepting the duty to conform it to the truth and to the law which God has engraved on our hearts (cf. Rm 2.15)."[112] Not to respond to conscience positively becomes a gross denial of God's truth and abuse of free will. As such, Whitehead asserts that we must also realize, "it is one of the tenets of Catholic doctrine that man's response to God in faith must be free."[113] It is therefore a basic aspect of our faith to respond to God, and this response comes from within our conscience.

Dignitatis Humanae categorically expresses that, "every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters of religious in order that he may with prudence form for himself right and true judgments of conscience, under use of all suitable means."[114] From this point of view, freedom of conscience becomes a social obligation. *Dignitatis Humanae* therefore emphasizes that; "the Christian faithful, in common with all other men, possess the civil right not to be hindered in leading their lives in accordance with their consciences."[115] The search for the truth through conscience therefore becomes important to religious dialogue, since all religions of the world share in the same vision of seeking for the truth. Lane affirms this reality that "inter-religious dialogue seeks to promote a shared search for the truth among the participants. In the encounter with the other there is always the possibility of discovering new truth about oneself and one's religious

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[110]Kenneth D Whitehead, *Affirming Religious Freedom: How Vatican Council II Developed the Church's Teaching to meet Today's Need* (New York: Society of St. Paul's Publications, 2010), 72.

[111]Dwyer, "Vatican II and the Dignity of Conscience," 161.

[112]Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Pastoral Letter on Freedom of Conscience and Religion*,*" *Originsonline.com* 42 no. 3 (May 2012): 45.

[113]Whitehead, *Affirming Religious Freedom,* 77.

[114]*Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 3.

[115]Ibid*,* no. 13.

commitment as well as new truth about the other and their religious commitment. Of course the idea of truth, especially religious truth, is notoriously difficult to describe. Yet the search for truth remains central to dialogue."[116] Therefore, there is need for interreligious dialogue to be encouraged to promote the freedom and right to seek truth and live according to it for the sake of the common good.

c) The Common Good and the welfare of all in Relation to Interreligious Dialogue

The concept of the "Common Good" needs to be clarified because it is much debated. The common good according to *GS* concerns "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race."[117] It is the duty of every individual to promote the welfare of all in society. The common good does not exclude or exempt any individual or particular group, but extends to all in the community. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church affirms that "the common good therefore involves all members of society, no one is exempted from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it."[118]

Following this background, John G. Vrana maintains that

> As an end, the common good is understood as the perfection and completion of society itself, insofar as this redounds to the perfection of man. As an end, the common good is seen as an order, that order of society in which every member enjoys the possibility of realizing his true self by participating in the effects of the cooperation of all. In this perspective it has been common to understand society in terms of the State.[119]

The Compendium also reaffirms that "the common good of society is not an end in itself, it has value only in reference to attaining the ultimate ends of the person and the universal common good

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[116]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 123-124.
[117]*GS,* no. 26.
[118]Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 167.
[119]John G. Vrana, "The Concept of the Common Good in the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, 1891 -1971," *Louvain Studies* 5, no. 4 (January 1975): 368.

of the whole creation."[120] All these provide the general understanding of the concept of the common good. It implies what benefits the good of all in society, not just the majority or the minority.

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right and is important to the common good as earlier discussed. Denial of this fundamental human right affects the common good because it hinders the rights of individuals to carry out their responsibilities for the good of society. In relation to religious freedom, "religious communities should not be prohibited from freely undertaking to show the special value of their doctrine in what concerns the organization of society and the inspiration of the whole of human activity."[121] Since religious values are part and parcel of what contribute to the welfare of society, Rico maintains that religion must also be given due consideration in society. He argues that "the basic claim is that full respect for religious freedom is indispensable and of great benefit for the promotion of the common good, because it liberates individual citizens for a full-hearted commitment."[122] Religion provides the moral principles and values for the good of society. Such moral principles also promote peace, unity, equality and justice in society. All these principles are directed towards the common good and welfare of every member of society. Therefore, the Declaration on religious freedom generally highlights the good of religion in respect to human dignity and individual conscience. It demands government to protect the rights of citizens in matters of religion. It also demands that religious freedom should be exercised within certain limits for the sake of law and order and for the common good.

2.7 *Lumen Gentium* and Interfaith Dialogue

Lumen Gentium reflects on the Church. It is an important document, because it gives the vision and theology of the Church as a human institution as well as the means to salvation. This document was prepared by the doctrinal commission of the Second Vatican Council. It was then presented and

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[120] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 170.
[121] *Dignitatis Humanae,* no. 4.
[122] Rico, *John Paul II and the Legacy of Dignitatis Humanae*, 126.

given the final vote of approval on November 21, 1964. *Lumen Gentium* is divided into eight chapters:

I.   The Mystery of the Church

II.   The People of God

III.   The Church is hierarchical

IV.   The Laity

V.   The Universal Call to Holiness

VI.   Religious

VII.   The Pilgrim Church

VIII. Our Lady

Looking at the whole structures of the chapters, four are important and relevant to interreligious dialogue. These are the chapters on, the People of God, the Universal Call to Holiness and the Pilgrim Church. The last chapter on Our Lady (the Blessed Virgin Mary), is also important for dialogue between Christians and Muslims, since Mary is also revered in Islam. These chapters make the document relevant to this thesis as it opens the way to inclusive dialogue with other religions on some fundamental theological issues, such as salvation and common identity.

1. The People of God: Its Relevance to Interreligious Dialogue

Lumen Gentium reflected on the other religions outside the Catholic Church and state that there should be good and cordial relationships between the different religious communities. It was considered that much emphasis was on the Catholic Church alone as the true Church. As a result, Danneels states that, "there developed a different attitude towards other faiths. The attitude held that dialogue should be focused more on the basis of what Christians have in common and to stress what unites . . . rather than what separates them."[123]   Some areas of this unity can be seen in the following aspects of the document. Paragraphs 14 and 15 most particularly incorporate into the

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[123]Godfried Cardinal Danneels, "The Ongoing Agenda: A Council Unlike any other," in *The Second Vatican Council: Celebrating its Achievements and the Future* eds. Gavin D'Costa and Emma Jane Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 27.

People of God those who are not part of the Catholic Church but possess the Spirit of Christ, and those who are yet to receive the gospel, but have common identity with the Church. It states, "Fully incorporated into the Church are those who possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept all the means of salvation given to the Church. . . Those who have not yet received the Gospel are related to the People of God in various ways."[124] These include living according to the gospel injunctions, having the love of God and neighbour as taught in the commandments. In relation to this, the document highlights those who share the ancestral faith of Abraham, Jews and Muslims into the community of believers in one God. *Lumen Gentium* 16 also highlights the aspect of monotheism in relation to Jews and Muslims. It therefore affirms that the kingdom of God extends to other religions. O'Donovan argues that "this is tantamount to saying that while the Kingdom is present in a more concentrated way in the Church, it also extends beyond the limits of the Church."[125] *Lumen Gentium* therefore expresses and acknowledges inclusivism and pluralism as well.

The relationship of the Church to other religions therefore lies in the belief in one God. For the Catholic Church, Christ is the unifying factor of the People of God. Daniel J. Harrington emphasizes that *Lumen Gentium* points to Christ as the source of the identity of the people of God. He asserts that "the fundamental theological insight underlying the title is related to the person of Jesus: Jesus the Messiah makes us the people of God. Insofar as Jesus has fulfilled God's promises to his people, those gathered around Jesus and sharing in his life-whether they be Jews or Gentiles-make up God's people. Christ is the *Lumen Gentium*."[126] Though our expressions of belief in God vary, the essence of this belief in God is unique to all religions. What matters is we all believe in one God, creator of heaven and earth. It is the first and basic article of the Christian faith. This principle of *Lumen Gentium* also forms the basis of our dialogue, and stresses the respect due to the dignity of the human person. It expresses the relationship of *Lumen Gentium* with *Nostra Aetate*

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[124]*Lumen Gentium,* nos. 14 and 16.
[125]O'Donovan, *Understanding differently: Christianity and the World Religions*, 330.
[126]Daniel J. Harrington, "Why is the Church the People of God?," in *Vatican II the Unfinished Agenda: A Look to the Future,* eds. Lucien Richard, Daniel Harrington and John W. O'Malley (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 47.

and *Dignitatis Humanae*, on the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God.

Note that in Vatican II, the Catholic Church did not only focus on herself, but went further and considered her identity and relationship not so much with other Christians, but as well with other religions. Citing the work of Yves Conger on *Lumen Gentium,* Elizabeth T. Groppe posits that: "At the heart of *Lumen Gentium's* theology of the people of God is a vision of the communion of the entire human family united through Christ. The unity and universality of the new people of God is *Lumen Gentium's* repeated refrain."[127] Interestingly, the Church does not solely claim this privileged identity, but accepts all who believe in God. "All men are called to this catholic unity which prefigures and promotes universal peace. And in different ways to it belong, or are related: the Catholic faithful, others who believed in Christ, and finally all mankind, called by God's grace to salvation."[128] This is an important point for interfaith dialogue.

2. The universal call to holiness: An Invitation to Interreligious Dialogue

The primary vocation of all in the Church lies in the call to holiness. *LG* defines holiness as "that sanctity which is cultivated by all who act under God's Spirit and, obeying the Father's voice and adoring God the Father in spirit and in truth, follow Christ, poor, humble and cross-bearing, that they may deserve to be partakers of his glory."[129] The call to holiness comes from Christ's demand in Matt 5:48 to strive for perfection. It is from this perspective that *LG* emphasizes the fact that: "This holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful and so it must be; it is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus sanctifying others."[130]

The call to holiness is also expressed in the love of God and neighbour, (See also, Mk12:30, Jn. 13:34; 15:12). This is a special call to all the religions. The Catholic Church teaches that by virtue

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[127]Elizabeth T. Groppe, "Revisiting Vatican II's Theology of the People of God after fourty-five years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue," *Theological Studies* 72, no. 3 (September 1, 2011): 614.
[128]*LG*, no.13.
[129]*LG*, no. 41.
[130]*LG,* no. 39.

of baptism all its member and every human person are called by God through Jesus Christ to be partakers of the divine nature, to be holy. Carlo Martini emphasizes that: "The Church is holy not because of its many saints. The dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* draws attention to the fact that the holiness of the Church is a challenge for each and every individual."[131] Every individual person must therefore, use their God's given gifts in obedience to God and in the service of humanity.

There are diverse ways of life, but the life of holiness is a unique state of living in obedience to God, in the spirit of truth. To follow the ways of Christ is to share one's gifts in living out the faith through hope and love. Martini again posits that: "Nobody is excluded from the call to the perfection of charity, to the fullness of the Christian life and nobody is excused for reasons of age-I'm too young! I'm too old!-or for reasons of inability to follow the way of the spirit. *Each and every one* of us can be saints."[132] One can choose different paths to follow in his/her response to the call to holiness.

However, all human beings are called to support one another in grace, with faithful love and be trained in the religious values of their traditions and beliefs. Since the role of religions is to promote the practice of virtues in society, the call to holiness also demands that every religion is to seek holiness as a means to perfection in society. Therefore, the vocation to holiness thus extends to other religions in the same way the church is called.[133] Similarly, all are called to contribute to the holiness of life by being involved in human works of charity, and to also help their fellow-citizens to promote the betterment of society and the whole of creation.

All individuals should therefore seek sanctity of life in their every day endeavours through the help of the Holy Spirit. Martini further emphasizes that, "all believers, to the extent to which they allow

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[131]Carlo Martini, *Reflections on the Church: Meditations on Vatican II* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1987), 74.
[132]Ibid.
[133]Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 165-166. McBrien argues that "if the Church is, in fact the corporate presence of the triune God, who is holiness itself, then it must look and act like a community transformed by that divine presence. It must be a Church that is 'at once holy and always in need of purification,' which means that it is called 'constantly' to follow 'the path of penance and renewal'

the Holy Spirit to work in them, become the soul of their environment, of the reality that surrounds them, of their group, because the Holy Spirit diffuses holiness everywhere."[134] The call to holiness is also challenged by various conditions of life. Therefore, those weighed down by miserable conditions of life such as poverty, infirmity, sickness and other hardships should also realize that they share in the divine plan of God which for the Christians can be compared with Christ's sufferings. All individuals in whatever conditions and situations they find themselves should accept the will of God and cooperate in love as they carry out their temporal works.

Charity is the first and most important virtue by which we love God above all and our neighbour. All the faithful should therefore heed the word of God in their heart and carry out his will in deeds, if charity is to grow. Members of the Catholic Church must frequently attend to the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and partake in the liturgy of the Church according to *Lumen Gentium*.[135] Love is thus the bond of all perfection, and completes all the processes of sanctification. As Christ laid down his life for all in love, so also those who are persecuted or martyred give great testimonies of love. This is regarded by the church as the highest gift and the greatest test of love.

The Church therefore invites all religions to consider the virtue of holiness in their lives.[136] The Church appreciates those who emptied themselves, undertaking poverty in the freedom of God's children and renouncing their own wills to continue in the spirit, following the obedience of Christ. To conclude; "Therefore all the faithful are invited and obliged to holiness and the perfection of their own state of life."[137] This is a special vocation for Christians, and forms an important aspect of interreligious dialogue.

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[134]Martini, *Reflections on the Church: Meditations on Vatican II*, 76.

[135]*Lumen Gentium*. no. 42. "One must constantly apply him/herself to prayer, self-denial, active brotherly service and the practice of all virtues."

[136]Geoffrey Preston, *Faces of the Church: Meditations on a Mystery and its Images* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 226. This is why Geoffrey Preston argues that: "*Holiness* of the Church does not come to focussed expression in particular people."

[137]*LG*. no. 42.

3. The Pilgrim Church in Relation to other Religions

The pilgrim church reflects the eschatological dimension of the Church. It shows the goal of Christ's mission and the Church in the world. It is also an invitation to every religion. On the part of the Catholic Church, she believes that her perfection is only complete in the glory of heaven, when all things will be renewed.[138] Most religions also believe that the entire universe will be re-established in the perfection of the glory of God. Thus, *LG* affirms that:

> The Church, to which we are all called in Christ Jesus, and in which by the grace of God we acquire holiness, will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven, when will come the time of the renewal of all things (Acts 3:21). At that time, together with the human race, the universe itself, which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him, will be perfectly reestablished in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:10-13).[139]

This perfection represents the eschatological salvific plan of God for all who believe in him. All individuals are therefore called to work out their salvation in truth, faith and hope according to the responsibility and tasks entrusted to them by God.

The world is in transition and aims at permanent renewal, which is not anticipated in this life. Richard P. Gaillardetz argues in this vein that; "we are people on the way who have the promise of God's presence and guidance but who still await the consummation of God's plan."[140] Every religion is therefore called to be prepared always and be ready for the final revelation, so that all may be counted among the blessed and not be condemned. Most religion therefore anticipates in hope, the glorification of the just. For Christianity, it is when Christ will appear in glory and change us after the pattern of his risen self. Among the major religions in the world that believe in the eschatological vision of God's glory (life after death) are also Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.[141]

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[138]Cf. Acts 3:21.

[139]*LG*, no. 48.

[140]Richard P. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiaru* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 56.

[141]Cf. Dermot A. Lane, "Encountering other Religions, Enriching the Theological Imagination," in *Vatican II Facing the 21st Century: Historical and Theological Perspectives*, eds. Dermot A. Lane and Brendan Leahy (Dublin: Veritas, 2006), 206.

Adrian Hastings highlights the eschatological dimension of the pilgrim Church and argues that: "She is a pilgrim Church, a church sharing in the process of history and really profiting under the influence of the Holy Spirit from the circumstances of history. She is a growing Church, one in the process of becoming, of reaching an ever greater fullness of holiness, unity and catholicity, of pressing forward to the final union with her Lord, the omega of history."[142] Even though *Lumen Gentium* specifically focuses on the Catholic Church and the yearning for eschatological unity, this yearning is also a factor common to some religions,[143] especially, Judaism and Islam. Therefore, since the hope of most religions is to be reunited with their creator, it suggests that most religions are on pilgrimage to a future yet to be revealed. This ideal of pilgrim people is also an important aspect of interreligious dialogue that should create more harmony and unity among the different religions.

4. The Blessed Virgin Mary and Dialogue between Christians and Muslims

The Blessed Virgin Mary has a special role in salvation history which placed her in a unique position especially for Christianity and Islam. In Christianity, just as it was that a woman (Eve) shared in bringing about death, so also God desired that a woman (Mary) should contribute in bringing about life. Through her acceptance of the angel's message, Mary committed herself completely and accepted to cooperate with God's holy plan. She therefore shares in the work and mystery of salvation by the grace of the almighty God. According to *Lumen Gentium;* "Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience."[144] From the very moment of Christ's conception to his death, the union of his mother's participation in the work of salvation was manifested.

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[142]Adrian Hastings, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council* vol.1 (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1968), 98.

[143]Cf. Donald Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith*, 42.

[144]*Lumen Gentium.* no. 56.

Mary played a prominent role in the public life of Jesus until the end. The first miracle of Jesus at Cana was brought about through the intercession of Mary. At the foot of the cross, Mary in her pilgrimage of faith was united with her son. She stood and associated herself with her divine son in his suffering and sacrifice. In the end, her dying son handed over his mother to the beloved disciple John. Finally, in glorifying the Immaculate Virgin Mary who was freed from all stain of original sin, she was taken body and soul into heaven. Preston posits that this is the summit of Mary's glorification and victory in the work of salvation. According to Preston, "Mary opens out into what goes far beyond one particular woman who lived at one particular time in one particular place; and yet the whole of human history would have been different without this particularity."[145] The Blessed Virgin Mary therefore is a central figure in the plan of God's salvation according to the Church's faith.

The Church continues to revere Mary based on her special privilege as the mother of Jesus the Messiah whom the Muslims also believe to be the greatest prophet. Thus, Bahar Davary confirms that:

> The figure of Mary is highly venerated not only in popular Muslim piety, but within the Islamic sacred text (the Qur'an) as well as the tradition of the Prophet. However, reverence toward Mary-especially among Muslim women-exceeds the scholarly and textual exposition of her status within Islam. This is in fact true of all things regarding all matters that have to do with women. Mary is known as the epitome of virtue and a model for all people-both men and women-to aspire to.[146]

This position of Mary in Islam serves as a model of all virtues to be emulated by all Muslims. Mary according to Maura Hearden "is an example for Muslim believers because of her chastity, obedience, and faith (Sura 66:12). In Muslim Marian spirituality, believers contemplate the living image of a human embodiment of the traits which they strive to achieve."[147] This is why according to Davary, Mary "is the only woman mentioned in the Qur'an by her proper name as opposed to

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[145]Preston, *Faces of the Church,* 253.

[146]Bahar Davary, "Mary in Islam: 'No man could have been like this woman'," *New Theology Review* 23, no. 3 (August 2010): 27.

[147]Maura Hearden, "Ambassador for the Word: Mary as a Bridge for Dialogue Between Catholicism and Islam," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 32.

being associated with a male figure."[148] Because Mary is so special in Islam, she is mentioned more than thirty times in the Qur'an, in seven chapters, (3,4,5,19,21,23,66). Chapter 19 of the Qur'an is specifically named after Mary.

Christianity, especially Catholicism and Islam have a common ground for interfaith dialogue on the Marian doctrine. Hearden also affirms that:

> Mary is exalted in both the Muslim and Catholic faiths because of the great things that God has done for her. These 'great things' are linked to doctrines that we have in common-namely, the virgin birth and her preservation from sin-but that are interpreted differently. The fact that Islam and Catholicism exalt the same person as a symbol of the faith-favored by God with God's Word and afforded the unique gifts of sinless purity and a virgin birth-means that Marian doctrines, studied within the context of each religious tradition, afford a great opportunity to explore our respective belief systems.[149]

Therefore, the place of Mary in interreligious dialogue is very central to Christianity and Islam, and should help to promote unity and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

2.8 Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*)

This document was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965. It was the last document to be promulgated. The document did not go through the drafting process, but emanated from discussions in the Council. It is 'the Social Document' of the Church. It highlights the Church's approach to contemporary challenges and takes a positive outlook towards the world. *Gaudium et Spes* is composed of five chapters divided into two parts. Part one which focuses on the Church and Man's vocation, deals with the Dignity of the Human Person, the Community of Mankind, Man's Activity throughout the World, and the Role of the Church in the Modern World. Part two on the other hand concerns some Problems of Special Urgency. It deals with issues of fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family, the Proper Development of Culture, Economic and Social Life, the Life of the Political Community, the Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations. *Gaudium et Spes* is important to this thesis because of its significant

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[148]Davary, "Mary in Islam: 'No man could have been like this woman'," 27.
[149]Hearden, "Ambassador for the Word: Mary as a Bridge for Dialogue Between Catholicism and Islam," 20.

contributions to the challenges of the modern world, such as the need for unity, justice, peace and respect of human dignity.[150] A critical look at the entire document suggests a place of interreligious dialogue as a theme. This is because the issues raised in the document concern the entire human race. To situate *Gaudium et Spes* among other documents of the Council, James Harvey argues that, "*Gaudium et Spes* can be easily submerged in the other themes of the documents even though it is crucial to their own development. Increasingly, it becomes clear that the Council's sense of the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Church, in humanity and in the world, is an underlying presupposition of its thinking."[151] *Gaudium et Specs,* also put into perspective the issues raised and discussed in *Nostra Aetate*, especially on human relationships and peaceful co-existence in the world. Others include principles of unity, justice, and human dignity.

2.8.1 Part One-Human Situation in the World: The Dignity of the Human Person

Some of the common issues raised in *Gaudium et Spes* that are relevant to interreligious dialogue concern the human situations in our world, especially the dignity of the human person through the use of freedom. It states that: "God willed that man should be left in the hand of his own counsel so that he might of his own accord seek his creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him. Man's dignity therefore requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint."[152]

The dignity of the human person is an extension of the Church's social mission. *Gaudium et Spes* highlights the relevance of this ministry as an apostolate of the Church in this modern age. As discussed earlier, *Dignitatis Humanae* also considers freedom of religion and the dignity of the human person. Daniel J. Harrington further argues in this perspective that the "the reality of religious, ideological, and cultural diversity was taken up with great seriousness by the Council,

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[150]Cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 2-3.
[151]James Harvey, "Vatican II: for the Life of the World," in *The Second Vatican Council: Celebrating its Achievements and the Future,* eds. Gavin D'Costa and Emma Jane Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 54-55.
[152]*Gaudium et Spes,* no. 17.

particularly in the two most important conciliar documents dealing with the social role of the church: the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World and the Declaration on Religious Freedom."[153] Harrington again emphasizes that *Gaudium et Spes* maintains that:

> The religious mission and identity of the Church is a source of commitment, direction, and vigour to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the law of God. More specifically the Council spelled out three dimensions of this social mission: the healing and elevation of the dignity of the human person, the building and consolidation of bonds of solidarity in society, and the endowment of daily human activity with deeper meaning and worth.[154]

In order to build this bond of solidarity in the world, interreligious dialogue is required among all the religions of the world.

2.8.1.2 The Community of Mankind and Man's Activity in the World: The Search for the Truth

There is inter-connectivity in the social mission of the Church and the freedom of the human person, which also includes freedom in religious matters. Fitzgerald and Borelli highlight that §4 of *Gaudium et Spes* teaches that: "At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its tasks."[155] *Gaudium et Spes* states the mission of the Church to proclaim to the world the fundamental right of the human person as a social being and to seek the truth without hindrance. The role of conscience in seeking the truth according to Dwyer was also reflected in *Gaudium et Spes.* "Conscience is integral to the process of seeking the truth and adhering to its demands, once that truth is known."[156] The encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* builds on the insight of *Gaudium et Spes* in order to illustrate its theological and anthropological components. The encyclical uses *Gaudium et Spes* to highlight the role of conscience in yearning for the truth and searching for man's aspiration to seek

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[153]Daniel J. Harrington, "The Church's Social Mission in a Pluralistic Society," in *Vatican II the Unfinished Agenda: A Look to the Future,* eds. Lucien Richard, Daniel Harrington and John W. O'Malley (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 113.

[154]Ibid, 117-118.

[155]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 54. This reference was to a Catholic perspective of dialogue in the light of *Gaudium et Spes*.

[156]Dwyer, "Vatican II and the Dignity of Conscience," 161.

the knowledge of God. Mary Elsbernd affirms that: "A description of the human person in *Gaudium et Spes* §17 speaks of one 'who is called to seek the Creator of one's own accord and freely to arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to (God).' The sentence in which the quotation appears states that human persons attain their own perfection through acts. The preceding sentence notes that the relationship between freedom and God's law is realized in acts."[157] The search for God and the truth is therefore a personal commitment. However, it requires the effort of working together to come to the realization of the ultimate truth. Religion plays a central role in coordinating this activity, and therefore the need for interreligious dialogue to harmonize this search.

Consequently, seeking the truth becomes a human act engaged in a concrete endeavour of trying to reach the goal of human yearnings. Thus, *Veritatis Splendor,* consistently made reference to *GS* no.16 to uphold the dignity of conscience as a means of providing solutions to different social problems.[158] This is because "the relationship between man's freedom and God's law is most deeply lived out in the 'heart' of the person, in his moral conscience."[159] Elsbernd further maintains that: "In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems that arise in the life of individuals and from social relationships. Obedience of conscience to the law of love and the engagement of Christians with others in the quest for truth and solutions to contemporary problems,"[160] becomes an important agenda of interfaith dialogue.

Gaudium et Spes §22 again opens the theology of salvation of all who believe, affirming that "we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known only to God, in the Paschal Mystery."[161] Fitzgerald and Borelli again posit that *Gaudium et Spes*

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[157]Mary Elsbernd, "The Reinterpretation of Gaudium et Spes in Veritatis Splendor," *Horizons* 29, no. 2 (January, 2002): 229

[158]Cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 31.

[159]*Veritatis Splendour*, no. 54.

[160]Elsbernd, *The Reinterpretation of Gaudium et Spes in Veritatis Splendor*, 233.

[161]O'Donovan, *Understanding differently: Christianity and the World Religions*, 334. (See also *Lumen Gentium* no. 48).

further reiterates the: "teaching of the Church that salvation is not confined only to those who have received the sacrament of baptism. There is the possibility of the *baptism of blood*. There is also the possibility of the *baptism of desire*."[162] *Baptism of blood* according to *Gaudium et Spes* signifies bearing witness to the truth and even giving up one's life; and *baptism of desire* symbolises one's response to the truth following the dictates of conscience. Therefore, one can be in any religion and still bear witness to the truth according to one's conscience.[163] Interfaith dialogue must always consider this to be the case.

2.8.2 Part two- Some Problems of Special Urgency: The Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations

Chapter five on *'fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations'* is of more importance and relevance to interreligious dialogue. *Gaudium et Spes* already acknowledges that the twentieth century had experienced many horrific wars and conflicts in human history, and in the midst of these crises was the presence of the threat of nuclear annihilation. The Council called the attention of the world to this ugly reality in the history of humankind, affirming it was a period of supreme crisis, and sought for collaboration among people against these challenges. *Gaudium et Spes* highlights that;

> In our generation when men continue to be afflicted by acute hardships and anxieties arising from the ravages of war or the threat of it, the whole human family faces an hour of supreme crisis in its advance toward maturity. Moving gradually together and everywhere more conscious already of its unity, this family cannot accomplish its task of constructing for all men everywhere a world more genuinely human unless each person devotes himself to the cause of peace with renewed vigor.[164]

This theme on fostering peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations seeks the solidarity of all people in the world. Therefore, it is not just the responsibility of the Catholic Church, but a collective duty of every religion in the world to be involved in fostering peace and uniting people

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[162]Fitzgerald and Borelli, *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View*, 40.
[163] (See also Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 1777-1778, and *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 3).
[164]*Gaudium et Spes* no. 77.

all over the world. Thus, *Gaudium et Spes* according to Larry Kaufmann, is a document that was addressed to all people in the world. Kaufmann asserts that;

> Believers and non-believers alike as Christians 'cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history' (*GS* no. 1). Already we hear in such language the pastoral tone that *Gaudium et Spes* seeks to adopt in its desire for dialogue between the Church and the world of which it is a part in its 'joy and hope, grief and anguish' (GS 1). The fact that the Church identifies itself with these stated human emotions is a mark of the important quality of empathy which is necessary for any true dialogue to take place.[165]

This solidarity of all peoples of the world demands that every person must be involved in the task of ensuring peace is established in the world and all people live in harmony. Charlotte Anne Zalot also confirms that *Gaudium et Spes* changes the horizon and understanding of the Church and the entire world. Zalot states that: "With the advent of *Gaudium et Spes* that understanding and experience of Church was to expand. Now the Church was to be understood as extending beyond the neighbourhood. The 'people of God' encompasses all of humanity, not just friends and family, classmates and neighbors. With the very first words of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church is linked with 'the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties' of all people."[166] *Gaudium et Spes* therefore uphold the principle of solidarity in the world, pointing out the fact that we have all some common responsibilities, rooted in natural law to support one another. It demands that all people should cherish peace and make sure it is established among the different nations of the world. This natural law also binds all to try and establish the kingdom of God even here on earth. This solidarity among people is therefore another important focus of interreligious dialogue.

2.9 The General Principles of Interfaith Dialogue in Vatican II and Conclusion

From the above contributions the common principles of interreligious dialogue from the Second Vatican Council can be summarized under the following themes:

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[165]Larry Kaufmann, "Gaudium et Spes Heralds a World Church of Dialogue," *Grace & Truth* 28, no. 3 (November 2011): 34.

[166]Charlotte Anne Zalot, "Another look at Gaudium et Spes: The Church in the Modern World," *Benedictines* 66, no. 2 (January 2013): 19

1. Freedom and Dignity of the Human Person: This particular factor is well articulated in *Dignitatis Humanae* as the key and focal point of the document. *Gaudium et Spes* also follows from this background and lays, emphasis on it as the criteria of achieving the common human goals in society. *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* do not explicitly express this factor; however they also focus on what will improve cordial relationships among humanity, thereby adding more value to human dignity.

2. Free use of Human Conscience in the search for the truth: Both *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Nostra Aetate* considered this factor in varying degrees. While *Dignitatis Humanae* clearly insists on non-coercion to safeguard the free exercise of conscience in the search for the truth, *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* recognize man's yearning to arrive at his final destiny, which is also connected with the search for the truth. *Gaudium et Spes* on its part considers this to be a moral responsibility and obligation for every human person searching for the truth and living their faith.

3. Unity of all God's people-unity in diversity: The unity of God's people is an important aspect of *Nostra Aetate.* This unity is a unity in diversity, coming from different cultural, social, political and religious backgrounds. *Lumen Gentium* also dwells on this element, trying to identify all men and women of goodwill as one family of God. Though *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Gaudium et Spes* do not directly concentrate on this point, they invariably communicate the importance of peaceful co-existence, which is also a basic criterion for unity among the people of God.

4. Common Identity in one God and Final Destiny: This is a common subject of the documents, but particularly *Nostra Aetate*. It seeks to provide a common identity of the various religions; their sources and final destiny. *Dignitatis Humanae* also affirms the reality that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, thereby attesting to the fact that we all came from God, and will have to reach our final end in Him. *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes* on their parts ideally speak of the universal gift of God, thereby stating the reality of a common destiny.

5. Common Good and Welfare of all: The common good implies the general objectives of every human society. All the documents approached this factor from the perspective of the common human objectives. While *Dignitatis Humanae* and *Gaudium et Spes* focus on promoting the general welfare, *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* advocate a common relationship among humanity in order to achieve the desired goal of a cordial society. Religion as a common good is also expressed in *Dignitatis Humanae,* because religion provides certain human needs which are for the good of society.

6. Pursuit of Peace, Justice and Equality in society: This concept stands out in *Nostra Aetate*, where it is advocated as a channel of providing solutions to social problems and crises. In *Dignitatis Humanae* however, this factor stands as a medium of working and maintaining harmonious relationship among people. On the other hand, *Gaudium et Spes* is a practical document on the implementation of this factor in society; while *Lumen Gentium* takes a theological stand, on the universal salvation of God for all people of goodwill. The salvation of God is a reward of justice from God, and proves that God does not show favouritism in His Kingdom. God's kingdom is a kingdom of peace where all people will be equal.

7. Solidarity and Collaboration: While *Dignitatis Humanae* highlights freedom and right in matters of religion, *Nostra Aetate* focuses on relationships of all religions. Both documents therefore encourage a working relationship in freedom and respect among the various religions. *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium* also reflect a collaborative relationship in strengthening cordiality and progress among humanity.

In the final analysis, *Lumen Gentium* considers the Church as the people of God and goes further to include those who possess the Spirit of Christ and those who are yet to accept the gospel; it therefore provides a platform for unity of the various religions. On the other hand, *Gaudium et Spes* also upholds the dignity of the human person through the use of freedom. While we connect *Lumen Gentium* to our relationship with people of other faiths, and thus a channel of interfaith dialogue,

Dignitatis Humanae consequently leads us to the freedom of the human person created in the image and likeness of God.

2.8.1 Conclusion

Today many human lives are destroyed in the world because of religion. Human life and its dignity, which religion is supposed to uphold, support and protect as sacred is not being respected. Religion teaches us about the knowledge of God; and God does not need to fight and kill in order for Him to be known. No religion therefore has the authority to condemn or kill anybody in the name of God. Following the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the urgency of interreligious dialogue is required to deal with the topic of the respect for and dignity of human life which is sacred. There is also the need to dialogue on peaceful co-existence through understanding and tolerance of each other. M. Din Syamsuddin categorically states that: "At a time when differences often lead to friction, and friction leads to conflict, the search for peaceful ways of resolving differences and conflicts has become imperative. In this regard, I believe that the significance of mediation as an instrument to resolve differences and to find common ground cannot be overstated."[167] Interfaith dialogue can be considered as a process of mediation for peaceful co-existence. But even with the effort towards interfaith dialogue, the world still lives in tension among people because of religion. There is more violence and terrorism in the name of religion in recent years. Hence the need to work for unity rather than division among the various religions is the key objective of *Nostra Aetate*. But how effective and influential has *Nostra Aetate* been to the world religions? Has unity been achieved with the coming together of the world religions and establishment of different interfaith organizations and movements?

Nostra Aetate has been an influential document; it has made a positive contribution in the relationships of the Church and other religions. However, there are more efforts required still, because the success of interfaith dialogue has not yet been fully achieved. The aspect of religious

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[167]M. Din Syamsuddin, "Peaceful Mediation of Conflict through Interfaith Dialogue," *Dialogue & Alliance* 26, no. 1 (January 2012): 29.

unity still demands much attention. Other issues concerning religious competitions and rivalries, religious superiority and dominations and other related factors needs to be checked.

Vatican II wishes to restore dignity and respect to other religions. In Vatican II, the Church took a positive position of building a good relationship with other religions. Van der Merwe in his commentary on *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* states: "The fact that the declaration is grounded in the task of the Church to improve unity and love amongst all people, means that it is not connected to the essential task of the Church, and therefore will also not be concerned with matters essential to the Church. The document does not result from a serious consideration of the gospel which ought to be declared to all people and nations, but is based on unity and love."[168] Thus, *Nostra Aetate* does not aim at conversion, but focuses more on building cordial relationships among the different religions.

Consequently, *Nostra Aetate* cannot be said to fully confront the problems of interfaith dialogue but to elaborate the theme of religious unity. Some principles of interfaith dialogue that reflected in the chapter were: truth, unity, peace, justice, human dignity and the common good. These are all principles that must be promoted in inter-religious dialogue. There is therefore, the need for a pragmatic approach to the theology and teachings of the Second Vatican Council on inter-religious dialogue. The next chapter will discuss the contributions of the Popes and the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue after the Second Vatican Council.

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[168]Piet J. van der Merwe, "Commentary on the documents *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*," *Hervormde teologiese studies* 73, no. 6 (January 2017): 20.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE POPES AND THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE (PCID) SINCE THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

3.1 Introduction

The Second Vatican Council provides the foundation of the teachings and principles of interfaith dialogue for the Catholic Church. However, to implement these teachings and principles is not an easy task. Since the Pope is the head of affairs in the Church, he also has the responsibility of ensuring the effectiveness of the teachings and principles laid down by the Second Vatican Council. This chapter will therefore discuss the contributions of various Pontiffs and the 'Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID)'[1] since the Second Vatican Council, and the works of Cardinal Francis Arinze. It will also highlight the success of their efforts towards religious unity and harmony. The contributions of the Popes and the PCID show their concerns towards unity and peaceful co-existence with various religions of the world, particularly with Islam (Muslims) which is the focus of this thesis.

PART ONE: CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE POST VATICAN II POPES

This part will focus on how the various Popes after the Second Vatican Council contributed to the themes of inter-religious dialogue with different emphases such as universal unity of all the religions, human dignity, the common good, peace and social justice. It will examine the contributions of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.

3.2 Pope Paul VI, (1963-1978)

Paul VI had a profound respect for all religions and cherished interreligious dialogue. Giuseppe Alberigo says that the vision of Paul VI for the Church on inter-religious dialogue in his pontificate

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[1] PCID Is a special department of the Roman Curia, saddled with the responsibility of coordinating the relations of the Catholic Church with non-Christian religions.

emanated from the Second Vatican Council against triumphalism.[2] Paul VI believed that the salvation of Christ extends to all humanity, and so there was the need to consider other religions and walk in the path that God set for humanity.[3] These are objectives that guided Paul VI in his pontificate and contribution to the promotion of interfaith dialogue and relationship with people of non-Christian religions.[4]

Paul VI's personal contributions to religious freedom and interreligious dialogue especially with Muslims had much impact on the unity of the two religions, namely Christianity and Islam. Prior to the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* Paul VI highlighted these areas of relationship with Muslims in his encyclical letter, *Ecclesiam Suam*. The encyclical opened up the era of Paul VI regarding interfaith dialogue. The encyclical focused on how the Church should carry out its missionary activities in the contemporary world. This came as a vision for Pope Paul VI on how he can lead the Church in his pontificate.

There are three principal areas that concerned Pope Paul VI. These are the self-consciousness of the Church, the renewal of the Church and the relationship of the Church with the world. The third concern of Pope Paul VI also demands dialogue with the world. The world here, according Paul VI in *Ecclesiam Suam*;

> Is meant either those human beings who are opposed to the light of faith and the gift of grace, those whose naive optimism betrays them into thinking that their own energies suffice to win them complete, lasting, and gainful prosperity, or, finally, those who take refuge in an aggressively pessimistic outlook on life and maintain that their vices, weaknesses and moral ailments are inevitable, incurable,

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[2]Giuseppe Alberigo, *A Brief History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2006), 30. Giuseppe Alberigo affirms that "The mystery of Christ's vital relationship with his Church, through which he imparts salvation to humanity, seemed to Cardinal Montini-the future Paul VI-the central point around which the Council's reconsideration of ecclesiology must resolve. It seemed clear that the great majority of the fathers did not recognize themselves in the triumphalism of the preparatory schema."

[3]Ibid, 43. Thus according to Alberigo, as Paul VI inaugurated the second period of Vatican II activities on September 29, 1963, he "indicated four objectives: the expression of the Church's theology, its interior renewal, the promotion of Christian unity, and dialogue with contemporary world."

[4]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 114. Lane states that at the beginning of Paul VI's pontificate while the Second Vatican Council was in progress, "in his address to the second session (1963), Paul VI encouraged the bishops to engage in dialogue with the world." That address of Paul VI also gave support to the consideration given to the Jewish people, which formed the basis of *Nostra Aetate*, and eventually included dialogue with other religions.

or perhaps even desirable as sure manifestations of personal freedom and sincerity.[5]

In *Ecclesiam Suam*, according to Lane, "Paul VI gave decisive direction to the Council at a time when it needed new direction. Commentators are agreed on the importance of this encyclical for understanding the documents of Vatican II."[6]

Paul VI addressed Muslims in *Ecclesiam Suam* as those who adore God according to the concept of monotheism. He called on the Catholic Church to admire and respect the ways of life of the Muslims. Paul VI states that: "We have those worshipers who adhere to other monotheistic systems of religion, especially the Moslem religion. We do well to admire these people for all that is good and true in their worship of God."[7] Paul VI therefore acknowledged the fact that both Christianity and Islam share the similar belief in God. He therefore continued his agenda of interfaith dialogue, focusing on the theme of 'belief in one God'. In his address while on pilgrimage to the Holy land, (Speaking in Bethlehem) he greeted all who acknowledge monotheism, the same as Christianity. He urged all to work towards peace and justice in the world.

While emphasising on the Christian belief in monotheism expressed in the Trinity, Paul VI sought for more dialogue to understand the basis of each other's beliefs and work towards peace and justice in the world. He affirms that: "We Christians, enlightened by revelation, know that God subsists in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but always we celebrate the divine nature as unique, we proclaim the living and true God unique."[8] Paul VI therefore urged other religions to realise the purpose of their belief in God as the basis for the dialogue of faith relationship with other religions.

In his desire for dialogue with people of the same faith in Africa, Paul VI addressed the Muslim community in Uganda, where he again highlighted the common beliefs between Islam and

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[5]*Ecclesiam Suam,* no. 59
[6]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 114.
[7]*Ecclesiam Suam,* no. 107.
[8]Paul VI, "Pilgrimage to the Holy Land-Solemnity of the Epiphany in Bethlehem," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, January 6, 1964.

Christianity. These common beliefs between Islam and Christianity are a relevant aspect of the new paradigm of Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria. Paul VI called on the African people to pray and work for reconciliation in the continent. He says that:

> In our prayers, we always remember the peoples of Africa. The common belief in the Almighty professed by millions calls down upon this continent the graces of his providence and love, most of all, peace and unity among all its sons. We feel sure that as representatives of Islam, you join in our prayers to the Almighty, that he may grant all African believers the desire for pardon and reconciliation so often commended in the Gospels and in the Qur'an.[9]

This emphasis on pardon and reconciliation is required among people all over the world in order for peace and harmony to exist. The purpose of Paul VI's visit to Uganda, he stated, was to intercede for peace in Africa. Paul VI therefore clearly stated:

> Our pilgrimage to these holy places is not for purposes of prestige or power. It is a humble and ardent prayer for peace, through the intercession of the glorious protectors of Africa, who gave up their lives for love and for their belief. In recalling the Catholic and Anglican Martyrs, we gladly recall also those confessors of the Muslim faith who were the first to suffer death, in the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, for refusing to transgress the precepts of their religion.[10]

Paul VI was therefore interested in the unity of Christians and Muslims because of their common ancestral root from the one God. He desired dialogue that would bring about reconciliation and forgiveness, leading to peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

Pope Paul VI's pontificate began at the middle of the Second Vatican Council and continued for thirteen years after the Council. He started the implementation of the reforms that the Catholic Church worked for during the Second Vatican Council which began with Pope John XXIII. Therefore, Paul VI's pontificate focused on strengthening the relationship of the Church with the modern world. The relationship of the Church with non-Christian religions in the world is a necessary prerequisite for Paul VI. His interest in interfaith dialogue centers on theological considerations regarding monotheism, peace and justice in the world. Since the Church shares in

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[9]Paul VI, "Journey to Uganda-Address of to the Dignitaries and Representatives of Islam," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, August 1, 1969.
[10]Ibid.

the common history and tragedies of the world, she must also join with other people in the world to seek solutions to the problems that confront the world.[11]

Summarily, Pope Paul VI advanced the relationship of the Church with the modern world as presented in the Second Vatican Council. He emphasizes more on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the three monotheistic religions, namely Judaism, Christianity and Islam and the promotion of justice and peace in the world. He considered dialogue as an important aspect of the Church's mission in the world.

3.3 Pope John Paul II, (1978-2005)

John Paul II's pontificate was much longer and involved many ecumenical and interfaith activities. Interfaith dialogue was therefore a key area during John Paul II's pontificate. His encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* emphasizes many points associated with interfaith dialogue. It highlights the fact that interfaith dialogue is integral to the Church's mission. John Paul II believes that it is part of the evangelising mission of the church to be involved with other religions in dialogue. Through interfaith dialogue, the Church presents the gospel of Christ in a special way to people of other faiths. Thus, "Understood as a method and means of mutual knowledge and enrichment, dialogue is not in opposition to the mission *ad gentes*; indeed, it has special links with that mission and is one of its expressions. This mission, in fact, is addressed to those who do not know Christ and his Gospel, and who belong for the most part to other religions."[12] Harold Kasimow was therefore, "amazed by Pope John Paul II's strong commitment to interfaith dialogue. This brilliant intellectual and mystic believes that interfaith dialogue can help to repair and transform the world. The Pope is well aware of the violence and destruction being carried out today in the name of religion and is

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[11]Peter Phillips, "The Dialogue of Faith and Cultures: From Paul VI to Benedict XVI," *New Blackfriars* 98, no. 1077 (September 2017): 571. In this regard, Peter Phillips argues that: "While recognizing the Church is not immune from the tidal wave of change transforming the world for good and ill, he stresses the fact that the Church cannot escape from the world for it 'is deeply rooted in the world. (The Church) exists in the world and draws its members from the world. It derives from it a wealth of human culture'."

[12]*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 55.

deeply preoccupied with the religious factor in the wars being waged on our planet."[13] Pope John Paul II took up the challenge of the relationship with non-Christian religions in the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity.

In his effort to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council like his predecessor Paul VI, John Paul II focuses on three (3) interrelated principal areas regarding interfaith dialogue:

   i. Brotherhood and solidarity of all religions,

   ii. The Dignity of the Human person,

  iii. Religious freedom.

a. ***Brotherhood and solidarity of all religions:*** This was a major concern for John Paul II in promoting the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.[14] John Paul II focuses on brotherhood and solidarity, especially between Christians and Muslims. He committed himself to address followers of Islam in various nations and groups. In such addresses, he always emphasized the unity of Christianity and Islam, highlighting the similarities between them, especially the monotheistic aspect of both religions.

John Paul II further highlights that holiness forms the basis of belief in one God between Christianity and Islam. Holiness in Christianity and Islam John Paul II says: "Comes from God, who is called 'The Holy One' in the sacred books of the Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Your holy Qur'an calls God 'Al-Quddus,' as in the verse: 'He is God, besides whom there is no other, the Sovereign, the Holy, the (source of) Peace' (Qur'an 59, 23)."[15]

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[13]Harold Kasimow, "John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue: An Overview," in *John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue*, eds. Byron L. Sherwin and Harold Kasimow (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 1.

[14]Dermot A. Lane, "Pneumatological Foundations for a Catholic Theology of Interreligious Dialogue," in *The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue*, eds. Terrence Merrigan and John Friday (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31. Dermot A. Lane argues that, "the challenge of developing the seeds of the Spirit sown at Vatican II was taken up by John Paul in a varieties of ways: through his encyclical and speeches, through his outreach to other religions, and through his prophetic gestures to other living faiths such as the Assisi Gatherings in 1986, 1993, and 2002. John Paul II did break new ground in the outreach of the Church to other religions."

[15]Pope John Paul II, "Colloquium on Holiness in Christianity and Islam," *Islamochristiana* 11 (May 1985): 3.

According to John Paul II, Christians and Muslims are also called to promote the culture of peace and harmony based on their call to holiness and belief in one God. He asserts: "It is therefore important for Muslims and Christians to ask each other about their own ideal of holiness, how they have received it as a divine gift and developed it in the history of the individual and the community as a human living answer, for the glory of God and the fulfilment of man's hope."[16] This consideration on the state of holiness in Christianity and Islam will enable Christians and Muslims to advance in their unity and peaceful co-existence. This is because their holiness comes from God who demands they imitate him in living a holy life, which entails living in virtues like unity, peace, justice, mercy and love.

John Paul II also sought for solidarity and brotherhood among Christians and Muslims when he addressed representatives of Muslims in the Philippines:

> But are you not, above all, brothers of the Christians of this great country, through the bonds of nationality, history, geography, culture, and hope for a better future, a future that you are building together? Is it not right to think that in the Philippines, the Muslims and the Christians are really travelling on the same ship, for better or for worse, and that in the storms that sweep across the world the safety of each individual depends upon the efforts and cooperation of all?[17]

He therefore urges them to adopt dialogue in order to bring about progress in society, and to build trust among them.

Again, John Paul II further highlights the message of promoting dialogue with Muslims to the Islamic faithful at the end of the month of Ramadan, April 3, 1991. He reiterates the need for cooperation and solidarity between believing Catholics and Muslims to be established through dialogue. This, he says, will strengthen mutual trust and knowledge of one another, and promote peace. This call was also reflected in his apostolic letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, where he clearly points out that: "In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that this dialogue will be especially important

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[16]Ibid, 5.
[17]John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to Pakistan, Philippines I, Guam (United States of America II), Japan, Anchorage (United States of America II): Address to representatives of Muslims of the Philippines," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, February 20, 1981.

in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history. The name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: *a name of peace and a summons to peace*."[18]

Religious tolerance was another aspect that Pope John Paul II encouraged Christians and Muslims to put into consideration in their approach to strengthen their brotherhood and solidarity with one another. He spoke to the representatives of Muslims in Belgium that:

> It is a good thing to come to understand each other by learning to accept differences, by overcoming prejudices in mutual respect, and by working together for reconciliation and service to the lowliest. This is a fundamental dialogue which must be practiced in neighbourhoods, in places of work, in schools. This is the dialogue which is proper to believers who live together in a modern and pluralistic society.[19]

John Paul II made further calls to Christians and all people of goodwill in Bangladesh, on November 19, 1986, to dialogue on factors that bind and unite humanity, and to shun misunderstanding and distrust. At the International Airport, Amman, Jordan, on March 20, 2000, he called on the people to work and seek for peace among themselves despite their religious differences. He claims that this is vital in order for development to happen in the world.

b.   *The Dignity of the Human person:* Another major concern of John Paul II according to Ethna Regan is the promotion of human dignity.[20] Like his predecessor Paul VI, John Paul II also had great value and respect for the dignity of the human person during his pontificate. He called on every religion to consider the good and dignity of the human person as fundamental to their religions.[21] Furthermore, John Paul II emphasizes the dignity of the human person in his address to

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[18]John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, January 6, 2001, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, no. 55.

[19]John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to the Netherlands: Address to the Muslim community in Brussels-Belgium," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 19, 1985.

[20]Ethna Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 43. According to Ethna Regan, the emphasis of "John Paul II on the protection and promotion of human rights as a key to and measure of justice led to the refining and application of these themes in the various documents produced by local churches throughout the world."

[21]Ibid, 38. Regan argues that "John Paul II had a generally positive view of the secular human rights movement, seeing therein evidence both of a universal human nature and also of a humanism that speaks to all people of good will. He described the Universal Declaration as one of the highest expression of the human conscience of our time and called for a culture of human rights-which is accommodating of legitimate cultural and political differences-to become an integral part of humanity's moral patrimony."

the Islamic World delegates in Rome. He emphasizes that because Christians and Muslims believe in the one God who is the source of goodness and perfection, their activities and ways of life must also reflect the nature of this God whom they seek, obey, and worship. John Paul II asserts that "for this reason, also in the works of mission and *da'wah*, our action must be founded upon a respect for the inalienable dignity and freedom of the human person created and loved by God."[22] Christians and Muslims must therefore focus on the promotion of the concept of human dignity.

John Paul II also maintains that the fundamental human right helps to promote human dignity and the restoration of peace in the world. His message to the Islamic faithful at the end of the month of Ramadan therefore invites all Muslims and people of goodwill to collaborate with the Catholic Church through dialogue in order to build up structures that will enable lasting peace to flourish, and human dignity to be respected everywhere in the world.[23] Kasimow also highlights that John Paul II seeks dialogue to promote religious unity, respect and peace in the world.[24] Thus, John Paul II emphasizes the need for Christians and Muslims to protect the weak and the afflicted in society as important to human dignity. He says: "This cooperation in solidarity towards the most afflicted can form the concrete basis for a sincere, profound and constant dialogue between believing Catholics and believing Muslims, from which there can arise a strengthened mutual knowledge and trust, and the assurance that each one everywhere will be able to profess freely and authentically his or her own faith."[25] Dialogue between Christians and Muslims according to John Paul II will strengthen mutual relations where everyone will cherish and respect each other's faith and religion. He posits that: "In today's world where God is tragically forgotten, Christians and Muslims are

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[22]John Paul II, "Address to a Delegation of the World Islamic Call Society," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, February 15, 1990.

[23]Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights,* 39. In this regard, Regan argues that "it is the job of the Church-together with all people of good will-to be vigilant regarding the actual implementation of the Universal Declaration. Human rights thus become the measure by which social justice is tested in the life of political bodies, and the protection of human rights the criterion of authentic development of peace" in the world.

[24]Kasimow, "John Paul II and Interreligious Dialogue: An Overview," 2. Kasimow says, "John Paul II seems to be convinced that interreligious dialogue is a path that can promote respect among members of different religions and help to bring peace and harmony to a world torn by conflict and war, poverty, and the destruction of the environment, a world that is captivated by materialism and secularism, in deep need of finding significant existence."

[25]John Paul II, "Message to the faithful of Islam at the end of the month of Ramadan," Rome: Vatican Publishing Library, April 3, 1991.

called in one spirit of love to defend and always promote human dignity, moral values and freedom."[26] Christians and Muslims therefore have a common task and responsibility to uphold human dignity and create a society of moral values and social justice.

Furthermore, John Paul II invites both Christians and Muslims in promoting human dignity to collaborate and work towards eliminating factors that create barriers among them in order to achieve the common good. He points out factors that concern human dignity and affect relationships between Christians and Muslims, and the need to try and overcome them. John Paul II highlights that: "Injustice, oppression, aggression, greed, unwillingness to enter into dialogue and to enter into negotiations, lack of forgiveness, desire for revenge: here are some factors that cause people to move away from the way where God wants us to live on this planet. We must all learn to know these realities in our own lives and in our societies, and to find ways to overcome them."[27] He similarly re-echoes this idea in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, stating that;

> In the modern world there is a tendency to reduce man to his horizontal dimension alone. But without an openness to the Absolute, what does man become? The answer to this question is found in the experience of every individual, but it is also written in the history of humanity with the bloodshed in the name of ideologies or by political regimes which have sought to build a 'new humanity' without God.[28]

John Paul II emphasizes that both Christians and Muslims should unite in a spiritual bond to promote peace, social justice, liberty, and moral values. He further stresses how the profession of faith by both Christians and Muslims as taught in the Bible and the Qur'an will improve their understanding of one another. He gave a similar message in his address to a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims, on February 26, 1986. John Paul II posits that: "In today's world, it is more important than ever that people of faith place at the service of humanity their religious conviction, founded on the daily practice of listening to God's message and encountering him in prayerful worship. My prayers and hopes are with you as you pursue your reflection on the God of mercy and

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[26]John Paul II, "Dialogue with Muslims: Together with us Adore the one, Merciful God," *L'Osservatore Romano* 1591 (May 1999): 2.

[27]John Paul II, "Message to the faithful of Islam at the end of the month of Ramadan," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, April 3, 1991.

[28]*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 8.

justice, the God of peace and reconciliation!"[29] This thought corresponds with the call to desire reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among various religions. John Paul II therefore seeks dialogue for a common purpose by all religions of the world. He maintains that: "As members of the one human family and as believers, we have obligations to the common good, to justice and to solidarity. Interreligious dialogue will lead to many forms of cooperation, especially in responding to the duty to care for the poor and weak. These are the signs that our worship of God is genuine"[30] and can foster brotherhood and friendship between Christians and Muslims. He visited Astana, Kazakhstan where he made an appeal for peace in the world, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He called on all people to work together and shun violence, and not to use religion as a weapon of hatred and conflict.

Religious Freedom: Pope John Paul II's approach to religious freedom and interfaith dialogue with Islam was seen in his effort to implement the principles of *Dignitatis Humanae*.[31] John Paul II emphasizes that; "Both Christians and Muslims are called to defend the inviolable right of each individual to freedom of religious belief and practice."[32] In order to ensure that religious freedom is fully implemented and religious persecution in the world is controlled, John Paul II again seeks both Christians and Muslims to create good relationships and shun violence. He emphasizes that:

> It is important that Muslims and Christians continue to explore philosophical and theological questions together in order to come to a more objective and comprehensive knowledge of each others' religious beliefs. Better mutual understanding will surely lead at the practical level to a new way of presenting our two religions not in opposition, as has happened too often in the past, but in partnership for the good of the human family.[33]

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[29]John Paul II, "Address to a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, February 26, 1986.

[30]John Paul II, Message at his Visit to the Umayyad Great Mosque, May 6, 2001, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

[31]Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights,* 40. Regan argues that "there is a shift in John Paul's reception of *Dignitatis Humanae*. For many years, he placed the question of religious freedom in the context of the struggle against atheistic communism; however, in later years, while not denying that religious persecution still exists in many parts of the world, he saw religious freedom as under assault from the forces of secularism and relativism."

[32]John Paul II, "Address to a Delegation of the World Islamic Call Society."

[33]John Paul II, "Jubilee Pilgrimage to Greece, Syria and Malta: Meeting with the Muslim leaders-Omayyad Great Mosque, Damascus," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 6, 2001.

John Paul II therefore wants Christians and Muslims to approach dialogue in a special way to search for the truth about the reality of their being and existence, which is a fundamental aspect of religious freedom.

John Paul II also emphasizes unity during his pontificate, especially with the rise in terrorist activities. The peak of this was the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack by Al-Qaeda in New York. John Paul II described that as the dark history of humanity and an abuse to human dignity. In an audience the following day after the attack John Paul II states:

> Yesterday was a dark day in the history of humanity, a terrible affront to human dignity. After receiving the news, I followed with intense concern the developing situation, with heartfelt prayers to the Lord. How is it possible to commit acts of such savage cruelty? The human heart has depths from which schemes of unheard-of ferocity sometimes emerge, capable of destroying in a moment the normal daily life of a people.[34]

John Paul II made a plea to people all over the world to cooperate with one another and ensure that the spread of violence and hatred would not prevail in the world. The 9/11 attack also changes the phase and dimension of inter-religious dialogue especially with the Muslim world. It brought the involvement of governments both at local, national and international levels into the activities of inter-religious dialogue.[35] It means that the issue of peace in the world is now a top agenda for governments and all religions in the world. This is also why inter-religious dialogue should become an agenda of education.

Finally, because of John Paul II's love and concern for the people of Africa, his visits to various African nations were an effort to strengthen the bond of brotherhood, solidarity, peace and unity in Africa. This call resounds in his address to Islamic leaders in Dakar-Senegal, on February 22, 1992, stressing the relevance of interfaith dialogue. John Paul II wants Christians and Muslims in Africa to always recognize their common values and religious faith. He emphasizes that;

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[34]John Paul II, "General Audience," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 12, 2001.
[35]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 28. Lane argues in this regard that "there are some signs that governments are beginning to appreciate the importance of religion for promoting social cohesion and political peace at the local, national and international levels."

> Christians and Muslims, must recognize with joy the religious values that we have in common, and give thanks to God for them. Both of us believe in one God, the only God, who is all justice and all mercy; we believe in the importance of prayer, of fasting, of almsgiving, of repentance and of pardon; we believe that God will be a merciful judge to us all at the end of time, and we hope that after the resurrection He will be satisfied with us and we know that we will be satisfied with him.[36]

Therefore, differences in religious practices should never be the source of disunity and rivalry or competition. He always emphasized this point to the various African bishops during their "*ad limina's*" visits.

Pope John Paul II visited Nigeria twice during his pontificate: in 1982 and 1998. On both occasions he met and addressed leaders of the Muslim communities in Nigeria. In 1982, Pope John Paul II addressed Muslim leaders in Nigeria on the need for Christians and Muslims to engage in dialogue on three points: The first was to understand each other better both as scholars and in personal relationships. Secondly was to promote honesty and integrity through discipline in private and public life. The last point was on the effective implementation of the principles of religious freedom. He emphasizes the need for Christians and Muslims to cooperate with one another for the common good in Nigeria. John Paul II is convinced that if Christians and Muslims in Nigeria join hands together in the name of the God they both believe in and worship, they "can accomplish much good. We can work together for harmony and national unity, in sincerity and greater mutual confidence. We can collaborate in the promotion of justice, peace and development. It is my earnest hope that our solidarity of brotherhood, under God, will truly enhance the future of Nigeria and all Africa, and add to the good ordering of the world as a universal civilization of love."[37] John Paul II's emphasis is therefore on the need for collaboration and commitment between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria in order to promote the good of the nation.

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[36]John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to Togo, Ivory Coast, Cameroon I, Central African Republic, Zaire II, Kenya II, Morocco: Meeting with the Young Muslims in Casablanca-Morocco," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, August 19, 1985.

[37]John Paul II, " Apostolic Journey to Nigeria, Benin, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea: Address to the Muslim Religious Leaders, Kaduna-Nigeria," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, February 14, 1982.

The 1998 visit of John Paul II was a pastoral visit for the beatification of Michael Cyprian Iwene Tansi, the first Nigerian to be beatified. However, he also used that opportunity again to address Muslim leaders in Nigeria. He emphasizes the dignity of the human person in two dimensions, the respect and value of human life, and dignity of the human person based on religious freedom. He wishes Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to be more tolerant and communicate effectively to resolve their disagreements and respect one another. John Paul II emphasizes that:

> In any society, disagreements can arise. Sometimes the disputes and conflicts which ensue take on a religious character. Religion itself is sometimes used unscrupulously to cause conflict. Nigeria has known such conflicts, though it must be recognized with gratitude that in many parts of the country people of different religious traditions live side by side as good and peaceful neighbours. Ethnic and cultural differences should never be seen as justifying conflict.[38]

These differences, according to John Paul II, can actually create harmony in Nigeria if all can have real respect for one another.

In conclusion, John Paul II advanced from Pope Paul VI in the promotion of unity between Christians and other religions in the world. He focused on unity with Muslims, and his new emphases were on the common beliefs and values between Christianity and Islam as the basis for promoting unity and interfaith dialogue. He also called on Christians and Muslims to see themselves as brothers and sisters and live in peace and harmony with one another. He further emphasizes the promotion of the common good, social justice and religious liberty as a means of promoting human dignity and religious freedom in the world.

3.4 Pope Benedict XVI 2005-2013

Pope Benedict XVI's period was controversial in the history of religious dialogue in the world. There was an increase in religious conflicts and persecution in his era, with tension in the Middle-East and Syria. There was also the rise in terrorist activities in the name of religion during Benedict's era. Despite all these, Benedict XVI was also opened and committed to dialogue with

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[38]John Paul II, "Apostolic Journey to Nigeria: Meeting with Muslim Leaders, Abuja-Nigeria," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 22, 1998.

other religions in order to improve the relationship of the Catholic Church with other religions. He sees dialogue as crucial to unite the human family and bring reconciliation among people all over the world. Benedict like his predecessors embraces dialogue in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. According to Lane, Benedict XVI considers *Nostra Aetate* as the 'magna charta' of interfaith dialogue between the different religions in the world.[39] Benedict XVI believes that the Second Vatican Council laid a solid foundation and provides the guiding principles for interfaith dialogue and building a strong relationship with other religions in the world.

Benedict's official message at the twentieth anniversary of the interreligious prayer meeting for peace in Assisi, Italy, highlights the theology of interfaith dialogue on faith and brotherhood relationship with other religions. Benedict XVI believes that: "When the religious sense reaches maturity it gives rise to a perception in the believer that faith in God, Creator of the universe and Father of all, must encourage relations of universal brotherhood among human beings."[40] This view serves as a basis for understanding his message on interreligious dialogue, through recognizing and respecting the faith and belief of every individual. He therefore requests efforts by both Christians and Muslims to enter into dialogue for peace and respect for human dignity, especially in the midst of the challenges of religious conflicts and terrorism in the world. According to Benedict XVI: "When threats mount up against people and against peace, by recognizing the central character of the human person and by working with perseverance to see that human life is always respected;"[41] there will peace and progress in the world. He therefore calls on Christians and Muslims to be collaborators in restoring peace and human dignity in the world.

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[39]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 79. "It is quite striking that within a week of his election as Bishop of Rome, Benedict asserted formally his commitment to ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue as laid out in the Second Vatican Council, and developed by John Paul II, in an early address to representatives of different churches and world religions."

[40]Benedict XVI, " Message of his Holiness Benedict XVI to Bishop Domenico Sorrentino on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Interreligious Meeting of Prayer for Peace, Assisi, Italy, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 2, 2006.

[41]Benedict XVI, "Speech to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 25, 2006.

Furthermore, Benedict also reiterates the profound respect of the Catholic Church for the Muslim communities throughout the world. He made effort to strengthen solidarity and friendship between the Catholic Church and Muslims in the world. Benedict therefore calls for effective dialogue in the spirit of Vatican II in the following words: "Placing myself firmly within this perspective, I have had occasion, since the very beginning of my pontificate, to express my wish to continue establishing bridges of friendship with the adherents of all religions, showing particular appreciation for the growth of dialogue between Muslims and Christians."[42] In his letters addressed to Suhail Khalil Shuhaiber, the then newly-appointed Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Holy See, and Mr. Kenan Gürsoy, the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, who had also been newly appointed, Benedict stressed the importance of interfaith dialogue and collaboration in bringing peace in the world. He states;

> In this regard, I greatly appreciate Your Excellency's reference to your country's acknowledgement of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue for the promotion of peace. Such dialogue–and I think here with satisfaction of the increasing contacts between Muslims and Christians-is essential for overcoming misunderstandings and forging solid relations marked by mutual respect and cooperation in the pursuit of the common good of the whole human family.[43]

According to him this relationship could be achieved by applying religious truth to the challenging situations of the world. He therefore encourages Christians and Muslims to build mutual trust and work together in handling the numerous challenges of the world and to promote human dignity.

Benedict XVI's letter to Mr. Ali Akbar Naseri, who was the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Holy See, 2009, also highlights the use of religious faith to defend human dignity. He urges all religions to promote and safeguard human life, peace and justice in the world. In Lebanon Benedict says Muslims "welcomed me with great respect. I believe the time has come to give a sincere and decisive witness together against divisions, against violence and against war."[44] He also

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[42]Ibid.

[43]Benedict XVI, "Address Suhail Khalil Shuhaiber New Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Holy See," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, December 13, 2007.

[44]Benedict XVI, "As Protests Rage in Middle East, Pope Urges Interfaith Dialogue," *America* 207 no. 9 (October 2012): 6.

called on the young people of Lebanon to live together in peace and unity as they are the future

hope of their nation and the Middle East. Therefore, according to him, the youth should cooperate

for the good of their nation, and

> Seek to build it up together! And when you are older, continue to live in unity and harmony with Christians. For the beauty of Lebanon is found in this fine symbiosis. It is vital that the Middle East in general, looking at you, should understand that Muslims and Christians, Islam and Christianity, can live side by side without hatred, with respect for the beliefs of each person, so as to build together a free and humane society.[45]

Benedict further requested the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, to engage in dialogue

with followers of other religions in the spirit of proclaiming the truth. He emphasizes that "the

Church's principal responsibility is service to the Truth-'truth about God, truth about man and his

hidden destiny, truth about the world, truth which we discover in the Word of God'."[46] He therefore

encourages the PCID to organize formation courses in dialogue, particularly for young people.

To the representatives of the Muslim community of Yaoundé-Cameroon, Benedict XVI spoke of

the common factors which unite humans beings. He therefore urges Muslims to work towards

understanding their common beliefs with Christians. According to Benedict XVI dialogue is the

best way to enhance such understanding where they can create a society of peace and justice. He

says:

> I therefore encourage you, my dear Muslim friends, to imbue society with the values that emerge from this perspective and elevate human culture, as we work together to build a civilization of love. May the enthusiastic cooperation of Muslims, Catholics and other Christians in Cameroon be a beacon to other African nations of the enormous potential of an interreligious commitment to peace, justice and the common good![47]

Benedict XVI's, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus*, reflects his message to the

African continent. It focuses on the Church in Africa in the service of reconciliation, justice, and

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[45]Benedict XVI, "Apostolic Journey to Lebanon: Meeting with Young People," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 15, 2012.

[46]Benedict XVI, "Address to Participants at the Tenth Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, June 7, 2008.

[47]Benedict XVI, "Apostolic Journey to Cameroon and Angola: Meeting Representatives of the Muslim Community of Cameroon at the Apostolic Nunciature of Yaoundé," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 19, 2009.

peace. He emphasizes the need for dialogue to avoid discrimination and other problems among

Christians and Muslims. Benedict posits:

> If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism. In her social apostolate, the Church does not make religious distinctions. She comes to the help of those in need, be they Christian, Muslim or animist. In this way she bears witness to the love of God, creator of all, and she invites the followers of other religions to demonstrate respect and to practise reciprocity in a spirit of esteem.[48]

His Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, Benedict XVI again made reference to

interreligious dialogue as a process of religious unity. He describes the nature of such dialogue in

the following words: "The Church's universal nature and vocation require that she engage in

dialogue with the members of other religions. In the Middle East this dialogue is based on the

spiritual and historical bonds uniting Christians to Jews and Muslims. It is a dialogue which is not

primarily dictated by pragmatic political or social considerations, but by underlying theological

concerns which have to do with faith."[49] He therefore highlights the common ground of dialogue

with Islam and calls on both Christians and Muslims to dialogue on some controversial aspects of

their doctrines in order to avoid discrimination, marginalization, intolerance and even persecution.

Benedict XVI is renowned for promoting universal brotherhood and friendship among religious

adherents. His call for interfaith dialogue centers on respect for life and human dignity, peace and

justice in the world and the pursuit of the common good.

Despite Benedict XVI's effort to promote interfaith dialogue and healthy relations with Muslims,

he was also confronted with controversy and misunderstanding over a lecture he gave in the Aula

Magna at the University of Regensburg, Germany, on September 12, 2006. The title of the lecture

was "*Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections.*" Lane affirms that "the title

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[48]Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus,* Libreria Editrice Vaticana, November 19, 2011, no. *148. "*I ask the whole Church, through patient dialogue with Muslims, to seek juridical and practical recognition of religious freedom, so that every citizen in Africa may enjoy not only the right to choose his religion freely and to engage in worship, but also the right to freedom of conscience."

[49]Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana September 14, 2012, no. 19**.**

indicates that this lecture was not formally about Islam or the Catholic-Muslim dialogue. Benedict did, however, use a quotation from a fourteenth-century Byzantine Emperor's critique of Islam, causing offence to Muslims throughout the world and provoking some violent reactions."[50] In his presentation, Benedict emphasized the importance of convergence and sought dialogue on faith and reason to guide against religion and violence. It was a timely message in a world surrounded with terror and dangerous fundamentalist and violent ideologies. Benedict's citation of the work of Professor Theodore Khoury was the center of the controversy. According to Benedict XVI the work was a masterpiece "by the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and an educated Persian on the subject of Christianity and Islam, and the truth of both."[51]

The controversial and thought provoking statement was a reference to the prophet Mohammed and his approach to the promotion of Islam. The statement, Benedict quotes: "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."[52] The statement though made in the light of strengthening dialogue and understanding, it however caused the already existing tension between Christians and Muslims to escalate, and some Muslims revolted against that. The reactions necessitated the Vatican to issue an apology to repair the damage being done to the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Muslim world. The Pontifical Council, through the Secretary General of the State of Vatican, issued a statement of apology to the Muslim people who felt offended by the Pope. The statement according to Tarcisio Bertone explains that;

> The Holy Father did not mean, nor does he mean, to make that opinion his own in any way. He simply used it as a means to undertake-in an academic context, and as is evident from a complete and attentive reading of the text-certain reflections on the theme of the relationship between religion and violence in general, and to

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[50]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions,* 82.

[51]Benedict XVI, "*Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,*" *Islamic Studies* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 596.

[52]Ibid, 597. See also Controversy VII, 2 c: Khoury, pp. 142-143; Förstel, vol. I, VII. Dialog 1.5, pp. 240-241. In the Muslim world, this quotation has unfortunately been taken as an expression of my personal position, thus arousing understandable indignation. I hope that the reader of my text can see immediately that this sentence does not express my personal view of the Qur'an, for which I have the respect due to the holy book of a great religion. In quoting the text of the Emperor Manuel II, I intended solely to draw out the essential relationship between faith and reason. On this point I am in agreement with Manuel II, but without endorsing his polemic.

conclude with a clear and radical rejection of the religious motivation for violence, from whatever side it may come.[53]

Based on the misinterpretation of the Pope's citation, and the tension it has caused, the Cardinal Secretary to the Vatican, according to Bertone, went ahead to plead that "the Holy Father thus sincerely regrets that certain passages of his address could have sounded offensive to the sensitivities of the Muslim faithful, and should have been interpreted in a manner that in no way corresponds to his intentions."[54] This apology helped to explain the mind of the Pope and to calm the tension from the Muslim world.

Pope Benedict himself apologized personally in the following statement: "At this time, I wish also to add that I am deeply sorry for the reactions in some countries to a few passages of my address at the University of Regensburg, which were considered offensive to the sensibility of Muslims. These in fact were a quotation from a medieval text, which do not in any way express my personal thought."[55] He further apologized at a general audience and explained that the statement was not intended to provoke Muslims, but to express the use of reason in promoting religion and dialogue in history. He states;

> For the attentive reader of my text, however, it is clear that in no way did I want to make my own the negative words spoken by the Medieval Emperor in this dialogue, and that their polemical content does not express my personal conviction. My intention was quite different: . . . about rationality that must guide us in the transmission of faith, I wanted to explain that it is not religion and violence but rather religion and reason that go together.[56]

Although Benedict's apology shows a deep sense of sincerity and humility, the intention of the statement, as far as the Muslims are concerned, did not call for such reference to their holy prophet. Benedict XVI himself should have been aware that such a statement was certainly capable of provocation in this age, with the increase in religious fanaticism and fundamentalism. So it can be said that the statement created much damage in the Christian-Muslim relationship.

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[53]Tarcisio Bertone, "Statement by Cardinal Secretary of State," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 16, 2006.
[54]Ibid.
[55]Benedict XVI, "Angelus: Rome-Castel Gandolfo," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 17, 2006.
[56]Benedict XVI, "General Audience: Rome-St. Peter's Square," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, September 20, 2006.

There are two points that Benedict XVI's contributions focus on in the light of dialogue and mission of the Church:

1.   Dialogue in relation to the mission of the Church in the modern world. Thus, Viviano affirms that:

> Benedict XVI's theology of interreligious dialogue would require considering various factors: for example, how his thought belongs within the historical development of the modern papacy in relationship to the world; his understanding of the task of theology vis-à-vis the communication of the faith and the Church's mission; and his theological assessment of religion and of the religions, especially Judaism and Islam.[57]

In this regard, we saw Benedict's understanding of the Church's mission as a source of unity among humanity. Benedict's intention is to provide more understanding among the various religions. He wants all religions to unite on the basis of their human identity in the midst of the challenges of modern world.

2.   The mission of the Church in relation to inter-religious dialogue. Thus, if the mission of the Church is directed towards the salvation of souls, the Church must also seek to form unity with the different structures of humanity in the world. From this perspective, Viviano again affirms, "that the Church's relationship with the followers of other religions is unique in virtue of the importance of religious experience for human life, and that interreligious dialogue is not only the specific mode of mission in relation to the followers of other religions, but it is also a ministry in the service of all humanity."[58]

To conclude therefore, Benedict XVI in the same line as his predecessors, Paul VI and John Paul II, also developed on interfaith dialogue as a means of carrying out the mission of the Church, especially in the modern world. He called on the various religions of the world to unite in seeking solutions to the various problems and human challenges in the world. Benedict XVI's new emphases were on the bond on friendship, brotherhood and solidarity among people of various

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[57]Viviano, "Interreligious Dialogue in the Thought of Benedict XVI," 108.
[58]Ibid.

religions and cultures in the world. These will create more unity, peace, social justice and respect for human dignity in the world.

3.5 Pope Francis (2013- Date)

Following the inauguration of Pope Francis on March 19, 2013, he received a fraternal delegation in Rome. They were representatives of various faith groups and Ecclesial Communities (such as the representative envoys of Churches, and international ecumenical organizations, as well as representatives of non-Christian Religions). In his speech, he clearly expressed his commitment to promotion of friendship and respect among the different religions in the world. Pope Francis therefore seeks for the collective collaboration of all religions to love and protect the world, including the poor and vulnerable of society.

Pope Francis also calls on the religions and people of the world to promote justice and reconciliation, and to build peace in a world torn apart by wars and conflicts. Pope Francis affirms that;

> The Catholic Church is conscious of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions. . . The Church is likewise conscious of the responsibility which all of us have for our world, for the whole of creation, which we must love and protect. There is much that we can do to benefit the poor, the needy and those who suffer, and to favour justice, promote reconciliation and build peace.[59]

Like his predecessors, Pope Francis also focuses on respect and dignity of the human person, the establishment of peace in the world through interfaith dialogue, and the provision of social justice and religious liberty. He emphasizes mutual friendship and care for the poor and vulnerable, demanding that interfaith dialogue focuses on education, the care of the earth, and mercy, in order to promote all these principles. Pope Francis therefore sees the need to engage in dialogue with all cultures and religions in the world. He emphasizes that all religions should establish a bridge between God and humanity. According to him, this can be achieved through intensive dialogue.

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[59]Pope Francis, "Audience with Representatives of the Churches and Ecclesial Communities and of the Different Religions," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 20, 2013.

Pope Francis maintains that "in this work, the role of religion is fundamental. It is not possible to build bridges between people while forgetting God. But the converse is also true: it is not possible to establish true links with God, while ignoring other people. Hence it is important to intensify dialogue among the various religions, and I am thinking particularly of dialogue with Islam."[60]

Pope Francis also highlights the importance of dialogue with Muslims to promote mutual respect and human dignity through education in his Message at the end of Ramadan, 2013. The theme of the message is, 'Promoting Mutual Respect through Education.' Pope Francis emphasizes that respect for the dignity of the human person is an important aspect of dialogue. The "theme is intended to underline the importance of education in the way we understand each other, built upon the foundation of mutual respect. Respect means an attitude of kindness towards people for whom we have consideration and esteem. 'Mutual' means that this is not a one-way process, but something shared by both sides."[61] Pope Francis thus highlights the implication of the concept of human respect. He asserts that: "We are therefore called to think, speak and write respectfully of the other, not only in his presence, but always and everywhere, avoiding unfair criticism or defamation."[62] Education will help to develop the character and attitude of individuals towards such mutual respect for the other person.

Furthermore, Pope Francis emphasizes the need for collective effort from families, schools, religious institutions and all forms of media to ensure that the goal of human respect is achieved in society. He also pays attention to mutual respect through interreligious relations, particularly between Christians and Muslims. He says that Christians and Muslims "are called to respect the religion of the other, its teachings, its symbols, its values. Particular respect is due to religious leaders and to places of worship. How painful are attacks on one or other of these!"[63] These

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[60]Pope Francis, "Audience with the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, March 22, 2013.

[61]Pope Francis, "Message to Muslims throughout the world for the end of Ramadan on," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, July10, 2013.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

collective efforts and interreligious relations are also useful to the educational curriculum in inter-religious dialogue. It is through education that the idea of mutual respect can be taught, either in the formal or hidden curriculum. This is why it requires collective effort.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, of Pope Francis from numbers 250 to 257, specifically focuses on interfaith dialogue. Though the encyclical concerns the joy of proclaiming the gospel, it also points out how the gospel is to be proclaimed. According to Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, Pope Francis sees interfaith dialogue as an aspect of proclaiming the gospel. Thus Chia states, "in dialogue not only does one learn about the religious "other," but one also learns from them and especially learns to accept the different approaches our neighbours have toward the existential questions of life, such as understandings of God, faith, salvation, and the universe. This process of learning from the other is to be seen as constituting part of the Christian's mission and evangelization."[64]

Francis sees the importance of interfaith dialogue in the world, despite the challenges of peaceful co-existence and abuses of human rights and dignity. Pope Francis opines that;

> An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides. Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. This dialogue is in first place a conversation about human existence,[65]

and then, other issues that concern faith and salvation. Francis also dwelt on the importance of social dialogue in the context of religious freedom. This he considered as "a healthy pluralism, one which genuinely respects differences and values them as such, does not entail privatizing religions in an attempt to reduce them to the quiet obscurity of the individual's conscience or to relegate them to the enclosed precincts of churches, synagogues or mosques."[66] He therefore calls for an attitude of acceptance of one another despite the differences in religious views. Thus Pope Francis

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[64]Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, "Inter-religious Dialogue in EG, TTL, and CTC," *International Review of Mission* 104, no. 401 (November 2015): 274.
[65]*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 250.
[66]Ibid, no. 255.

highlights that: "As believers, we also feel close to those who do not consider themselves part of any religious tradition, yet sincerely seek the truth, goodness and beauty which we believe have their highest expression and source in God. We consider them as precious allies in the commitment to defending human dignity, in building peaceful coexistence between peoples."[67]

In declaring the Year of Mercy 2015-2016, Francis also saw this as an avenue to call on all the religions of the world to see mercy as an essential value among them. For Pope Francis, "the theme of mercy is familiar to many religious and cultural traditions, where compassion and nonviolence are essential elements pointing to the way of life."[68] Mercy therefore demands that the world should reach out in compassion to the weak and needy. Francis encourages all religions to draw closer to those living in such conditions of pain and misery, such as disability, sickness, injustice and poverty. Every person is therefore called in conscience to be selfless and open to the plight of those living in such conditions of life. This care of the poor and needy also demands protection of the environment that we live in. In this context, according to Pope Francis;

> Mercy extends also to the world around us, to our common home, which we are called to protect and preserve from unbridled and rapacious consumption. Our commitment is needed for an education to sobriety and to respect, to a more simple and orderly way of life, in which the resources of creation are used with wisdom and moderation, with concern for humanity as a whole and coming generations, not simply the interests of our particular group and the benefits of the present moment.[69]

In this light, Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'* further appeals to the whole world to seek dialogue in order to protect and care for the earth as a whole. He says:

> I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organizations committed to raising awareness of these challenges.[70]

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[67]Ibid, no. 257.
[68]Pope Francis, "Interreligious Audience," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, November 3, 2016.
[69]Ibid.
[70]*Laudato Si',* no. 14.

Pope Francis prays that the entire human race will come to an agreement on common principles to live in peace with one another.

According to Pope Francis in his encyclical letter *Evangelii Gaudium*, "Constructive dialogue between persons of different religious traditions helps also to overcome another fear, which we unfortunately increasingly see in strongly secularized societies: fear directed toward the various religious traditions and toward the religious dimension as such. Religion is looked upon as something useless or even dangerous."[71] His message calls on individuals of different religions in Africa to engage in dialogue about the challenges of the contemporary world. Addressing the crowd in Central Africa he says:

> Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters. We must therefore consider ourselves and conduct ourselves as such. We are well aware that the recent events and acts of violence which have shaken your country were not grounded in properly religious motives. Those who claim to believe in God must also be men and women of peace. Christians, Muslims and members of the traditional religions have lived together in peace for many years.[72]

Pope Francis therefore wants Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists to remain united in pursuing the common good that promotes human values through dialogue. For him;

> Dialogue is essential if we are to know, understand and respect one another. But, as experience has shown, for such dialogue and encounter to be effective, it must be grounded in a full and forthright presentation of our respective convictions. Certainly, such dialogue will accentuate how varied our beliefs, traditions and practices are. But if we are honest in presenting our convictions, we will be able to see more clearly what we hold in common.[73]

Based on this fact, he requested prayer for effective dialogue between different religions to produce fruits of peace and justice in the world.

Pope Francis recommends proper education for the Muslim and Christian youth on the basis of interfaith dialogue. According to Pope Francis, this should form part of the academic discipline. Francis emphasizes that, "academic work, the fruit of daily effort, seeks to investigate sources, fill

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[71]*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 257

[72]Pope Francis, "Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic: Meeting with the Muslim Community," November 30, 2015, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

[73]Pope Francis, "Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Sri Lanka and the Philippines: Interreligious and Ecumenical Gathering," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, January 13, 2015.

in the gaps, analyze etymology, propose a hermeneutics of dialogue and, through a scientific approach inspired by astonishment and wonder, is able to avoid losing the bearings of mutual respect and reciprocal esteem. With these premises, one tip-toes toward the other without stirring up the dust that clouds one's vision."[74] Education, according to Pope Francis, also provides respect for one another among the youth. This he clearly expresses in the following statement: "We have to bring up our young people to think and speak respectfully of other religions and their followers, and to avoid ridiculing or denigrating their convictions and practices."[75] Pope Francis has been working towards achieving peace among religions in the world through interfaith dialogue.

In recent times, Pope Francis' inter-religious engagement with Muslims is more evident with his visit to the United Arab Emirates (the center of Islamic activities) on February 3-5, 2019. His visit was to strengthen solidarity between Christians and Muslims in the world. A joined declaration titled *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed by Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb (the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar) during the visit. The document highlights:

> From our fraternal and open discussions, and from the meeting that expressed profound hope in a bright future for all human beings, the idea of this Document on *Human Fraternity* was conceived. It is a text that has been given honest and serious thought so as to be a joint declaration of good and heartfelt aspirations. It is a document that invites all persons who have faith in God and faith in *human fraternity* to unite and work together so that it may serve as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters.[76]

Human fraternity according to the document is based on matters of faith in God the creator of the universe. Human beings are therefore called to cooperate with God in safeguarding creation in every capacity.[77]

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[74]Pope Francis, "To Participants in the Meeting Sponsored by the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, January 24, 2015.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019.

[77]Ibid. "Faith leads a believer to see in the other a brother or sister to be supported and loved. Through faith in God, who has created the universe, creatures and all human beings (equal on account of his mercy), believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need."

As a conclusion, Pope Francis, like his predecessors, took the path of building friendship and solidarity with other religions. He places more emphasis on the importance of education in building relationships among the various religions. He calls on all religions to collaborate in caring for the earth and creation, and to promote mercy in the world.

3.6 Evaluation and Conclusion of Part One

Following the Second Vatican Council, the Church continues to make efforts to implement her teaching on inter-religious dialogue. Consequently, in the light of Vatican II, the post-conciliar popes also have tried to implement the teachings of the Council in their various pontificates. The various Popes responded to the need of the Church and the world according to the teachings of Vatican II. The four Pontiffs approach interfaith dialogue with the same interest. Therefore their different emphases focus on the challenges of their various eras to promote inter-religious dialogue.

Pope Paul VI's pontificate began at the middle of the Second Vatican Council and continued for thirteen years after the Council. This period was to oversee the implementation of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, Paul VI's pontificate focuses on strengthening the relationship of the Church with the modern world.

John Paul II promoted unity between Christians and other religions, especially Muslims, through emphasising the common beliefs and values. His emphasis was on the common belief in the one God as the source of religious unity, brotherhood and solidarity between Christians and Muslims in the world, and the promotion of the common good, social justice and religious liberty. Jean L. Jadot highlights John Paul II's contributions, stating that;

> In the years of the papacy of John Paul II, the consciousness of the need for Christians to respect, understand, and collaborate with non-Christians has continued to grow. Certainly no pope in history has given so much time and attention to contacts with those outside the Catholic Church. His encyclical

Redemptor Hominis opened new theological doors for Catholics, incorporating much of the recent theology of religions.[78]

With the rise in religious conflicts and terrorist activities worldwide, John Paul II shifted attention to respect for human dignity, love of one another and peace in the world. John Paul II was convinced that without respect for human dignity and love for one another, there would never be peace in the world.

Pope John Paul also emphasized dialogue with Muslims to promote human dignity and the principles of religious freedom. He sought the effective implementation of the teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae* and the Second Vatican Council. He wanted Christians and Muslims to embrace one another in mutual respect and to dialogue in the search for the truth. As a result of the growing trend of terrorist activities in the world, John Paul II believed that Christians and Muslims should collaborate on the ways forward to end terrorist activities and religious violence in the world. John Paul II paid particular attention to Christians and Muslims in Africa, emphasising that they should build a bond of brotherhood and unity to shun violence and create lasting peace in Africa.

Looking at Benedict's position, he pays more attention to building relationships of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity in the world. Benedict believes that if the bond of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity is established among people of various religions and cultures in the world, it will also provide unity, peace, social justice and respect for human dignity in the world. His message to the people of Africa called on solidifying the unity of the African people to create reconciliation, justice and peace; and to avoid any sort of discrimination in Africa.

Pope Francis, like his predecessor, took the path of building friendship and solidarity in his approach to inter-religious dialogue. Francis' determination is to ensure that inter-religious dialogue fosters respect and friendship among the various religions of the world. With the challenge of

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[78]Jean L. Jadot, "The Growth in Roman Catholic Commitment to Interreligious Dialogue Since Vatican II," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 376

movements of people across the world through migration, Francis places more emphasis on education, care of the earth and all creations, and also the promotion of mercy in the world. He therefore called on people to be more open to various cultures and religious traditions in the world. This he highlights in *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 250. Such an attitude of dialogue according to Francis will serve to reduce the increasing fear among people in the world. Pope Francis therefore pays particular attention to the importance of education in building firm relationships and appreciating the various cultures and faith traditions in the world.

For Pope Francis, education is also the best approach and solution to religious violence. He therefore focuses attention on Christians and Muslims getting involved in interpersonal relationship and communication system that will create more awareness and understanding of common interest among them. For this reason, Pope Francis says that, Christians and Muslims are to focus on;

> Specific preparation, not limited by sociological analysis, but having the characteristics of a journey among members of religions who, although in different ways, refer to the spiritual paternity of Abraham. Culture and education are in no way secondary to a true process of approaching the other which respects in each person his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices.[79]

All these factors, according to Pope Francis, suggest the need for Christians and Muslims to interact frequently in order to avoid all forms of prejudices.

From the emphasis of Pope Francis, he believes that Christians and Muslims should promote principles of respect and friendship with one another through dialogue. Such dialogue should also carry a spirit of love and compassion, in order to improve the quality of human life, such as looking after the welfare of the poor and vulnerable people in society.

From Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis, we see a consistency of emphasis in brotherhood and solidarity in inter-religious dialogue. However, while Pope Paul VI and John Paul II paid attention to the solidarity of all the religions, especially between Christianity, Judaism and Islam, Benedict XVI

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[79]Pope Francis, "To Participants in the Meeting Sponsored by the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies on the 50th Anniversary of its Establishment," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, January 24, 2015.

and Pope Francis were more particular on solidarity between Christians and Muslims. The basic principles that have been emphasized by the Popes include common belief, peace and justice in the world, brotherhood and solidarity, respect and friendship, promotion of human dignity, and the value of education in promoting inter-religious dialogue. All these principles are very important and must be promoted by inter-religious dialogue.

In summary, from Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis, we see the development to strengthen religious relationships on the principles of common beliefs, peace and justice in the world. This was further developed by John Paul II on the principles of brotherhood and solidarity, human dignity and religious freedom. Benedict VI further developed the principles of unity of all humanity, while Pope Francis expanded the principles of respect and friendship with one another.

As a concluding remark, it is easier for the Catholic Church to make decisions and implement them because of its hierarchical structure through the papacy. This is likely to be different with other religions. This is because the authorities of these religions only operate on a regional or national level from one region or country to another. Therefore, the easier way for the Popes to establish contacts and improve relations is to visit the various countries and address their religious leaders on issues of religious harmony and peaceful co-existence. The efforts of the Popes are also reinforced by the Roman Curia through its various departments as well as theologians. The next section will discuss the impacts of the Pontifical Councils.

PART TWO:

THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The Catholic Church conscious of the continuous process of interfaith dialogue, sets up the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID). The PCID and other pontifical commissions coordinate interfaith dialogue and activities in the world. This part of the chapter will therefore examine the contributions of the Pontifical Council in promoting dialogue and relationships with non-Christian religions in the world. The section will look at the functions and activities of the

PCID in promoting dialogue between the Catholic Church and other religions. It will pay particular attention on dialogue with Muslims. It will examine the publications of the PCID and their messages to Muslims in the world. The section will also consider the impact and role of Francis Cardinal Arinze and his focus on inter-religious dialogue in the world generally, and between Christians and Muslims in Africa and Nigeria.

The PCID was inaugurated on Pentecost Sunday, 1964 by Pope Paul VI. The PCID was set up in order to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council in *Nostra Aetate*, and "to foster the work of dialogue, Pope Paul VI set up in 1964 the Secretariat for Non-Christians, recently renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue."[80] In setting up this Secretariat Cassidy also maintains that, Paul VI "expressed the hope that in the future no pilgrim, no matter how distant the country from which he comes may by geography or religion, will be a complete stranger in this Rome."[81] This implies that the PCID will make effort to establish friendship with people of every religion and culture.

The initial name for the Council was 'the Secretariat for Non-Christians', until 1988 when it assumed the title of Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), which represents its primary function. Thus, according to Risto Jukko: "It can be said that the task of the PCID is to promote and carry out serious, objective and scientifically sound studies of other religions so that Christians might arrive at a clearer understanding of the content and practice of other faiths."[82] This involves three processes:

1.   Promotion of mutual understanding; respect and collaboration between the Catholic Church and other religions.

2.   Encouraging the study of religions in the Catholic Church and among other religions.

3.   Formation of personnel committed to promoting interfaith dialogue.

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[80]PCID, *Dialogue and Proclamation*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, May 19, 1991, no. 2.
[81]Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Dialogue*, 133.
[82]Risto Jukko, *Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations: The Work of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 18.

Jukko also states that among the functions of the PCID, "the preparation of Christians for dialogue has always been one of its primary tasks. Additional tasks are to encourage Catholic communities around the world to see the importance of dialogue, understand its role in Christian faith, and to be stimulated, despite obstacles and initial reservations, to establish good, cordial relationships with other religious believers."[83] The PCID also "cooperates closely with the World Council of Churches Office on Interreligious Relations in Geneva and with regional Church bodies."[84] Thus, the PCID have a multi-dimensional task on religious issues, cultural as well as socio-political issues.

The PCID also plays the role of fostering brotherly relationships, unity and solidarity with other religions in the world. It represents the Catholic Church in matters and issues of dialogue and relationship with non-Christian religions. It also makes pronouncements on behalf of the Pope and in the name of the Catholic Church regarding issues that affect interfaith dialogue and relationships with other religions. The PCID is the organ of reconciliation and intervenes on behalf of the Catholic Church in conflict situations. Cassidy affirms that the PCID does that; "by establishing a new relationship in the *psychological* order, by breaking down barriers resulting from misunderstandings, calumny, prejudice on the part of both sides, intolerance and hurtful insults to the other partner, and by promoting attitudes inspired by truth and brotherliness."[85] In this regard for example, the PCID has been involved in the reconciliatory role and intervention in the situation of Iraq and Syria. The Council has played a significant role in the promotion of brotherly relations especially after 9/11, the crisis in Iraq, and the critical situation in the Holy Land between the Jews and the Arabs. The PCID also supports and encourages the local Catholic Churches in the Middle East and Syria.

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[83]Ibid, 18-19
[84]Ibid, 18.

[85]Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue,* 133.

For a very long time now the PCID has been engaged in active dialogue with Muslims for better understanding. This is also to strengthen the bond of unity and friendship between Christians and Muslims, and to confront their common challenges, especially the conflicts between them. In this perspective, Jukko also asserts that, "on October 22, 1974, the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims was established by Pope Paul VI within the ambit of the Second Vatican Council in order to facilitate encounters of a religious character with Muslims."[86] However, this commission also functions together with the PCID to work for a good relationship with Muslims; especially with the rise in tensions between Christians and Muslims. This is why Jukko again highlights that;

> Since the 1990s the PCID has developed an institutionalized dialogue with Muslims. In 1995, an Islamic-Catholic Liaison Committee was established between the PCID and the four major world Islamic organizations: the Muslim World League (*Rabita*), the World Muslim Congress (*Mu'tamar*) (both in Saudi Arabia), the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief (in Cairo, Egypt), and the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) (in Rabat, Morocco).[87]

The PCID therefore engages with these organizations to work for peace and seek reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in the world. They also intervene in times of conflict or any act of religious violence in the world by condemning such acts of violence and abuse to human dignity. For instance, William Kilpatrick affirms that, the PCID condemned 'Islamists' or 'Islamism', which are the activities of the Islamic militants. The Council also called on other religious leaders in the world to condemn and denounce both the crimes; as well as the use of religion to justify them, especially the activities of the Islamists. In a Declaration issued by the PCID, it states:

> No cause, and certainly no religion, can justify such barbarity. This constitutes an extremely serious offense to humanity and to God who is the Creator, as Pope Francis has often reminded us. We cannot forget, however, that Christians and Muslims have lived together-it is true with ups and downs-over the centuries, building a culture of peaceful coexistence and civilization of which they are proud. Moreover, it is on this basis that, in recent years, dialogue between Christians and Muslims has continued and intensified.[88]

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[86]Jukko, *Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations*, 15.
[87]Ibid, 20.
[88]PCID, "Declaration by Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue," *The Catholic World Report*, August 12, 2014.

Kilpatrick therefore asserts that: "Since the Council for Interreligious Dialogue has probably done more than any other Catholic organization to keep alive the illusion that the Islamic faith is just like ours, it's significant that they are calling on their Muslim counterparts to take a stand against Islamism."[89] The call to condemn and denounce Islamist activities is very necessary among all religions because of the danger and threat it poses to peaceful human co-existence and the challenge to Muslim relations and interfaith dialogue in the world.

Religion can sometimes be used for a selfish or wicked motive. It is against this background that the PCID emphasizes that religion should not in any way be used as a means or institution to promote violence and abuse to human dignity in the world. The PCID therefore insists that;

> Dialogue between Christians and Muslims must be considered important, in both educational and cultural dimensions. Thus all forces can be mobilized in the service of mankind and humanity so that the younger generations do not become cultural or religious blocs opposed to one another, but genuine brothers and sisters in humanity. Dialogue is the tool which can help us to escape from the endless spiral of conflict and multiple tensions which mark our societies.[90]

It is therefore very important for both Christians and Muslims to focus on education in order to promote inter-religious dialogue and to confront the challenges of conflicts in the world. The success and future of inter-religious dialogue and relations between Christians and Muslims according to the PCID can be achieved through proper and adequate education.

SECTION ONE

3.7 Documents and Contributions of the PCID

There are three publications of the PCID to be considered here. The documents highlight and emphasize the contributions of the PCID regarding dialogue and relations with other religions, especially with Muslims. The publications include:

1.   *The Church and other Religions: Dialogue and Mission*.[91]

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[89]William Kilpatrick, "Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue Slams Islamists," *Crisis Magazine*, August 20, 2014, 2.

[90]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1428 H. /2007 A.D.).

[91]PCID, "The Church and Other Religions: Dialogue and Mission" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Publication of the

2.   *Dialogue and Proclamation.*[92]

3.   *Dialogue in Truth and Charity: Pastoral Orientations for Interreligious Dialogue.*[93]

3.7.1 *The Church and other Religions: Dialogue and Mission*, 1984.

This is a short document, and it will be referred to in this thesis as "*Dialogue and Mission*". It is an appraisal of *Ecclesiam Suam* to mark the 20th anniversary of its publication by Pope Paul VI. The main purpose of the document, according to the PCID, is to enable "Christian community, and in particular those responsible, to live according to the instructions of the Council, offering solutions to the difficulties that may arise from the simultaneous presence in the mission of the duties of evangelization and dialogue. Members of other religions can also better understand how the Church sees them and how they wish to behave with them."[94] While *Ecclesiam Suam* opened the door of dialogue as an aspect of missionary activity of the Catholic Church to the contemporary world, *Dialogue and Mission* goes further to present this mission as a mandate given by Christ to the Church.

The mission is about bringing God's salvific love to all of humanity as the document states: "God is love (1 Jn 4 *:* 8-16). His salvific love was revealed and communicated to men in Christ and is present and active through the Holy Spirit. The Church should be the living sign of this love in order to make it the norm of life for all. Beloved by Christ, the mission of the Church is a mission of love, since it is in her that she finds the origin, the end and the mode of exercise."[95] Love is therefore at the center of the Church's mission. This is why the document emphasizes that: "Every aspect and every activity of the Church must, therefore, be imbued with charity, precisely by fidelity to Christ, who has ordained the mission and who continues to animate it and make it

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Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, June 10, 1984).
[92]PCID, "Dialogue and Proclamation," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Publication of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, May 19, 1991).
[93]PCID, "Dialogue in Truth and Charity," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana May 19, 2014).
[94]"Dialogue and Mission," no. 7.
[95]"Dialogue and Mission," no. 9.

possible in history."[96] The mission of Christ must be carried out through dialogue to build human relationships.[97]

With this idea of mission, the document therefore highlights the various means and demands of mission in the light of the Church's teaching. The document clearly highlights that: "This task is unique, but it takes place in various ways, according to the conditions in which the mission is carried out. These conditions can depend on the Church as well as on the peoples, the groups or even the individuals to whom the *mission* is directed ... Each conditioning and every situation must correspond to appropriate actions or appropriate means."[98] The document thus specifically focuses on the relationship between dialogue and mission as highlighted in the Second Vatican Council.

Dialogue as a mandate of Christ to the Church is directed towards the ministry of evangelization. In this regard, the document sets forth how Christians are to go about this mandate of Jesus in two dimensions: First is 'Dialogue as mission and conversion', and secondly is 'Dialogue to build the reign of God's kingdom on earth'.

a.   'Dialogue as Mission and Conversion'

Dialogue and mission in the church are aids to conversion. According to the document this is a response to the universal love of God. The document emphasizes that;

> In biblical and Christian language, conversion is the return of the contrite and repentant heart to God, with the desire to submit more generously to his own life (*AGD* 13). All are called permanently to this conversion. In this process, a decision may be made to leave a previous spiritual or religious situation to address another. Thus, for example, of a particular love, the heart can open itself to a universal charity.[99]

However, the concept of conversion in the context of the document focuses on the search for the truth and the common good.

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[96]Ibid.

[97]Donald Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith: The Legacy of Vatican II* (Dublin: Veritas, 2012), 48. This mission Donald Murray also argues "is about enabling people to understand more fully the significance of that word which God speaks in the depth of every human heart. But this means that mission has to be about a relationship in which people meet as people. It has to be a relationship where, in the words of Blessed John Henry Newman's motto, 'Heart speaks to heart."

[98]"Dialogue and Mission," no. 11.

[99]Ibid, no. 37.

Mission and conversion highlights the broad concept of the Church's mission towards dialogue in order to achieve the common truth. It is not to convince the other person to change their religion. It is the dialogue according the document, "in which Christians find those who follow other religious traditions to walk together toward truth and collaborate in actions of common interest. There is the proclamation and catechesis when the good news of the Gospel is proclaimed and its consequences for life and culture are deepened. All of this is part of the broad concept of mission."[100] From the perspective of truth, according to Suzanne Mulligan this gives the Church her identity.[101] But this mission is not just a Church venture. The fact and reality is that the mission of searching and proclaiming the truth has a wide dimension and is not restricted to the Catholic Church.

It is a universal mission and a responsibility given to all men and women of good will, in full freedom. This is why *Dignitatis Humanae* also teaches that: "Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth."[102] In this perspective, Clinton Bennett opines that dialogue and mission are complementary.[103]

Furthermore, dialogue and mission, according to the document, must also respect the principle of religious freedom and the rights to conversion. The document affirms that; "In this process of conversion, the supreme law of conscience prevails, because no one should be forced to act against his conscience, nor should anyone be prevented from acting according to it, especially in religious

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[100]Ibid, no. 13.

[101]Suzanne Mulligan, "The Church in the World: A Light for the Nations," in *Reaping the Harvest: Fifty Years After Vatican II*, eds. Suzanne Mulligan, Jim Corkery, and Gerry O'Hanlon (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2012), 50. Mulligan argues that because "we are a pilgrim church; as a result, we are constantly searching for the truth. That implies that we should be steadfast and courageous in our efforts, but also humble."

[102]*Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 3.

[103]Clinton Bennett, *Invitation to Dialogue* (London: Inter-Church House, 1990), 5. Bennett says that "dialogue doesn't dilute the Gospel because it is based on the example of Christ, nor does it betray mission because through dialogue we are able to witness to Christ's love and to his call for discipleship. Paul at Athens unmistakably witnessed to Christ but he did so using dialogue. Dialogue is then, a medium of authentic witness."

matter."[104] Therefore, just as Christ, the head and master of the mission, loved and respected every person, the Church must learn from Christ to love and respect the values of other cultures and religions.[105] The role of conscience is very vital in the process of mission and conversion. Conscience gives one the freedom to choose and accept, and not be impelled.

b. **'Dialogue to build the Reign of God's kingdom on Earth'**

On the second aspect, the document highlights the reality that the mission of Christ is an extension of the kingdom of God and its values among people in the world. The document stresses the nature of this mission of Jesus. It furthers calls on all the members of the Church to continue this mission of Jesus. Thus, *Dialogue and Mission* emphasizes that;

> In the Gospels, Jesus is shown in silence, in action, in prayer, in dialogue, and in teaching. His message is inseparable from his deeds; he announces God and His reign not only by word but by his deeds and works which complete his preaching. Accepting contradiction, failure, and death, his victory passes through the gift of life. Everything in him is the means and way of revelation and salvation; everything is the expression of his love. Christians ought to act in the same way.[106]

Dialogue therefore serves as a means of promoting these values set by the gospel standards. In other words, Christians are invited in the light of the gospel to become evangelizers of Jesus' mission in their encounters with other religions in the world. Christ therefore set the goal of this mission, and is the perfect model for all Christians to emulate. The document acknowledges the diversity of the mission of the Church among the faithful and calls on Christians to try and reflect these ideals in living with others in society. It specifies the fact that the Christian mission must be within the context of love and respect for others. These are all key elements to educational principles of inter-religious dialogue.

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[104]"Dialogue and Mission," no. 38.

[105]Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 10. In this regard, "the Church strictly forbids that anyone should be forced to accept the faith or be induced or enticed by unworthy devices; likewise, it strongly defends the right that no one should be frightened away from the faith by unjust persecutions."

[106]Catholic Church, Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis, "The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 9, no. 4 (October 1985): 188.

According to *Dialogue and Mission*, dialogue is considered as a dynamic encounter to experience what others have to offer through their faith. It emphasizes the fact that dialogue is a necessary tool for mutual and community living, and also an indispensable mission of the Church. Such dialogue, the document states, should motivate "an attitude and a spirit which guides one's conduct. It implies concern, respect, and hospitality towards the other. It leaves room for the other person's identity, his modes of expression, and his values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it, whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service, or direct proclamation."[107] These attitudes of respect and hospitality are required in promoting unity and the pursuit of peace in society.

Furthermore, the document also clearly points out that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of dialogue and mission in the Church. According to the document, through dialogue, the Holy Spirit still continues to lead all mankind to the truth, directing our consciences to God's revelation and the love of Christ. "Dialogue thus becomes a source of hope and a factor of communion in reciprocal transformation. It is the Holy Spirit who guides the realization of God's plan in the history of individuals and of all humanity, until all the children of God, dispersed by sin, are united in unity (cf. Jn 11:52)."[108] Furthermore, the search for the truth is a fundamental right. Nobody should be denied this opportunity in whatever capacity.[109] In the final analysis, the document therefore invites all religions to collaborate in dialogue so that God's plan for humanity may be achieved. Such collaborations include the promotion of dialogue for the good of all, for human dignity, peace and social justice. Mulligan considers this mission as "an essential part of the gospel and therefore the mission of the church itself, it must be consistently practised within the life of the church."[110] Therefore, Dialogue and Mission is the responsibility of the Church to make known God's

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[107]Ibid, 190.

[108]"Dialogue and Mission," no 43.

[109]Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 8. "Everybody has the duty, and consequently the right, to seek the truth in religious matters so that, through the use of appropriate means, he may prudently form judgements of conscience which are sincere and true."

[110]Mulligan, "The Church in the World," 50.

revelation to the world as presented by Christ, through His redemptive action and love for humanity.

3.7.2 *Dialogue and Proclamation*, 1991

This is also a very short document which was jointly published by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. It was published to mark the 25th anniversary of the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*. The document highlights the importance of Dialogue and Proclamation in the work of evangelization and mission of the Church. From the development of *Dialogue and Mission, Dialogue and Proclamation* thus "gives further consideration to these two elements. It first puts forward the characteristics of each, and then studies their mutual relationship. If dialogue is treated first, this is not because it has any priority over proclamation. It is simply due to the fact that dialogue is the primary concern of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue which initiated the preparation of the document."[111] *Dialogue and Proclamation* therefore presents dialogue as an essential element of evangelization, and an indispensable tool in the proclamation of the Christian message.[112]

There are three aspects which the document highlights as important and requiring attention. The first is the pluralistic nature of religion in the world today, coupled with other factors of mobility, communication and interdependence of people. The document highlights that

> In the world of today, characterized by rapid communications, mobility of peoples, and interdependence, there is a new awareness of the fact of religious plurality. Religions do not merely exist, or simply survive. In some cases, they give clear evidence of a revival. They continue to inspire and influence the lives of millions of their adherents. In the present context of religious plurality, the important role played by religious traditions cannot be overlooked.[113]

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[111]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 3.

[112]Lacunza Balda Justo, "Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," *Encounter (Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica)* 191-192 (January-February 1993): 3. The document, according to Lacunza Balda Justo, gives further consideration to these two elements, namely Dialogue and Proclamation. "It first puts forward the characteristics of each, and then studies their mutual relationship. If dialogue is treated first, this is not because it has any priority over proclamation. It is simply due to the fact that dialogue is the primary concern of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue which initiated the preparation of the document."

[113]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 4.

In this perspective, Alan Hilliard also affirms that dialogue should be used as a means to promote pluralism.[114]

The second aspect is the role of religion in the world. Religion stands at the center of all these activities among people in the world. Religion influences and inspires millions of people in the world. This role that religion plays in the lives of people also becomes an urgent need for inter-religious dialogue in the world, which is an important aspect of the document. This necessity of interreligious dialogue varies from country to country and from various cultural differences, depending on the ratio and population of people represented by a particular religion, be it Christians or Muslims and other believers. In this context, the document clearly points out that "dialogue can be taken as an attitude of respect and friendship, which permeates or should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church. This can appropriately be called 'the spirit of dialogue'."[115]

Finally, the document responds to the different questions that are raised regarding inter-religious dialogue, and the errors and misconceptions about dialogue. Such questions as to whether dialogue should replace proclamation in the mission of the Church are put forward. Some again question the relevance of inter-religious dialogue or if it is as important as the proclamation of the gospel. Or is the effort to unite people in the Church unnecessary? The document therefore seeks to provide pastoral and doctrinal directives and guidelines, as well as clarifications on these complex questions.

Although the document was generally addressed to all Catholics, it specifically focuses on all those who have the responsibility of leadership in communities and institutions of formation. It also

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[114]Alan Hilliard, "Interfaith Dialogue: Speaking with One Another," *The Furrow* 69, no. 1 (January 2018): 33. He says: "as we witness an increasing number of polarising political contexts emerging there is reason to be anxious about the implications for our societies. With this backdrop any activity that will promote pluralism and not polarity is to be welcomed. Interfaith activity fits this category while showing the transformative nature of faith in the personal and social domain. Furthermore, interfaith activity reveals the power for reconciliation and understanding among peoples."
[115]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 9.

considers other Christians of various churches and people of other religions who reflect on the questions that form the focus of the document. In this regard;

> Dialogue means 'all positive and constructive interreligious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment', in obedience to truth and respect for freedom. It includes both witness and the exploration of respective religious convictions. It is in this third sense that the present document uses the term dialogue for one of the integral elements of the Church's evangelizing mission.[116]

In view of the characteristics of dialogue and proclamation, the document further clarifies the distinct and unique nature of the two concepts. It state that:

> Dialogue and proclamation, though not on the same level, are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable: true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the Gospel spirit of dialogue.[117]

Therefore, dialogue and proclamation are two distinct realities that can go hand in hand in the mission of the Church. The Church can be engaged in dialogue and at the same time carry out its mission of proclaiming the gospel in the world by representing Christ in a genuine and authentic manner to people of other religions.

Evangelization, dialogue, proclamation and conversion are concepts which *Dialogue and Mission* also reflected upon. *Dialogue and Proclamation* goes further to clarify these concepts and to give a clear vision of the Church regarding them, especially as the world is becoming more sensitive to religious plurality. According to *Dialogue and Proclamation,* evangelization is the mission of the Church in its entirety. On the other hand, dialogue can be understood from a different perspective. There is the dialogue of reciprocal communication which serves the common goal; there is also the dialogue of the attitudes of friendship and respect, which involve all the activities in the mission of the Church. However, there is the dialogue 'in obedience to the truth and respect for freedom' which is the specific aspect the document emphasizes. This includes witnessing and exploring the various

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[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid, no. 77.

religious convictions, because it is also a central aspect of the evangelizing mission of the Church. The document therefore presents the different forms of dialogue. They include:

a.   Dialogue of life;

b.   Dialogue of action;

c.   Dialogue of spiritual experience;

d.   Dialogue of theological exchange.

1. *Dialogue of life*, which takes place among individuals within the community between friends or neighbours or colleagues. According to the document, it is a type of dialogue "where people strive to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations."[118] In this type of dialogue, Murray says, "People share life-experiences of joys, sorrows, problems and preoccupations."[119] It is more of a dialogue of daily experiences and engagements.

 2. *Dialogue of action*, which seeks the collaboration of individuals in the search for the common good in society, which will bring about justice and human freedom. It is the dialogue "in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people."[120] According to Bennett, this "is a type of Christ-likeness which seeks to do as he did, which may sometimes emphasize doing the Father's will more than calling Jesus Lord, Lord."[121] This can be considered as a more practical dialogue of living out one's faith and commitment.

3. *Dialogue of spiritual experience*, is mainly sharing religious experiences through contemplation and prayer in the search for common truth. It is the dialogue "where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute."[122] Gerard Forde reaffirms in this view that this type of dialogue "involves interfaith prayer and also occasions when spirituality

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[118]Ibid, no. 42.
[119]Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith*, 49.
[120]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 42.
[121]Bennett, *Invitation to Dialogue*, 5.
[122]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 42.

and religious texts are studied by members of both faiths. This kind of dialogue also requires a level of expertise."[123]

4. *Dialogue of Theological Exchange*, which engages the activities of scholars in 'promoting mutual enrichment' on the legacies of their various religions. This is the dialogue "where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values."[124] Forde refers to this kind of dialogue as theological dialogue or discourse. According to Forde, this kind of dialogue "takes place on academic or official levels between experts, theologians and religious leaders. This kind of dialogue helps to clarify issues, to create greater understanding and remove prejudice."[125] It is therefore a dialogue of intellectual reflection and exchange.

The communication of the gospel message is what Proclamation is all about. It is the 'center and summit of evangelization' according to *Dialogue and Proclamation*. Proclamation, the document emphasizes;

> Is the communication of the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God for all in Jesus Christ by the power of the Spirit. It is an invitation to a commitment of faith in Jesus Christ and to entry through baptism into the community of believers which is the Church. This proclamation can be solemn and public, as for instance on the day of Pentecost (cf. *Ac* 2:5-41), or a simple private conversation (cf. *Ac* 8:30-38).[126]

Conversion, on its part, generally represents the movement to God. There are two dimensions to this, according to the document. There is "the humble and penitent return of the heart to God in the desire to submit one's life more generously to him. More specifically, conversion may refer to a change of religious adherence, and particularly to embracing the Christian faith. When the term conversion is used in this document, the context will show which sense is intended."[127] Both concepts appeared in the document and represent their contexts. The entire mission of the Church

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[123]Gerard Forde, *A Journey Together: A Resource for Christian Muslim Dialogue* (Cork: Cois Tine, 2013), 14.
[124]Dialogue and Proclamation, no. 42.
[125]Ibid.
[126]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 10.
[127]Ibid, no. 11.

according to *Dialogue and Proclamation* involves all these four elements. Dialogue and proclamation are therefore in a dialectic relationship in the mission of evangelization. The Church is part of the world and must engage with other religions in dialogue for the common interest.[128]

Fifteen years before the publication of *Dialogue and Proclamation*, Lawrence D. Folkemer, argues in this line that:

> Proclamation and dialogue are not synonymous, nor are they adversaries. They are locked into one another not as human devices but as events in which God may speak to us and we may respond. In interfaith encounter genuine proclamation is invariably dialogical and true dialogue includes witness. In many instances today it may be the prime or the last channel of proclamation and the only substance to dialogue.[129]

Thus, the document highlights the importance of taking into cognisance the relations with followers of other religions. It calls on all Christians to be equipped and involved in the task of dialogue and proclamation as it emphasizes that:

> It is also important that specific studies on the relationship between dialogue and proclamation be undertaken, taking into account each religion within its geographical area and its socio-cultural context. Episcopal Conferences could entrust such studies to the appropriate commissions and theological and pastoral institutes. In the light of the results of these studies, these institutes could also organize special courses and study sessions in order to train people for both dialogue and proclamation. Special attention is to be given to young people living in a pluralistic environment, who meet the followers of other religions at school, at work, in youth movements and other associations and even within their own families.[130]

Dialogue and proclamation is therefore very important in evangelization and mission of the Church, and should be encouraged all over the world.

3.7.3 Dialogue in Truth and Charity: *Pastoral Orientations for Interreligious Dialogue*, 2014

This is a more recent document of the PCID. It was published in 2014 to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Council by Pope Paul VI. *Dialogue in Truth and Charity: Pastoral*

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[128]Jacques Dupuis, Theological Commentary: Dialogue and Proclamation, in *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading 'Redemptoris missio 'and 'Dialogue and proclamation'*, ed. William R. Burrows (Maryknoll, NY : Orbis, 1994I), 155. In so far as the Church remains on her pilgrimage, together with the 'others', towards the fullness of the Kingdom, she engages with them in dialogue; insofar as she is the sacrament of the reality of the Kingdom already present and operative in history, she proclaims to them Jesus Christ in whom the Kingdom of God has been established.

[129]Lawrence D. Folkemer, "Dialogue and Proclamation," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 13, no. 3 (January 1976): 434.

[130]"Dialogue and Proclamation," no. 88.

Orientations for Interreligious Dialogue, was also the theme of the 10th Plenary Assembly of the PCID which took place in Rome, June 4th-7th 2008. It was an occasion for the participants of the Assembly to discuss the developments of inter-religious dialogue in the world since the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, the contents of the document, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity: Pastoral Orientations for Interreligious Dialogue,* are a compilation of suggestions of some individual Bishops and Episcopal Conferences in the world, as well as the outcome and consultations of members of the 10th Plenary Assembly. The document will be discussed here as '*Dialogue in Truth and Charity'*.

The main reason for the publication of the document is to provide a vision and guidelines for pastors and indeed the Catholic faithful working and living with people of other religions. The document therefore sets out to consider the role of the Catholic Church in interreligious dialogue, and reflects on recent Magisterium statements on interreligious dialogue. It goes further to examine the dynamics of interreligious dialogue in the context of the Church's mission and work of evangelization. While reflecting on the Church and interreligious dialogue, the document lays emphasis on the teachings and Catechism of the Church. It "summarizes the key teachings of the Catholic Church on the levels of relationship between Christians and followers of other religions and the understanding of salvation in Christ within and outside the visible boundaries of the Church."[131]

From this background, the document exposes the dynamics involved in implementing the teaching of the Church, and calls for a sound formation in carrying this out. The document is therefore important in promoting the objectives of interfaith dialogue based on the recognition and respect of religious dignity, and the search for peaceful co-existence in society. The document finally points out some specific areas of interreligious relations, calling for an active involvement of everybody in

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[131]"Dialogue in Truth and Charity," no. 11.

the activities of inter-religious dialogue. All these issues are discussed in three chapters of the document.

Chapter One: The Church and Inter-Religious Dialogue

This chapter takes an evaluation of the Church's activities on inter-religious dialogue in the world. It explores the contributions of the Second Vatican Council from the documents of *Nostra Aetate, Dignitatis Humanae, Lumen Gentium, Gaudium et Spes, and Ad Gentes Divinitus.* It further summarizes the teaching of the Church on inter-religious dialogue from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, regarding the salvation of Christ within and outside the Church. "This position of the Church is not aimed at those who, through no fault of their own, do not know Christ and his Church."[132] The document, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity* then moved on to examine the different publications of the PCID and the encyclicals of the various Popes on inter-religious dialogue. These are the foundations on which the teaching of the Catholic Church on inter-religious dialogue is built. "Following the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterial teachings, above indicated, some basic theological foundations have been identified in the Church's effort to promote interreligious dialogue."[133] It is from these foundations that the Catholic Church emphasizes her teaching on inter-religious dialogue.

This teaching is focused on the Trinity, namely that God is the father and creator of all, and therefore, all human beings are brothers and sisters of one another. The redemption of Christ is universal, because Christ is the mediator between God and Man, and therefore, all human beings are part of the reconciliation that Christ won for the entire world. Finally, that the Spirit is present everywhere and in all cultures and traditions. It is the Spirit that leads and directs all to the light of truth which is in every culture and religion. From this point of view, the universal salvation of God can be seen within the circle of the Trinity. Therefore, the document emphasizes that, "the Church is the universal sacrament of salvation for all peoples because she has been endowed by Christ with

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[132]Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 847.
[133]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 16.

the fullness of the goods of salvation. Thanks to these gifts, she is able to examine more deeply her own identity and to bear witness to the fullness of Revelation which she has received for the good of all."[134] In the light of the above, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales furthermore highlight:

> The dialogue of salvation began with charity, with the divine goodness: 'God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten son' (John 3:16). Nothing but fervent and unselfish love should motivate our dialogue. The dialogue of salvation was not proportioned to the merits of those toward whom it was directed, nor to the results which it would achieve or fail to achieve. The dialogue of salvation did not physically force anyone to accept it; it was a tremendous appeal of love which, although placing a vast responsibility on those toward whom it was directed (cf. Matthew 11:21), nevertheless left them free to respond to it or reject it[135]

The emphasis of this chapter on the universal salvation of all extends to every religion, including those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or the teaching of the Church, but seek God in sincerity of heart and are moved by grace to strive and do good deeds.[136]

Furthermore;

> Our eagerness for such dialogue, conducted with appropriate discretion and leading to truth by way of love alone, excludes nobody; we would like to include those who respect outstanding human values without realising who the author of those is, as well as those who oppose the Church and persecute it in various ways. Since God the Father is the beginning and the end of all things, we are all called to be brothers; we ought to work together without violence and without deceit to build up the world in a spirit of genuine peace.[137]

Chapter Two: The dynamics of Inter-Religious Dialogue

This chapter calls for the participation of every member of the Church in varying degrees to be involved in inter-religious dialogue. It emphasizes the position of theologians who are well equipped to promote the teachings of the Church on inter-religious dialogue, as well as to explain the Catholic faith to other religions. It is from this perspective that the document seeks the formation of people who will be "well-grounded in the Church's doctrine. For Catholics, dialogue requires a well-grounded knowledge of the Church's doctrine, solid faith and spiritual and personal

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[134]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 20
[135]Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 11.
[136]Cf. *LG,* no. 16.
[137]Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 11.

maturity. Therefore, the need for a sound philosophical and theological formation remains foremost."[138] Such formation is geared towards the youth at various stages of life, especially those training to become pastors in the Church. Such formation should also focus on the different forms of inter-religious dialogue which are also presented in *Dialogue and Proclamation*, (the dialogue of life, the dialogue of action, the dialogue of spiritual experience and the dialogue of theological exchange). One of the aims of dialogue is to enable people to accept the truth in charity and obedience to the mission given to the Church by Christ. Therefore, "Dialogue in truth entails that all believers view dialogue not only as a means of enhancing mutual understanding, but also as a way of serving society at large by bearing witness to those moral truths which they hold in common with all men and women of goodwill."[139] Dialogue in charity on the other hand "requires respect, attentiveness, kindness, trust, humility, patience, forgiveness, acceptance of the other as a person of the same human family, and finally a desire to share joy and sorrow."[140] Dialogue in charity therefore leads to the achievement of social benefits, such as justice, peace and human development. It is from this angle that the Church's mission and evangelization is oriented and emphasized. In every circumstance, the Church is expected to make the message of Christ known, loved, and appreciated by other religions in the world. Those who will engage in inter-religious dialogue should also display certain characteristics and attitudes such as the "readiness to understand people of other religious traditions without pretence, prejudice, or close-mindedness; genuine love; humility; prudence; honesty, and patience."[141] All this can lead to mutual enrichment and facilitate growth and maturity among various religions.

However, there are some obstacles that pose challenges to inter-religious dialogue which are to be noted. Race and Hedges posit that because "there are likely to be many religions, which is to say that there are many different forms of life that seem to those who belong to them to be

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[138]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 31.
[139]Ibid, no. 37.
[140]Ibid, no. 38.
[141]Ibid, no. 40.

comprehensive, incapable of abandonment, and of central importance."[142] These differences should however not keep the different religions from the fundamentals of human co-existence. *Dialogue in Truth and Charity* therefore argues that among the challenges to interreligious dialogue;

> Lack of enthusiasm in witnessing to and proclaiming Christ, and substituting proclamation with dialogue constitute a danger to the evangelizing mission of the Church. Related to this according to the argument is the error of relativism in which a partner in dialogue tends to reduce religious truths to mere individual perspectives, holding that one religion is as good as another. This is a fruit of the 'mentality of indifferentism'. Relativism can also lead to syncretism, which is a blending of elements, especially doctrines and practices of different religions.[143]

There is also the challenge of 'Irenicism', which has made proclamation of the gospel difficult, because of the compromising nature of eliminating differences in order to make peace possible at all costs. This is becoming common in the contemporary secular world where there is indifference to doctrines in order to please other people. This can also lead to insufficient knowledge or the misunderstanding of beliefs and practices of other religions, and can become an obstacle to inter-religious dialogue. It will make inter-religious dialogue a futile exercise of just 'meeting for the sake of meeting' without any intention of building real bridges of mutual understanding and collaboration."[144] Therefore, every abuse in the name of inter-religious dialogue should be eliminated so that sincere and mutual trust will be established among the different religions. Another aspect which Forde also highlights in this perspective is the generalised and stereotypical view of each other which also encourages polarization. According to Forde this is caused by the activities of the media. Forde asserts that: "The media for example often portrays Islam as a fanatical religion, in which all Muslims support terrorism. This is clearly not true. The overwhelming majority of Muslims reject terrorism and Islam as a religion does not condone it."[145] In this sense, Christians and Muslims must therefore watch out against such tendencies of generalization and stereotypical approach to each other.

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[142]Alan Race and Paul M. Hedges, *Christian Approaches to Other Faiths* (London: SCM Press, 2009), 69.
[143]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, nos.45-46.
[144]Ibid, no. 52.
[145]Forde, *A Journey Together*, 21.

Chapter Three: Specific Areas of Interest in Inter-Religious Dialogue

The document finally considers six specific aspects of inter-religious relations in the last chapter. These include:

i.   Defending human dignity and promoting the exercise of human rights

ii.   Establishing Bonds of Trust and Friendship among Religious Leaders

iii.   Educating the Youth for Interreligious Cooperation

iv.   Interreligious Cooperation in Healthcare Services

v.   Ministry to persons in interreligious marriages

vi.   Prayer and symbolic gestures

Defending human dignity and promoting the exercise of human rights emphasizes the right to religious freedom. This is based on the fact that the "human person is imbued with the capacity to reason, to know and, in freedom, to choose what is right and to avoid what is wrong. From this derives the inviolable dignity and inalienable fundamental rights, which are recognized, at least in part, in many religions and cultures, although based differently from biblical anthropology."[146] Religious freedom stands at the center of human dignity and rights, because religious freedom puts into perspective the relationship of the human person with the transcendent principle of reality.[147]

Dialogue in Truth and Charity highlights that: "The right to religious freedom opposes any form of interference from outside the religion itself. It connotes the liberty, without any hindrance from outside, to practice one's own belief, individually and collectively; to transmit the teachings of one's religion to people of that religion and, with respect, to bear witness in the public square and also before followers of other religions."[148]

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[146]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no.56.

[147]Schindler, "Freedom, Truth, and Human Dignity," 39. In this regard, Schindler argues about the nature of this right. He raises some fundamental questions in his argument regarding the nature of this right. "Granted that this right is founded in the dignity of the human person, on what does the dignity of the person itself finally rest, and how does one's conception of these foundations affect the nature of the right? Can one assert civil rights to religious freedom without thereby at least implicitly invoking some claim about the nature of the person and so far the question of truth?"

[148]*PCID, Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 58.

The right to religious freedom is imbued in human nature in pursuit of the human good and search for the truth.[149] The right to religious freedom suggests that others should be invited to have an understanding of one's religion without any hindrances or denial of another's right. It also includes the right to adhere or not to adhere to a religion, or even change religion according to one's conscience, which must be respected by every authority.[150] When such rights become one-sided in favour of any particular religion, it leads to marginalization, which is the "denial of civil rights, loss of job, jail, extradition, and even death. Such a lack of respect for the fundamental right to religious freedom deserves thoughtful and persistent reflection and discussion at the table of interreligious dialogue, resulting in joint action."[151]

The Catholic Church therefore calls on all her members to engage in dialogue with all people of goodwill so that they can build up a society of peace. However, peace can only exist when human rights and dignity are respected, especially the right to religious freedom. Any act of violence on account of religion should therefore be considered as a violation, and also an attack on religious freedom. Christians and all other religions in the world must work together to prevent such attacks and the misguided use of religion to achieve other political or selfish interest by individuals.

Establishing Bonds of Trust and Friendship among Religious Leaders emphasizes a sense of solidarity among the various religious leaders, which in turn will extend to their followers. Such solidarity will help to build peace and harmony, and enhance the defence of human rights and alleviation of poverty in society. Such solidarity will also help to heal the painful experience of the past conflicts, and create reconciliation among religious adherents. The document states that; "The healing of such memories is a special task that may be undertaken through joint study by groups of

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[149]Thomas J. White, "The Right to Religious Freedom: Thomistic Principles of Nature and Grace," *Nova et Vetera* 13, no. 4 (Fall 2015): 1163. White says that: "The recognition of God in religious activity can orient human prudence with respect to the use of all secondary good. Because it is inscribed in the very nature of human rationality and desire for happiness, religious behaviour is an inevitable part of human culture (as long as human nature persists) and is a necessary social reality, one that can justly have a public presence within the common life of society."

[150]Ibid, 1163-1164. White says that, "due precisely to the integrity of the common good, the state or the local community should in principle be able to ask religious persons and associations to respect the natural and civic order. This presupposes, of course, that the state is aware of the structure of the natural law,   and does not wish to violate it."

[151]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 59.

experts and leaders in a spirit of truth and charity as well as by reflection and prayer in forms acceptable to their respective religious communities, for mutual pardon and reconciliation."[152]

Educating the Youth for Interreligious Cooperation gives priority to religious education in schools and how it should be supported by the state and religious leaders. Cassidy affirms that this has been among the priorities of the PCID in recent years. According to Cassidy, the PCID liaises with the World Council of Churches on issues of "new religious movements, on relationship between interreligious dialogue and evangelization, and on interreligious formation in the fields of education."[153] Educational institutions should therefore aim at providing opportunities that will nurture inter-religious understanding and peaceful co-existence among students.

> Special attention must be paid to universities because they play an important role in advancing peace and interreligious understanding. Whether Catholic or not, private or public, these institutions of higher learning can provide the intellectual capital to broaden and deepen the knowledge of other religions and examine the issues surrounding interreligious conflict, past and present, as well as the ways to promote peace together.[154]

Interreligious Cooperation in Healthcare Services reflects on the importance of providing physical and spiritual welfare to individuals, regardless of their background, religion and physical condition.[155] In this regard, Catholic Church members should "collaborate in dialogue with followers of other religions not only towards the recovery of physical health, but also for the spiritual and psychological support of sick persons and their families."[156]

Ministry to persons in interreligious marriages focuses attention on mixed marriages and the pastoral care to be given to people in such marriages. Sometimes these marriages face certain cultural, ethical and, above all, religious challenges that may affect the practice of religious

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[152]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 70.
[153] Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, 160.
[154]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 75.
[155]Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith*, 37. Murray argues that "the role of religious congregations in education and health care and in reaching out to the marginalised has been one of the most positive and fruitful elements of the Church's life."
[156]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 77.

freedom.[157] There is a need to support couples living under mixed marriage and make sure that they do not feel as though they are being distanced and cut off from the Church or their religion. "It is not uncommon for such a person to come under pressure to convert. Good relations among religious leaders are important to accompany spouses in journeying together in faithfulness according to their promises to each other in marriage, and to help them not to become discouraged when tensions arise over differences in religious observance."[158]

Prayer and symbolic gestures explores the need to pray together among different religions for a particular intention. To be able to pray together also requires a common understanding of who God is, and because there are different understandings of God among different religions, interreligious prayers should be conducted carefully with respect for the prayers and worship gestures of others. Such prayers and worship gestures are important in order to express friendship, hospitality and cooperation with followers of other religions.

Dialogue in Truth and Charity generally emphasizes the need for partners in dialogue to take into consideration the local cultures, traditions, languages and worldviews in promoting meaningful collaboration among themselves. Therefore, the document concludes by stating 'the need for sound theological formation and information' which are vital for proper discernment in inter-religious dialogue.

3.7.4 Section Evaluation and Conclusion

The three documents presented approached interfaith dialogue on a general level without paying attention to any particular religion. *Dialogue and Mission* emphasizes three aspects of the Christian vocation. These are: Mission, Dialogue, and Mission and Dialogue. The purpose of the document is to consolidate the Catholic Church's commitment to dialogue with other religions; especially as the

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[157]Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, *Interfaith Dialogue*, 24. Thus, "today in many parts of the world marriages between Catholics and nonbaptised persons are growing in numbers. In many such marriages the nonbaptised partner professes another religion, and his beliefs are to be treated with respect, in accordance with the principles set out in the Second Vatican Council's declaration Nostra Aetate on relations with non-Christian religions."

[158]PCID, *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 80.

world is becoming more sensitive to religious differences. The document presents to the world the

mission of Christ to the Church. This mission is to make known to the world the relationship

between God and man. The document states that the mission "intends to encourage behaviour

formed by the Gospel in its encounters with believers of other faiths with whom Christians live in

the city, at work, and in the family."[159] This is what the 'dialogue of life' is all about. It is geared

towards encouraging mutual relationships among the various religions.[160] The key emphasis of the

document is for the Church to consider dialogue important in her mission of evangelization in the

world. The Church must therefore engage in dialogue with people of other faiths. Dialogue and

mission are therefore presented as the way of establishing the kingdom of God here on earth,

among people of different faiths.[161]

Dialogue and Proclamation came as a development of certain questions raised from *Dialogue and

Mission*.[162] To respond to these questions and some other issues in relation to the mission of the

Church in world, the PCID therefore published *Dialogue and Proclamation* with the aim to clarify

the meaning of this mission as it concerns evangelization, dialogue and proclamation. These three

concepts, namely evangelization, dialogue and proclamation are introduced into the document to

emphasize the urgency of the mission of the Church in relation to other religions in the world. This

is because of the increase in awareness of religious pluralism in the world.[163] Therefore, the main

themes that were added to the document are: religious pluralism, the central role of religion in

society, and the relationship between dialogue and proclamation in the evangelizing mission of the

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[159]PCID, *Dialogue and Mission* no. 6.

[160]Cassidy, *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue*, 148. Thus according to Cassidy, *Dialogue and Mission* "sees dialogue as a way of relating to others, and the accent is on positive and constructive relations with communities and individuals of other faiths. This dialogue becomes an exchange of gifts, promoting mutual understanding."

[161]Ibid, 149. Cassidy therefore argues that "*Dialogue and Mission* is certainly a positive development in the church's understanding of her relationship with other religious traditions. While being firmly rooted in the Council declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the document strengthens the church's commitment to inter-religious dialogue by pointing out the link between dialogue and mission, and then by affirming dialogue as an essential element of the church's mission."

[162]Ibid, 150. These questions according to Cassidy concern "how such dialogue was to be related to the duty of the church to proclaim Jesus Christ to the world. Did this mean that proclamation was obsolete, as some missionaries were saying? Had dialogues become the new name of mission? Or was dialogue another way of bringing about conversion to the Christian Church?"

[163]Ibid, 151. "The document stresses again the understanding of interreligious dialogue as forming part of the church's evangelizing mission."

Church.[164] The document therefore highlights some difficulties and challenges affecting interfaith dialogue. It seeks for the right attitudes to approach interfaith dialogue. In the final analysis, Justo argues that: "Proclamation and dialogue are thus both viewed, each in its own place, as component elements and authentic forms of the one evangelizing mission of the Church. They are both oriented towards the communication of salvific truth."[165] The universal salvation of God is the theological justification of the two concepts, Dialogue and Proclamation.

Dialogue in Truth and Charity is a document that serves as a guideline in matters of interreligious dialogue. The document lays emphasis on the Church's mission and work of evangelization in the light of the Church's teaching on the universal salvation of God. The mission of the Church is an obligation and responsibility that every member of the Church is called to participate in. It is a mission that leads people to discover the truth, according to the document. It also leads to the achievement of social benefits by promoting justice, peace and human development. The document therefore seeks to caution all Catholics on the obstacles that pose challenges to dialogue and invites Catholics to approach dialogue in sincerity of purpose with other religions to promote peace and mutual understanding.[166] It further highlights the mission of the Church as universal to include other religions. Conscious of religious plurality in the world, the document sees the urgency of constructive relations with people and communities of other faiths. The document advances on *Dialogue and Mission* with *Dialogue and Proclamation,* in terms of emphases on dialogue with other religions. *Dialogue in truth and charity* therefore dwelt on promoting dialogue with other religions in the search for the truth and working together for the common good. It includes other areas of formation in dialogue and education for those involve in dialogue.

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[164]Justo, "Dialogue and Proclamation," 3. Justo says that "the evangelizing mission of the Church is a 'single but complex and articulated reality'. It indicates the principal elements of this mission: presence and witness; commitment to social development and human liberation; liturgical life, prayer and contemplation; interreligious dialogue; and finally, proclamation and catechesis."

[165]Ibid.

[166]Dewick Edward Chisholm, "Truthfulness in Religion," *Modern Churchman* 6, no. 1 (April 1916): 23. Such sincerity according to Dewick Edward Chisholm depicts the character of truthfulness, which is "not only a scrupulous accuracy of statement, but a complete honesty of purpose, an absence of the intention to deceive, whether by word, or action, or by the silence which is sometimes as eloquent as any speech."

Looking critically at the three documents, they all share a common factor of dialogue as a mission of the Church. While *Dialogue and Mission* considers this mission as a mandate given to the Church by Christ to proclaim the gospel to the world, *Dialogue and Proclamation* sees the mission as an activity of dialogue which is an essential element of evangelization. On the other hand, *Dialogue in truth and charity* sees this dialogue and evangelization as an obligation and responsibility entrusted to every member of the Church in collaboration with people of other religions.

While *Dialogue and Mission* and *Dialogue and Proclamation* emphasize mission and evangelization of the Church in relation to dialogue, *Dialogue in truth and charity* emphasizes dialogue because of the contemporary challenges of inter-religious dialogue and religious pluralism in the world. *Dialogue and Mission* is a call on the Church to respond to the demand of the Second Vatican Council for interfaith dialogue while *Dialogue and Proclamation* is a call on the Church to consider dialogue as an important aspect of her mission of proclamation in the world. *Dialogue in truth and charity* presents how the Church can go about her mission of proclamation and evangelization in dialogue with people of other religions. One basic principle that runs through the three documents is the promotion of the common good through dialogue.

SECTION TWO

3.8 The PCID and Muslims in the World: Ramadan Messages

The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue is involved in various activities and tasks relating to dialogue and Christians' relationship with Muslims. Such activities include welcoming Muslim religious leaders and groups (visitors) and arranging audiences with the Pope. The Council also visits local churches to get familiar with local situations and to encourage dialogue. It often organizes interfaith meetings or participates in such meetings organized by other religions. Michael L. Fitzgerald affirms that from the activities of the PCID, "through visits made and received a network of persons concerned with dialogue has been established. Consultations organized or

participated in have contributed to growing understanding. Various publications have helped to stimulate and sustain the commitment of Catholics to dialogue. Despite frequent changes of staff, the activities show a considerable degree of continuity."[167] Apart from these activities, the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue always sends messages of good will to the different religions in the world on special occasions and celebrations. "This started in 1967, when the office for Relations with Muslims sent a letter to Muslims around the world on the occasion of *'Id al-Fitr*, the feast of the breaking of the Fast at the end of the Islamic month of Ramadan."[168] An exploration of the impact made through such activities will focus on the messages of the PCID to Muslims in recent years. The messages emphasize three important areas of concern:

1.   The unity and solidarity between the Catholic Church and Muslims,
2.   Promoting reconciliation and peace between Christians and Muslims,
3.   The role of education in confronting the challenges of war and violence, and in developing peace in the world.

3.8.1 The Unity and Solidarity between the Catholic Church and Muslims

A key area in the activities of PCID is implementing the teachings of the Second Vatican Council concerning unity and solidarity between the Catholic Church and other religions. This message of unity and solidarity is more emphasized in the recent Ramadan message as the effective way of building bridges of friendship for the good of all humanity. The message emphasizes that; "We Muslims and Christians are called to open ourselves to others, knowing and recognizing them as brothers and sisters. In this way, we can tear down walls raised out of fear and ignorance and seek together to build bridges of friendship that are fundamental for the good of all humanity."[169]

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[167]Michael L Fitzgerald, "Twenty-Five Years of Dialogue: The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue," *Islamochristiana* 15, (January 1989): 109.

[168]Jukko, *Trinity in Unity in Christian-Muslim Relations*, 21-22.

[169]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Promoting Universal Fraternity," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1440 H. /2019). The message further states; "We thus cultivate in our families and in our political, civil and religious institutions, a new way of life where violence is rejected, and the human person respected."

The PCID saw the need for unity and solidarity between the Catholic Church and Muslims to be established in order to achieve the common good.[170] Jukko again maintains that this solidarity focuses on the theological search for the ultimate truth and absolute yearning in the human heart. The search for the ultimate truth and absolute yearning in the human heart also centres on the One God. This God is the creator and Father of all, who is at the center of every religion.[171] According to Jukko, from this basis, a link of "common origin through creation, mutual affinity, faith in one God, and common work or action"[172] for Christians and Muslims is being established.

Furthermore, Jukko believes that through such a link: "the combination of divine origin, the goodness of creation, and common faith in one God should not leave Christians and Muslims inactive but lead them to work together, to build up a better or a more humane world, to foster social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom"[173] Unity and solidarity in this sense should help Christians and Muslims to focus on their identity in relation to their beliefs in God who created them and whom they serve and worship. Paul L. Heck opines that such unity can also be strengthened through the gift of prayer. In this regard, Heck says;

> Christians and Muslims have a common yearning to be in God's presence and through prayer to have their hearts recreated by God. For Christianity, this is the work of the Holy Spirit that has a special relation to the Body of Christ. At the same time it is important to remember the history of the Holy Spirit that stretches back across the history of the Israelites, which both Jews and Muslims see in some fashion as their history, too.[174]

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[170]James A. Beverly, *Muslim and Christians: A History of Conflict and Conversion* (Illinois: Christianity Today, 2012), 1. The PCID pays particular attention to the unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims because of the religious tensions and conflicts in the world. James A. Beverly affirms that "the daily news reminds us of the ongoing conflicts between Muslims and Christians across the world, especially in places like Indonesia and Sudan. Even in America, where freedom of religion is a cardinal virtue, many Christians are increasingly anxious about a growing Muslim presence." It is the same story all over the continents of the world. There is a rise in religious tensions and conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

[171]Risto Jukko, "The Theological Foundations of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Christian-Muslim Relations," *International Review of Mission* 96, no. 380-381 (January-April 2007): 76. Risto Jukko argues that: "As long as the theological emphasis rests on the first person of the Christian God, One God the Creator and Father (even though "father" is not really accepted on the Muslim side) and the anthropological emphasis rests on the human being and his or her experiences, Christians and Muslims have a great deal in common. Common humanity should make Christians and Muslims share their common responsibilities, and undeniably they are both orientated towards transcendence, God the Creator and One."

[172]Ibid.

[173]Ibid.

[174]Paul L Heck, "God's Gift of Prayer to the Children of Abraham Christians and Muslims in Sacrificial Solidarity," *Islamochristiana* 41 (January 2015): 59.

The PCID therefore emphasizes the unity and solidarity with Muslims in order to promote the values that are common, and bind Christians and Muslims together, especially values that are fundamental to human rights and dignity.[175] This is also a point that Murray emphasizes when he says that, "the unity of the human race is founded on God's gift and it should express itself in solidarity."[176]

The PCID also focuses on collaboration between Christians and Muslims to work against the factors that create tensions and rivalries among them. Such attitudes of competition and rivalry destroy the meaning of religion and affect the faith of its followers. It gives the followers the view of religions not as 'sources of peace, but of tension and violence.'[177] Collaboration between Christians and Muslims, according to the PCID, will also lead to fraternity of Christians and Muslims as brothers and sisters of the one human family. This call to fraternal collaboration and solidarity, according to the PCID, is also necessary because of the challenges of the contemporary world where there is lack of peace in many countries. Such collaboration, according to the PCID, "takes into account the requirement that a culture of peace and solidarity between men can be built in which everybody can be firmly engaged in the construction of an increasingly fraternal society, doing everything one can to reject, denounce and refuse every recourse to violence which can never be motivated by religion, since it wounds the very image of God in man."[178] Daniel Ang highlights that collaboration is necessary to complement each other. Collaboration Ang posits "provides opportunity for persons and communities to realise goals they could not achieve on their own."[179]

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[175]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Promoting Universal Fraternity." This is emphasized in 2019 Ramadan Message. "In order to respect diversity, dialogue must seek to promote every person's right to life, to physical integrity, and to fundame
ntal freedoms, such as freedom of conscience, of thought, of expression and of religion. This includes the freedom to live according to one's beliefs in both the private and public spheres. In this way, Christians and Muslims-as brothers and sisters – can work together for the common good."

[176]Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith*, 41.

[177]Cf. PCID, "Christians and Muslims: From Competition to Collaboration," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1439 H. /2018).

[178]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1428 H. /2007 A.D.)

[179]Daniel Ang, "Fifty Years After Vatican II," *The Furrow* 63, no. 11 (November 2012): 540.

Furthermore, the PCID pointed out certain areas of the challenges to Christian-Muslim unity and how they affect the future of the people and society. These challenges "include threats to the environment, the crisis of the global economy and high levels of unemployment particularly among young people. Such situations give rise to a sense of vulnerability and a lack of hope for the future."[180] It is a similar call Pope Francis made for an active participation of everyone in global protection.[181]

The PCID further highlights certain factors responsible for religious conflicts. These include: "the manipulation of the religion for political or other ends; discrimination based on ethnicity or religious identity; divisions and social tensions. Ignorance, poverty, underdevelopment are also direct or indirect sources of violence among as well as within religious communities."[182] The PCID therefore seeks the cooperation of Christians and Muslims to build a relationship that will promote peace and reconciliation among people in the world especially in areas of war and conflicts.

In line with the declaration of the year 2015-2016 as the year of mercy by Pope Francis, the PCID also extended the message of mercy as a source of unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims. In this regard, the Council calls on Christians and Muslims to focus on the mercy of God and to be merciful and compassionate themselves. Mercy is required especially in the plight and miserable conditions of many people in the world. The PCID emphasizes support for those suffering in society, stating that "when we gaze upon humanity today, we are saddened to see so many victims of conflicts and violence-here we think in particular of the elderly, and children and women, especially those who fall prey to human trafficking and the many people who suffer from poverty, illness, natural disasters and unemployment."[183] Although these situations can be complex, the PCID asks Christians and Muslims to collaborate with each other and reach out to those in need

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[180]PCID, "Towards a Genuine Fraternity between Christians and Muslims" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1435 H./2014 A.D**.).**
[181]Cf. *Laudato Si'* no. 14.
[182]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1431 H. /2010 A.D.).
[183]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Beneficiaries and Instruments of Divine Mercy" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: *Message For The Month Of Ramadan and 'Id al-Fitr1437 H. / 2016 A.D.).*

by being merciful and compassionate. This can also give hope to the future of inter-religious dialogue. Qamar-Ul Huda in this perspective posits that "the future of Muslim-Catholic inter-faith dialogue is to bring minds and hearts together and primarily to teach all the participants in the dialogue that we need each other."[184] Therefore, regardless of the religious differences, Christians and Muslims must seek to live in peace and unity with one another.

To overcome the challenge of competition between Christians and Muslims, the PCID also suggests that it is necessary for Christians and Muslims to consider the religious and moral values they have in common and to acknowledge their differences as well. The Council opines that:

> By recognizing what we hold in common and by showing respect for our legitimate differences, we can more firmly establish a solid foundation for peaceful relations, moving from competition and confrontation to an effective cooperation for the common good. This particularly assists those most in need, and allows us to offer a credible witness to the Almighty's love for the whole of humanity.[185]

The love that should exist between Christians and Muslims should also serve as an important aspect of their collaboration. In love, Christians and Muslims will be able to see the good in one another, appreciate each other, tolerate and forgive in the midst of misunderstanding among them. Thus, love is the answer and solution to the problem of the Christian-Muslim relationship in the world.

3.8.2 Christians and Muslims Promoting Peace in the World

The promotion of peace has become a major task for both Christians and Muslims in the world. With the recent activities of terrorists in the world, the task of Christians and Muslims to counter worldwide terrorism has become more demanding. Gerard Forde affirms that there is "the urgent need for Christians and Muslims to address the polarisation that is growing between them. This has

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[184]Qamar-Ul Huda, "The 40th Anniversary of Vatican II: Examining Dominus Iesus, and Contemporary Issues for Inter-religious Dialogue between Muslims and Catholics," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15, no. (July 2004): 344.

[185]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: From Competition to Collaboration."
We thank the Almighty for what we have in common, while remaining aware of our differences. We perceive the importance of promoting a fruitful dialogue built upon mutual respect and friendship. Inspired by our shared values and strengthened by our sentiments of genuine fraternity, we are called to work together for justice, peace and respect for the rights and dignity of every person. We feel responsible in a particular way for those most in need: the poor, the sick, orphans, immigrants, victims of human trafficking, and those suffering from any kind of addiction (PCID, "Towards a Genuine Fraternity between Christians and Muslims" Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1435H./2014 A.D.**).

been fuelled by wars, persecution, injustices and by individual groups stirring up religious divisions to achieve political or material gain."[186] Conscious of this reality, the PCID observes that "violence, especially terrorism which strikes blindly and claims countless innocent victims, is incapable of resolving conflicts and leads only to a deadly chain of destructive hatred, to the detriment of mankind and of societies."[187]

Again, the PCID highlights the rise in violent activities and objections to religious values and doctrines in the world. In this sense, the Council emphasizes that;

> The world is now experiencing a period of the most agitated, in which violence and doctrines that rise up against God seem to triumph. That is why, in this Year of Childhood, it would be more than ever before each one of their own but with the same commitment, to implore God, the One and the Almighty, for the young generations to escape the whirlwind of violence and the temptation of atheism.[188]

The PCID therefore invites Christians and Muslims to make their spiritual values serve as their superior goods in order to keep away from any tendency to resort in violence and sacrilegious consequences. The Council seeks Christians and Muslims to be more active in the pursuit of peace.

The PCID emphasizes that respect must be given to the exercise of religious freedom in seeking for peace. The Council maintains that it is "a duty above all to work in favour of peace, by 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."[189] It is in this regard that Gerry O'Hanlon claims that "with the Declaration on Religious Freedom in particular, and its focus on Freedom of Conscience, the non-identity of Church and State and the assertion of religious freedom as a human right, it became

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[186]Forde, *A Journey Together*, 9.
[187]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1428 H. /2007 A.D.).
[188]PCID, "Religious Relations With Islam" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message to the Muslim World by the end of the Ramadãn 1979).
[189]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace."

possible for the Church to speak with greater credibility on the world stage"[190] O'Hanlon argues that although the declaration focuses on freedom in religious matters, its principles are based on the dignity of the human person and on the search for the truth. O'Hanlon further states that "by analogy with the teaching of the Declaration, in moral matters people should not be forced to act against their consciences nor should they be restrained from behaving according to their conscience-provided that the just requirements of public order are observed."[191] This is already clarified in the previous chapter under *Dignitatis Humanae.*

Furthermore, the PCID chose the theme of the Ramadan messages of 2002, on *the way to peace,* and 2003, on *the construction of peace in the world*. This is to intensify efforts on the need for Christians and Muslims to seek world peace together. The Council contends that the: "situations where war prevails are like an open wound in the heart of humanity, above all those conflicts which have been going on for many years, whether in the Middle East, in Africa or in Asia. In several countries such conflicts result in numerous innocent victims, leading the population to despair of peace returning to their land in the near future."[192] According to the PCID, peace is a gift from God, and therefore Christians and Muslims have the responsibility of sharing the gift of God with all humanity. "In bringing about peace, and maintaining it, religions have an important role to play, one which in these days more than ever is being recognised by civil society and by Governments. . . We are indeed convinced that the ways of peace include education, for through it one can learn to recognise one's own identity and that of the other."[193]

The PCID further emphasizes that if Christians and Muslims work together in mutual respect and collaborate for peace and for a better future for all people in the world, "it will provide an example for the young people of today to follow and imitate. They will then have a renewed confidence in society and will see the advantage in belonging and taking part in its transformation. Education and

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[190]Gerry O'Hanlon, "Religious Freedom," *The Furrow* 64, no. 2 (February 2013): 71.
[191]Ibid, 72.
[192]PCID, "Christians and Muslims and the Ways to Peace" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1423 H. /2002 A.D.).
[193]Ibid.

example will also be a source of hope in the future for them."[194] The role of education therefore becomes the instrument to empower the future generation to live in peace with one another, as will be reflected in the next heading.

In seeking for solutions to the numerous problems that cause lack of peace in the world, the PCID demands confident dialogue between Christians and Muslims. These problems include:

> Injustice, poverty, tensions and conflicts between countries as well as within them. Violence and terrorism are a particularly painful scourge. So many human lives destroyed, so many women widowed, so many children who have lost a parent, so many children orphaned … So many wounded, physically and spiritually… So much, which has taken years of sacrifice and toil to build, destroyed in a few minutes![195]

Looking at these issues around the world, and how they affect human life and existence, it is necessary to seek dialogue in trust and confidence between Christians and Muslims. This is a universal responsibility for both Christians and Muslims.

The PCID highlights that this mandate and responsibility also provides the integrity and genuine characteristics of Christianity and Islam. If Christians and Muslims do not make efforts to provide solutions to all these problems, then religion is not useful to society. Since both Christians and Muslims place great importance on love, compassion and solidarity, they have to be motivated by these principles to promote human values. Love especially is at the center of the relationship to all who believe in God, both in Christianity and Islam. The PCID therefore maintains that, "believers who are engaged in helping people in need or seeking solutions to these problems, do so above all through their love for God, 'for the face of God'. . . Everyday worries together with the more serious problems faced by the world call for our attention and our action. Let us ask God in prayer to help us confront them with courage and determination."[196] The PCID therefore seeks the cooperation of Christians and Muslims wherever they find themselves; they should appreciate, value, and respect one another in mutual love for the good of the entire human race.

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[194]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace."
[195]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: in confident dialogue aimed at solving together the challenges of our world" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1427 H. /2006 A.D.).
[196]Ibid.

Therefore, in order to build a strong bond of love between Christians and Muslims, the PCID invites Christians and Muslims to shun negative attitudes and hope for a better and happy world.[197]

The Council highlights it is sad;

> When Muslims and Christians, who are part of the one human family, ignore one another, no longer exchange greetings or, even worse, quarrel with one another! And yet, how beautiful it is to live in peace with everyone, to meet together, to speak of our joys and sorrows, our fears and hopes! How can we not see in the dialogue between believers, and in particular between Muslims and Christians, a sign of hope for the present and for the future?[198]

Christians and Muslims therefore have the responsibility and obligation to ensure that peace reigns in the world based on the foundation of their religious teachings to be agents of love and promoters of peace in the world. The PCID therefore seeks Christians and Muslims to open their;

> Hearts to mutual forgiveness and reconciliation, for a peaceful and fruitful coexistence; to recognize what we have in common and to respect differences, as a basis for a culture of dialogue; to recognize and respect the dignity and the rights of each human being without any bias related to ethnicity or religious affiliation; . . . to recall the importance of education towards respect, dialogue and fraternity in the various educational arenas: at home, in the school, in churches and mosques.[199]

The PCID also calls on Christians and Muslims to promote peace through reconciliation and their love for one another, as people of common origin and belief in one and the same God.

3.8.3 The Role of Education in Confronting the Challenges of Wars and Violence, and in Developing Peace in the world

Education is a vital tool in human progress and development. Education is also the solution to human problems and challenges in the world. The PCID specifically focuses on education for both Christians and Muslims in order to establish good relationships and peaceful co-existence among them. The Council emphasizes the fact that "as religious believers, it's up to us all to be educators

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[197]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Promoting Universal Fraternity." "the gesture and message of fraternity will find an echo in the hearts of all those holding positions of authority in the areas of social and civil life of the whole human family, and may lead all of us to put into practice not merely an attitude of tolerance but true and peaceful living together."

[198]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Together in Hope" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan 'Id al-Fitr 1418 H. /1998 A.D.)

[199]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions."

of peace, of human rights, of a freedom which respects each person, but also to ensure increasingly strong social bonds, because man must take care of his human brothers and sisters without discrimination. No individual in the national community should be excluded on the grounds of his or her race, religion, or any other personal characteristic."[200]

The PCID chose the theme of education in its year 2000 Ramadan message as the way forward in understanding the basics of dialogue and relationships. The Council argues in favour of "education in the fundamental values of human dignity, peace, freedom and solidarity. It evokes the desire to know other people, to be able to share their sorrows and to understand their deepest feelings. Education for dialogue means nurturing the hope that conflict situations can be resolved through personal and collective commitment."[201] According to the PCID, education is the tool for creating awarenes, knowledge, and apprciation of other people's religion and culture. However, the Catholic Church targets the education of the youth, "especially a civic education which invites each young person to respect those around him or her, and to consider them as brothers and sisters with whom he or she is daily called to live, not in indifference, but in fraternal care. It is thus more urgent than ever to teach the younger generations, those fundamental human, moral and civic values which are necessary to both personal and community life."[202]

The PCID once again emphasizes that;

> In accompanying young people along the highways of life, attention has to be given to the preparation required for living in a society marked by ethnic, cultural and religious plurality. Such education implies, first of all, that we broaden our vision to an ever wider horizon, become capable of looking beyond our own country, our own ethnic group, our own cultural tradition, so that we can see humanity as a single family in both its diversity and its common aspirations.[203]

Education for dialogue in this regard, is an on-going process and should also include adults and not be restricted to just children and youth.

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[200]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace."
[201]PCID, "Education for Dialogue: A Duty for Christians and Muslims" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1421 H. /2000 A.D.).
[202]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace."
[203]PCID, "Education for Dialogue: A Duty for Christians and Muslims."

Education serves the good of society in building up responsible citizens that will be productive and contribute to the progress and development of society. The PCID therefore emphasizes that the task of education is a responsibility of the entire society. It states that "if the task of education is entrusted to the whole of society, as you know, it is first and foremost, and in a particular way, the work of parents and, with them, of families, schools and universities, not forgetting about those responsible for religious, cultural, social, and economic life, and the world of communication."[204] Education is a difficult task but it is also a necessary resource that enables individuals to discover their endowed qualities and to build responsible relationships with others. In this sense, the PCID maintains that education is a formative process of the individual which will eventually serve the common good, and this also extends to the provision of justice and peace in society.

The PCID made it categorically clear that, "in the tormented world of ours, educating the young for peace becomes increasingly urgent. To engage ourselves in an adequate manner, the true nature of peace must be understood: that it is not limited to the mere absence of war, or to a balance between opposing forces, but is at one and the same time a gift from God and a human endeavour to be pursued without ceasing."[205] There is the need for Christians and Muslims to collaborate fraternally and contribute universally to address the challenges of the world with their God-given gift of peace. Furthermore, the PCID emphasizes the fact that Christians and Muslims are particularly responsible for ensuring that the youth are educated towards peace and justice. The PCID affirms that it is important that "young people, who will be in charge of tomorrow's world, are formed in this spirit. It is above all the responsibility of families and then of those involved in the educational world, and of civic and religious authorities, all of whom have a duty to pay attention to the spread of a just teaching."[206] Christian and Muslim youth need to have the disposition to truth and freedom to

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[204]PCID, "Educating young Christians and Muslims for justice and peace," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1433 H. / 2012 A.D.).
[205]Ibid.
[206]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Called to promote a culture of peace."

become ambassadors of peace and justice, and promoters of a culture that gives respect to the rights and dignity of all.

Education for peace and justice therefore includes recognizing and accepting the diversities among people and how to manage and prevent crisis. The construction of peace, according to the PCID, is structured on four pillars: "truth, justice, love and freedom. Each of these values has to be present if there are to be good and harmonious relations between peoples and between nations."[207] According to the PCID, truth is directed to the reality that human beings are God's work of art and are called to fulfil the will of God-the absolute truth. This implies that human beings are to be sincere in their relationships and to acknowledge their rights and those of other people. Such recognition of rights leads to justice and there is no peace without justice. On the other hand, justice should always promote love which enables individuals to consider one another as brothers and sisters. An essential characteristic of all these three-truth, justice and love-is freedom, which according to the PCID, "allows people to act according to reason and to assume responsibility for their own actions. Indeed each of us is responsible before God for our contribution to society."[208] These four characteristics, truth, justice, love and freedom combine together to form the goal and essence of education in promoting good relationships and the common good of society.

Furthermore, the PCID also emphasizes education is required to counter violence perpetrated in the name of religion. The PCID pays particular attention to the activities of violence by ISIS' declaration of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in early 2014; alongside the atrocities committed by *Boko Haram* between 2009 to date in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The PCID affirms that;

> Ethnic and religious communities in a number of countries of the world went through various and enormous unjust sufferings: killing of some of their members, destruction of their religious and cultural heritages, forced emigration from their homes and cities, molestation and raping of their women, enslavement of some of

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[207]PCID, "Constructing Peace Today" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1424 H. /2003 A.D.).
[208]Ibid.

their members, trafficking of persons, commerce of organs, and even selling of cadavers![209]

The unfortunate reality in these situations is the role of religion in justifying such crimes, and the inactive response of government and security agencies in protecting and defending the lives and properties of the people against such atrocities. The PCID opines that because violence and terrorism are doctrines which are developed in the minds of people, there is the need for society to caution people against any ideology that will encourage the growth of such tendencies among young people. The role of education comes first in this regard. The PCID therefore made it clear that "all those involved in the education of the youth and in the various educational spaces should teach the sacred character of life and the derived dignity of every person, regardless of his or her ethnicity, religion, culture, social position and political choice. There is no life that is more precious than another one because it belongs to a specific race or religion."[210] To kill in the name of religion, according to the PCID, is 'a double crime against God'. Therefore, education should be able to empower individuals to cherish and respect the life and dignity of their fellow brothers and sisters.

3.8.4 Section Conclusion

The PCID has been very active in promoting the principles of interfaith dialogue set by the Second Vatican Council. In recent years, the attention of the PCID has focused on three principal areas that were already highlighted:

i.   The principle of unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims,

ii.   The promotion of peace in the world,

iii.   The role of education in interfaith dialogue

The principle of unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims: This emphasis is because of the urgent need to tackle the problem of division and conflict in the world. The principle of unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims emphasizes the need for Christians and Muslims to

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[209]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: Together to counter violence perpetrated in the name of religion" (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: *Message for the Month of Ramadan Id al-Fitr 1436 H. / 2015 A.D.)*.
[210]Ibid.

pursue the common good, to see themselves as brothers and sisters of one another. Therefore, Christians and Muslims must collaborate to break down the barriers that create division and conflicts among them, such as discrimination and competition. Christians and Muslims must be motivated by love in everything they do in order to live in harmony with one another.

The promotion of peace in the world: The promotion of peace is also the most basic urgent need for Christians and Muslims in the world. This emphasizes the need for Christians and Muslims to use their spiritual values to build up the quality and characteristics of peace required in the world. Such values involve the respect of human dignity and religious freedom. Since peace is a cardinal value taught and promoted in both Christianity and Islam, it is therefore a gift from God that Christians and Muslims need to share with one another. They should watch out for the obstacles that prevent the existence of peace among them, such as violence and injustice. In the midst of misunderstanding and conflict, Christians and Muslims should seek reconciliation and forgive one another to ensure peace prevails among them.

The role of education in interfaith dialogue: The emphasis on education in interreligious dialogue concerns the promotion of relationships between Christians and Muslims. Education in interreligious dialogue seeks to promote the principles of peace and justice that are at the center of the problem of relationship between Christians and Muslims in the world. Education for interreligious dialogue seeks to highlight the importance of acknowledging religious differences and how to manage these differences so that they do not escalate into conflict and create division among people. It also seeks to teach the importance of religion so that religion may not be used for negative purpose and selfish gains and ambitions.

One basic factor that runs through this section is the need for Christians and Muslims to love one another. In love, Christians and Muslims can overcome all their challenges. Love therefore is the solution to the Christian-Muslim problems and the challenges in their relationship.

PART THREE

5.9 FRANCIS CARDINAL ARINZE, PRESIDENT OF THE PCID, 1984-2002

Francis Cardinal Arinze is of Nigerian origin, born in 1933 from Eziowella of Anambra State. Arinze was a convert of African Traditional Religion and was baptized on November 1, 1941. He was ordained in Rome on November 23, 1958. He was consecrated as bishop on August 29, 1965, as coadjutor Archbishop of Onitsha, and eventually became the Archbishop of Onitsha on June 26, 1967. Arinze was elevated as Cardinal Deacon of San Giovanni della Pigna on May 25, 1985, and raised to Cardinal-Priest in 1996. Arinze served as president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue from April 8, 1984 until October 1, 2002. Based on his background from Nigeria, and profile as the president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, Arinze is a significant figure to be considered in Inter-Religious Dialogue. Apart from his role as the president of the PCID for over a period of 18 years, Arinze's interest and contributions on inter-religious dialogue are also very tremendous. His contributions are therefore highlighted in his books and articles: [211],[212],[213],[214],[215],[216].

These works and writings focus on three important areas that Arinze considered relevant in promoting interreligious dialogue in the World.

1.   Solidarity for Peace among the Religions of the World

2.   The Urgent Necessity of Interreligious Dialogue in the World

3.   The Prospects and Risks of Interreligious Dialogue

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[211]*The Church in Dialogue: Walking with other Believers* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990).

[212]"Christian-Muslim Relations in the 21st Century," Talk given at the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding in Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 5 June 1997, https://sedosmission.org/old/eng/arinze.htm (accessed December 8, 2018).

[213]"Interreligious Dialogue at the Service of Peace," in *Interreligious Dialogue: Catholic Perspectives*, ed. James H. Kroeger (Davao: Mission Studies Institute, 1990)

[214]*Meeting other Believers: The Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1998).

[215]*Building Bridges: Interreligious Dialogue on the Path to World Peace*, Interview with Cardinal Arinze, by Helmut S. Rupert (New York: New City Press, 2004).

[216]*Religion for Peace: A Call for Solidarity to the Religions of the World* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2013).

3.9.1 Solidarity for Peace among the Religions of the World

As an activist for inter-religious dialogue, Cardinal Francis Arinze saw the need for all the religions of the world to collaborate for peace in the world. Arinze's interest came in response to the 9/11 attack in America. It was an attack that affected all the nations of the world, because the victims were from almost every country in the world, hence it can be described as a global attack. The 9/11 attack was therefore an incidence that awakened the responsibility and collaboration of the entire world.[217] It calls for a response and solidarity of all religions in the world. Herbert H. believes that the 9/11 attack is a golden opportunity for solidarity and brotherhood among all religions of the world, that will be devoid all forms and nature of sentimental relationships. But apart from this reality, Arinze also observes that "the world unfortunately is afflicted with conflicts, lack of peace and injustices. The sound of war has not ceased to vibrate in some parts of the globe. Brother still fights brother in order to redress real or alleged injustices. Too many men, women and children suffer and die. Too many families are disrupted or forced to become refugees in or outside their countries."[218] In the light of these observations, the call for peace in the world becomes an urgent desire for Arinze who was the president of the PCID around the period of 9/11 and the rise of conflicts in the world.

Arinze thus emphasizes the collaboration of religious leaders in the world towards the promotion of peace and the urgency to ensure peace in the world. He contends that already;

> Leaders of various religions around the world have long realised the importance of collaboration for the promotion of peace in society. In some places they make common appeals for good interreligious relations. This is often done only in times of tension or conflict which religion as their alleged cause or occasion or in which religion is exploited to fuel divisions. It is obviously better if various religions meet outside crisis time to seek together to promote peace.[219]

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[217]Murray, *Keeping Open the Door of Faith*, 58. On another aspect, Murray describes such incidence as a phenomenon of globalization. "The phenomenon of globalization means that a crisis in any part of the world now affects everybody almost immediately."
[218]Arinze, *The Church in Dialogue,* 200.
[219]Ibid, 203.

Arinze therefore calls for the unity of religious leaders, especially in Africa between Christians and Muslims. He opines that, "whenever mutual relations deteriorate, leaders of thought and action are needed to pull the majority of the people out of their entrenched positions and encouraged interreligious dialogue."[220] Arinze thus recommends a programme of education for religious leaders in Africa to have the basic knowledge in areas that will build mutual relationships between Christians and Muslims.

The first approach to work together for peace among all the religions of the world, according to Arinze, is to consider the concept of peace as it is commonly understood among the various religions. Thus, from the opening sentence of the introduction of his book, *Religions for Peace,* Arinze argues that; "Peace strikes a response chord in the hearts of the followers of religions of the world. Christians have the custom of exchanging a sign of peace. Muslims interpret the name of their religion, Islam, as referring to peace, *salām*. Jews greet each other by saying *shalom,* "peace." Buddhists want to promote peace. So do Sikhs. So do the followers of the Traditional Religions."[221] Arinze therefore presents a general concept of peace and states that, by "peace we mean the tranquillity of order. We mean that situation of justice and rightly ordered social relationships that is marked by respect for the rights of others, that provides favourable conditions for integral human growth, and that allows citizens to live out their lives to the full in calm and joyful development."[222] The concept of peace understood in this way means something to pursue and yearn for. Arinze therefore emphasizes that peace should be considered by world religions as a necessary good. He asserts that peace "is a very positive concept. It is not mere passiveness. Rather it is an active commitment to establishing an order that will be a source of tranquillity. This attitude is greatly helped by recognition that all human beings belong to one family, that they have one Creator and a single origin, that human nature is the same in all people."[223] Arinze therefore called

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[220]Ibid, 220.
[221]Arinze, *Religion for Peace*, xiii.
[222]Ibid, 1
[223] Ibid, 2.

on the leaders of the world religions to work together for the world peace and to overcome violence.

In order to promote the culture of peace in the world, Arinze therefore explores what the various religions have to say regarding the concept of peace. Among the major world religions, Christianity, according to Arinze, derives its concept of peace from the biblical context. He explores biblical passages and maintains that the concept of peace in Christianity relates to the love of God and the neighbour.[224] In Judaism, Arinze says *shalom* of God leads to the inculcation of love, truth and faithfulness to God's commandments. Thus peace is a gift of God.[225] This idea suggests that Judaism considers peace as central to the relationship with God and with one another. Islam also believes that her concept of peace has origin from Qur'anic verses, and centres on the point that peace comes from God.[226] Arinze also highlights that some religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Traditional Religions, and others cherish and favour peace according to their doctrines. Since all the religions of the world advocate and promote peace, Arinze poses a question. Why are most conflicts and wars around the world instigated by religions? In this regard, Arinze argues that religion tries to create a common philosophy of life for its followers and in the process of that it may create a demarcation or separation of its members. In this sense therefore, religion can also be manipulated by some deceitful leaders to create and promote violence and division. He asserts:

> Occasionally, there is the temptation for religions to allow themselves to be used by politicians and even a greater temptation for politicians to manipulate religion for their own ends. Since religious convictions are among the strongest of motivations, an unscrupulous politician may be tempted to use religion to attain political goals. It has happened in history that religion has been abused to

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[224]Ibid, 15. Arinze says that, "the peace, therefore, that Christianity extols demands love of God and neighbor and requires constant combat against egoism. It also includes willingness to carry one's cross and follow Christ."

[225]Ibid, 17. Arinze therefore argues that: "For the Jews, *shalom* refers to both material and spiritual elements. God speaks of peace to his people. Righteousness and peace embrace. The land yields its fruit. People are to avoid the evils of deceit and uncontrolled desire."

[226]Ibid, 19. Arinze therefore argues that "the peace greeting, *al-salām 'alaykum*, is believed to be given to the blessed when they enter paradise. The common salutation in the Islamic world is never omitted by a devout Muslim after the mention of the name of Muhammad or of earlier prophets like Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. . . The person who is given the peace greeting is expected to reciprocate and return the greeting with additional blessing according to the Qur'anic advice."

motivate people to fight wars which have as their real causes political, economic, or racial considerations.[227]

It is in the light of the above quotation that Arinze cautions all religions to examine how their religion has been manipulated, if there are elements used to promote violence among them or not? Arinze categorically cautions religious leaders not to allow religion to be manipulated in any way by certain individuals. He contends that;

> Christian and Muslim leaders cannot remain indifferent in front of the manipulation of religion by politicians. Religion should be allowed necessary freedom to concentrate on beliefs, ritual and a rule of life. God is at the centre of all genuine religion. Politicians and governments should be impartial towards all religions. Religious leaders who succumb to the temptation of allowing their religion to be abused and made an instrument by a political party will have to reflect on the negative consequences.[228]

Arinze particularly calls on Christians and Muslims to lead other religions in working for peace in the world. This is because of the common elements among them which have the foundation to work for peace, such as their common beliefs in God and common values in society. Arinze posits that "The elements of belief common to Christianity and Islam and the concerns shared by both religions are clear indications and encouragement of Islam-Christian dialogue at the service of peace. These two religious families make up one half of humanity. The potential weight of their combined contribution to peace, justice, and development is considerable."[229] Christians and Muslims therefore have a common responsibility in building peace in the world.

Arinze further examines the attitudes and characteristics that will promote peace among the various religions of the world. According to him, these include the acceptance of pluralism among all the religions, the readiness for interfaith and religious collaboration, the conversion or change of heart among all religions, and the ability to cultivate the virtues of peace and hope for peaceful co-existence. Furthermore, Arinze also insists that "society cannot hope to have peace if the

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[227]Arinze, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the 21st Century."
[228]Ibid. Arinze also caution that among the dangers to the abuse of religion including the probability that that religion is likely to become a despised widow when that political party is no longer in power. At times it will be useful for religious and political leaders to meet and discuss such questions.
[229]Arinze, "Interreligious Dialogue at the Service of Peace," 93.

individuals in it are themselves not personally at peace. This applies especially to those who are placed in public authority, those whose decisions affect many others. Societies often suffer from the lack of peace of their leaders, from the moral bankruptcy of the directors of its affairs."[230] It is in this regard that Arinze calls on the various religions to develop concrete initiatives and provide information that will promote peace, the good of other religions. All the religions should try to unite and collaborate on common projects that will defend and respect human life and individual/community rights, such as education of the youth, encouraging reconciliation and forgiveness, and caring for the earth and its environment. Arinze thus argues that "interreligious dialogue can help to promote cooperation among citizens so that in mutual respect, justice, peace and fraternal collaboration, they can build up their country."[231] This respect for the human person is built on the fundamental right of individuals.[232]

In order to demonstrate a practical example of how religions should work for peace, Arinze highlights the activities of religions on peace. An outstanding development in this regard, according to Arinze, is the "warm welcome given to Pope John Paul II on February 24, 2000, by the Sheik Al-Azhar and the major authorities of that one-thousand-year-old Islamic institution in Cairo and the many meetings between the Pope and Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Holy Land in March 2000."[233] Such gestures are really required in the promotion of interreligious dialogue and peace in the world.

Arinze also emphasizes the defence of religious freedom as an essential aspect of the world religions in working for peace. Such freedom also includes tolerance which, according to him, implies "respect for other religious persuasions, acceptance of their followers, and readiness to

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[230]Ibid, 88.
[231]Ibid, 22.
[232]Arinze, *Religion for Peac*, viii. Arinze states that: "Justice, peace, and tranquillity in the world are built on the pillars of respect for the fundamental rights of other people, especially their right to life, religious freedom, and free exercise of political, economic, and cultural rights."
[233]Ibid, 72. Such activities include the World Conference on Religion and Peace, the 1986 Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace, the Religions of Japan's Prayer for Peace, the establishment of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the Community of St. Egidio, the Focolare Movement

work with them."[234] Arinze therefore emphasizes that freedom of religion is relevant in the contemporary world of religious pluralism in order to prevent religious imposition by fundamentalists, or religious domination within a state, as well as a secular tendency of eliminating religion. Arinze argues that in situations where there are such tendencies of fanaticism and religious imposition;

> Such people declare that only their religion should exist in their country or state, to the exclusion of other religions. They go further and give their religion an interpretation or cast which they consider to be its original or pure form. That is the only form they regard as legitimate. Sometimes they do not hesitate to use violence and to kill or marginalize people, including more moderate members of their own religious community, all in their effort to promote their own idea of their religion.[235]

The situation above describes the actual agenda of ISIS (*Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*) in promoting Islam in the world. This is a serious challenge to peace in the world. Respect of religious freedom is an important aspect in the promotion of peace in the world, and demands the cooperation of all the religions and indeed everyone in the world. Therefore, "Christian and Muslim parents, leaders and educators should be so convinced of the necessity of a sincere commitment to peace, beginning with peace between Muslims and Christians, that they will be able to effectively share these convictions in the family, at school, over the mass media, and especially in mosques and churches."[236] This will be the ultimate approach to promoting peace by Christians and Muslims in the world.

3.9.2 The Urgent Necessity for Interreligious Dialogue in the World

The demand for interreligious dialogue is more urgent due to the reality of religious pluralism in the world.[237] Because the post-modern world is dominated by religious pluralism creating much

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[234]Ibid, 127.
[235]Ibid, 132.
[236]Arinze, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the 21st Century."
[237]John Sobert Sylvest and Amos Yong, "Reasons and values of the heart in a pluralistic world: toward a contemplative phenomenology for interreligious dialogue," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 20, no. 2 (January 2010): 170. This also according to them present postmodern situation that " is characterized by radical pluralism. There is resistance to essentialism in religion and insistence on religious pluralism as a fact, a suspicion about theological metanarratives as opposed to thinking about theological systems or worldviews, and a rejection of any type of philosophic synthesis in favor of epistemological perspectivism and axiological relativism."

religious competition, interreligious dialogue is required to understand one another. Arinze sees the need for interreligious dialogue "as a meeting of heart and mind between followers of various religious. It is communication between two believers at the religious level. It is walking together in projects of common concern."[238] Such common concern may not necessarily have a connection to religion, but affects all the religions of the world.[239]

The reasons that necessitate the urgency of interreligious dialogue include abuse to human rights and religious conflicts in the world. This calls for an approach to religious pluralism among the various religions of the world. From this perspective David Hollenbach argues that: "In the present international climate discussion of the relation between human rights and religious pluralism may appear foolish or naïve or both. Diversity of religious conviction is a particularly evident contributing factor to intractable communal conflict and long-standing patterns of human rights violations in many regions of the globe today."[240]

However, Sylvest and Yong maintain that there is the desire for a philosophy of unity from a theological and religious dimension due to a commonality of human experience to a large extent. Based on this demand, every religion should change their approach to other religions.[241] From the part of Christianity, Gregory Baum argues that there was rejection of other religions for a long time. Baum says that;

> Until recently, we must admit, Christianity was unable to reconcile itself to religious pluralism. The Church saw itself as gifted with divine truth and sent into the world to convert all people to Christ. According to the Council of Florence (1442), there is "no salvation outside the Church": heretics, schismatics, Jews and pagans are destined to go to hell. The Church then thought that the ancient

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[238]Arinze, "The Christian Commitment to Interreligious Dialogue," 21.
[239]Arinze, *Religions for Peace*, 72. In this perspective, Arinze opines that, "there are many human problems and challenges that do not respect the frontiers of religion or race, and sometimes even country. Examples are war, hunger, the refugee problem, unemployment, and drugs."
[240]David Hollenbach, "Human Rights and Interrelations Dialogue: The Challenge to Mission in a Pluralistic World," International Bulletin of Missionary Research 6, no. 3 (July 1982): 98. For instance according to Hollenbach, "Hindu-Muslim strife in India and Pakistan, Christian-Muslim conflict in the Philippines, Catholic Protestant resentments in Northern Ireland, and Jewish-Christian - Muslim animosity throughout the Middle East are glaring examples of the way religious in-group loyalty can become a threat to the dignity and rights of adherents of out-group belief system."
[241]Cf. Sylvest and Yong, "Reasons and values of the heart in a pluralistic world," 170.

covenant God made with the people of Israel had been cancelled when the Jewish people refused to believe in Jesus.[242]

It is in this context that Lee Hyo Dong argues and advocates for the need of a pluralistic approach of the church to other religions.[243] Dong further affirms that, "such a paradigm shift, the pluralists have claimed, is to be made on the basis of theoretical explications of some reality or mystery underlying all religions or some commonly exhibited historical traits among them or else on the basis of the strength of some shared practical concerns that all religions have in face of the commonly experienced reality of injustice and suffering in the world."[244]

On the other hand, Baum maintains that there are many reasons for the change in position of the Church towards other religions especially in the second part of the 20th century. Baum asserts that;

> The Church became deeply troubled by its silence during the persecution of the Jews culminating in the Holocaust. Why this absence of solidarity with the people of the Old Testament? Then the collapse of colonialism after WW II made the Church painfully aware that its overseas mission had been protected by the colonizing empire and in fact promoted its interests. In many parts of the world the image of Christianity was associated with military conquest.[245]

Therefore, today there is a need for religious people and their communities in the world to reflect on their identities in relation to others.[246] As people travel and move around, according to Arinze, they also bring their religion with them and they are also able to meet with people of other religions. There is also the political, social, and economic dimension where religious relationships are created through the activities of the international organizations in the world. Some contemporary crises also have religious affiliation. In this regard, Francis Arinze argues: "The fact

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[242]Gregory Baum, "The Church in Solidarity with the World Religions," *Ecumenism* 151 (September 2003): 5.

[243]Lee, Hyo-Dong, "Interreligious dialogue as a politics of recognition: a postcolonial rereading of Hegel for interreligious solidarity," *The Journal of Religion* 85, no. 4 October 2005): 556. Dong says that: "For the last two decades or so, Christian theological advocates of religious pluralism have argued for a paradigm shift that would enable Christians finally to move away from their millennia-long insistence on the superiority and finality of their way, whether in its exclusivist or inclusivist version, and to recognize the equal and independent validity of other religions."

[244]Ibid.

[245]Baum, "The Church in Solidarity with the World Religions," 5.

[246]Donald W. Mirchell, (Foreword) *Building Bridges: Interreligious Dialogue on the Path to World Peace*, Interview with Cardinal Arinze, by Helmut S. Rupert (New York: New City Press, 2004), 7. This according to Donald W. Mitchell is "due to new forms of transportation and communication, economic globalization, and more possibilities for immigration, people of various religions find themselves meeting each other, working with each other, and living with each other much more than the past."

is that we cannot fully comprehend human relationships without considering their religious context. It is necessary to recognize the religious dimension in human relationship in order to understand the human person and human behaviour. Whether this religious context is immediately apparent or not does not matter. We still must be aware of it and keep it in mind."[247] However, Arinze believes that to understand the religious aspect of human life, it also helps to recognize the causes of conflict. Religions thus present more factors that determine human behaviour than whatever any sciences or general knowledge offers. This is why many people can go to any lengths possible because of the conviction they have about their religion.[248] Based on this reality, the demand for interreligious dialogue in this age is a fundamental necessity.

From the above background, Arinze therefore considers the importance and essence of interfaith dialogue. He again sees dialogue as "a meeting of people of differing religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other, to try to understand that person's religion, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration."[249] There are many reasons why interreligious dialogue is important in the world today, not just because of conflict. On this reality, Arinze argues that dialogue is even more necessary in the absence of conflict.[250] Therefore, the need for interreligious dialogue is not just to resolve conflicts but also to create more understanding of one another.

Thus respect for people and their religion should form the focus of all interreligious dialogue. According to Arinze, this can lead to cooperation, and will bring about love for one another among people of different religions. In this sense, interreligious dialogue for Arinze is not an optional commitment, but a promotion of spiritual growth for an individual believer who develop his/her

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[247]Arinze, *Building Bridges: Interreligious Dialogue on the Path to World Peace*, 22.

[248]Ibid, 23. Therefore, Arinze affirms that: "Religion is certainly not the only factor that determines human relations, but it certainly is a significant one. If we do not recognize the complex roots of today's conflicts in their multiple dimensions, we will not be able to come up with lasting solutions."

[249]Arinze, *Meeting other Believers: The Risks and Rewards of Interreligious Dialogue*, 16.

[250]Arinze, *Building Bridges*, 23. According to Arinze, "It is simply a question of how we think about human beings. To take people seriously means to take their religion seriously as well. It is not enough to engage in religious dialogue only when necessary for putting out the fires of conflict. No, we have to do better than that. We have to take the human person seriously in every aspect of being human. So interreligious dialogue is not just an insurance policy against conflict, it has value for its own sake."

faith through experience and engagement with people of other faith. Arinze again insists that in dialogue people should never negotiate on the fundamental aspects of their faith. From a Christian perspective, he asserts that, "dialogue with those who belong to non-Christian religions does not mean 'negotiating' with them. Faith mysteries are necessarily clothed in inadequate human words, concepts and images-and can be presented only at the end of patient, trustful and fruitful dialogue."[251]

It is obvious that there is difficulty in understanding the connection between Christianity and other religions that have the belief in a personal god. However, it is easier for Christians to understand Jews and Muslims because of their common belief in One God. Although this demarcation of understanding one another exists, it does not block other means of uniting all the religions of the world for common goals in love. These common goals can be, for example, on family issues, such as family formation and upbringing of children. This should never be approached under doctrines, but with trust among the people. According to Arinze, "where such fundamental differences exist, the boundaries for dialogue quickly become apparent. Then we must be content with reaching agreement on practical issues, which in itself is something significant."[252] This demands meaningful dialogue to take place between the adherents of the different religions. In this regard, Arinze maintains that Christians must approach other religions as members of the one family of God in the world.

Christians should share with other religions the rich theological principles about God and humanity. Christians should also appreciate and respect the rich cultural heritage of other religions in the world. On the side of the Catholic Church therefore: "Since the Vatican Council, the Roman Secretariat for non-Christian Religions and, later, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

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[251]Ibid, 30
[252]Ibid, 31.

have promoted dialogue and cooperation among the world religions. The Pope has prayed in synagogues and joined representatives of the world religions in a common prayer for peace."[253]

There is also the fundamental need for theological dialogue due to the challenges and changes in different views and experiences in the contemporary world. Arinze argues that this is due to cultural mingling and therefore he says; "Today, a theology that ignores the religious plurality of the world is unthinkable."[254] Therefore, the demand for interreligious dialogue increases more and more with the intermingling of various religious cultures and traditions, as they interchange views and ideas of their faith and beliefs. This is where the dialogue of religious experience also becomes a fundamental necessity. Arinze opines that while this dialogue is important, it however requires careful preparation of the participants.[255]

In the face of increased secularism, global discrimination, and religious extremism, collaborative action to tackle the main challenges of the world is perhaps the best way for the various world religions to achieve what Arinze refers to as the 'ultimate goal of mutual encouragement in our search for God'. Therefore, interreligious dialogue in the world has to take a pluralistic dimension due to this development. Such dialogue demands that the different religions of the world interact with each other, in order to foster mutual understanding and respect.

Due to increased secularism, global discrimination, and religious extremism particularly in Africa, and especially in Nigeria, Arinze also sees the need for a more active role and engagement of interreligious dialogue. He highlights that in Africa, dialogue focuses "less on colonial problems from the past than concerns of today. We face pressing issues-social justice, for example, and how people of different ethnic backgrounds can live together harmoniously in national unity and respect for persons who hold other religious affiliations."[256] While focusing on dialogue between Christians, African Traditional Religionists and Muslims, Arinze emphasizes that there must be an

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[253]Baum, "The Church in Solidarity with the World Religions," 6.
[254]Arinze, *Building Bridges*, 40.
[255]Ibid, 41. Therefore according to Arinze, "while it is good to be enthusiastic about an idea, this is not enough. What is important is careful intellectual, spiritual and theological preparation."
[256]Ibid, 70.

attitude of openness and understanding of one another in dialogue. Arinze therefore advocates a more pastoral approach to members of African Traditional Religion. This Arinze posits "means that Christians must try to learn more about such religions and understand better where they are coming from, so that after some examination they can determine which elements in these religions are good, worthwhile and positive. Possibly, the Church might even adopt some of these elements."[257]

On the part of dialogue with Muslims, Arinze argues from his background and his experience in Nigeria. Though Arinze comes from an Igbo background where there are only a few Muslims and no problem between Christians and Muslims, many Igbo people live in Northern Nigeria where there is consistent conflict between Christians and Muslims. It is as a result of this reality that Arinze calls for more efforts on dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. He states that, "today there are many efforts to encourage Christians and Muslims to meet one another. There are various forms of interreligious dialogue; besides direct discussion of different religious doctrines there is the indirect exchange over common ethical, social and ecological issues."[258] The need for more efforts on interreligious dialogue is also eminent as a result of the security challenges in Nigeria. In the light of these challenges, Sam Eyoboka in the *Vanguard* newspaper reported Arinze's position on the importance of dialogue to tackle the challenges. He states; "To tackle the multi-dimensional security challenges facing the nation, Prefect Emeritus, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Disciple of the Sacraments, Vatican City, His Eminence Francis Cardinal Arinze has stressed the need for a religious dialogue that will facilitate better understanding among the different religious groups in the country and promote peace, unity and national growth."[259]

Arinze further speaks on the nature of dialogue in Nigeria. According to him, "in Nigeria we find that it is generally easier to practice indirect dialogue. Many Muslims avoid direct interreligious dialogue because they feel it makes truth relative, but they are quite open to a so-called 'cultural

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[257]Ibid, 61-62.
[258]Ibid, 71.
[259]Sam Eyoboka, "Arinze calls for religious dialogue," *Vanguard, October 6, 2013.*

dialogue'"[260] In the final analysis, there are two fundamental questions put forward on the demand for this kind of dialogue, namely: What are the challenges and problems that this kind of dialogue will create? Will this kind of dialogue lead to compromising one's faith? These two questions lead us to the next heading.

3.9.3 The Risks and Prospects of Interreligious Dialogue: Nature of Interfaith Dialogue

Arinze focuses on practical dialogue within the reality of worldwide pluralism of religions. This kind of dialogue, according to Arinze, falls among the four forms of dialogue presented by the PCID, that is, dialogue of life, dialogue of action, dialogue of discourse, and dialogue of religious experience. Arinze highlights the importance of the four forms of dialogue in the context of the risks and prospects of interreligious dialogue. He asserts that, "it is clear that the above forms of dialogue do not exclude one another, that no one is expected to practice all forms in all circumstances, but that whenever a believer meets another of a different religious conviction, at least one form of dialogue is possible."[261] Arinze thus called for practical dialogue in a way that provides the vision of the Church in her encounters with other religions.

Dialogue is not disguised proselytism or merely tolerance or the mutual exchange of information. It is not an academic exercise or a search for a single religion based on the lowest common denominator. It is not intended to foster syncretism, religious relativism, or indifferentism. These are the areas Arinze considers as risks to interreligious dialogue. Bartholomew however opines that: "Dialogue is not necessary first and foremost because of all the benefits and advantages that can possibly derive from it but because of the fact that it is inherent in the nature of the human person. The truth of this is such that the person who denies participating in a dialogue denies indirectly this very human quality."[262] That is to say every human person by virtue of his/her

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[260]Arinze, *Building Bridges*, 71.

[261]Francis Arinze, *Meeting other Believers,* 21.

[262]Bartholomew I (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople), "The Necessity and Goals of Interreligious Dialogue," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 52, no. 1-4 (Springs-Winter 2007): 237.

existence is a 'dialogue being'.[263] Dialogue is therefore an indispensable characteristic of human existence and relationships.

Arinze thus sees dialogue from a theological perspective as a sincere way in search for the truth. This means dialogue is a process of movement towards God and becoming more receptive to God's saving action. Thus Arinze agrees that "the mystery of salvation includes all people in a way that is ultimately known to God. If people sincerely follow their conscience and dutifully serve God according to the norms of their religion-assuming that these norms do not embrace anything fundamentally evil-then they can certainly share in the saving work of Christ."[264] Dialogue from a theological perspective is therefore considered as a sincere search for truth. From a human perspective, dialogue is to be conducted with mutual respect and sincerity. Dialogue in this sense, according to Arinze, is a reciprocal activity, because it is "marked by a two-way and not a one-way movement. Reciprocity is in the nature of dialogue. There is give and take. Dialogue implies both receptivity and active communication."[265]

On the other hand, Lane also opines an understanding of dialogue that enriches mutual relationships among human beings. Lane states that; "Dialogue as bilateral seeks to go beyond the kind of objective understanding that takes place in science: controlling, detached and 'objective'. In contrast, dialogue seeks to effect a process of mutual understanding that impacts both parties."[266]

Of course, this can never be an easy task. In this way, Bartholomew I also asserts that;

> The interreligious dialogue in the context of religion is one of the most difficult dialogues, for the so-called religions of revelation accept the fact that they express the divine truth through the revelation of God himself. Nevertheless, the existing dispersion of the religious groups and the opposing convictions that they confess prove that some of them are wrong by default, for one rules out the other, and of

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[263]Ibid, 237-238. Bartholomew I therefore emphasizes that for one not to be able to dialogue, "not only does one deny this human quality to those whom he or she does not accept in dialogue but one also abolishes self-evidently one's very own human quality, for by not showing any respect to the person and the dignity of the other, one acts as if he or she lacks the most principal human trait, which is the respect of a human person, both in one's self as well as in any other being."
[264]Arinze, *Building Bridges*, 64-65.
[265]Arinze, *Meeting other Believers*, 16
[266]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 119.

course it is neither possible nor thinkable that God can be controversial to himself.[267]

Therefore, from both a theological and a human perspective, dialogue must be approached with sincerity and respect.

Looking at the prospects of dialogue from human and theological perspectives, sometimes the dialogue leads to co-operative social action, such as the pro-life activities of Catholics and Muslims. Sometimes the dialogue leads to praying for the same objective, even if the prayers are said apart from each other as they were in Assisi. In this sense, according to Arinze, there is spiritual and mutual enrichment through dialogue, there is also the unity of religions in promotion of human values. Thus Arinze emphasizes that "interreligious dialogue can help each participant to grow in his or her own faith when that partner in dialogue encounters a person of another religious persuasion and engages in sincere and calm confrontation of religious beliefs, practices, and values. Sometimes a religious conviction is better appreciated, further studied and deepened, understood and lived with greater commitment, when met with other views."[268] Such dialogue can occur at the grass-roots level as well as at the official or administrative level. Dialogue is also fruitful in inculturation, the combining of the local culture with religious beliefs and practices. The means of expressing religious beliefs and practices must adapt to the local culture. The local culture must adapt and not contradicts the religious beliefs and practices. In this perspective of cultural enrichment through dialogue, Arinze asserts that "through interreligious contacts, for example, Christianity can contribute to other religions' elevation, inspiration, and universality. Christianity has helped some religions to shed some of their unworthy beliefs and practices such as human sacrifice, the killing of twins, or the denial of some human rights to unborn children or to

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[267]Bartholomew I (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople), "The Necessity and Goals of Interreligious Dialogue," 239.
[268]Arinze, *Meeting other Believers*, 24.

women."[269]   On the other hand, Forde also affirms the common points of dialogue between Christians and Muslims. These

> Common points, together with our shared respect for human dignity and our common responsibility to care for creation, provide broad areas in which we can cooperate for the good of humankind and the created world. Even more basic than these broad areas of common concern is our shared wish to live in a place that is safe for our families, friends, and communities. Dialogue is a means of building such a place and, as we have seen, is a means consistent with what both Islam and Christianity teach.[270]

Therefore, there is much enrichment of one another from religious and cultural dimensions in interreligious dialogue. Another important point, Lane argues is that interreligious enrichment is the understanding of our identities. Lane also posits that, "one of the most fundamental points about dialogue is that it is only in and through dialogue that we come to know who we are. It is through encounter with the other, especially the otherness of the other, that we come to understand who we are. This applies to both human identity and religious identity." [271] Through interreligious dialogue, we come to knowledge of our various religions and this helps to protect religions against extremism and fundamentalism.

However, Arinze highlights certain risks that are involved in interfaith dialogue. Such risks, according to him, include "danger of losing one's faith, relativism, syncretism and religious indifferentism."[272] These risks, Arinze says, should not discourage dialogue, but rather enable people to be careful as they engage in dialogue. In the Catholic Church, dialogue is considered as an aspect of the Church's mission. This is not a mission to convert people to the Church. Arinze categorically maintains that; "interreligious dialogue is not the same as an effort to get the interlocutor to be convinced of one's faith and to persuade him to change his religion."[273] Dialogue in the mission of the Church should help to lead people in the search for the truth proclaimed by Christ in the gospels. Arinze therefore distinguishes between conversion and missionary activity of

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[269]Ibid, 25.
[270]Forde, *A Journey Together*, 22.
[271]Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions*, 116.
[272]Arinze, *Meeting other Believers*, 35.
[273]Arinze, *The Church in Dialogue*, 161.

proclaiming the gospel. He clarifies that "dialogue aims at meeting a believer of a different religious conviction in order to listen, to understand, to be enriched, and to cooperate for the good of society. Dialogue presupposes that each partner has a clear and peaceful religious identity."[274]

On the other hand, the missionary activity (to propose one's religion to others), "aims at the conversion of the other person to one's religious conviction. It is marked by proclamation, teaching, catechesis, supply of information and books, invitation to celebrations of the religious community, introduction into its history and patrimony, together with information on the advantages of belonging to that religious community."[275] This is not in the programme of interreligious dialogue. Therefore, the dialogue of leading in the search for the truth is what Arinze describes as conversion to God. Arinze emphasizes that "every believer who meets other believers in interreligious contacts should strive to be more and more open to the action of God. God can speak to us through our encounter with other believers. Such can become occasions in which we are challenged to become more faithful to the deeper calls of our faith."[276] The objective of such dialogue is not to change our religions, but to gain deeper understanding of our faith in God.

However, if conversion occurs in such dialogue, according to Arinze, this may be due to the grace from God, not by force of the actions of people. We are not hoping for a conversion to Catholicism in dialogue. Instead, each party to the conversation should be hoping that God's will be done.

> Some examples may serve to illustrate the point. Italy has been traditionally Catholic. So have Ireland and Spain. But Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are not forbidden to live in these countries, to practice their religion there, and even to propose it to citizens of those countries, as long as they adopt acceptable methods. This is the principle of religious freedom as a fundamental human right.[277]

Perhaps the greatest argument in favour of dialogue is the danger that at the end there is no dialogue, because of drifting away from the aims and objectives. This can create mistrust which

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[274]Ibid, 69.
[275]Ibid.
[276]Ibid, 70-71.
[277]Ibid, 77.

will grow into open hostility, and international, regional or just personal warfare among the religious; violating the dignity and fundamental rights of individual people.

3.9.4 Conclusion on Arinze

Looking at the three areas of Arinze's contributions, the following points clearly stand out. First is that there can never be genuine and authentic peace in the world without the co-operation and collaboration of all the different religions in the world. Therefore, the need for solidarity in the promotion of peace by all the religions of the world is fundamental and more emphasized by Arinze. Arinze therefore argues that with the rise of conflicts and wars in the world, the promotion of peace is a universal venture. He thus emphasizes the role of dialogue and education, especially for religious leaders in the promotion of peace in the world. Dialogue especially is not just for the promotion of peace but serves various purposes.

Arinze again emphasizes the necessity for dialogue in the world as a result of religious pluralism due to movement of people and exchange of cultural diversities. As a result of all these movements and cultural diversities, the world is confronted with so many problems not only from a religious perspective which occupies the human yearnings, but also from social, economic, physical and spiritual problems. Dialogue is the only thing that can lead people in the search for solutions to the problems that confront the human conditions in the world. Of course, interreligious dialogue has its challenges; however, Arinze insists that those challenges should not discourage the effort of interreligious dialogue in the world. Whatever these challenges, Arinze emphasizes that dialogue should be approached with sincerity and openness to promote mutual relations in society.

In the African context especially, Arinze advocates more dialogue between the three main religions of the continent, namely Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. He focuses mainly on dialogue between Christians and Muslims particularly in Nigeria because of the tension existing between Christians and Muslims. In the midst of all these efforts, Arinze also emphasizes the need to pray for peace in the world. However, against the background of relativism and syncretism,

Arinze opposes both interreligious praying (this is when people of different faiths pray at the same time) and against multi-religious praying (this is when people of one faith pray together while others who are there are excluded). He therefore advocates that people of different faiths can pray separately in different places, in the manner of their own traditions or alternatively, they should pray in silence and can demonstrate some gesture when they come together. Arinze states that; "In their prayer for peace, it is best and safest if each religious tradition prays in a separate place according to its identity. . . Provision should be made for periods of silent prayer. I have seen it work out beautifully at gatherings of people of many religions. Silence encourages interiority, reflection, and raising mind and heart to God."[278] Arinze fears the danger of scandal of relativism and syncretism in common prayer. This danger may lead to one religion considering themselves better than others; or even taking elements from the various religions in order to create something new.[279]

Arinze is therefore considered as a significant figure of interreligious dialogue in the Catholic Church, and from this background, he is an intermediate link for the Catholic Church and the PCID with Christians and Muslims in the Nigerian context. Therefore, he is also a necessary figure in connection to this thesis.

3.10 Chapter Conclusion

There seems to be similar emphases of the Popes, the PCID and Cardinal Arinze in the promotion of interreligious dialogue and creating peaceful co-existence in the world. However, while the Popes in their efforts to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council focus on the principles of common beliefs as a source of unity and promotion of peace and justice in the world, brotherhood and solidarity; they also emphasized the respect for human dignity, religious freedom and the promotion of the common good.

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[278] Arinze, *Religion for Peace*, 98.
[279] Ibid.

Similarly, the PCID seek to promote dialogue with other religions, especially with Islam. They therefore emphasized the importance of dialogue with other religions as an aspect of the mission of the Church, and part of the church's ministry of evangelization. With rise in religious conflicts and terrorist activities in the world, the PCID highlights the importance of dialogue with Islam in the spirit of brotherly love and solidarity to seek for peace and in pursuit of the common good. They also emphasized the importance of education in the promotion of dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

In the same vein, Cardinal Arinze also highlighted the necessity of dialogue with other religions in the search for world's peace. Despite the challenges and risks involved, Arinze seeks that dialogue should be carried out in sincerity and open-mindedness to promote mutual relationships among all religions.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the activities and impact of interreligious dialogue in Nigeria. The chapter will therefore be divided into two parts: The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria and the local Theologians/Scholars.

1.   The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria was founded on March 15, 1958. Their contributions on issues of dialogue and relations with Muslims in Nigeria will be the focus of discussion. It will explore the Bishops' communiqués, pastoral letters and statements edited by (a) Chris Anyanwu and Otunba Jide Fadugba-Pinheiro, (b) Peter Schineller;[1] and also published on the website of the Bishops' Conference.[2] Some individual Nigerian Bishops who have been involved in Christian/Muslim dialogue/relations and whose dioceses have been affected by the insurgences will be considered. They include: John Cardinal Onaiyekan of Abuja[3], Archbishop Ignatius A. Kaigama of Jos[4], Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto[5], Bishop Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo[6], Bishop

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[1] a) CBCN, *Our Concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak, Communiqués issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria on the state of the Church and the Nigerian Nation, 1963-2015*, eds. Chris Anyanwu and Otunba Jide Fadugba-Pinheiro (Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2015); and b) *The Voice of the Voiceless: Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002,* ed. Peter Schineller (Ibadan: Daily Graphics Nigeria, 2002).

[2] Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed October 20th, 2016). The CBCN is the umbrella organization that unites the hierarchies of the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The organisation is responsible for making the impact of the Catholic Church in affairs of society and on the Nigerian government. "Through the conference, the archbishops and bishops of the 54 ecclesiastical jurisdictions, as shepherds of souls in their archdioceses and dioceses, are able to pray together, study together, and work together; and with one voice, are able to speak and spearhead the teaching, prophetic and pastoral ministry of the Catholic Church in Nigeria."

[3] John Onaiyekan, "Freedom of Religion in Nigeria: An On-going Project." Notes for discussion at a meeting organised by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, USCIRF), (Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, April 22, 2009).

[4] Ignatius A. Kaigama, a) *Dialogue of Life: An Urgent Necessity for Nigerian Muslims and Christians* (Jos: Fab Educational Books, 2006), *Peace, Not War: A Decade of Interventions in the Plateau State Crises* (Jos: Hamtul Press, 2012); b) "The Challenges of Religious Freedom in Nigeria," *A Talk Delivered at the Presidential Palace, Malta, November 24, 2018,* www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed January 2, 2019).

[5] Matthew Hassan Kukah, "Christian-Muslim Relation: The Nigerian Situation," *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* 25, (2013).

[6] Emmanuel Ade Badejo, "Religious Harmony and Peace: Save the Face of Religion," CBCN, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed October 20, 2016).

Joseph Bagobiri of Kafanchan[7], George Jonathan Dodo of Zaria[8], and Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme, of Maiduguri.[9] Some papal and African synod/Church documents will also be considered

2.   The approach to Interfaith Dialogue in Nigeria from local Theologians/Scholars. They include:

a)   Christians Contributors

Akintunde E. Akinade,[10] Marinus C. Iwuchukwu,[11] Jonathan Madu,[12] Thaddeus Byimui Umaru,[13] Paul Ademóla Ojebude and Paul Osato Aigbekaen.[14]

b)   Muslims Contributors

Yushau Sodiq,[15] Tijani Ahmad Ashimi,[16] Wan Ariffin Wan Yon, Khambali Khadijah Mohd, and Hasan, Ahmad Rozaini Ali et al,[17] Mukhtar Sarkin-Kebbi,[18] Khurshid Ahmad and Salem Azzam.[19]

c)   Others

Kathleen McGarvey,[20] Rekha M. Chennattu,[21] Jan H. Boer,[22] A. A Ogunjemilua and J.O.

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[7]Joseph Bagobiri, "Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace: A Challenge to a Multi-Religious Society," (Welcome Address, AECAWA Interreligious Dialogue Conference, Kaduna-Nigeria, November, 10-14, 2003).

[8]George Jonathan Dodo, "Loving Patience," Interview in Catholic Church Archives-Aid to the Church in Need, Abuja, July 10, 2015, https://acn-canada.org/tag/goodluck-jonathan/ (accessed November 12, 2018).

[9]Oliver Dashe Doeme, "May the God of all consolations console all of us," Pastoral Letter, entry posted October 25, 2014, under "Vatican Radio" en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/25/nigerian_bishop_issues_a..._/1109433 (accessed October 25, 2016).

[10]*Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria: A Contextual Study of Ambivalent Encounters* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan Press, 2014); and "The precarious agenda: Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary Nigeria," *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae 29, no. 1 (June 2003)*.

[11]*Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria: The Challenges of Inclusive Cultural and Religious Pluralism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[12]*Understanding Peace and Conflict Studies: A Handbook in Development and Social Studies* (Enugu: Madonna University Press, 2015).

[13]*Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Milton Keynes: XlibrisLLC. 2013).

[14]"Ensuring Justice and Peace Reigns in the Society: A Re-Awakening Call on the Nigerian Church," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 19, no. 3 (January 2014):.

[15]"Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?" The Muslim World 99, no. 4 (October 2009).

[16]"The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue in Building Muslim-Christian Relations in Nigeria," *Mamdard Islamicus* 37, no.1 (Jannuary-March 2014).

[17]"Bridging The Muslim-Christian Relations Through Dialogue Of Life: Muslim Perspective," *International Proceedings of Economics Development & Research* 5 Issue 2, (January 2011).

[18]"The Role Of Muslim Scholars In Minifying Religious Extremism For Peace Building And Educational Development In Nigeria," *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences* 4, iss. 1 (May 2018)

[19]*Islam: Its Meaning and Message* (London: The Islamic foundation, 1980).

[20]*Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue: The Case of Northern Nigeria* (Switzerland: Verlag Peter Lang, 2008); and "Gender, Peace and Religious Coexistence: Insights from Nigeria," *Journal of Religion and Society* 1, (June 2011).

[21]"Dignity of Women: Christian Perspectives," *Journal of Dharma* 37, no. 1 (January-March 2012).

Familugba,[23] Gwamna, Je'adayibe Dogara,[24] Omololu Fagbadebo.[25]

PART ONE

4.2 The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria and Dialogue with Muslims

The previous chapters set the tone of interfaith dialogue that is required between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This chapter therefore discusses the impact of the Catholic Church in Nigeria in responding to these teachings and principles. It will focus on eight areas of Christian/Muslim dialogue/relations in Nigeria:

1. Mutual Relationship between Christians and Muslims and Social Transformation in Nigeria

2. Freedom and Non-Discrimination of Religion in Nigeria

3. The Family Model: Symbol of Christian-Muslim Unity in Nigeria

4. Solidarity for Social Justice through Dialogue

5. Promotion of Human Dignity in Nigeria

6. The Relevance of Education in Peace Keeping and Nation Building

7. Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

8. The Security and the Defence/Protection of Human Life in Nigeria

These are areas in which the Nigerian Bishops seek to implement the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the Pontifical Commission for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), and call on Christians and Muslims to unite in pursuing the common good in Nigeria.

4.2.1 Mutual Relationship between Christians and Muslims and Social Transformation in Nigeria

The PCID pays attention to the mutual relationship between Christians and Muslims in so many ways. These involve collaborating and living in peace with one another, respecting each other in

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[22]*Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together* (Canada: Essence Publishing, 2009).
[23]"The Contributions of Nigeria Women Towards National Development," *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research* 3, no. 5 (May 2015).
[24]*Religion and Politics in Nigeria.* (Kaduna: Prudent Universal Press, 2010).
[25]"Corruption, Governance and Political Instability in Nigeria," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 1, no. 2 (November 2007).

every way, seeking the truth that will promote human values and the pursuit of the common good. All these have also become the interest of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops because of how significant they are in promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue and peaceful co-existence.

A mutual relationship between Christians and Muslims entails living cordially and harmoniously despite the religious and cultural plurality in Nigeria. It entails friendship and love among people of all religions in Nigeria. The key factor in this regard is love between Christians and Muslims. Building on from the teaching of Benedict XVI, the Nigerian Bishops demand that living a life of love should be an obligation of every person and indeed the entire Church. In the light of Benedict XVI's teaching, this love

> Is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practise love. Love thus needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community. The awareness of this responsibility has had a constitutive relevance in the Church from the beginning.[26]

Consequently, the expression of this love, Benedict XVI states, shines in the Church's nature and character that is built on charity.[27] In this way, the love that exists among people will help to bring about justice and respect for the rights of others in society. This is the position of John XXIII when he says that: "Human society, as we here picture it, demands that men be guided by justice, respect the rights of others and do their duty. It demands, too, that they be animated by such love as will make them feel the needs of others as their own, and induce them to share their goods with others, and to strive in the world to make all men alike heirs to the noblest of intellectual and spiritual values."[28] Christian love therefore seeks to promote justice and the rights of others.

The love of God and neighbour is therefore the guiding principle in the theology of peace building and reconciliation. Pope Francis also posits that:

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[26]Benedict XVI, "Christian Love: *Deus Caritas Est*" (Encyclical Letter to the Bishops Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and All the Lay Faithful, December 25, 2005), no. 20.
[27]Ibid, no. 25.
[28]John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris,* (April 11, 1963): no. 35.

> Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones. That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a civilization of love. Social love is the key to authentic development[29]

In this perspective, Kaigama opines that the teachings of Jesus Christ before and after his death and resurrection were predicated on peace (Mt 10:12, Jn 20:19, Lk 24:36). This concept of peace and its importance in Christendom became a very characteristic greeting of St. Paul in all of his letters.[30] In this sense, peace has become a basic requirement in living the Christian life, as presented in the beatitudes, Matt 5:9.

It is from this perspective of living the Christian life according to the beatitudes that the Catholic Bishops advocate a sincere approach to religion with a purified human heart in order to strengthen human bonds and social values. According to the Bishops; "The human heart must become the sanctuary of the Spirit of God so that the human person can be recreated in the image of the Son of God. When we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, our worship will please God, and our actions will be acceptable in his sight. Then shall we be just to God and to our neighbor, then shall peace and justice reign amongst us in our land."[31]

In the view of Bishop Emmanuel Badejo of Oyo, there must be strategies and commitment to peaceful co-existence and mutual respect by the government, traditional and religious leaders in Nigeria.[32] For John Cardinal Onaiyekan of Abuja, this has to be the major Nigerian project. He says that in the Nigerian project, "we have been working hard at the project of building mutual respect and acceptance, without which there would be no genuine freedom of religion."[33] Again dialogue becomes necessary in trying to achieve the success of the project of building mutual respect and

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[29]Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015): no. 231.
[30]Kaigama, *Peace, not War*, 153-154. Peace therefore is the very essence of the Christian religion and those who work for peace are regarded as children of God. (cf. Mt 5:9).
[31]CBCN, "Conversion for Justice and Reconciliation," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 278.
[32]Badejo, "Religious Harmony and Peace: Save the Face of Religion."
[33]Onaiyekan, "Freedom of Religion in Nigeria," 5.

acceptance of one another in Nigeria. It is the dialogue to seek unity despite the diversities of cultures and religions in Nigeria.

Tremendous efforts are made to resolve religious differences and to implement the means of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. These attempts are to help create conditions where conflicts are not just resolved, but that the frontiers of religious tolerance can be summoned so as to arrive at the threshold of mutual respect and acceptance.[34] All these are geared towards a lasting solution, so that people can live in peace and have mutual respect for one another. People should be accepted anywhere they go, not because of their religion or culture, but based on their dignity as human persons. Interreligious schools have to be encouraged where Christians and Muslims can learn and study together in Nigeria.

Despite all these efforts, there are some areas which the Bishops emphasize must be considered as threats to the mutual relationships between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama affirms that:

> The uneasy relationship these two religions had elsewhere, before their arrival in Nigeria, has influenced the competitive spirit, inexplicable tension, suspicious and sometimes hostile relationship between the Christian and Muslim adherents. Ever since these two religions met in Nigeria, the struggle has often been for increased membership, territorial expansion or the use of religion to gain political capital.[35]

These areas may further be summarized under two headings, namely:

a) Religious Manipulation by Individuals for Selfish Interest in Nigeria

b) Religious Domination and Competition in Nigeria.

4.2.2 Religious Manipulation by Individuals for Selfish Interest in Nigeria

Religious manipulation has been at the center of religious crisis in Nigeria, especially as religion has gradually become a major factor for determining and defining one's identity. Certain individuals have made religion a tool for their self-aggrandizement. They hide behind the scene to create confusions and sponsor or fuel religious crises for their advantage. This also expresses the

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[34]Ibid.
[35]Kaigama, "The Challenges of Religious Freedom in Nigeria,".

idea put forward by Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama as he affirms that "religion is used for the wrong purposes. It is politicized. It is abused and used to kill other people. Religion has nothing to do with the spread of terror by the Islamist *Boko Haram* militia"[36] This Islamist group is known for its radical ideology that seeks to impose the Islamic shari'a law at least in the northern part of Nigeria. Their activities discussed in chapter one are most overwhelming in the north-eastern part of the Nigeria, where lives and property worth millions of naira have been lost. Women, children, government and Christian institutions have been their major target. For them, their effort is but a conscious religious attempt to win converts for Islam. According to Ignatius Kaigama, with the *Boko Haram* activities, youths and some economically vulnerable persons "have been manipulated to take up arms to fight 'holy wars' or to initiate 'crusades' as a way of preserving their religious identity or a way of promoting their religion. Religion has been used as a reason to terrorize people, destroy both lives and property and some even claim that they have done great service to God and humanity, by bombing the other out of existence."[37]

Matthew Hassan Kukah of Sokoto, Chairman of inter-religious dialogue for the Nigerian Bishops, was reported in the Vanguard Newspaper to have said that:

> Although conflict has been a part and parcel of the narrative of most religions, events in the last few years have created so much anxiety that it seems safe to say that ordinary believers and non-believers are visibly terrified by what is being done in the name of religion. The key actors, who have turned religion from a weapon of love to an arsenal of fear and savagery, claim that they are acting in the name of religion. They believe that they are acting to expand the frontiers of power and authority of their religion.[38]

This expresses how religion has been misused by political elites in the country for selfish intentions.[39] Nonetheless, while religion is used to manipulate politics in the North, in the South and

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[36]Ignatius A. Kaigama, interview by Deutsche Welle (DW made for minds), June 10, 2015).
[37]Kaigama, *Dialogue of Life*, 18.
[38]Matthew Kukah, "Future of Religion in Nigeria's Politics," *Vanguard*, November 29, 2015.
[39]Ibid. Kukah further narrates that "Right before our eyes, what we call religious crises are often crises over unresolved antagonisms within the cleavages of the political classes. In their pursuit of their personal exploitations for accumulation, they are blind to the boundaries of religion and ethnicity. But in real life, our people are being held hostage by the darker forces of politics as politicians generate and deploy hostile narratives to divide the poor and the weak."

the East, ethnicity and tribal sentiment is the order of the day. Awareness and enlightenment is needed to educate people against such trends, and the educational curriculum of interfaith dialogue is an important means for achieving this.

Many people still use religion in Nigeria for their selfish and greedy interest. This shows that proper education is lacking in Nigeria. People who are well educated cannot be easily manipulated and controlled by a negative influence or ideology. On the contrary, educated people tend to teach and not to manipulate. It is an abuse of religion when it is being used for selfish gains by individuals. The Nigerian Bishops assert that: "True religion has to do with relationship between human beings and God, which in turn guides and nourishes correct relationship among people. However, unfortunately, religion in our country seems to have been hijacked and held hostage by some charlatans who continue to exploit religion to further their ambitions and interests."[40] Furthermore, Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah also affirms that some Northern Politicians manipulate religion and create divisions among the people. Kukah posits that: "The Northern ruling class had shown that it was not willing to create any distinction between the boundaries of Muslim culture and politics in Nigeria. The non-Muslims, feeling left out and treated very clearly as outsiders, decided to seek common cause by also defining their own identity."[41] This position of religious manipulation by Northern Nigerian elite was also highlighted by the CBCN in 1993 as a challenge to national cohesion.[42]

Even with the effort to restore full democracy in Nigeria, the Nigerian Bishops still observe that some politicians are not conscious of their responsibilities, and instead use politics for selfish aims. "Unfortunately, far too many politicians in our country have continued to use politics merely as a

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[40]CBCN, "Restoring Confidence in Nigeria," A Statement of the CBCN on the State of the Nation, Akure, September 15, 2016, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed December 10, 2018).
[41]Kukah, "Christian-Muslim Relation: The Nigerian Situation," 9.
[42]CBCN, "Authentic Religion Saves a Nation," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 103. In this context, the CBCN maintain that there is an abuse of religion "when people fraudulently manipulate religion for gaining undue political, social or economic advantage over others. In all this, responsibility falls on every religious adherent, but in a special way on the leaders. In such situations of misuse and abuse of religion, peaceful collaboration becomes almost, if not totally, impossible. The role of government as an even-handed supporter of religion and as an impartial umpire in religious matters is also crucial if religion is not to become a major problem in society."

platform for self-enrichment, oppression and the pursuit of goals that are totally at variance with our common good, collective wellbeing and aspirations."[43] As a result, such politicians end up creating barriers and divisions among the people. The few that benefit from them will defend them, against the wellbeing of the general masses. Religious leaders should therefore be aware of those who use religion to create division among Christians and Muslims, and destroy the unity Nigerians desire to achieve.

4.2.3 Religious Domination and Competition in Nigeria

Religious domination has also been among the key factors responsible for religious crises and riots in Nigeria. Bishop George Jonathan Dodo of Zaria explains this from a Christian view in the following statement: "As long as Muslims refuse to treat us as equals, we will not have peace. But now that we meet regularly, Muslim leaders are ashamed to come and give explanations for violence when Christians do not take revenge after an attack. We try to have patience with them, as God had patience with us and came among us at the fulfilled time."[44]

Patience with one another is an important element of religious tolerance and understanding. Without patience, the efforts for peaceful co-existence will be futile. This is why Cardinal Onaiyekan opines that;

> Problems are often created in the area of religious freedom by people with fanatical and exclusive views of their own religions, making no room for others to believe differently. Such fanatics exist on both sides of the religious divide in Nigeria. These are people who say they cannot tolerate a church or a mosque in their neighbourhood. They also try to disrupt orderly religious processions and public celebrations.[45]

Such attitudes always depict to some extent signs of weakness and intolerance in the life of a religious movement as the case may be. What this does at best is the breeding of all of forms bigotry, fanaticism and extremism.

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[43]CBCN, "Restoring Confidence in Nigeria,"
[44]Dodo, "Loving Patience."
[45]Onaiyekan, "Freedom of Religion in Nigeria," 4.

According to a report of the Seminary Committee of the CBCN, two factors can be seen as dominant to the religious violence as a result of religious fanaticism in Nigeria. There is the collapse of the Islamic caliphate and Empire. There is also the determination of Islam to always rule. Consequently, since the Uthman dan Fodio *jihad* of the 19th century, down to the eras of the Maitatsine, the Qur'aniyyun, Izala, al-Janna Tabbas movements of the 1980s-1990s and the recent *Boko Haram* and Herders attacks, Islam has been pushing forward to dominate and rule. According to the report; "These groups are still reeling in the grief of the collapse of both the Caliphate and the Empire. They are motivated by the ideology that Islam has to rule in all spheres of life. Above all, western civilization is antithetical to Islam, and it is in this context that Islamic violence in Nigeria has been prevalent."[46] Wherever religious fanaticism is found, there is usually no room for religious tolerance. There are bound to be attacks and counter-attacks at the least provocation. This can create a scenario of clashes that may result in religious conflicts and riots.

The Second African Synod cautioned that tendencies that provoke religious conflicts and manipulation should be avoided by Christians and Muslims. Such tendencies can be seen through discrimination in favour of a particular religion. The synod highlights that, "When this religious fervour is misdirected by fanatics or manipulated by politicians, conflicts are provoked that tend to engulf everyone. But under proper direction and leadership, religions are a strong power for good, especially for peace and reconciliation."[47]

With regards to religious tolerance, Archbishop Kaigama argues that most of the time, "the root of the conflict comes from a belief among believers on both sides that their way is best, without being willing to look at both sides. That is a stance that Catholics should be able to understand, given the church's long time insistence that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church."[48] In the

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[46]CBCN, "Christian Witness in the Face of Islamic Militancy," Communiqué at the end of the 2018 National Seminaries Workshop, Iseinu-Nsukka, May 2-5, 2018, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed November 20, 2018).

[47]"Message to the People of God, of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," (Vatican: Synod of African Bishops, October 24, 2009), no. 39.

[48]Ignatius Kaigama, "Christians, Muslims find paths to dialogue in Africa," reported by Michelle Martin, Catholic News Service, in *America Jesuit Review Magazine,* November 13, 2015, 1.

Nigerian society with plurality of religions and different Christian bodies, this notion cannot be the basis of interfaith or ecumenical dialogue. Therefore, instead of focusing on this notion of 'no salvation outside the Catholic Church', Christians and Muslims should focus on the principle of unity and solidarity. In this principle, Christians and Muslims can contribute to a better society by their religious values.

Christianity, according to Kaigama "creates no room for violence, it gives no vacancy for breakdown in inter-personal relationships, and seeks to employ all strategies to bring about peace."[49] This should be the focus and principle to which both Christians and Muslims adhere. On the contrary, antagonism and squabble with one another will only destroy the progress and development of society and the common good.[50] All these negative influences affect interreligious dialogue and create tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. These situations are also evidence of religious domination in Nigeria whereby one particular religion wants to feel relevant and more important than the other.

While it is clear that social justice and peaceful co-existence are an important aspect of interfaith dialogue and religious freedom in Nigeria, there still remains a lot of tension between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. For instance, among other issues in the Christian-Muslim crises in Nigeria, is establishment of the federal Capital in Abuja.[51] Furthermore, of recent in May, 2015, Nigeria experienced a transition of government from a Christian President Jonathan Goodluck to a Muslim President Muhammadu Buhari. It was expected that President Buhari would be unbiased as a

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[49]Kaigama, *Peace, not War*, 127.

[50]Ibid, 161. Kaigama further elaborates when he maintains that "People who are divided by prejudicial quarrels, racial and cultural conflicts, tribal sentiments or religious persuasions are prevented from developing."

[51]CBCN, "Justice: the Foundation for Peace," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 190. (Statement at the end of Conference, Awka-Anambra, 26-30, October, 1987). According to the CBCN, "The position and the administration of Abuja as the new capital of the Federation was so clearly defined as to leave no one in doubt whatsoever about the purpose it is meant to serve. Abuja as the Capital of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a symbol of National Unity, a place where every Nigerian of good will is so welcome that he or she does not suffer from discrimination, religious or tribal. However, we observe with dismay and disappointment that key positions like the Minister, and Permanent Secretary of the FCT seem to be the preserve of Moslems." The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is very central to all Nigerians and not any particular region or religion. Furthermore, in relation to the Federal Capital, "plans are ahead to mount Islamic emblems at the proposed main gates leading to the city of Abuja instead of the national emblem. And bus stops already constructed are in the form of mini-mosques." These stand against the principle of religious freedom in a secular state such as Nigeria.

President. However, the Nigerian Bishops observed that the "one-sided appointments into public office have displayed a tendency towards a form of sectionalism that we found it difficult to associate with high moral credentials of the President."[52] Unfortunately this situation did not give President Muhammadu Buhari credibility regarding the unity of Nigeria. Another important issue relating to social justice and peaceful co-existence affecting the unity of Nigeria is the membership of Nigeria in OIC (Organisation of Islamic Countries). Nigerian Catholic Bishops at one of their conferences maintain that such issues must be clarified for all Nigerians.[53] The Nigerian's membership in the OIC suggests an effort to make Nigeria a religious state and not a state free from religious influence. In this kind of situation, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops argue that it is showing favouritism to Islam.[54] The government of Nigeria must not take sides with any particular religion, and should try by all means not to cause a barrier to the unity that Christians and Muslim set out to achieve through dialogue.

A more sensitive issue centers on the implementation of Sharia law in the country. This is a disturbing situation for the Nigerian Catholic Bishops as they observe from national daily newspapers and media reports on how the Sharia courts in Nigeria have been supported by the government.[55] The concern of the Nigerian Bishops is that the implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria will definitely affect the practice of religious freedom, and also contravene the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on freedom of religion. In this perspective, Kaigama blames the partial implementation of the Constitution of Nigeria by the governemnt. In Kaigama's view, "this

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[52]CBCN, "Restoring Confidence in Nigeria,"

[53]CBCN, "Justice: the Foundation for Peace," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 190. The Nigerian Bishop "Would have liked to believe that the issue of the OIC has been laid to rest. However, we are disturbed by two things. One is the recent move, according to newspaper reports, to have Nigeria become a member of the Islamic Development Bank (I.D.B.) which is a subsidiary of the OIC. The second is the statement credited to the Head of State, President Babangida, that in an interview he granted to *West African Magazine* of September 27, 1987 he said that Nigeria's membership of the OIC is still "open", and therefore not a closed issue."

[54]CBCN, "Church and State Partnership in the Provision of Quality Education," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 330. The CBCN further maintain in a communiqué that "to adopt any religion as a State religion at the Federal or State level will lead to favouritism and partiality which deprive the rest of equality before the law. In the spirit of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Government at all levels should handle religious matters discretely"

[55]CBCN, "Justice: the Foundation for Peace," 190. "Related to all we have said is the threat to impose the Sharia Law on the entire nation contrary to the fact that the country is a secular state. Already there is a Sharia Court of Appeal with its Grand Khadi on government payroll in the Federal Capital Territory."

constitutional provision is only partially translated into reality. Religious freedom in Nigeria is somehow allowed if one considers that the Muslims have Sharia courts established up to the Court of Appeal with judges paid from government coffers; Muslims have enjoyed official government patronage for pilgrimages long before their Christian counterpart."[56] This religious tie between government and state led to full implementation of Sharia law in some northern States in 1999. The response to the implementation along with other religious issues also led to religious crises where many were killed as Kaigama affirms:

> The Miss World contest in 2002, when about 200 lives were needlessly lost because of the disapproval of some who felt that the whole exercise was unethical and the publication of the cartoon of Prophet Muhammad in far away Denmark in 2005 which led to many deaths and before it the new dimension of Sharia introduced in 1999 and propagated by the former Governor of Zamfara State, Alhaji Ahmad Sani Yerima, which almost polarized the nation, are cases in point.[57]

All these are vital and critical issues on religious domination and competition that affect Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria. They also form one of the factors responsible for crises in the country.[58]

The current riots and insurgencies in the country can also be traced to such mentality. All these issues signify that Islam has an agenda in Nigeria as many Christians believe.

Therefore, for a peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, all these factors must be put into consideration, and appropriate channels of interfaith dialogue must be implemented to keep religion from being used for selfish purposes. Once again, the importance of education in dialogue is required in this regard to make Christians and Muslims understand themselves better and unite strongly.

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[56]Kaigama, "The Challenges of Religious Freedom in Nigeria,"
[57]Ibid.
[58]CBCN, "Peace through Justice and Love: Religion, Justice and Peace," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 479. In the past, religious tensions and crises have often been provoked and fuelled by opportunists for whom religion is only a means and a pretext for scoring political, economic and social advantages. They often, unfortunately, manage to drag along sincere believers into misguided battles. It is blasphemy, a crime against God's name, to use God's name fraudulently in a selfish battle. The believer must be vigilant.

4.2.4 Freedom and Non-Discrimination of Religion in Nigeria

Among the themes/subjects of the Second Vatican Council is Freedom of religion. This has already been discussed in chapter two, where freedom of religion was presented as an indispensable right of the individual person to seek the truth without compulsion or coercion. This was also emphasized by the Second African Synod. Freedom of religion according to the Second African Synod "includes also freedom to share one's faith, to propose, not impose it, to accept and welcome converts. Those nations which by law forbid their citizens from embracing the Christian faith are depriving their own citizens of their fundamental human right to freely decide on the creed to embrace."[59] Freedom of religion is also an important aspect which the Nigerian Catholic Bishops focus on because of the abuse and atrocities committed in the name of religion in Nigeria. It is based on the abuse of religion in Nigeria that Kaigama states:

> The unhealthy rivalry between adherents of Islam and Christianity always pushes the nation to religiously inspired violence especially in the North. Violence has occurred in the name of religion, but deep at the roots there are social, economic, political and ethnic discontent by minority groups begging for attention. There are religious leaders who ignite and fuel fires, while other moderate preachers attempt to quench the fires.[60]

Pope John Paul II made a similar call to the Church in Africa in his Post-Synodal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*. John Paul II requests that emphasis should be given to freedom of religion, so that respect can flourish between Christians and Muslims. He opines that freedom of religion is required;

> So that Islamic-Christian dialogue respects on both sides the principle of religious freedom with all that this involves, also including external and public manifestations of faith. Christians and Muslims are called to commit themselves to promoting a dialogue free from the risks of false irenicism or militant fundamentalism, and to raising their voices against unfair policies and practices, as well as against the lack of reciprocity in matters of religious freedom.[61]

The Second African Synod also recommends the promotion of religious freedom as a matter of fundamental human right. The synod emphasizes that when religious freedom is not respected, it

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[59]"Message to the People of God, of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," no. 41.
[60]Kaigama, "The Challenges of Religious Freedom in Nigeria,"
[61] *Ecclesia in Africa,* no. 66.

frustrates the effort of interfaith dialogue. It therefore "warns that such restriction of freedom subverts sincere dialogue and frustrates genuine collaboration. Since Christians who decide to change their religion are welcomed into the Muslim fold, there ought to be reciprocity in this matter. Mutual respect is the way forward. In the emerging world, we need to make room for every faith to contribute fully to the good of humanity."[62]

Respect is reciprocal and entails that both Christians and Muslims should respect one another. The Second African Synod further emphasizes the importance of respecting the right to religious freedom in Africa for the promotion of justice and peace. The synod fathers therefore, "urge that all countries in Africa recognize and protect religious liberty and freedom of worship and that all forms of intolerance, persecution and religious fundamentalism might be eliminated. They also ask for the restitution of Churches, Church property and the property of other religious institutions, confiscated by some countries."[63] These were all the issues that cause grievances and tensions among the different religions in Africa. It is from this backdrop that the Catholic Church in Nigeria sees the need for religious freedom to be treated with great importance between Christians and Muslims.

Vatican II's declaration on religious freedom also concerns the dignity of the human person without discrimination. The problem of discrimination in Nigeria goes back to the independence period in 1960. Thus, in a Joint Pastoral Letter of the Nigerian Bishops on October 1st 1960, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops highlight that discrimination is a challenge to the diversity of the nation.[64] Catholics and indeed all responsible citizens, according to the Nigerian Bishops, are to be cordial and transparent in their relationships despite their diversities. The Nigerian Catholic Bishops state: "We observe with dismay the growing inequality and lack of respect for basic rights

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[62]"Message to the People of God, of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," no. 41.

[63]Second African Synod, "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace. You are the salt of the earth ...You are the light of the world» (*Mt* 5: 13,14)," Vatican: the Holy See, October 23, 2009), Proposition 27.

[64]CBCN, "Social Problems-Unity in Diversity," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 8. The Nigerian Bishops stated clearly that: "For some years to come we shall have to face problems that arise from the great extent of the country and from the diversity of our peoples. We shall solve these problems best by facing them candidly and not by ignoring them."

in our nation. Cases of discrimination on the bases of religion, ethnic group and political affiliation still abound. This is evident in the recent government appointments and provision of social amenities."[65] Catholics accordingly should shun and reject any action of tribalism and discrimination.[66] In a similar manner, Muslims too are encouraged to seek unity with Christians at all costs. The Nigerian Bishops state: "In this challenging time in our history as people, we call for more concerted efforts in overcoming the spirit of unhealthy competition, suspicion, negativity and tenacious postures between Christians and Muslims."[67]

The Catholic Church in Nigeria tries to reach out to all people on the principles and teachings of Vatican II. Bishop Badejo expresses that: "Catholics accommodate in our schools, clinics and hospitals, adherents of all religions. We provide employment and training to all, irrespective of religion. We try to relate to others at all times with fairness, respect for the religion, rights and dignity of all without discrimination."[68] In the view of Badejo, a society where places of learning will be open to all without discrimination is needed in Nigeria. Health and medical centres should be accessible to everyone no matter what religion one belongs to. Commercial centres and business entrepreneurship should be open to all. Everyone in society should feel accepted without any religious bias. If this can be implemented, then that is a step towards progress, and the best place to begin such implementations are the schools. The Church sees herself as an institution of development and liberation to the people. The Church therefore must promote the rights of the oppressed.

While the Nigerian Bishops have always been at the forefront in the general condemnation of all forms of discrimination in the country since independence nearly sixty years ago; this problem

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[65]CBCN, "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development," Communiqué at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Akure, September 8-16, 2016, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed December 4, 2018).

[66]CBCN, "Social Problems-Unity in Diversity, " in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 8. In their words, the Nigerian Bishops maintain that "no Catholic can with a good conscience indulge in a policy that sets one section of the state against another - 'tribalism' as this attitude is usually called. Catholic Church is justly proud that she has made into one family of God people from all parts of Nigeria. Since she is herself a universal society that includes in her fold cultures and peoples from all parts of the world, she has been ideally suited to fostering the unity in diversity that we want in Nigeria. She wishes to go on making a contribution to the building up of Nigeria fellowship."

[67]CBCN, "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development."

[68]Badejo, "Religious Harmony and Peace: Save the Face of Religion."

continues to affect the progress and development of the country. Many people are being discriminated against because of their tribal or religious affiliation. This can be seen in areas of political appointments, job employments, admissions into some schools and high institutions and residential areas. According to the Catholic Bishops, this has been among the factors responsible for the conflicts in Nigeria. The Catholic Bishops affirm that; "The reality on ground and the verdict of most of our people across the nation-irrespective of religious affiliation, ethnic group or social status-point to the contrary. The inability of the Government to address the inequitable situation in the country has provided breeding ground for violent reactions, protests and agitations, which exploit the grievances of different segments of the country."[69] To examining how these problems can be resolved, a sincere approach must be made by the government of Nigeria. An educational approach to create an awareness and understanding that all human beings are one and equal before God and the law must be upheld.

The Government of Nigeria too has special roles to play in providing unity and eliminating discrimination against any individual or group(s) in society. The Bishops had advised the government in this regard to guide against any action of discrimination. Thus the Bishops state: "We count on government to safeguard due freedom of opinion and expression for all genuine religious bodies. Government should also carefully guard against any action likely to raise suspicion of discrimination against, or partiality in favour of any religious body. This will go a long way to reducing incidents of violent religious fanaticism."[70] For the nation to progress there must be religious peace and harmony. There must also be equity in religious matters from the government, and all must commit themselves to collaborate with government in the desire to promote this course. Kaigama states: "Today in Nigeria, there are fervent and frantic efforts made

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[69]CBCN, "Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration," A Communiqué issued at the End of Second Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Jalingo-Taraba State, 7-15 September 2017, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed March 3, 2019).

[70]CBCN, "Extracts From a Memorandum Submitted to the Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander In Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, on the Occasion of the first visit of the Delegation to the Head of State," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 141.

by adherents of both Islam and Christianity to encourage sustainable peace. There was a time when the silence of some notable personalities was deafening especially when members of the opposite religion were the victims. The Nigeria Inter Religious Council has been very vocal about peace and harmony."[71] Every Nigerian must be seen as an equal despite his/her religious affiliation. This is the best way to tackle religious discrimination.

The concept of respect for religion is also an important aim of the Nigerian project. This is the position of Onaiyekan when he maintains that: "We try to respect the freedom of everyone and of every group. As of now most Nigerians are either Christians or Muslims, and are of fairly equal numerical strength. Freedom of religion boils down to freedom for Nigerians to be either Muslims or Christians."[72] The point here is that Nigerians should be faithful to the constitution of the Federal Republic that also guarantees the freedom of religion. It means one is free to choose which ever religion one desires in Nigeria.

Benedict XVI also emphasizes the need to respect religious freedom. He therefore seeks, "the whole Church, through patient dialogue with Muslims, to seek juridical and practical recognition of religious freedom, so that every citizen in Africa may enjoy not only the right to choose his religion freely and to engage in worship, but also the right to freedom of conscience. Religious freedom is the road to peace."[73] The following questions are worth reflecting on the challenges of religious freedom in Nigeria: Must one change his/her religion before they can belong to a community dominated by a particular religion? Is it possible for the governor of Kano State to be Christian, or a Muslim to be a governor in the Eastern part of Nigeria? These fundamental questions challenge religious freedom and encourage discrimination in Nigeria.

4.2.5 The Family Model: Symbol of Christians-Muslims Unity in Nigeria

The family is considered as the foundation of society. It is the family that provides the background and values for individuals in society. The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria acknowledge this reality and

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[71]Kaigama, "The Challenges of Religious Freedom in Nigeria,"
[72]John Onaiyekan, "Freedom of Religion in Nigeria An On-going Project," 5.
[73]*Africae Munus*, no. 94.

emphasizes that: "The family is the first school of virtue. The Christian family is the domestic church, the first school of evangelization, the first school of faith, and an indispensable pastoral collaborator. The family also has a responsibility to the society. Every family must be involved in the way the nation is built."[74]

The family is structured in such a way that everyone has a role and performs functions that will contribute to the welfare and general good of every member. The roles and functions in the family show how love should exist in the family, especially between parents and their children. Thus, it is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that love is well established in their family. This is a fundamental responsibility entrusted to them by virtue of their marital obligations which also come from God. Thus, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria clearly affirm that:

> The family is at the service of love and life when parents educate their children on the essential values of human life-to love the truth, to love the good, to love and to be loved, to love God. This is itself the ministry of the church in which the family is able to participate when husband and wife live in fidelity, love and mutual respect. In this way parents teach their children to love in the wider society, and good families build good nations.[75]

One of the ends of marriage according to the code of canon law is the procreation of children.[76] This requirement in marriage also goes with the responsibility of education. On this note, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria also reaffirm that:

> The primary responsibility of parents is not just to pass genes unto their children but also to bring them up in every aspect of life in the society. Christian parents in particular have the responsibility of inculcating civic and religious values to form them into good citizens and good Christians. The religious education they provide for their children is the foundation on which their civic education rests.[77]

How this role can best be achieved is by giving witness to those values that provide the dignity of the human person, which the parents also acquire through their spiritual and moral lives. These they

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[74]Catholic Church. Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, "Statement on elections, the family and Boko Haram," *Originsonline.com* 44, no. 40 (March 2015): 663.
[75]CBCN, "Good Families Makes Good Nations," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 340.
[76]Canon 1055 §1.
[77]CBCN, "Good Families Makes Good Nations," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 340.

can pass on to their children through their personal lifestyles and example, as the saying goes: 'the best way to learn is by example'.

This image and role of the family is also employed as a model of relationships in a general sense. Hence there is the need for individuals to collaborate on a national level in building a nation based on the core values they inherit from their family background. This is why the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria also emphasize that: "A nation is itself a family of families, a community of persons who share common core values, and the family is the nucleus of the community of persons that a nation is. Every nation needs effective institutions and leaders of intellectual, moral and technical competence to administer these institutions. The family, as vital cell of the society, is where such leaders are born and nurtured."[78] The family is therefore responsible for the good functioning and progress of society and nation.[79]

Since every structure and institution of society receives its quality and effectiveness from the family background, the Nigerian Bishops maintain that:

> The effectiveness of such institutions and the emergence of good leaders in the nation largely depend on the family. The family, as a community of persons, gives birth to and nourishes the nation and every other institution critical to the life of that nation. Nations are built on and secured by values, and the family is the first place of acquisition of values. That is why the state of a nation is a reflection of the state of its families.[80]

The family is therefore a necessary instrument of transformation and development of a nation. This is at the center of the call made by John Paul II in the first African synod when he states: "It is earnestly to be hoped that theologians in Africa will work out the theology of the Church as Family with all the riches contained in this concept, showing its complementarity with other images of the Church".[81]

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[78]Ibid.

[79]John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 45. This is the stance of John Paul II when he asserts that "The family and society have complementary functions in defending and fostering the good of each and every human being. But society-more specifically the State-must recognize that 'the family is a society in its own original right' and so society is under a grave obligation in its relations with the family to adhere to the principle of subsidiarity."

[80]Catholic Church. Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, "Statement on elections, the family and Boko Haram," 662.

[81]*Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63.

From the above perspective, Christians and Muslims are therefore called upon to consider themselves as one family in pursuit of a common goal for the good of all. Just as individuals have different identities in the family and yet still cooperate for the good of their family, so also Christians and Muslims are to see themselves as different in faith profession, yet one in unity for the common good. "By common good is to be understood 'the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily. The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority."[82]

This responsibility towards the common good was also emphasized in the pastoral letter of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). It states "that everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the Common Good of all members of society. A better society is not for the benefit of the elite but for all. The way in which we organize our society directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow together in community and contribute to the Common Good."[83]

The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria therefore request Christians and Muslims to reflect on the ideals which the old Nigerian National Anthem stated.[84] The unity of Christians and Muslims as one family is also similar to how John Paul II presented the Church in Africa at the first African synod when he emphasized the Church in Africa as a family. For John Paul II;

> This image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelization will thus aim at *building up the Church as Family,* avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favouring solidarity and the sharing of personnel and resources among the particular Churches, without undue ethnic considerations.[85]

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[82]Canon 1906.

[83]SECAM, "Governance, the Common Good and Democratic Transitions in Africa," (Pastoral Letter, Accra-Ghana, February 25, 2013).

[84]Lillian Jean Williams, "Nigeria we Hail thee," (Wikisource, 1960). 'Though tribe and tongue (and creed) may differ, in brotherhood we stand.'

[85]*Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 63.

Such spirit and attitudes should also be brought into the forum of Christian-Muslim unity and relationship in Nigeria. According to the Nigerian Bishops, this calls for an enlargement of the African traditional concept of the family life in order to help liberate the nation from the shackles of ethnocentrism, malicious ethnic and religious solidarity. By doing so, Nigerians will learn to recognize their common humanity despite their being different. If not for anything else, it should be done for the sake of posterity.[86] Furthermore, the family image is a model for dialogue with Muslims per se. Christians and Muslims can embrace themselves and live as one, united in one purpose and goal of peaceful co-existence.

In a joint communiqué, the Nigerian Bishops further emphasize that, "religion and matters of faith should no longer be allowed to divide us. As we approach the centenary of Nigeria's existence, the time has come to move beyond religious tolerance to recognition and acceptance of our common humanity and respect for religious and ethnic differences. This is an essential step in our march to nationhood."[87] Family unity is thus a foundation of national unity and a source of solidarity for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Therefore, Christians and Muslims are to collaborate in achieving the progress and development of Nigeria.

Christians and Muslims must forget their differences and be united to pursue the progress and development of the country as their common goal. Without this, freedom of religion will not be possible and interreligious dialogue will also be difficult. The collaboration of Christians and Muslims should also be extended to institutions and places of learning.

4.2.6 Solidarity for Social Justice through Dialogue in Nigeria

Solidarity and social justice are among the key issues that the Second Vatican Council and the PCID seek to promote among the various religions of the world. While the Second Vatican Council emphasizes the unity of all the religions as the basis of solidarity and promotion of social justice among them, the PCID specifically focuses on the theme of solidarity especially between

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[86]Catholic Church. Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, "Statement on elections, the family and Boko Haram," 663.
[87]CBCN "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 319.

Christians and Muslims in the world. With the crisis of religion between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, the Nigerian Bishops seek solidarity and social justice as a solution to combat social vices that create tension and insecurity in Nigeria. This is emphasised in their 2017 communiqué where the Bishops highlight clearly:

> Our country is currently passing through a phase that is marked by tension, agitation and a general sense of hopelessness and dissatisfaction. This we believe is as a result of years of injustice, inequity, corruption, and impunity. There are agitations in many sectors of the country against the one-sidedness in appointments to key institutions and sensitive national offices, against marginalisation, and unfair distribution of resources and amenities. There are also allegations of cases of selective application of the rule of law.[88]

A similar point was made in the 2008 communiqué.[89] In the midst of all these problems, religion is seen to play a key role because the present government led by a Muslim president that seemingly promotes Islam in his appointments and administration. This situation has made the Bishops recall the words of the President when he addressed them: "Government has no business preferring one religion to the other. The role of government is to protect lives and properties of citizens and to respect and protect their constitutional rights. . . Furthermore, we find the calls for the expansion of the scope of Sharia law in public life at variance with the letter and spirit of the Nigerian Constitution."[90] Based on this negative development, the Bishops therefore seek solidarity and social justice in Nigeria. According to them this will demand spiritual and social transformation. The Catholic Bishops admonish Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to stand against all forms of injustices no matter the consequences.

The search for spiritual and social transformation in Nigeria cannot be achieved by the Catholic Church alone. It demands the co-operation and collaboration of other religions and groups. Consequently, there is the need for dialogue among all the religions and groups in Nigeria. It is on

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[88]CBCN, "Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration."

[89]CBCN, "Towards Spiritual and Social Transformation," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 262-263. The Bishops argue therein that "insecurity, characterized by spates of armed robbery, kidnapping and killings, adds to this sense of hopelessness. Corruption still remains unabated. The consideration of merit in admission into institutions of learning, employment and promotion, has been thrown to the wind. Nepotism and mediocrity seem to have been elevated to an art."

[90]CBCN, "Restoring Confidence in Nigeria." (President Muhammadu Buhari's address to the Bishops).

this note that the Nigerian Bishops appreciate how dialogue has been effective between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria particularly with the formation of Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC).[91] The NIREC is to be considered a project for all. The Nigerian government is called to support the initiative especially as it will foster peaceful co-existence since it provides a platform for encounter between Christians and Muslims in the country. It is important also to note that the emphasis of the Nigerian Bishops on dialogue focuses on social issues than religious matters; because the problems between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria are more of a social problem.

To achieve social transformation, the Nigerian Bishops further believe that because of the complexity noticed in the nature of the development in the socio-economic sector of the country, the church has no choice other than to remain focused on her mission. As the family of God on mission, the church should be able to ensure and intensify without hesitation an on-going formation of all pastoral agents in the country.[92].

From the larger context in Africa, SECAM communication department also emphasizes that dialogue should be promoted among the different faith communities, in mutual trust. Monsignor Ben Assorow highlights that:

> In our Continent which is more and more confronted by issues of violence and religious extremism, we analyzed the contribution of the inter-religious dialogue toward the consolidation of peace and the bringing together of peoples and cultures. We are convinced that the inter-religious dialogue coupled with good governance practices by our African leaders constitute a genuine engine for the integral development of our countries.[93]

In this perspective, Rev. Fr. Efeturi Ojakaminor also argues that justice and equality will resolve most of Nigeria's problems.[94]

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[91]CBCN, "Towards Spiritual and Social Transformation," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 262. The Bishops state that "dialogue between Christians and Muslims is bearing fruit in some areas, leading to greater tolerance, harmonious coexistence and peace. This should be extended, promoted and sustained in every part of the country. Government at all levels should strengthen the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) as a means of promoting religious freedom, unity and progress among Nigerians."

[92]Ibid, 64.

[93]Ben Assorow, "Justice and Peace at the service of reconciliation and integral development of Africa," (Congress of SECAM Justice and Peace Commissions Dobra, Windhoek-Namibia March 15, 2015).

[94]Efeturi Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee!!* (Iperu-Remo: The Ambassador, 2000), 200.

Solidarity and social justice can also serve as a means to promote faith and the dignity of the human person. The 2013 communiqué of the Nigerian Bishops emphasizes faith and the dignity of the human person. The communiqué was issued in line with Benedict XVI's proclamation of 2012-2013 as the Year of Faith. According to the Nigerian Bishops, faith should be expressed in solidarity. Such solidarity is more effective through educational programmes in schools and instruction centers. The Bishops therefore call for unity and cordial relationships between Christians and Muslims in expressing and sharing their faith. As a church in Nigeria according to the Bishops;

> We express sentiments of fraternal love toward our Muslim fellow-citizens. We share with them a sense of reverence for the One God. We appreciate their deep spirit of prayer and their striking fidelity to penitential fasting. Christians and Muslims can work together for the good of the country. We are united against tendencies towards materialism and secularism. It is a comforting sign of hope for Nigeria that the vast majority of people in our country are convinced that man's first duty is to God and that life has no meaning without religion.[95]

This indicates that religious acceptance and tolerance must be embraced by both Christians and Muslims. This will strengthen the bond of unity and solidarity between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and make interfaith dialogue effective. This has some implication to the new paradigm on change and common belief, because they both concern the transformation of Nigeria and create the unity of Christians and Muslims.

4.2.7 Promotion of Human Dignity in Nigeria

The dignity of the human person is a cardinal focus of the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis Humanae*). This implies that the question of human dignity is a fundamental area that interfaith dialogue seeks to promote in the quest for peace and mutual co-existence. In the spirit and response of the Second Vatican Council and the PCID, the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria also set out to promote this cardinal principle of human dignity. The Nigerian Catholic Bishops clearly emphasize that; "The dignity of every human being is rooted in the fact that God made us in his

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[95]CBCN, "Social Problems-Unity in Diversity," in *The Voice of the Voiceless*, 44.

image and likeness. Human dignity is not dependent on race, ethnic affiliation, gender, age, nationality, physical ability, talents, religion, or economic status. It can neither be conferred nor withdrawn by anyone. It simply belongs to human nature given by Almighty God."[96] This fundamental principle also provides full immunity for the rights of the human person and indeed every individual. These rights must be defended at all costs by society, and indeed the government has the full responsibility of protecting and defending the rights of all its citizens. No individual is less or more important, for we are all equal, created in the image and likeness of God.

Among the fundamental rights of the human person is the right to life, which must never be interfered with. And every religion must seek to promote human values, especially human life and the right for all to existence and to live well. For any religion to discriminate or kill is against the natural law and the commandment of God. Thus, the Nigerian Bishops did not relent in their effort to emphasize the importance of the human life, and any threat to life violates human dignity. The Bishops consider it important to remind the government that it is their primary responsibility to guarantee protection of life and property of its citizens.[97]

Similarly, In the pastoral letter that followed the Second African Synod, "*Good Governance, Common Good, and Democratic Transitions in Africa*", the Bishops of Africa also call on African leaders to focus on values that depict true human dignity, solidarity and love. In doing so, the pastoral document recommends "public leaders to consider political action as requiring openness and dialogue to create or reinforce social cohesion. This means the involvement, without discrimination, of the citizenry in the definition and the implementation of a social pact that translates the general will, guarantees the stability and improvement of living conditions for all, and

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[96]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person: The Faith we Profess," Communique of the CBCN, Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed November 30, 2018).
[97]CBCN, Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person," in *Our Concern for Nigeria,* 319. The Bishops further declare that "we denounce the fact that Nigeria remains a place where some people wantonly kill in the name of religion, a land where the right to worship is restricted only to certain people."

promotes justice and equity."[98] These are all relevant to promoting human dignity and necessary for the unity of Christians and Muslims.

Recent activities in Nigeria show gross abuse to human dignity in so many ways. It is on account of this the Nigerian Bishops highlight:

> Today, Nigeria faces many challenges, veritable threats to human dignity: the challenge of good governance and the attendant stifling of the potential of the governed, the problem of insecurity, the epidemic of corruption, the collapse of moral and technical infrastructure, violation of the rights of the Nigerian citizen on the grounds of ethnic affiliation, religious creed, gender, state or local government of origin. These and other discriminatory practices pose threats to human dignity in our land today.[99]

The communiqué at the end of the 2002 Congress of West African Bishops also affirms the "Infringement of the religious rights of other people, with the intent of subjugating them or forcing their conversion"[100] as an abuse to human dignity. It is against this background that the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria maintain that a pro-active response to defend and protect human dignity in Nigeria be upheld always.

The Bishops further call on the Nigerian government to take a major step in ensuring that every Nigerian is safe and defended against any threat to life and his/her dignity. The Nigerian Catholic Bishops posit:

> To respect the dignity of a person is to concede his rights to him as fully human. We cannot fail to point out that the pervasive lack of accountability and transparency in governance in Nigeria has become a serious abuse of human rights…It is a gross violation of human dignity that Nigerians, citizens of a richly endowed land, live in dehumanizing poverty. That is why the government and the governed must renew sincere efforts to fight corruption and the theft and wastage of public funds in Nigeria.[101]

The promotion of human dignity and life is therefore to be considered a core value that must be upheld by Christians and Muslims through interfaith dialogue.

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[98]SECAM, "Governance, Common Good and Democratic Transitions in Africa," (Pastoral Letter, Accra-Ghana, February 2013, no. 28).

[99]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person: Defense of Human Dignity as an Obligation of Faith," Communique of the CBCN," Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed November 30, 2018).

[100]AECAWA, "Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa," (Communiqué of the Study Session, Accra-Ghana October 7-10, 2002).

[101]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person: Human Dignity and Public Accountability."

4.2.8 The Relevance of Education in Peace/Nation Building

Education is an aspect of life that the Catholic Church in Nigeria considers seriously and gives great priority. The Catholic Church considers education as the solution to the numerous problems of Nigeria, as well as the means to progress and human development. According to the Nigerian Catholic Bishops; "History shows that the Church started very early to invest heavily and fruitfully in quality education in what is now known as Nigeria. She established schools which were known for their good academic and moral standards, and their non-discriminatory policies, even in the difficult terrain of rural Nigeria."[102] However, there are challenges in the quality of education in Nigeria at the moment. The CBCN note this setback with dismay. The decline in the quality of education in Nigeria came after government take-over of schools in the 1970s. The result of this setback in education in Nigeria led to the stifling of the initiatives of voluntary agencies in the educational sector. Before then, however, government and the church saw themselves as partners in progress.[103] Therefore, there is the need for government to collaborate and support religious institutions in the promotion of education in Nigeria.

Education also forms an important aspect in the defence of human life and dignity in Nigeria. This the Bishops highlighted many times. However, in a Communiqué issued at the End of the First Plenary Meeting of (CBCN) Abuja, March 8-14, 2014, the bishops examined the decline of educational standards in Nigeria and how it affects human lives generally. Insecurity and destruction of life are aspects of this setback in education in Nigeria. According to the Nigerian Catholic Bishops; "In recent times we have seen how the problem of insecurity affects education. The mindless massacre of innocent students' right in their schools in the North Eastern States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe is a very painful case. Despite the efforts of security agencies, life and property in Nigeria are still exposed to people of wicked intentions."[104]

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[102]CBCN, "Church and State Partnership in the Provision of Quality Education," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 327.
[103]Ibid, 327-328.
[104]Ibid, 329.

Among other issues considered was the growing incidence of conflicts between cattle herdsmen and some communities. While security agencies and government are to be pro-active and ensure the protection of lives and property, government should seek solutions for lasting peace and reconciliation in Nigeria.

All these issues formed the agenda for a National Conference set up by the regime of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014 to seek ways forward for Nigeria. Unfortunately, the implementation of the outcome of this conference has become difficult because of the change of government in 2015. Like the Bishops, many Nigerians anticipated with hope a positive outcome of the conference, especially on aspects that addressed issues of religious freedom.[105] It is in this light that Ojakaminor opines that Nigerians should collaborate in the hope for a better future. According to him;

> We have undoubtedly found ourselves in an ugly mischance which has hurt and continues to hurt the Nigerian populace-but this is not a sufficient reason for us to bury our hopes and lose faith in a better future. Today, at the very moment when events seem to be tempting many Nigerians to give up to despair, Nigeria must feel called upon by its own conscience to rise, like the mythical phoenix, out of its ashes and begin a new course in its history.[106]

Education is therefore the best way to approach the new history that Christians and Muslims seek to achieve for Nigeria. The CBCN insist that education is the option for transformation in Nigeria. In the communiqué at the end of the first plenary meeting in 2014, the Bishops clearly affirm:

> The numerous problems affecting our country Nigeria are very obvious: corruption, abuse of power, insecurity, poverty, discrimination, to name but a few. We cannot confront these challenges without investing in the provision of quality education. With integral education, the human person is formed to be loving and caring, able to actualize his or her potential, contribute to the attainment of the common good and fulfill his or her aspiration.[107]

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[105]Ibid, 330. According to the Bishops, "we expect the Conference to devise ways and means of fostering the right of each person to freely choose, profess, disseminate and practise his or her own religion in private and in public, as well as acknowledge the contributions of religion to nation building. Where this right is not well protected, peaceful co-existence and participation in social, political and economic lif   e are endangered. Nigeria is a multi-cultural country."
[106]Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee!!* 7.
[107]CBCN, "Church and State Partnership in the Provision of Quality Education," 327.

The Association of the Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) also seeks dialogue through education to promote good governance and the common interest of Christians and Muslims in West Africa.[108] Education still remains the best option for promoting all these principles and qualities.

Consequently, the issue of citizenship in the country must be handled with care. This concerns the relationship between the State and citizen, as well as between fellow citizens across the country. The welfare of every citizen and efforts to curb corruption in the country are also parts of the conference's recommendations.

Government is therefore called upon to put measures in place for the quick rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation among those affected by the tragedy of the insurgency. More effort is also required to defeat the insurgents and stop further loss of lives. Government must try to treat everyone equally before the law and try to establish justice and peace in society. To this effect, the Bishops demand "that all Nigerian citizens should enjoy all fundamental rights and privileges wherever they live in Nigeria so that in places other than their towns or cities of their birth or birth of their ancestors they will no longer feel deprived of their citizenship rights."[109]

The Bishops' conference therefore advocates an active role of government as impartial umpire and mediator in religious matters. They strongly recommend dialogue as an indispensable instrument for harmonious and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. However, for this dialogue to be effective, proper channels and structures must be in place, and education is an important aspect of this structure. Such aspects of education will focus on the unity of Christians and Muslims, as well as the need for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

4.2.9 Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

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[108]AECAWA "Strengthening Democracy in West Africa the Role of Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism," Communiqué at the end of Inter-Religious Dialogue and Ecumenism Commission, Accra-Ghana, July 14-15, 2009). The Bishops demand that: "Religious groups should educate their adherents on their rights, duties and obligations through grass root community based organizations and civil societies…Religious groups should continuously educate politicians on the social teachings of their traditions with regard to human rights, human dignity and social justice."
[109]CBCN, "Nigeria: Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities," Communiqué at the end of the first plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Abuja, March 4-10, 2017, Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed December 20, 2018).

It is not news that there have been a lot of religious crises in Nigeria, leading to lack of peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. Relationships have already been broken by religious conflicts and riots. Enmity has been on the increase between Christians and Muslims, particularly in Northern Nigeria. There is a need for reconciliation and peaceful resolution. For this to be achieved, forgiveness should lead the way, a point made by Bishop Oliver Dashe Doeme of Maiduguri, who published a pastoral letter titled, 'May the God of all consolations console all of us'. Forgiveness, he urges the people, should form an aspect of this consolation.[110]

Rev. Fr. Chidi Denis Isizoh called Christians and Muslims to bury the hatchet and forge ahead in the spirit of reconciliation. Isizoh states:

> We cannot forget the past; we must both own it and go beyond it. The time has come to free our memories of the negative consequences of the past, however painful they may be, and look resolutely towards the future. The one who has given offence must repent and ask for pardon. We need mutual pardon. Without true reconciliation we cannot commit ourselves together on behalf of our fellow believers and for the good of the whole world.[111]

Through reconciliation, Christians and Muslims become symbols and examples of peaceful people in the world. Forgiveness is one of the means to bring about peace in society. In this context, Bishop Joseph Bagobiri of Kafanchan, at AECAWA 2003 interreligious Seminar emphasizes the need to forget the enmity of the past and to forgive in order to achieve peace. Bagobiri posits: "We cannot have peace when past wounds are not healed and forgiven, and when those who live today seek to revenge the injustices done to them yesterday. Israel and Palestine, for instance, will continue to suffer the spiral of blood-letting attacks on one another as long as neither is prepared to 'turn the other cheek' and all are committed to the philosophy of a 'tooth for tooth'."[112] Rev. Fr. Augustine Abasi also emphasizes the Christian perspective of forgiveness at the 2003 AECAWA

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[110]Oliver Dashe Doeme, "May the God of all consolations console all of us," Pastoral Letter, entry posted October 25, 2014, under "Vatican Radio" en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/10/25/nigerian_bishop_issues_a..._/1109433 (accessed October 25, 2018). "Again I say be consoled my dear people for the spirit of forgiveness God has implanted in our hearts. Forgiveness is the only thing we can give to the Terrorists and their sponsors. Forgiveness in this instance is very difficult. But we must forgive, since our Lord Jesus forgave his executioners,"

[111]Chidi Denis Isizoh, "The importance of giving and receiving forgiveness in interreligious relations," (Presentation at AECAWA Interreligious Dialogue Conference, Kaduna-Nigeria, November, 10-14, 2003).

[112]Joseph Bagobiri, "Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace."

seminar. He opines that; "A Christian perspective will therefore be seeing forgiveness and receiving peace through the eyes of a Christian, admitting that there are other views, especially in a multi-religious context…The Christian perspective will be Christ-centered. If it is centered on any other person other than Christ, then we can no longer call it a Christian perspective."[113]

Christians and Muslims according to Badejo must realize that without forgiveness, true religion can never flourish. "True religion promotes love, not death, for God and fellowmen."[114] Badejo again emphasizes that there is no need to go on killing and destroying properties in the name of religion, instead love should be demonstrated. Healing the wounds of the past, according to him, means that continuous effort should be made by both Christians and Muslims, to curtail instances leading to uprising and conflicts.[115]

The Second African Synod also highlights that: "The issues of reconciliation, justice and peace generally are concerns for entire communities, irrespective of creed. Working on the many shared values between the two faiths, Christians and Muslims can contribute greatly towards restoring peace and reconciliation in our nations. This has already happened in many cases. The Synod commends these efforts and recommends them for others."[116]

Benedict XVI emphasizes clearly in his Apostolic Exhortation that:

> If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism. In her social apostolate, the Church does not make religious distinctions. She comes to the help of those in need, be they Christian, Muslim or animist. In this way she bears witness to the love of God, creator of all, and she invites the followers of other religions to demonstrate respect and to practise reciprocity in a spirit of esteem.[117]

Reconciliation and peace, according to Bishop Badejo, will thrive when there is mutual respect. He opines that religious leaders must see to it that whatever is possible is put in place "to prevent the

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[113]Augustine Abasi, "Offer Forgiveness and Receive Peace: A Christian Perspective," AECAWA Interreligious Dialogue Conference, Kaduna-Nigeria, November, 10-14, 2003).
[114]Badejo, "Religious Harmony and Peace."
[115]Ibid.
[116]"Message to the People of God, of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops," no. 40.
[117]*Africae Munus*, no. 94.

spread of this harvest of death and violence among our followers and people in Nigeria. Our children and future deserve no less! I call for honesty in dialogue, friendship and love among people of all religions for a false friend is more dangerous than a murderous enemy. God is not amused or honored by bloodletting among his children."[118] Nigerians must be able to say 'No more' to the killings and bloodshed undertaken in the name of religion. Let interfaith dialogue focus on building bridges of love and unity, solidarity and peaceful co-existence.

To lead in conflict resolution, the African Bishops emphasize the need for a pro-active approach from all African leaders. According to the Bishops, this will help "to prevent conflicts from escalating into violence. To do this, SECAM recommends that you choose dialogue instead of confrontation; so that you may play your role with legitimacy and to base your actions on the interest of the Common Good, and refuse the instrumentalisation of political parties."[119] For all these to be effective, the best approach will be through education.

4.2.10 The Security and the Defence/Protection of Human Life in Nigeria

Security provides the peace and stability of people in society. It enables people to live freely and carry out their activities in an atmosphere of trust and sincerity for the development of society. The CBCN clearly affirm that: "The stability of every nation is, to a large extent, dependent on its security: security of its borders, internal security, economic and social security, etc. Without security, all plans for the development of a country could remain a mirage."[120] Threats to security extend even to the mobility of people across the country and affects economic activities thereby making the whole question of security a matter of concern for the Nigerian Bishops.[121] The

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[118]Badejo, "Religious Harmony and Peace: Save the Face of Religion."

[119]SECAM, "Governance, Common Good and Democratic Transitions in Africa," no. 43.

[120]CBCN, "Our Concern over the Security of our Nation," Statement by the CBCN, Abuja, Catholic Secretariat, June 15, 2016, Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed October 20, 2018).

[121]Ibid. The Nigerian Bishops express in their statement that: "It is a matter of grave concern to us that in recent times there has been an unacceptable increase in the degree of violence in the Country which has raised the level of insecurity in almost all aspects our public and private life. From North to South, East to West, clashes between marauding criminals who claim to be herdsmen and the local populations now threaten our mutual co-existence…In many parts of the country, the spate of kidnapping and armed-robbery has made travelling on our roads and retiring in our homes a nightmare for many Nigerians. In the Niger Delta region many militants have renewed their violent

consequence of this situation and development is that people are now living in tension and fear in every part of the country; and this has affected interpersonal relationships and created demarcations among people in Nigeria.

There are so many issues that affect human life and dignity. However, "The failure of government at all levels and other security agencies to provide adequate security for all Nigerians is a grave form of abuse of human dignity. This unfortunate situation leads to distrust of government and allied authorities. It creates loopholes for evil doers to thrive and for the proliferation of arms and dangerous weapons under the guise of self-defence."[122] The Bishops observe that the situation facing the nation shows mass slaughter of fellow Nigerians, with the burning and sacking of whole villages, churches and rectories in some parts of the country. It has caused many families and individuals to seek refuge outside their homes and lands.

The Bishops also challenged the problem of *Boko Haram* in the country. The unrest situation caused by *'Boko Haram'* in the North-East of Nigeria, which holds the whole nation in panic, is a dangerous situation for the nation. During a press briefing, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops highlight:

> We Bishops are really alarmed at the scale of human, material destruction, and the disruption of village and community life with increased levels of hatred and potentials for more conflicts in the nation. While Muslims are sometimes targets of these destructive attacks, Christians, Churches and non-Muslims in general are the principal targets for extermination, expropriation and expulsion by the *Boko Haram* insurgents, the perpetrators of all these destructions.[123]

Prior to this, in their 2015 communiqué the Catholic Bishops again highlight the destructions caused by the *Boko Haram* insurgence resulting in family separation; and the plight of the internally displaced persons especially in the North-East of Nigeria. According to them;

> Insurgency has not only led to loss of innocent lives, it has also led to separation of members of the same families. Our hearts go to children separated from their parents, especially our beloved daughters, the Chibok girls, and others who have been abducted by mindless terrorists. We think of many others who live in camps

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activities, which are now further distressing our already fragile oil-based economy. More and more dissatisfied youths in some parts of the country are protesting their continued political marginalization and economic deprivation, leading to the loss of many promising lives as a result of clashes between them and the security forces."
[122]CBCN, "Promoting Authentic Development in Nigeria," in *Our Concern for Nigeria*, 312.
[123]CBCN, "While Nigeria Bleeds and Burns."

far away from their homes lost in the insurgency. We are saddened by the use of young and innocent minds indoctrinated by *Boko Haram* and used as suicide bombers.[124]

It is upsetting that so many young people were recruited into crimes that caused intimidation and violence in society. Those to be blamed are the politicians and people of selfish interest trying to fight their opponents. All these have negative effects and affect the breakdown of family values in society.

Alongside *Boko Haram* is the concern of the Catholic Bishops on the Fulani herders' killings in some parts of Nigeria and the rampart kidnapping going on in the country which poses serious challenges to national security. While the Catholic Bishops commiserate with those affected by these mayhems, they univocally condemn such barbaric activities as shameful to humanity. In a statement they assert: "We totally condemn such brutal massacres of innocent people. Herdsmen may be under pressure to save their livestock and economy but this is never to be done at the expense of other peoples' lives or livelihoods. It is, therefore, madness to slaughter fellow human beings and shameful that we had to show the world this ugly picture of our country."[125] Furthermore, the Catholic Bishops express dismay at the rate of kidnapping, stating it is a disgrace to individuals' dignity. The Nigerian Catholic Bishops contend that:

> It is very sad to note that the spate of kidnapping in our country has risen to unimaginable proportion. Day after day, citizens are taken captive, humiliated and traumatised by heavily armed gangsters. No institution or individual is spared by kidnappers, no matter how old, sacred or highly placed. As a result, people live now in constant fear and anxiety, whether at home or on the highway. Kidnappers are ruthless, deadly and operate without any qualms of conscience.[126]

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[124]CBCN, "Good Families Make Good Nations," (Communiqué at the end of the Conference, Abuja, February 20 – 26, 2015).

[125]CBCN, "On the Recurrent Wave of Violence and the Cheapening of Human Lives in Different Parts of our Country," Statement by the CBCN, January 16, 2018, Homepage website, www.cbcn-ng.org/ accessed December 5, 2018). The Nigerian Catholic Bishops condone with affected victims of killing in Nigeria. "The recent mass slaughter of unarmed citizens by these armed herdsmen in some communities in Benue, Adamawa, Kaduna and Taraba States has caused national shock, grief and outcry. We commiserate with the families of the deceased, whilst we pray for the blissful repose of the dead and the quick recovery of the wounded."

[126]Ibid. The Catholic Bishops further recommend that; "The victims of kidnapping and their families should no longer be left at the mercy of heartless and greedy kidnappers. There is an urgent need to deal decisively with kidnappers and drastically curb their excesses. Given the effective security equipment available in the modern world of high technology and considering the huge security votes set aside every month at the state and federal levels, our

While the Nigerian Catholic Bishops advice perpetrators of kidnapping in Nigeria to have a change of attitudes and behaviours in this regard; they also call on government to respond promptly to security challenges in Nigeria.

Consequently, the Bishops also caution that, "in the face of sustained attacks on Christians and churches in Northern Nigeria, we insist that our patient response is not borne out of cowardice, but of universal Christ-like love, religious maturity and genuine patriotism. We fear that in the face of continued unprovoked onslaught, Christians might resort to legitimate self-defence."[127] This is not in any way advocating violence and retaliation by Christians. It is, however, calling for a pro-active approach from all religions to call their adherents to a peaceful order.

Government at Federal and State levels must consider security as their primary duty to protect the lives of every citizen irrespective of religion or tribe. In the midst of all these catastrophes, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops insist that; "government must do more than it is currently doing to safeguard our lives and defend our nation. It must do more than it is currently doing to fight off and disarm these actual destroyers of Nigerians and Nigeria. It must do more than it is currently doing to prevent segments of our nation from drifting into anarchy and mutual self-destruction and bring criminals to justice."[128] It is based on this that the Bishops call on the government to provide quality education to all, so that young people can be responsible citizens, empowered to be self-reliant and involved in positive contributions in the country.

For the sake of effective governance, the Bishops called on individuals and communities to be decisive in electing those who will consider the lives and security of Nigerians as their priority. All citizens must collaborate with government in the fight against insurgencies and the destruction of lives and properties. Thus, "we urge therefore that we all support and encourage every positive effort by the current government to protect every Nigerian and defend the integrity and unity of

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communities should be better policed by security agents, who are better equipped and well trained to handle the security challenge of kidnapping that is bringing our nation to its knees."
[127]CBCN, "Promoting Authentic Development in Nigeria," 312.
[128]CBCN, "While Nigeria Bleeds and Burns."

Nigeria. Let us equally take lawful measures locally to prevent the destruction of fellow Nigerians and to ward off Nigeria's destroyers."[129] Affected victims of insurgencies and destructions must be given the ultimate support, and Government should do everything possible to help alleviate their conditions, including the provisions of quality education.

It has been observed that some religions and their adherents do not feel safe and secure in certain areas of the country. Why do Christians not feel comfortable living in Muslim dominated areas and likewise why are Muslims not comfortable in Christian dominated areas? Why are Churches or Mosques allowed in certain areas and refused in other areas? In an interview, Olubunmi Cardinal Anthony Okogie (Emeritus) of Lagos says:

> Yes, the alarm will grow in spite of the many Christians who have always lived in the northern part of the federation. Especially, they do not feel protected by the State which for fear and the complicity of some areas does not adequately counter terrorists. With true Muslims there are no actual coexistence issues. The terrorists are exploiting religion for the sole purpose of power. Unfortunately the authorities have obviously failed to protect Christian citizens of the North.[130]

Okogie further explains that the reason for the lack of protection is enshrined in the failure of the government to act promptly on issues of security, causing distrust of the government. *Boko Haram* as presented in chapter one is a common enemy of both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Their activities affect all in society, Christians and Muslims alike. Many Muslims do not accept that *Boko Haram* represents their interests, since they present a different principle of Islam from what they believe.

Okogie states that the fight against *Boko Haram* can serve as a process of interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria in order to confront their common enemy. It can also open up and lead to more discussions and dialogue on the security of society. According to him, religious institutions and places of worship should be protected from attacks and vandalism.

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[129] Ibid.

[130] Anthony Olubunmi Okogie, interview by Catholic World News, Catholic Culture.org, January 9, 2012, https://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=12904 (accessed October 25, 2016).

Christian dominated areas must see to the welfare of the Muslim minorities, and likewise minority Christians must enjoy the freedom and security of religion in Muslim areas.

Therefore, the Bishops maintained that government and security agencies at all levels should rise to their tasks and responsibilities of defending the lives of all in the country. Religious organizations and leaders, including politicians, must be active, working hard to safeguard and create a united nation, and making sure all receive quality education in Nigeria.

4.2.11 Conclusion

The lack of peaceful co-existence and disunity are the key issues between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Over the past three decades, Christians and Muslims have been involved in various conflicts ranging from territorial domination and control over politics and other factors. This has created barriers and tensions between Christians and Muslims especially in Northern Nigeria.

This part of the chapter summarizes the contributions on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria and individual Nigerian Bishops on the issues affecting Christian-Muslim relationships and dialogue in Nigeria. The Nigerian Catholic Bishops focussed on many areas of interfaith dialogue and emphasized three important aspects: 1). Mutual relationship and freedom of religion, 2). Unity and Solidarity of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, and 3). Respect for human dignity through protection of lives, and living in peace. These three aspects developed in history with the need and urgency in the relationship between Christians and Muslims.

With the decline in relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria; and the abuse in religious freedom, the Bishops focussed on mutual relationships and respect for religious freedom. The Bishops emphasized the factors that are responsible for the deteriorating relationships between Christians and Muslims and cautioned both parties to take precaution of these factors and how they affect their relationships. Consequently, the Bishops also highlighted the fact that religion should be practiced freely as a fundamental right of every individual without coercion whatsoever. People should practice their religion without hindrances anywhere in Nigeria.

Subsequently, as the crises and tensions between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria continue to rise, the Bishops intensified their actions towards dialogue. As such they changed focus on the unity and collaboration between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The Bishops therefore emphasized the need for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to see themselves as belonging to one family and work together for the common good. They also highlighted the need for Christians and Muslims to work towards the promotion of human dignity and social justice.

In recent years as the crisis and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria became more severe; and the increase in activities of religious extremists and fundamentalists, the Bishops became more proactive towards dialogue with Muslims and the government. Because of the killings and destructions of properties, the Bishops emphasized the security of lives and properties, the necessity of conflict resolution, and the importance of reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The Bishops at this stage are making use of every avenue to reach out to their Muslim counterparts and the government and to challenge both government and religious leaders to rise up to the tasks and responsibilities.

The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria called on religious leaders and government to provide security and peace in the country. While religious leaders are called upon to caution their members against religious manipulation by certain individuals for their personal interest, government have more tasks to undertake for the unity and peaceful co-existence of the citizens. They are to provide security for the lives and properties of all citizens. They are to see to the welfare of all citizens with equal treatment of all and non-discrimination against any citizen. There is also the need to seek effective dialogue for reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. It is for this reason Ojakaminor states that for Christians and Muslims "to attain the kind of Nigeria we are all yearning for, we need to form a strong moral coalition that will say "No!" to evil under any semblance."[131]

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[131]Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee!!*, 200.

All the issues the Nigerian Catholic Bishops raised are important aspects of education that will strengthen interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence and unity in Nigeria. This is why effective dialogue is required, not just from the Catholic side, but also to include other religions and denominations in Nigeria. Therefore, the Bishops' contributions should not just be left on the level of communiqué and documents, or pastoral letters/statements. There is a need to communicate their messages to other religions and denominations, and also to discuss these issues on the national level. Dialogue is therefore necessary in this regard.

In conclusion, the observations of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops on the social challenges that create misunderstandings and conflicts in Nigeria include; the breakdown in security leading to abuse of human dignity with the barbaric bombings and killing of innocent citizens, kidnappings and armed-robbery; with the bombings and burnings of government buildings, places of worships and public gatherings. To this effect, both Christians and Muslims have a common goal to work against insurgencies and defend human lives and dignity; and to protect their properties in Nigeria. Thus, the emphases of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops can be summarized in six points:

1.   No discrimination in social affairs based on religion-individuals should be allowed to choose and practice their own religion.

2.   Religious superiority and domination should be avoided in all spheres of life in society.

3.   Religious fanaticism must not be allowed in society.

4.   Religious manipulation of the youth should be avoided and youth empowerment should be sought.

5.   Conflict resolution should be sought through reconciliation and forgiveness.

6.   Honest and sincere dialogue aimed towards religious tolerance should be exercised among religious adherents, and friendship should be encouraged.

PART TWO

4.3 Interfaith Dialogue in Nigeria: Contributions of Theologians and Scholars

Christianity and Islam existed in Nigeria for about two centuries, and Christians and Muslims have been living together in peace and harmony for many years. However, the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has deteriorated in the last three decades. Hence, interreligious dialogue is required to create understanding and reconciliation between the two religions.

The contributions of Christian and Muslim theologians and scholars in areas that concern Christian-Muslim dialogue and relations in Nigeria will be discussed in this section. It will focus on peace building and reconciliation. This is further elaborated through the dialogue of life, Christian and Muslim women in dialogue, Unity of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: Christian and Muslim leaders working together. It will also seek the implementation of the teachings of Christianity and Islam to encourage dialogue and improve relationships between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

4.3.1 Peace building and Reconciliation in Nigeria: Christian and Muslim Perspectives

This is one of the most important areas of interest and concern for Christian and Muslim scholars in Nigeria. The continuing religious tensions and conflicts in Nigeria has created division and made peace almost impossible to flourish in the country. Thus, the search for peace and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria has become mandatory. In relation to implanting peace in Nigeria, Paul Ademóla Ojebude and Paul Osato Aigbekaen opine that most Islamic scholars and Christian theologians consider this as;

> A value and a universal duty founded on the moral order of society that has its roots in God himself. Peace is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced sorely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. Rather, it is founded on a correct understanding of the human person and requires the establishment of an order based on equity, justice and charity.[132]

This implies that for peace to be established in a given society the three principles of equity, justice and charity must take precedence. The theology of peace building and reconciliation will be

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[132]Paul Ademóla Ojebude and Paul Osato Aigbekaen, "Ensuring Justice and Peace Reigns in the Society: A Re-Awakening Call on the Nigerian Church, *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 19, no. 3 (January 2014): 71.

approached from both the Christian and Islamic teachings. There are principles and guidelines from Christianity and Islam that will provide the atmosphere for establishing peace and mutual understanding for both Christians and Muslims. Christianity and Islam always uphold the position of peace and love of God and one another.

a. Christian Perspective of Peacebuilding/Reconciliation

The Christian theology of peace building and reconciliation is built upon the teachings of Christ, which are contained in the gospel narratives. These teachings centre on the principles of love, hospitality, peace, forgiveness, respect and dignity of others and many other virtues. Ojebude and Aigbekaen highlight this concept from a Christian perspective and again emphasize that:

> Peace is more than the absence of war. It is justice, equity and freedom from oppression, discrimination and all forms of violence. It is compassion and empathy for those we see in our communities and for those whose faces we will never see and whose voices are silenced. It is economic and environmental security. It is cultural dignity and appreciation for all of the unique manifestations of the human spirit.[133]

Peace from a Christian point of view is therefore characterised by the presence of justice, equity, freedom from oppression, and discrimination. When all these are found, violence will be eliminated in society. Therefore, peace from a Christian perspective, according to Michael Adeleke Ogunewu; "involves not only the absence of war or physical violence, but also of presence of conditions of well-being, co-operation and just relationships in the human and ecological spheres. Also it transcends the nature of relationships that exist between nations, ethnic or major groups, to include that of relationship among individuals."[134]

Furthermore, Mathias Daji Yake explores the theological basis of peace from what Jesus taught and lived. Yake contends that;

> The word Peace in Christianity is translated from the Hebrew word 'Shalom', which is a key word in the Bible and its at the center of how God wants us to live on earth. One of the key things Jesus came to give humanity is Peace and expects us to live in peace as cited in the scriptural verses above. Peace was not only what

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[133]Ibid, 72-73.

[134]Michael Adeleke Ogunewu, The church, peace-building and conflict reduction in Nigeria," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 19, no.3 (January 2014): 24.

Jesus taught but He also lived it, this in most cases is what scholars call pacifism, as Jesus never taught violence, even at his arrest by the Pharisees and one of his disciples struck the ears of the priest, Jesus rebuked the disciple and said that "those who live by the sword shall die by the sword" (Mathew 26:52, NKJV).[135]

Onah Nkechi G. brings out clearly what the concept of peace entails in a summary. According to Nkechi; "Peace means a state of harmonious relationship, a just order between individuals or group of people."[136]

From a Catholic Church point of view, peace is also fundamental to the mission of the Church. Ojebude and Aigbekaen affirm that the;

> Promotion of peace in the society is an integral part of the Church's mission. It is part of continuing Christ's work of redemption on earth The Church stands for the fact that Christ is sacrament or sign and instrument of peace in the world and for the world. The promotion of true peace is an expression of Christian faith as part of loving God and the neighbour. Inspired by the peace of Christ, the faithful are called to evolving a life that champions the prevalence of justice.[137]

Ojebude and Aigbekaen maintain that the quest for peace among Christians should also be extended to other believers as a vital source of unity among peoples. This will re-establish and consolidate peace by placing a high premium on the issues of justice, fair play and equity.[138] Peace therefore demands the presence of justice and equity. In the light of sharing peace with other believers, Benedict XXI, in his encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate,* clearly highlights the importance of diplomatic relations in building peace among the people of the world. This for him will "curb the threat of military conflict and to root out the underlying causes of terrorism. Nevertheless, if such efforts are to have lasting effects, they must be based on values rooted in the

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[135]Mathias Daji Yake, "Preaching Peace and Living Peacefully in Northern Nigeria: Bridging the gap between Theory and Practice," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, no. 3 (March 2015): 191. Yake also affirms that; "In another place Jesus taught the people not to retaliate any evil done to them as it used to be, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, if one should strike you on the right cheek, turn the left cheek (Mathew 5:38-39, NKJV) but now to always forgive those that offend them and he charged them to forgive their neighbors even seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22, KJV). . . The act of non retaliation as taught by Jesus helps to absorb violence instead of escalating it, hence every cycle of violence provoking revenge, which in turn provokes more violence is broken by the simple act of tolerating the violence and avoiding retaliation."

[136]Onah Nkechi G., "Religious Education, Peace and Sustainable Development in Nigeria," *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences* 8, no. 3 (September 2017: 5.

[137]Ojebude and Aigbekaen, "Ensuring Justice and Peace Reigns in the Society," 72.

[138]Ibid, 72.

truth of human life. That is, the voice of the peoples affected must be heard and their situation must be taken into consideration, if their expectations are to be correctly interpreted."[139]

If the Church must make an impact and become a credible instrument of salvation in the world, it must also be the channel of peace and reconciliation, and a means of uniting nations and society through the gospel. This is clearly brought to light in the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* when he states that:

> The Church proclaims 'the Gospel of peace' (*Eph* 6:15) and she wishes to cooperate with all national and international authorities in safeguarding this immense universal good. By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (cf. *Eph* 2:14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life. In a culture which privileges dialogue as a form of encounter, it is time to devise a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society.[140]

The church must therefore challenge the ills that crumble society in an objective and critical way. This will pave the way forward in building an environment of justice, equity and freedom, which will eliminate any form of oppression or discrimination in society. Just as the Islamic concept of peace highlights one's submission to God as a way of life in relation to others, so also in the Christian perspective, peace focuses on one's love of God which is expressed in the love of one's neighbour. These should be the objectives to be promoted both by Christians and Muslims in the educational plan of interfaith dialogue.

b. Islamic Perspective on Peacebuilding/Reconciliation

The Islamic perspective on peace building and reconciliation is linked to the notion of peace which Islam represents. The concept of peace in Islam, according to Khurshid Ahmad and Salem Azzam, emanated from the meaning of the word Islam itself. It refers to the making of peace or being in

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[139]Benedict XVI goes further to say that "one must align oneself, so to speak, with the unsung efforts of so many individuals deeply committed to bringing peoples together and to facilitating development on the basis of love and mutual understanding. Among them are members of the Christian faithful, involved in the great task of upholding the fully human dimension of development and peace" (Benedict XVI, "Christian Love," no. 72).

[140]*Evangelii Gaudium*, 239. Further still Pope Francis notes that in respect to peace evangelization, "the principal author, the historic subject of this process, is the people as a whole and their culture, and not a single class, minority, group or elite. We do not need plans drawn up by a few for the few, or an enlightened or outspoken minority which claims to speak for everyone. It is about agreeing to live together, a social and cultural pact" (Pope Francis, "Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World."

peace. This concept underlies an act of resignation to God. In this context, Islam is to be understood as a religion that brings peace when an individual submits oneself to God and His will.[141] Since the Qur'an is the center and foundation of Islamic teachings and principles, it is therefore the main source of teaching on peacebuilding for Muslims against the doctrine and teaching on violence.

Peace is claimed to be an indispensable attribute of Islam. M. O. Adeniyi highlights that peace is an attribute of God who is the source of peace itself. Adeniyi asserts that: "One of the attributes of Allah the Supreme Being is as-Salam, 'the source of peace.' When Muslims conclude the formal prayer which they perform five times every day, they do so by praying for peace, not only for themselves, but also for the 'righteous servants of Allah.'"[142] This implies that peace is very central to Muslims and defines the ideal of the Islamic way of life as well as the identity of the Muslim people.

The Qur'an and Hadith (teachings and actions of the Prophet Muhammed) therefore support peace and harmony among Muslims and their neighbours. The Qur'an especially has many descriptive themes on love, mercy, goodness, compassion, justice, peace, respect, forgiveness, equality, reconciliation and trust. All these principles depict building peaceful co-existence. The Qur'anic teachings on peace can also be confirmed from the following verses: (Qur'an 28:56, 3:157-158, 23:96; 4:86, 4:58;135, 16:90, 2:208; 10:10; 8:61; 56:25-26, 4:64;106, 49:13, 49:10, 3:75). Based on these verses, Islam is therefore theologically oriented towards peace and living in peace, not conflict and violence. Abdullahi Shuaib thus contends that human beings are agents of God in building peace. He opines:

> While God created us into tribes and nations, His gifts to us viz our tongues and faiths also encourages us to incline to peace with one another and forbids enmity. It is time we realize our role as representatives of God on earth and stop the

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[141]Khurshid Ahmad and Salem Azzam, *Islam: Its Meaning and Message* (London: The Islamic foundation, 1980), 1.

[142]M. O. Adeniyi, Religion and the Effort to Sustain Peace in a Nigerian University Community, *Dialogue & Alliance* 22, no. 1, (Spring/Summer 2008): 65. Adeniyi further states that Muslims also conclude their "prayer by invoking peace and Allah's mercy for co-worshippers on their right and on their left in the congregation, in the words of as-salam alaikum war aha mat-al-Allah meaning may the peace be upon you, his favour and his blessing."

ongoing bickering, mutual mistrust, suspicion and hate message among ourselves. They are evil winds that will blow nobody any good except violence, destruction of lives and property.[143]

Building from the above perspective, Mukhtar Sarkin-Kebbi emphatically highlights that Islam does not associate with violence. Sarkin-Kebbi posits that; "Islam is a religion of peace, which aimed at bringing man into peace here and hereafter. From this background one can understand that Islam is a religion of peace, which advocates for total human emancipation, peace, justice, unity, love, equity, tolerance, and patience. These have been attested in several verses of the Glorious Qur'an and Sunnah."[144] He maintains that any acts of injustice, violence, bloodshed, terrorism, hatred campaigns and disunity, are strongly condemned in Islam. It is from this perspective that Muslims are encouraged to embrace peace as ascribed from the Qur'an and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammed. Sarkin-Kebbi also asserts that; "Muslims scholars are in best position and have a duty to call on Muslims to stick on the real teachings of Islam based on the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W.), so as to embrace peace, unity and religious tolerance and shun away from any religious crises."[145] Any teaching that contravenes the concept or principle of peace as enshrined in the Holy Book must be rejected by true Muslims.

The aspect of violence needs to be clarified in Islamic tradition. Violence is never considered to be an aspect of Islamic teaching. "War" in the Islamic context is to be understood as only and strictly from the viewpoint of defending and protecting the rights of the oppressed and the exploited. Thus, in Islam, war is understood as a reaction against social injustice. The principle of *jihad* is also

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[143]Abdullahi Shuaib, "Islam, Conflict and Faith-Relations: The Prospects and Challenges of Peace Building in Nigeria," (Paper Presentation at a Two-Day Summit/Workshop Training on Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development, Lagos, April 26, 2016).

[144]Mukhtar Sarkin-Kebbi, "The Role of Muslim Scholars in Minifying Religious Extremism for Peace Building and Educational Development in Nigeria," *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences* 4, iss. 1 (May 2018): 653. In the view of Sarkin-Kebbi; "The essence of message of Islam and Prophet (S.A.W.) are Allah's mercy upon mankind irrespective their races, tribes, region and religion as Allah affirmed in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an: "We have sent you forth as nothing but mercy to people of the whole world." (Almawdudi, in Tafheem.net nd. Q. 21:107). The verse above indicates that the Prophetic mission is solely to provide guidance for mankind which had existed in ignorance bewilderment with many barbaric and inhuman acts such disintegration, tribalism, immoralities of pagans Arabs, infanticide, economics extortion, adultery and fornication, homosexual, polyandry, marrying step mothers or sisters etc."

[145]Ibid, 664.

connected to this understanding of war. Bashir Abdul-Raheem deciphers a clear view of the concept of *jihad* as understood by various groups in Islam. According to Abdul-Raheem; "*Jihad* means defending Muslim community against any form of oppression or external aggression, waging war against one's soul from being corrupted, standing for the truth infront of a tyrant ruler, striving in the course of peaceful propagation of Islam. Anything outside this cannot be regarded as *Jihad*."[146] Thus, the literal meaning of the word *jihad* is simply 'struggle'. This struggle, Ahmad and Azzam posit, has to do with the promotion of Islam and its pillars of faith since this is the only way one can commit to and sacrifice his/her time, energy, wealth and even life to the promotion of justice and truth for God in the society.[147] This seems to be the view of some Islamic scholars who are of the opinion that Islam does not preach and promote violence.

However, others are of the view that Islam is committed to *jihad* and violence, especially towards non-Muslims based on the activities of the Prophet Muhammed as recorded in the Hadith. Against such views, Abdul-Raheem again asserts: "The attitudes of some Muslims who claim to defend the dignity of Islam and Prophet through violent means is a reflection of their ignoramus of origin and purpose of jihad in Islam or they have been misguided by sentiments. Demanding for the head or killing somebody on the account of desecration of the Qur'an is unfounded."[148] Unfortunately, the violent view of *jihad* seems to circulate around the activities some Islamic extremists promote in their doctrines. This perhaps explains why many Muslim extremists use the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed to justify the violent *Jihad* around the world. While this can be said to have violated the assumption of the concept of peace in Islam, it calls for the need of

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[146]Bashir Abdul-Raheem, "The Concept of Jihad in Islamic Philosophy," *American International Journal of Social Science* 4, no. 1 (February 2015): 141.

[147]Ahmad and Azzam, *Islam: Its Meaning and Message*, 23.

[148]Abdul-Raheem, "The Concept of Jihad in Islamic Philosophy," 147. According to Abdul-Raheem, The precedent experience shows that the prophet Muhammad had been referred to as mad person while the Qur'an had been called many names. "… when they hear the message, and they say, "Indeed, he is mad" (Q68:51). "And said; This (Qur'an) is merely a sorcery of yore; this is nothing but the word of mere mortal" (Q74:24-25).In the face of this maligning, the Prophet was advised to be patient with them. "And bear patiently all that they say…" (Q73:11). If Salman Rushdie described the Qur'an as satanic verses or the prophet was described as womanizer there is better way of defending the Qur'an and the Prophet among which could be through scholarly rejoinder or by filing a case against such people in the court of law. Though keeping quiet might not be the best option but whatever reaction being taken must be the one that will depict Islam and Muslims as they are being described in the Qur'an.

education and enlightenment by Islamic scholars on the principles of *Jihad* among Muslim faithful. In this regard, focus should be on the verses of Qur'an which condemn violence over those that encourage it in order to give authenticity to the principles of Islamic teachings and theology. This is why Jan H. Boer from Amsterdam, who has worked in Nigeria for thirty years, opines that the "moderate Muslims have a huge challenge before them. They need to convince us which Islam they belong to and support. This cannot be done by words only but requires deeds demonstrating their words. As to those claiming to represent the peaceful Prophet, Christians had better be ready to support them instead of fighting them."[149] This is another way of showing solidarity and support by Christians to their Muslim counterparts.

c. Peace Building and Reconciliation in Nigeria

Both Christianity and Islam represent peace and preach the doctrine of peace. However, the principles of peaceful co-existence and building peace in Nigeria are lacking between Christians and Muslims. For many theologians and scholars, according to Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, peace building and reconciliation should be centred on the teachings of the Bible and the Qur'an. He contends that "the bible and the Qur'an play a significant role in the daily life of Muslims and Christians in Northern Nigeria. Scripture provides the guide for social, moral, and human interaction, giving the background for both individual and group identity and also providing hope for eschatological promise of God in both faith communities."[150] The injunctions of the Bible and the Qur'an on peace living, built on the commandment of love for one another must be practiced with sincerity and integrity. This is why Akinade opines that;

> While it is a known fact that religion is susceptible to different interpretations and usages, there is still ineluctable understanding that a sound prophetic awareness of the Christian faith has the potential for peacemaking and conflict resolution. There is also a strong tradition of prophetic teaching and search for justice in the Islamic tradition. Such a perspective is truly relevant to the Nigerian context.[151]

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[149]Jan H. Boer, *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together* (Canada: Essence Publishing, 2009), 121.
[150]Thaddeus Byimui Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria: A Socio-Political and Theological Consideration* (Milton Keynes: XlibrisLLC. 2013), 160.
[151]Akintunde E. Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria: A Contextual Study of Ambivalent Encounters* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan Press, 2014), 16.

Both the Christian principle of peacemaking and the Islamic principle of justice complement each other in showing how Christians and Muslims should live together and love one another. According to Abdullahi Shuaib, this "will only be possible in the face of mutual cooperation between the religions as offshoot of the same source trying to fulfill the will of God on earth. The attitudes of mutual respect, love, solidarity, equity, justice and the dignity of the person ought to be the benchmarks of relations."[152] This basis of common offshoot is a fundamental point of relationship between Christians and Muslims.

Since Christians and Muslims share common beliefs to a certain extent, these can also serve as a process of peace building, according to Owolabi Jacob Awoju. Through these beliefs and practices, Christians and Muslims can aim at common goals and objectives in building harmony and progress in Nigeria. Awoju asserts that; "Few samples of common themes which leaders of Islam and Christianity need to teach their adherents which can promote unity, harmonious living and peaceful coexistence of different groups of religion in the Northern Nigeria are as follows: Righteousness, peace, justice, love, kindness, forgiveness, oneness, paradise, contentment, prayer, House of prayer, God, Creator and creation."[153] From this point, Christians and Muslims in Nigeria also have a common ground of cooperation in building peace.

From a Christian point of view, peace building Ogunewu asserts; "Comprises the identification and support of measures needed for transformation toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships and structures of governance, in order to avoid conflict in its various forms."[154] Therefore, Christians in

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[152]Abdullahi Shuaib, "Islam, Conflict and Faith-Relations: The Prospects and Challenges of Peace Building in Nigeria," (Paper Presentation at a Two-Day Summit/Workshop Training on Peacebuilding and Sustainable Development, Lagos, April 26, 2016). Shuaib affirms that; "The Quran [Q5:2 and Q16:90] states '...You help one another in righteousness and piety...,' and 'God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion...' respectively."

[153]Owolabi Jacob Awoju, "Enhancing lasting religious peace and harmony in the Northern Nigeria," *Journal Research in Peace, Gender and Development (JRPGD)* 4, no. 4 (July 2014): 75.

[154]Ogunewu, The church, peace-building and conflict reduction in Nigeria," 24. There are "four dimensions of peace-building which are: socio-economic development, good governance, reform of justice and security institutions and the culture of justice, truth and reconciliation. It is believed that promotion of these virtues will culminate in the drastic reduction of hostilities, violence and all forms of 'peacelessness', among individuals, groups of people in relationships and the various ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria, through the prevention and resolution of

Nigeria have an intensive role and obligation towards peace building in the country. This must flow from the religious teaching and injunction of the scripture as Jesus Christ presented to the world and all his followers. From this point of view, Ogunewu opines that; "As an institution that proclaims Christ the embodiment of peace, it behoves the Church to respond to the call to bring the divine gift of peace into contemporary contexts of violence and conflict. One of the major distinctive features of the church is its being a sign of peace and reconciliation."[155]   In this light, Ogunewu posits that; "As a community saddled with such an enormous responsibility, the church has series of roles which it can play in the furtherance of peace in the world. Naturally, the promotion of peace is expected to culminate in the reduction of conflict."[156]

In the Christian tradition, the theology of peace building and reconciliation must also be related to the theology of love. The Christian love, according to Umaru, originates from God who is emphatically love in His nature. This nature of love in God, Umaru affirms, is emphasized in 1John 4:16. Umaru therefore applies this concept of love as a characteristic of God in relation to human beings who are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). It is from this context that the vocation to love is very central in Christian tradition. Thus, Umaru explores through the New Testament and the contributions of various theologians of Christian tradition and church documents; and maintains that the love of God is more practical and relevant in the love of neighbour. He proposes "that the praxis of love of God and love of neighbour be reflective, personal, and effective. It must not discriminate against persons; it must be holistic and sincere, transforming us into the likeness of God, who is the source of love (Jn. 3:17-18; 4:7-20). The love

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conflicts, using various strategies."
[155]Ibid, 31. Ogunewu further reiterates that: "In its liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper, the church remembers and re-presents how God reconciled the world through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the liturgy is an act of memory of what God has already done for us in Christ's life, death and resurrection. It is also the window on the eschatological hope, that has been promised to us, of the bringing together of all things. In various ways, our liturgical traditions illustrate how God's peace is communicated to us. They call us to share this peace with each other and to carry it into the world. Despite our shortcomings and failures as human beings, God's peace can be experienced in the lives ofindividuals, in families, in partnerships and in communities."
[156]Ibid, 34.

of God is incomplete without genuine love of neighbour."[157] This love of neighbour categorically must be grounded in the love of God.

The principle of peace building and reconciliation from Islamic perspective is aimed at developing peaceful co-existence. In the view of Yushau Sadiq, the Shari'ah precept in Nigeria is meant to bring sanity to society and in turn, to create a peaceful atmosphere. Sadiq however maintains that the Shari'ah should not be an imposition by any Islamic authority, especially to non-Muslims. This is the position he emphasizes in the following statement:

> Muslims in the North should not impose their religious laws, the Sharï'a, upon their citizens who are not Muslim because the religion itself advocates non-compulsion. If they want to practice their laws, they should be free to do so, but they should make sure that they do not infringe upon the rights of non-Muslims in their midst and not discriminate against them by any means or under any pretext.[158]

This implies the promotion of the principle of religious freedom as a fundamental human right; and this from the Muslims' point of view must be upheld in order for peace to be established among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Therefore, Sarkin-Kebbi emphasizes the fact that Muslims must focus on the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad on fundamental human rights in Islam in this regard. According to Sarkin-Kebbi, the Prophet Muhammad taught that;

> Islam is a religion that professes fundamental human rights, kindness, trustworthy, justice equity in dealing with any person whether Muslim or Non-Muslim. He has shown and demonstrated a great concerned on human right and freedom of religion. The Prophet Muhammad is an exemplary model in dealing with non-Muslims, he is very kind to them, treated them with justice, respected the parents, relatives and neighbours rights and discouraged injustice whether on Muslim or non-Muslim.[159]

In order to implement the theology of peace building, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and harmony from the Muslims' perspective in Nigeria, there must be religious tolerance. This,

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[157]Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, 162.

[158]Yushau Sodiq, "Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?" The Muslim World 99, no. 4 (October 2009): 676.

[159]Sarkin-Kebbi, "The Role of Muslim Scholars in Minifying Religious Extremism for Peace Building and Educational Development in Nigeria," 657. Therefore, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims traced its origin from the Prophet's relations with non- Muslims based on the morality; patience; constructiveness; respect for basic rights and freedom; invitation to Islam; ruling with justice; and guarding the cultural differences.

according to Shuaib, "is germane to peaceful relations as it would allow mutual development and growth along the path of the interest of each. It is counter-productive to oppose a phenomenon only on religious ground without looking at the advantages therein."[160] Religious tolerance encourages all to see and value the good sides of the religion of others. For religious tolerance to be valued among Muslims, Sarkin-Kebbi advocates the role of Muslim scholars in highlighting the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Sarkin-Kebbi thus asserts that;

> One of the responsibilities of Muslim scholars is to ensure religious tolerance, as demonstrated by the Prophet (S.A.W.) during his days in Makkah and Madinah. Therefore, they need to preach and emphasise on religious tolerance among Muslims and non-Muslims and shun away from any religious violence, respect for kinships whether Muslims or not, respect for others religious beliefs, and treat them with justice and kindness.[161]

Religious tolerance will also lead to the promotion of religious unity which is an important aspect of Islamic teaching. Sarkin-Kebbi affirms: "Forging unity amongst Muslims and Muslims groups or sects and amongst different religious and ethnics groups for peace building and national development requires tremendous efforts, particularly from the roles of Muslim scholars."[162]

It is from the above perspective that dialogue on peace building is required by Muslims in Nigeria. According to Sodiq, the skills of dialogue and mutual respect should be employed. Sadiq posits that: "Dialogue can yield fruitful results only when both parties demonstrate mutual respect and understanding for one another, when each group comes to the dialogue table as an equal partner-not with the arrogance of a superior attitude or with the intent of conversion. Of course, no one expects any group to compromise its basic beliefs for dialogue."[163] Therefore, there is the need to seek

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[160]Shuaib, "Islam, Conflict and Faith-Relations: The Prospects and Challenges of Peace Building in Nigeria."

[161]Sarkin-Kebbi, "The Role of Muslim Scholars in Minifying Religious Extremism for Peace Building and Educational Development in Nigeria," 663.

[162]Ibid, 661-662. Muslim scholars according to Sarkin-Kebbi are the ones "who are going to acts as Muslim preachers, representatives, elders, parents, arbitrators and reconcilers in dealing with the lager society of different sects, religions, ethnics, and backgrounds.

[163]Sodiq, "Can Muslims and Christians Live Together Peacefully in Nigeria?" 676. Sodiq continues to observe that "However, one anticipates an accommodation of different opinions and the recognition that others are serious and sincere about their beliefs. . . above all, leaders in both groups should play a role in educating their disciples as to the need to learn more about the other, to work together as members of one family (the human race), and to seek joint solutions to human problems that threaten our existence."

knowledge and understand each other's religion. Shuaib emphasizes this point and claims that it will go a long way in building peace between Christians and Muslims. According to him;

> There is need to seek for true knowledge of the scripture of the three major world religions about God with a view to understanding each other and how to live peacefully in the same society without fear, acrimony and bickering against one another, more so, that the message of Oneness of God was preached by all the prophets including Moses, Jesus and Muhammad and that they all followed the same path is affirmed in John 17:3.[164]

For Success to be achieved in the relationship and dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, it calls for both parties to develop the capacity to live with the challenges of pluralism. Boer also calls on the active role of all leaders in Nigeria to the reconciliation of Christians and Muslims. He maintains that "every Nigerian leader in the movement towards reconciliation, whether Christian or Muslim, must become familiar with this discussion and thus be equipped to clearly distinguish orthodox moderate Islam from fundamentalist militant varieties of today-and firmly refuse to deal with the latter."[165] This requires practical means and measures through education. Even though education opens the horizon of understanding our differences and enlarges our capacity to accommodate what these differences entail, there is still the need for active participation in interfaith programmes. It is in this regard that Tijani Ahmad Ashimi posits that in Nigeria:

> A common curriculum in religious instructions should be introduced in schools. This curriculum is to be drafted by experts in Christianity and Islam, and based primarily on the basic and common heritages and teachings found in both religions. For example, God, man, world, society, justice, peace, brotherhood, unity, cooperation, peaceful coexistence and moral codes and norms and other ethical values should be well highlighted.[166]

Education creates awareness and provides the visions that will promote understanding of one another in interreligious dialogue. Peace is therefore an indispensable characteristic in both

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[164]Shuaib, "Islam, Conflict and Faith-Relations: The Prospects and Challenges of Peace Building in Nigeria." 'Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent'. Furthermore, the NIV of the Bible, Mark 12:32 says: 'Well said, teacher,' the man replied. 'You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him'. This verse was corroborated in Qur'an 112:1-4

[165]Boer, *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together*, 115.

[166]Tijani Ahmad Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue in Building Muslim-Christian Relations in Nigeria," *Mamdard Islamicus* 37, no.1 (Jannuary-March 2014): 67.

Christianity and Islam. It requires that Christians and Muslims should be promoters of peace according to their religious teachings. It is in this regard that Yake emphasizes that Christians and Muslims should live according to the teachings of their religions in order to promote peace especially in Northern Nigeria. According to him; "Islam and Christianity become misrepresented when practitioners of these religions live outside the true teachings of their faith and also when they misinterpret certain verses of the holy books to suit their own selfish interest, especially in terms of justifying exploitation and violence as evidenced in northern Nigeria."[167] Peacebuilding in Nigeria therefore demands the cooperation of both Christians and Muslims.

4.3.2 Dialogue of Life in Nigeria

The dialogue of life is among the forms of dialogue which the PCID emphasized. In the Nigerian context, the dialogue of life in the view of Iwuchukwu "refers to the ongoing social phenomenon where people are required to interact healthily with neighbors, friends, family, and co-workers of different religions. During such interactions, the partners in dialogue get to know each other better without any pressure, intimidation, or suspicion."[168] Furthermore, dialogue of life according Nathan Samwini; "entails coexisting peacefully with 'the other' in spite of obvious religious differences. It also means being patient. In dialogue of life, people from different religious traditions live and interact in their everyday lives. Dialogue of life is a direct challenge to religious people, non-religious individuals, towns, and communities to accept one another no matter their differences in beliefs or practices".[169] Mujahid Hamza Shitu emphasizes that this type of dialogue "happens in a pluralistic society where people of different religious persuasions interact in different spheres of life be it economic, political or social."[170] It is what Cardinal Onaiyekan refers to as: 'dialogue in

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[167]Yake, "Preaching Peace and Living Peacefully in Northern Nigeria: Bridging the gap between Theory and Practice," 191.

[168]Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 176

[169]Nathan Samwini, "The Need for and Importance of Dialogue of Life in Community Building: The Case of Selected West African Nations," Journal of Interreligious Dialogue, issue 6 (April 2011), under "Interreligious Studies," www.irdialogue.org (accessed March 13, 2017).

[170]Mujahid Hamza Shitu, "Teaching Inter-Religious Dialogue as Part of the Syllabi of Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities: A Course Design," E-Journal of Arabic Studies & Islamic Civilization 1, no.1 (2014): 119

spite of faith'. In this perspective, Shitu states that because 'in spite' of the differences in their beliefs, people still live together, work together and share many similarities this itself is significant.[171]

Dialogue of life signifies the day-to-day engagements and encounters between individuals of various faiths and religious orientations. Akinade posits in this perspective that;

> Christians and Muslims may be outsiders to each other's theological nuances and emphasis; but the common existential issues and circumstances that they confront everyday are not products of fiction and imagination and may offer resources for interreligious dialogue. This perspective with less emphasis on *lex credendi* offers a good foundation for interreligious engagements that are deeply genuine and critical.[172]

It demands that Christians and Muslims be interested in doing common things that will unite and strengthen their relationships.

From the proxy of the four forms of dialogue presented by the PCID in the previous chapter, Iwuchukwu emphasizes their relevance to the spiritual and social implications in society. Iwuchukwu therefore recommends the social dimension of these implications to dialogue as what is appropriate to the Nigerian society, especially in Northern Nigeria. "Given the perennial violent social and religious relationship between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria, more energy needs to be focused on the social dimensions of dialogue. The two forms of dialogue that directly affect the social relationships of all religious people are the dialogue of life and the dialogue of action."[173]

For Iwuchukwu therefore, these two approaches to dialogue are the best way of promoting interreligious dialogue in Nigeria. "The social imperative tool calls for a pragmatic application of the concepts of the dialogue of action and dialogue of life; living and working together with people of different religious faith traditions toward the common good in the society. The dialogue of action and dialogue of life are people oriented or the most social imperative means of promoting

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[171] Ibid.
[172] Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria*, 15-16.
[173] Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 176.

interreligious dialogue in any society."[174] Iwuchukwu therefore observes that it may be easier for Christians and Muslims to have dialogue of action and dialogue of life than to engage in theological dialogue and exchange.

Christianity and Islam both cherish the relevance of this kind of dialogue. For Christians, dialogue of life emanates from following the life of Jesus in interacting and relating with other people without discrimination. This is what Kaigama describes in the Nigerian context as a "cross fertilization of our lives, an interaction in concrete daily life in a genuine and sincere manner between Christians and Muslims, a dialogue which opens us to accept each other and to share together at a deeper level. Muslims must open their hearts to Christians and Christians must open their hearts to Muslims in sincere love."[175] From the perspective of Cardinal Arinze, dialogue of life implies the totality of human activities in society, not minding the religious affiliation or identity of the members of a given society. Arinze affirms this kind of dialogue is where; "Christians and other believers meet and associate at the level of daily life, in the family, school, workplace or elsewhere without necessarily discussing religion."[176] Christians are therefore called to imitate this way of life in their relationships with other religious beliefs or groups.

However, from the Islamic approach, Wan Ariffin e*t al* pointed out that dialogue of life unconsciously exists among Muslims. They argue that "large majority of Muslims in the village used to mix, integrate and work together with members of the non-Muslim groups. They also respect their friends and family members who are from different religious backgrounds by their

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[174]Ibid, 175. While people are slow and even reluctant to invest time and energy toward in-depth theological discussions, they are more likely to be open to social interactions with other people for better social harmony and promoting the common good. Muslims collaborating with Christians on community-based projects, which will benefit the common good, is a noble cause and a very active form of dialogue necessary in northern Nigerian societies today. Christians living and working alongside Muslims in the same community should be more of the norm today than the exception. Therefore, being good neighbors to each other is indispensable for peaceful coexistence between northern Nigerian Christian and Muslim residents.

[175]Kaigama, *Peace, not War*, 30.

[176]Francis Arinze, "Cardinal Arinze Speaks on Interreligious Dialogue," an interview with *ASIA FOCUS*, August 5, 1994, https://www.ucanews.com/story-archive/?...=/1994/.../15/...arinze...interreligious-dialo...(accessed February 5, 2019).

readiness to attend weddings, funerals,"[177] and other functions in the community. Dialogue of life, Shitu further highlights;

> Is a form of dialogue which Islam not only encouraged, but was also practiced by the Prophet (S.AW). The Prophet never isolated the Muslim community from others, he interacted with people of other faiths, even at Makkah when he was persecuted by polytheist, and he was also given properties for safekeeping by those who persecuted him. In addition, Madinah, the place where the Prophet migrated to, was more pluralistic than Makkah, the Prophet traded with non-Muslims and was fond of visiting their sick ones.[178]

This is to say that the dialogue of life is central in Islam and Muslims generally are to be involved in it, since the Prophet Muhammad set an example for them.

There are still many Christians and Muslims who have yet to come to terms with the dialogue of life in Nigeria. These are those who cannot see any meaning in relating with people of other religions. It is a mentality that emerges from a fundamentalist and extremist attitude. It is against this background that Akintunde E. Akinade sets an example that in Yoruba land of Nigeria, Christians and Muslims co-exist and live side by side and tolerate each other as a result of the dialogue of life and full engagements with one another. This spirit of group solidarity through dialogue of life according Akinade "guarantees mutual openness, respect and cooperation among all Yoruba people."[179] In this type of dialogue, there is much understanding and acceptance of one another.

A typical contextual example is the situation where Christians are uncomfortable with Muslims using loud speakers calling for prayers at "odd hours"; Christians, on the other hand, use loud speakers in their worship which sometimes may also be a disturbance to their Muslim neighbours. Such attitudes do not in any way deny the fact that the dialogue of life is yielding positive fruit in society, but Christians and Muslims are tolerant to one another. Dialogue of life in Nigeria

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[177]Wan Ariffin Wan Yon, Khambali Khadijah Mohd, and Hasan, Ahmad Rozaini Ali et al, "Bridging The Muslim-Christian Relations Through Dialogue Of Life: Muslim Perspective," *International Proceedings of Economics Development & Research* 5 Issue 2, (January 2011): 140.

[178]Shitu, "Teaching Inter-Religious Dialogue as Part of the Syllabi of Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities: A Course Design," 121.

[179]Akintunde E. Akinade, "The precarious agenda: Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary Nigeria," *Studia historiae ecclesiasticae 29, no. 1 (June 2003):* 50.

particularly serves as the basis for encounter between Christians and Muslims in various activities and engagements of daily life and occasions. This is in consonance with Akinade's submission when he states that in Southern parts of Nigeria, dialogue of life is more practical and evident. Akinade affirms that in this part of the country; "Christians receive Christmas and Easter greeting cards from their Muslim friends, neighbors, and relatives. Muslims are present in churches for the baptism, wedding, or burial of relatives and friends. In this dialogue of life, Christians and Muslims are enriched by each other's experience and spirituality, and strengthened by certain features of the faith of the other."[180] However, the fact that both religions allow this in their communities shows that Christians and Muslims accept one another and are tolerant to some factors associated with their religions.

Dialogue of life can take place in two dimensions; it can happen on a daily basis as people engage and interact with one another. This can be referred to as the dialogue of relationship and daily encounter. There is also the dialogue in pursuit of the common good, what may be described as the dialogue of "common action". At the center of these two dimensions of dialogue, the word 'encounter' is very important, especially in the dialogue of life. Akinade argues that:

> Encounter can be interpreted as people meeting face to face, whether this is planned or unexpected. It may also connote a situation of dialogue, contestation, or mutual exchange. It signifies the day-to-day experiences of Christians and Muslims in different contexts. It enunciates the real *sitz im leben* of the various ways Christians and Muslims interact and contend with various existential circumstances.[181]

In both dialogue of relationship and daily encounter and dialogue of common action, there is often the need for encounters between Christians and Muslims. It is a more practical way of achieving solidarity between Christians and Muslims in their pursuit of the common good. A better understanding of one another is achieved when Christians and Muslims encounter one another in a

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[180]Akinade, "The precarious agenda: Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary Nigeria," 49.

[181]Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria*, 15. This perspective according to Akinade also relates to the significance of contextualization in Christian-Muslim relations. Rather than dealing with prefabricated theories and conditions, contextualization valorizes the concrete experiences of the *dramatis personae* in interreligious relations.

mutual way on a daily basis. Such dialogues are very vital and necessary to enhance the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

4.3.2.1 Dialogue of Relationships and Daily Encounter

This is an area that unites person to person, or group and community together. In dialogue of life and encounter, individuals encounter others on a daily basis in their houses, places of work, Churches or mosques, recreational centers, or any other place that people meet and interact. This is the point Ashimi affirms when he says that there is this kind of dialogue: "In the offices of government, within the armed forces, in the political parties, in the markets and even at times within the same family, many Nigerians are working together often rejoicing with those who rejoice and mourning with those who mourn."[182]

Dialogue of relationships and daily encounter may be seen as a more practical demonstration of the dialogue of life. In Nigeria this can be seen in many cultures and tribal settlements. Many Christians and Muslims from the same family live together and have everything in common. For instance among the Gbagyis and Koros of Niger, Kaduna and Nassarawa States, the Igalas and Igbaras of Kogi state, the Maguzawas of Kano, Zaria, Katsina and Sokoto and the Yorubas of the West, you find such examples of Christians and Muslims coming from the same family. It is the kind of dialogue Ashimi refers to as informal dialogue. Ashimi affirms "that this concept of informal dialogue is already a reality on the ground among the Nigerian people. It is among their normal patterns of life. One of the most beautiful things about Nigeria is that with the huge number of Christians and Muslims living side by side all over the country, they have managed to live together in relative peace and tranquillity."[183] This should therefore serve as an example in areas where Christians and Muslims cannot still live in peace with one another in Nigeria.

4.3.2.2 Dialogue of Common Action

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[182]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 55-56.
[183]Ibid, 55.

This kind of dialogue demands the cooperation and collaboration of all the members of society (both Christians and Muslims) in pursuit of the common good and interest. The dialogue of common action from the perspective of Iwuchukwu "requires a deliberately organized collaboration of peoples from different religious blocks. It may also entail community events sponsored by the collaboration of different religious groups in the society. It is through the auspices of such dialogue that Muslims and Christians can collaboratively protect, promote, and advocate for the common good in the society.[184] Shitu also highlights that the dialogue of common action; "is a dialogue on common issues whereby people of different religions would come together to struggle for a common course of concern to the society. The joint action may be geared towards struggle for justice, peace, human rights, alleviation of suffering, provision of social welfare facilities etc."[185] Both Christians and Muslims are involved in the dialogue of action for the common good of all in society. They work together in various ministries and government organizations, the military and police barracks, institutions of learning, places of businesses; they live together and interact with one another on a daily basis. In such encounters and relationships, Muslims and Christians embrace, promote and cherish their relationships.

From the above narrative, this kind of dialogue and relationships should be encouraged against religious rivalries. Christians and Muslims should stop taking sides with their religious members in times of misunderstandings in society. This is in order to create a very firm and genuine relationship. It is based on this theory that Kaigama highlights how Christians and Muslims behave and put religion before relationships. They identify with their fellow religious member(s) even when such person(s) is/are on the wrong side. Kaigama states: "When misunderstanding or differences occur among their adherents, the manner in which some adherents go at the others suggests that the practice of religion is hypocritical and a sheer externalism."[186] Most of the

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[184]Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 177.
[185]Shitu, "Teaching Inter-Religious Dialogue as Part of the Syllabi of Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities: A Course Design," 119.
[186]Kaigama, *Dialogue of Life*, 8.

religious riots in Nigeria in the past were fuelled by such attitudes of identifying with religion to the detriment of relationships. More efforts are therefore needed to eliminate such attitudes and to ensure Christians and Muslims engage freely with one another, not minding their religious affiliations.[187]

Dialogue of common action in many situations also serves as a remedy to some social problems and crises, such as misunderstanding, quarrels, and grievances. This is because people are dealing with their family members, friends, colleagues and counterparts. Dialogue of common action transcends the official dialogue and is more practicable in the daily lives and affairs of the people. This kind of dialogue, according to Ashimi, is an aid to effective interreligious dialogue. Ashimi contends that this kind of dialogue leads to how Christians and Muslims in Nigeria can mobilize their human and natural resources in society for the general and common good. He posits that; "Through the sound interreligious dialogue, this approach requires that the starting point of this mobilization exercise is for the leaders of both religions especially, imams and priests to orientate themselves in the philosophy of their assignment, which is the creation of conducive environment for the sake of peaceful co-existence and mutual respect."[188] It is therefore a positive development to see the dialogue of life through daily encounters and actions already working successfully in many parts of Nigeria. This is because Christians and Muslims have been able to accept one another as brothers and sisters. They have been able to consider themselves as believers in one God, though with different religious affiliations.

The challenge to the dialogue of life lies in areas where one particular religion is predominant. It becomes difficult for a member of a different religion to be accepted and live in such a community

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[187]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 55. Ashimi also argues that even with certain negative situations in Nigeria, Christians and Muslims still make efforts to engage in dialogue of common action. Ashimi states that: "The occasional moments of madness which unfortunately receive wide publicity at home and abroad do not in any way reduce the importance of the normal desire and efforts of ordinary Nigerians-Christian and Muslim-to live together in peace. We should not underestimate the importance of the fact that many Nigerians of all faiths are carrying on their daily lives, facing their common challenges, making friends across religious divide and are generally working together in the different spheres of national activities."
[188]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 62.

or organization. Dialogue of life must therefore be encouraged between Christians and Muslims. This implies doing things in common. Such common engagements can be seen in the dialogue of life among women, in the next section.

4.3.3 Christian and Muslim Women Dialogue in Nigeria

An African Proverb according to Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey of Ghana (1875-1927), states: *If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.*[189] This provides the background of the role of women in promoting interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Women, of course, play a significant role in the affairs of Nigerian society. As mothers, women are the co-ordinators of the domestic activities in the family. Since the family is the bedrock of society, it has the responsibility of impacting society with positive values.

This special role of the family in society has its orientation and support from women. Due to the significant roles women play in the progress and development of society, A.A Ogunjemilua and J.O. Familugba opine that they are responsible for society as well, since they give life to society. Ogunjemilua and Familugba posit:

> Women in most societies, whether developed or developing are regarded as currency with which political and economic alliances are cemented. Thus in social anthropology, the transfer of women between lineages and clans is regarded as a medium of communication more potent and clearest than language itself. The woman as a person is an agent of reproduction of life itself. This places her in the position of the life itself. This places her in the position of the life blood of the entire humanity.[190]

From this background, the education of women is important for nation-building and development. It is also important in strengthening interfaith dialogue between Christian and Muslim women in Nigeria, because women will be the primary agents of inculcating the principles of peaceful co-existence and harmonious living in their children.

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[189]Sylvia M. Jacobs article: "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *The Journal of Negro History* 81, No. 1/4 (Winter - Autumn, 1996): 47.

[190]A. A Ogunjemilua and J.O. Familugba, "The Contributions of Nigeria Women Towards National Development," *International Journal for Innovation Education and Research* 3, no. 5 (May 2015): 91.

Therefore, women must be given the dignity of their gender in the Nigerian culture and society. Speaking on the dignity of women from a Christian perspective, Rekha M. Chennattu emphasizes the role that women played in history from the biblical perspective. Chennattu argues that, based on this significant role of women in the bible, women should actively participate in the affairs of society as their mission in the Church. Chennattu states that: "The stories of biblical women give us a glimpse of the actual creative power and wisdom of women as shapers of tradition and makers of history. These stories challenge us to uphold the dignity of women as God's beloved daughters created in God's image and likeness as well as to promote their active participation in the mission of the Church."[191] The Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* also highlights that: "Underlines the ample evidence that we have in the history of the Church of the presence of women in the Church as 'true disciples, witnesses to Christ in the family and in society, as well as in total consecration to the service of God and of the Gospel'."[192] The involvement of Christian women in dialogue lies in the fact that they too have a mission and ministry in the Church. John Paul II also affirms that; "The presence and the role of women in the life and mission of the Church, although not linked to the ministerial priesthood, remain absolutely necessary and irreplaceable."[193]

From an Islamic perspective, Lejla Demiri (a Muslim student in Rome, studying Christian theology at the Gregorian University, in order to promote interfaith dialogue), argues that "there is especially a need for the female contribution to dialogue. Although I do not want to sound discriminative, I still hold the feminine dimension will add some positive aspects to dialogue endeavor, especially to everyday dialogue, in other words, the dialogue of life."[194] Prejudices are among some of the main

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[191]Rekha M. Chennattu, "Dignity of Women: Christian Perspectives," *Journal of Dharma* 37, no. 1 (January-March 2012): 77.

[192]*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, no. 3.

[193]Ibid. As the Declaration Inter Insigniores no. 6 also states: "The Church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the rediscovery by believers of the true face of the Church."

[194]Lejla Demiri, "How A Muslim Woman Views Christian-Islamic Dialogue," *Zenith,* Online Interview, June 3, 2004, https://zenit.org/articles/a-muslim-woman-views-christian-islamic-dialogue/ (accessed June 15, 2017).

problems that are encountered in dialogue, and so there is the need for mutual knowledge among Christian and Muslim women. Demiri states that:

> It can be clearly seen that many enmities and hostilities are products of lack of knowledge and ignorance. I can give an example of one of these prejudices and misinformation that we often see. Unfortunately, very often in the mass media, Muslim women are described as oppressed and the object of violence…one of the essential elements in mutual understanding and dialogue is to avoid all kinds of simplistic generalizations, because there is no religion today that is monolithic; each contains within itself a variety of ideas and interpretations.[195]

Therefore, the need for dialogue between Christian and Muslim women is important in improving the relationship between the two religions.

There are of course many areas of common interest for women in Nigeria to dialogue. In her work on Muslim and Christian women in dialogue, Kathleen McGarvey, a sister of Our Lady of Apostles' congregation from Ireland, worked and taught in Northern Nigeria for more than twenty years. She discusses six areas of concern for Nigerian women. These include: Women and Abuse within Marriage, Women in Power and Decision-Making, Women and Health, Women and Education, Women and Poverty, Women and Law. While these focus more on civil and secular dimensions, religion also has a prominent role in the lives of women, according to McGarvey: "The majority of these women give a prominent place to religion in their lives. The secular movement for human and civil rights, including women's rights, actually grew in Nigeria alongside the religious revivalism, both which evolved during the military regimes. Religious and cultural beliefs are particularly influential in the areas of women's empowerment and their social development."[196] Because of the influential nature of religion on women, it poses challenges to social transformation and development, since many women are restricted by religious doctrines. This is why dialogue becomes relevant among Christian and Muslim women in Nigeria, in order to break the barriers of religious rigorism, and create open and diverse intellectual encounters among women.

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[195]Ibid.

[196]Kathleen McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue: The Case of Northern Nigeria* (Switzerland: Verlag Peter Lang, 2008), 162.

The religious tension between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria also demands interfaith dialogue among women of the two faith communities. Women according to Kathleen McGarvey, are pro-active in conversations and personal relationships, and can go to any length to make sure a solution is provided to a problem. McGarvey affirms that: "In Nigeria, from time to time we have heard of women baring their breasts as a way of resolving conflict or refusing to sleep with their husbands unless such and such a dispute were clarified. More recently we had hundreds of Muslim and Christian women going together, dressed in mourning cloth, through the streets of Abuja to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the Jos conflict."[197] McGarvey further opines that, women are more prompt in showing solidarity towards the welfare of their fellow women, and in achieving their goals and objectives.[198]

From this backdrop it is evident that Christian and Muslim women in Nigeria can form an alliance of unity and solidarity through dialogue among themselves. Such dialogue is aimed towards building a bridge of peaceful co-existence and reconciliation in Nigeria. For example, in Plateau state, Kaduna State, Bauchi State, Gombe State and different parts of Northern Nigeria, both Christian and Muslim women have formed a circle of dialogue to live in peace with one another.

In an effort to unite women in Nigeria, the Interfaith Council of Muslim and Christian Women's Associations was established in Northern Nigeria by Sr. Kathleen McGarvey. Since the establishment of the organization in 2010, according to the Society of African Missions, it has grown tremendously, and more women from both faith communities identify with it. "They have run seminars, workshops, and conferences on the subjects of conflict, peace, women, and dialogue. Political, traditional and religious leaders of both faiths have participated in these events as well as hundreds of Muslim and Christian women."[199]

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[197]Kathleen McGarvey, "Gender, Peace and Religious Coexistence: Insights from Nigeria," *Journal of Religion and Society* 1, (June 2011): 65.
[198]Ibid.
[199]Society of African Missions*,* "Working for justice, peace and understanding between Christians and Muslims," *African Missionary, July 15, 2013, 3.*

Christian and Muslim women must therefore be part of the dialogue in Nigeria, because they have a significant role which naturally connects them to the family and society at large. Thus, women are the channels of linking society through their various families. Because of the close bond existing between mothers and their children, women form the background in providing education to their children from the home. It is expected that they teach them the basis of peaceful and harmonious living with others. Of course, this is an agenda of dialogue among women, and can be used as a means of encouraging interfaith dialogue.

4.3.4 Unity of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria: Christian and Muslim Leaders Working Together

There is a need for an active engagement between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This calls for a strong bond of unity between the two religions. Interfaith dialogue therefore becomes the main channel of uniting Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Christians and Muslims in Nigeria need to focus on factors and ideologies that unite than divide. Such principles and ideologies of unity that will bridge the gap of hatred and bring about reconciliation and peaceful co-existence are required. Akinade asserts that: "The formidable task of creating a united front among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria still remains. In the words of Chinua Achebe, the most commonly enunciated Nigerian ideal is *unity*. So important is it to us that it stands inscribed on our coat-of-arms and so sacred that the blood of millions of our countrymen, women and children was shed . . . to uphold it against secessionist forces."[200] In the struggle for the unity of Nigeria, every barrier of ethnicity and religious affiliation should therefore be kept aside.

It is from this perspective that Simon Mary Asese Aihiokhai emphasizes how friendship should connect individuals as well as enhance religious bonds in Nigeria. Aihiokhai opines that there should be a general approach to friendship, where every person is a friend to all in society. In this sense, Aihiokhai posits; "One cannot be an enemy of those close to one's friends. This point is vital

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[200]Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria*, 32.

if one is to understand the implications of establishing bonds of friendship as a tool for enacting interreligious dialogue. To establish a bond of friendship among peoples of different religions entails an extension of that bond to those each one regards as close to oneself."[201]

Interreligious dialogue is also necessary for establishing unity through peace. It is argued that the necessity for peace comes from the presence of war. Therefore, if there is war with one another, then there is the need to seek peace and through this, unity is also initiated. From a Christian perspective, Mary Uzoigwe Amara and Louis Nwadialor Kanayo suggest the application of St. Paul's teaching in the text of Gal.3:26-29. Amara and Kanayo affirm that verse 28 of the text is particularly relevant to the unity of Nigeria. The verse, according to them;

> Apparently stimulates us to overlook ethnic differences that have engulfed us. The claim of superiority of one ethnic group over the other as obtains among Jewish Christians over the Gentile converts incubates discontentment, distrust and suspicions. As Paul repeatedly used the phrase "in Christ" so also we could say "in Nigeria", Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Christians, Muslims and Traditional worshippers alike could lay hold of common ancestry as beneficiaries of the bounteous natural and human resources in our nation.[202]

Therefore, from the above perspective, Amara and Kanayo also maintain that the diversities of ethnicities and religions in Nigeria should not affect the unity of the nation. This unity, according to them, should serve to promote the dignity of Nigeria. They posit that;

> Our unity implies oneness as a nation and does not in any way negate our diverse peculiarities in terms of culture, language, religion and so on. The uniqueness of every ethnic group, culture and religion will only boom when we understand and appreciate that in unity lies our dignity . . . Our diversity should be a source of strength as against division that it causes. Our unity is in our diversity.[203]

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[201]SimonMary Asese Aihiokhai, 'Love one another as I have loved you': the place of friendship in interfaith dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 48, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 495. in the religious context, a concrete way of showing the constant love that exists among the different religions is to have an anamnetic awareness and appreciation of the other religions within the worship rituals of one's own religion.

[202]Mary Uzoigwe Amara and Louis Nwadialor Kanayo, "Towards Bridging Ethnic and Religious Divides in Nigeria: ExegeticoHermeneutical Application of Gal. 3:26-29," *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies* 7, no. 2 (2013): 84. For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:26-29).

[203]Ibid. Amara and Kanayo also point out the fact that we have and share common ancestry in Nigerian nation.

From the Islamic point of view, Shitu posits that; "The teachings and spirit of Islam promote unity and peaceful co-existence with peoples of different faiths."[204] Therefore, both religions cherish the unity of Nigeria as a goal to be pursued.

Interfaith dialogue has a tremendous contribution to the prospect of unity. From a historical perspective, Israel Adelani Akanji opines that interfaith dialogue has united more faith communities to collaborate and live together in peace and harmony. According to Akanji, interfaith dialogue has made pluralism more acceptable and appreciated by various religions. Akanji thus expresses that pluralism should be employed for the unity of Christians and Muslims in order to control the religious crisis in Nigeria. He affirms that:

> Religious pluralism, in our estimation, is one of the most urgent issues for contemporary theology in Nigeria, where incessant religious conflicts have gained centre stage. Since Nigerian Christians are not cut off from the rest of the world, it is important to begin by taking note of the fact that Christians have contemplated on relationships with people of other religions right from the New Testament times.[205]

Akanji therefore suggests that the three theological perspectives of exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism should be examined in the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Nigeria. He places greater emphasis on inclusivism and pluralism. This is because in his opinion, they form the elements of the theology of religion.[206] Furthermore, caution should be taken by the adherents of both Christianity and Islam in applying these three principles, especially exclusivism, lest discrimination creeps in among them. Such attitudes of exclusivism, according to Sunday Okungbowa

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[204]Shitu, "Teaching Inter-Religious Dialogue as Part of the Syllabi of Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities: A Course Design," 115, 123. Shitu further argues that "in Islam, the purpose of dialogue is arriving at, through mutual efforts, the truth, which every religion claims to possess." Shitu therefore maintains that dialogue of truth is the basis of interfaith dialogue in the Qur'an and Islam. Shitu quotes "Say (to them O Muhammad): I exhort you to one (thing) only: that you stand up for Allah's sake in pairs and singly and reflect (within yourselves): there is no madness in your companion (Muhammad). He is only a warner to you in the face of a severe torment (34:46). This verse obviously calls to the dialogue of Truth. Furthermore, the aforementioned verse of the Qur'an 3:64, also calls People of the Book to the dialogue of Truth, by calling them to the common terms of truth."

[205]Israel Adelani Akanji, "Towards a Theology of Conflict Transformation: A Study of Religious Conflict in Contemporary Nigerian Society," PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2011. In Edinburgh Research Archive, www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/5464 (accessed May 22, 2017). This kind of relationship Akanji further argues can also be traced to the Old Testament period and "also, throughout the patristic period and up to the modern period, discussions on the relationship between Christianity and other religions have burgeoned with complexities. Both biblical witness and Christian tradition have therefore been replete with mixed positions on the issue of people of other faiths and this has had much influence on how Christians relate with such people."

[206]Ibid.

Uhunmwuangho and Aluforo Epelle, emerge when certain groups "become characterized by a common consciousness of their identity in relations to other groups with in-group and out-group differences becoming marked with time. Such exclusivist, identity-based discrimination undoubtedly results in conflicts."[207]

Against the background of exclusivism and discrimination, Iwuchukwu recommends a practical implementation of inclusive and pluralistic principles especially in Northern Nigeria where religious crises has been prominent. Iwuchukwu opines that there must be a change of ideological worldview of superiority and inferiority complexes in Northern Nigeria;

> From binary presupposition (us versus them) to inclusive worldview, from totalizing ideology to accommodating and appreciation of differences. For northern Nigerians to reflect inclusive pluralistic worldview, they must expunge the prevailing exclusive mentality, which often separates people into antagonistic camps or gives the impression that either a certain culture or a religion is superior to others.[208]

Iwuchukwu therefore advocates Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria to respect their differences because most times perpetrators of violence and hate often amplify the differences in order to trigger misunderstanding among Christians and Muslims.

Interfaith dialogue must also provide the background for peace building and reconciliation between Christians and Muslims. Peace building, according to Boutros Ghali (UN Secretary General 1992-1995), is the process of identifying and supporting structures that will strengthen and make peace firm without yielding conflicts. Ghali emphasizes that:

> Peace requires a comprehensive endeavor, across the spectrum of action and time. Preventive diplomacy seeks to resolve disputes before violence breaks out. Peacemaking and peace-keeping are required to halt conflict and preserve peace once it is achieved. If successful, they strengthen the chances for post-conflict peace-building. Preventive diplomacy is to avoid a crisis; peace building is to prevent a recurrence. Each step requires and reinforces the others.[209]

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[207]Sunday Okungbowa Uhunmwuangho and Aluforo Epelle, "Challenges and Solutions to Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Case Study of the Jos Crises," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 13, no. 5 (2011): 114.

[208]Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 174.

[209]Boutros Ghali, "An agenda for peace: One year later," *Elsevier* 37, iss. 3 (Summer 1993): 323-324.

In the view of Jonathan Madu, it is the "efforts and interventions aimed at overcoming the root causes of conflict; and also at attempts to overcome the structural, rational and cultural contradictions which lie at the root of conflict in order to underpin the processing of peacemaking and peacekeeping."[210] These two factors, peace-making and peacekeeping are also strongly connected to peace building. Peace-making aims at negotiating and settling the crises or disputes between parties. Peacekeeping, on the other hand, focuses not just on stopping people from attacking or having conflicts, but is also the process of 'managing the transition from conflict to post conflict'.[211]

On the other hand, reconciliation involves the action of merging the peace-making and the peace-keeping processes in order to bring about the desired peace. According to Sulaiman Kamal-deen Olawale, this "among others should serve as tools with which to douse the social violence that emerges from the practice of religion in Nigeria. This will ensure peaceful coexistence of Christians, Muslims, Traditionalists and members of other religions. This would also help in the restoration of a peace, security, growth and stability order in Nigeria as a nation."[212] Thus, interfaith dialogue and unity can never be successful with just one party. There is a need for collaboration and cooperation among the various parties. The efforts and activities of religious leaders and organizations demonstrate such collaboration and cooperation.

Interfaith dialogue on unity and reconciliation also requires maintaining peace and living together in harmony, despite religious affiliations and cultural differences. This demands continuous interactions through dialogue. In this regard, J. Dogara Gwamna asserts that the process of interfaith dialogue "refer specifically to Christian/Muslim engagement involving discussions towards evolving means in order to forge greater relations, harmony, understanding, tolerance and

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[210]Jonathan Madu, *Understanding Peace and Conflict Studies: A Handbook in Development and Social Studies* (Enugu: Madonna University Press, 2015), 81.

[211] Cf. Ibid.

[212]Sulaiman Kamal-deen Olawale, "Religious Violence in Contemporary Nigeria: Implications and Options for Peace and Stability Order," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 29, no. 1 (2016): 85.

peaceful co-existence in Nigeria"[213] This is the means through which meaningful and authentic relations will develop and guarantee mutual respect, stability and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It is also important in the formation of teachers who will help in implementing the principles and objectives of the educational aspect of interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue should therefore be based on sincere respect for one another, according to the teachings of Christianity and Islam, in order for unity to be achieved. Through such unity, it will lead to co-operation, peace building, conflict prevention and reconciliation and peaceful co-existence.

4.3.5 Collaboration of Religious Leaders

Religious leaders are supposed to be the moral authorities and guides to people in society. They are to challenge and criticize the state and society objectively in various aspects; such as ethical lapses like corruption, mismanagement, and disregard for the poor and moral decadence in society. Thus in Nigeria, Christian and Muslim leaders have come together, not only to discuss, but also to understand themselves and pursue common goals. The efforts of Christian and Muslim leaders have become more eminent in recent years with the urgent need for both religions to respond to the various challenges and crises of the Nigerian society as well as the plights of their members. Christian and Muslim leaders have to discuss how to work together, and seek the ways forward to resolve the divisions that exist among them.

Promotion of education is an important aspect for Christian and Muslim leaders to focus on. Ashimi emphasizes that one of the responsibilities of religious leaders is to educate their members on mutual understanding and respect for one another. He asserts that religious "leaders should then embark on concerted efforts to educate the adherents of their respective faiths about the need for mutual understanding of their religious differences instead of engaging in bloodshed conflicts.

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[213]Gwamna, Je'adayibe Dogara. *Religion and Politics in Nigeria.* Kaduna: Prudent Universal Press, 2010), 169, 182. Dogara further states that in the final analysis, "Forging inter-religious peaceful co-existence through dialogue demands a lot of courage, sincerity and commitment. It demands a collaborative approach. It demands respect and mutual responsibility. Most importantly, it demands people who are well informed of the issues about religion in Nigeria."

Hence, special attention should be paid to the need to remove ignorance among the adherents about each other's faith."[214] This is a fundamental demand on religious leaders in Nigeria, so that they can prepare their members for mutual relations and respect for each other.

Interfaith dialogue among religious leaders becomes indispensable for a better and progressive society. Through such dialogue they will be able to share their stories and begin the process of healing the wounds of hatred and enmity. In Kaduna State for instance, such action is seen in the signing of the peace declaration by Christians and Muslims. The opening paragraph of the declaration captures the significance of collaboration between Christians and Muslims. It states: "In the name of God who is Almighty, Merciful and Compassionate, we who have gathered as Muslim and Christian religious leaders from Kaduna State pray for peace in our state and declare our commitment to ending the violence and bloodshed, which has marred our recent history."[215] Such initiative is also required in other places where there is religious tension in Nigeria.

The above development and initiative shows the readiness and willingness of Christian and Muslim leaders to collaborate and restore unity and bring progress in Kaduna state. Similar gestures are also displayed in other states where Christian and Muslims leaders have tried to unite their followers. For example, in Plateau and Taraba States, where Christian and Muslim leaders have

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[214]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 62-63. At a conference on Christian-Muslim dialogue at the University of Chicago, "Nigerian Christians and Muslims have demonstrated resilience by their willingness to quickly put their houses in order and get on with life." (Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Nigeria: Hopeful Failures, Paper presented at the international Conference on Christian-Muslim relations at the Catholic Theological Union, University of Chicago, May 4, 2006).

[215]Kaduna State, "The Kaduna Peace Declaration of Religious Leaders," Columban Interreligious Dialogue, August 22, 2002, http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/work/declarations/kaduna.cfm (accessed December 5, 2018). This Peace Declaration was agreed and signed by eleven Christian leaders including Archbishop Achigili and eleven Muslim leaders, Imams and Sheikhs and by His Excellency Alhaji Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi the Executive Governor of Kaduna State. The first three points According to our faiths, killing innocent lives in the names of God is a desecration of His Holy Name, and defames religions in the World. The violence that has occurred in Kaduna State is an evil that must be opposed by all people of good faith. We seek to live together as neighbours, respecting the integrity of each other's historical and religious heritage. We call upon all to oppose incitement, hatred, and the misrepresentation of one another. The declaration therefore outlines the following: a) Muslims and Christians of all tribes must respect the divinely ordained purposes of the Creator by whose grace we live together in Kaduna State; such ordained purposes include freedom of worship, access to and sanctity of places of worship and justice among others. b)As religious leaders we seek to work with all sections of the community for a lasting and just peace according to the teachings of our religions. c)We condemn all forms of violence and seek to create an atmosphere where present and future generations will co-exist with mutual respect and trust in one another. We call upon all to refrain from incitement and demonization, and pledge to educate our young people accordingly.

developed programmes to bring their followers together through workshops, seminars and spiritual exercises such as prayers. The foundation of the interfaith Vocational Youth training centre in Plateau State, January 27, 2011 resulted from such gestures. According to Kaigama, "it was initiated to be a bridge between Christian and Muslim youths, especially the rural youths who are disadvantaged by reasons of poor education or absence of vocational skills."[216] Plateau State now enjoys relative peace perhaps as a result of this effort.

Similarly, despite the activities of religious extremists in the North-East region, in 2015 thirty Christians and thirty Muslims were brought together for training on dialogue at the Youth Conference center in Jalingo, the capital of Taraba State. It was meant to build bridges of religious trust in the North-East region, and it has continued to develop since then. Furthermore, Ashimi highlights that "It is significant that, the formal dialogue in Nigeria should apply an ethical approach which involves the study of the moral decadence that is spreading through our society at an alarming rate. Here, leaders of both communities should strive and introduce the mechanism that can help to overcome this moral decadence in the society."[217] This is an aspect that the Interfaith Mediation Centre founded by Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye has been promoting.

In Chapter One of his article, "*No Enemy to Conquer*", Michael Henderson gave the story of an Imam and a Pastor who formed an alliance of peace, through cordial relationships. Henderson says that, "Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, a Muslim imam, was once committed to the total Islamization of Nigeria. James Movel Wuye, a Christian pastor, was just as committed to its evangelization. They were bitter enemies, determined to kill each other. Today they are friends and joint directors of an NGO, the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna, one of the most important cities in northern Nigeria."[218] Such relationships among religious leaders need to be established in Nigeria for peace

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[216]Kaigama, *Peace, not War*, 144.
[217]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 63.
[218]Michael Henderson, "Nigeria: The Story of Imam and Pastor," No Enemy to Conquer, mh.iofc.org/nigeria-story-imam-and-pastor (accessed March 21, 2017). The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has called the story of *Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa and James Movel Wuye,* "a model for Christian Muslim relations," which should be encouraged in Nigeria.

and unity to reign. It is from the leaders that their followers will learn how to live in peace and unity with one another. Thus, religious leaders in Nigeria meet often to discuss issues of common interest. Three important areas are therefore highlighted for the collaboration of Christian and Muslim leaders in Nigeria.

1.   Promotion of Education

2.   Economic Development

3.   Politics and Good Governance

a. **Promotion of Education**

Education is an important tool and instrument of development of a nation. This has been confirmed by Yekini Olawaiye Lawal, who states that; "Many perceive education as an instrument for self reliance, social reconstruction and economic development. The increasing demand for education and the resultant expansion in enrolments have quite serious impact on the future development of education in the poor countries."[219] Therefore there is the need for a collaborative effort by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to improve the quality of education in the country. Christians and Muslims have tried to establish schools and institutions of learning, not just meant for religious purposes, but for human empowerment and development. There are also many other areas that require the attention of Christian and Muslim leaders to help to bring about positive changes in Nigeria.

While Iwuchukwu appreciates the contribution of Western and Islamic education to technological and economic development of society, he however categorically states this has not been fully achieved in Northern Nigeria. Unfortunately, the failure of adequate Western education in Northern Nigeria has resulted to some negative influence in society. Thus Iwuchukwu affirms that;

> These positive impacts of Western education and development have failed to be beneficially implemented, resulting in the dearth of technological development in many parts of the north and growing abject poverty among the masses in the

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[219]Yekini Olawaiye Lawal, "Education as an Instrument for Effective National Development: Which Way Nigeria," *Business & Entrepreneurship Journal* 2, no. 2 (2013): 28.

society. . . The unprecedented increasing rate of crime and violence in different parts of northern Nigeria is unfortunately due to the misuse of available technologically advanced guns and other weapons such as improvised explosive device (IED), pipe bombs, vehicle bombs, petrol bombs, etc.[220]

Iwuchukwu also appreciates the relevance of Islamic education as having strong moral influence and suggests it can be beneficial to ensure an advance moral society in Nigeria. However, this has been manipulated with political influence in Northern Nigeria under the disguise of Shari'ah law. Iwuchukwu opines that the manipulation of religion by the Northern political leaders in order to promote "the Shari'a legal system in the 12 states of northern Nigeria used it as their primary bargaining tool to solicit the support of the Muslim dominated population. Unfortunately, the same politicians have failed to imbibe the virtues of accountability, political and economic honesty, fiscal discipline, social justice, and promotion of the common good, which the Shari'a requires of them."[221]

The lack of good governance because of poor education also has some negative consequence in the Nigerian society. In this regard, Ashimi observes that due to some manifestations of moral decadence, such as "armed robbery, misuse of power, unbridled ambition, brutalizing the young ones through immoral movies, due to widespread presence of bandits, vagabonds, criminals and crooks etc. Muslims and Christians will be performing both civic and religious duties by fighting the social malady and social corruption and moral decadence through promotion of moral or religious education in schools."[222] Lawal also confirms the consequences of poor education in the Nigeria society and opines that there is still hope with the establishments of private schools. Lawal posits that;

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[220]Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 175-176. Given the pervasive presence of Western and Islamic educational philosophies in most of northern Nigeria, a progressive northern Nigeria must hold the best of both worldviews in tandem. Western education has a strong propensity toward technological development and promotion of viable modern economic ideas and structures. These must be fully harnessed in the different parts of the north toward growth and development of the cities as well as give them comfortable competitive edge with the rest of the world.

[221]Ibid. Islamic education, which has a dominant Arabic influence, has a strong moral base, which needs to be sufficiently tapped to ensure a healthy social, economic, and political morality in northern Nigeria.

[222]Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue," 63.

Education, rather than becoming an instrument for effective national development in Nigeria had become a tool for destruction. Many students had acquired half education to become internet thieves, money launderers, fraudsters and producers of improvised explosive devices which are being deployed for mass destruction of lives and property. Hope is not lost. The evolving curricula and development of the emerging private schools would offer significant reform in the Nigerian educational sector. In the very near future, education would become an instrument for effective national development in Nigeria.[223]

Miracle Ajah further affirms that Christians and Muslims have been at the forefront of establishing many private schools in Nigeria. According to him, the number of these private schools from primary to university levels owned by Christians and Muslims show their collaborative efforts towards educational development in the country. Thus, he confirms this development that the "establishment of private universities received legal backing in 1999. By 31 December 2010, there were 41 private universities mostly owned by religious organizations, both Christian and Moslem."[224] Prominent among private universities owned by Religious bodies and some religious leaders in Nigeria are tabulated below:

Name of University	Owners of University
Bowen University	Nigerian Baptist Convention
Benson Idahosa University (BIU)	Archbishop Benson Idahosa (Church of God Mission International)
Babcock University	Seventh-day Adventist church of Nigeria
The Redeemer's University	Redeemed Christian Church of God
Ajayi Crowther university	Church of Nigeria, Anglican Communion
Madonna University	Catholic university established by Very Rev. Fr. Prof. Emmanuel M. P. Edeh
Veritas University	Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria
Al-Qalam University	Islamic University in Katsina State
Crescent University	Islamic University in Abeokuta, Ogun State
Fountain University in Oke	Nasrul-lahi-li fathi Society of Nigeria
Al-Hikmah University	Islamic University in Ilorin, Kwara State.

The position of Mallam Muhammadu Sanusi II, Emir of Kano, regarding the development of schools among Muslims, shows his concern for education. The emir says that Mosques should be

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[223]Lawal, "Education as an Instrument for Effective National Development: Which Way Nigeria," 36-37. "Many of them had been found to be ready and easy pawn usually mobilized and incited into violence by politicians and religious leaders because of their disadvantaged economic positions and low level of education which made them gullible for easy consumption of misinformation."

[224]Miracle Ajah, "Religious education and nation-building in Nigeria," *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 1, no. 2, (2015): 264-265.

converted to schools to boost education in the North. After all, Sanusi asserts, "it is not all the time that we pray and these utilities remain idle for the better part of the day. It will be highly rewarding if we convert them to learning institutions as obtains in other climes."[225] Furthermore, Sanusi insists and argues that: "If you look at our educational needs viz a viz the infrastructure deficit, it has become imperative to convert existing mosques to primary schools, and aside cost reduction in this era of recession, it would accelerate education development in the region,"[226] These statements attracted mixed feelings. While some appreciate the position of the emir on minimising the cost of education by converting places of worship to schools, others argued that it is wrong to associate the worship of God with economic or political condition.

Thus religious leaders have been trying to make sure that the standard of education is raised in order to bring about progress and development; and to challenge the government towards their primary responsibilities. This effort to challenge the government on the quality of education in the country is therefore commendable. Education is also the best tool of strengthening the relationship between Christians and Muslims. Once people are better informed, they will have the knowledge of understanding each other well, and will be able to relate cordially. In this sense, both religions have been making a conscientious effort in the areas of education in order to empower people to live harmoniously and peacefully. Such efforts should also be made in schools of learning and interfaith dialogue included in the school curriculum.

b. **Economic Development**

The development of every nation depends on the economic capacity and infrastructures of the country to a large extent. Economic infrastructure, according to Salisu Ahmed Kabiru,

> is the combination of basic facilities which is helpful in economic development of an economy and businesses. It includes facilities such as telecommunication, electricity, transportation, energy while Social infrastructure is the combination of basic facilities which are necessary for human development. It includes such facilities as hospitals, schools, and housing. Viewed functionally, infrastructure

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[225]Muhammadu Sanusi, "Let's convert our mosques to school," *Vanguard*, February 8, 2017.
[226]Ibid.

facilitates means the production of goods and services, and also the distribution of finished products to markets, as well as basic social services such as education and healthcare services.[227]

The economy of a nation therefore reflects the amount or total goods and services accumulated both from the human and natural resources of the nation. Nigeria is a nation of great potential wealth. The human resources of Nigeria extend from the supply of labour to intellectual capabilities of its citizens. Nigeria is the most populous African nation with a fast growing economy. The natural endowments of Nigeria are enormous, including minerals like tin, iron, gold and silver, agriculture such as food crops, animal farms, poultry and fishery, and crude oil like petroleum and gas.

Despite the rich resources of Nigeria, there is great poverty and lack of development in the country. These resources are not properly distributed and used. A few individuals benefit from and enjoy these resources to the disadvantage of the general population. Two factors can be seen to be responsible for this: poor governance and corruption. Omololu Fagbadebo argues that:

> The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. Consequently, national development is retarded, and the political environment uncertain. The country's authoritarian leadership faced a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically-differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption and profligacy.[228]

The effort of religious leaders to ensure good governance in Nigeria will help to tackle the mischief of political actors whose interest is to manipulate and take advantage of the people and the political processes. This also informs the clarion call on religious leaders to defend the integrity of the nation by condemning such bad practices among the political gladiators.[229]

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[227]Salisu Ahmed Kabiru, "Socio-Economic Infrastructure and National Development: An Analytical Assessment from Nigerian Perspective," *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 21, iss. 10, ver. 4 (October 2016): 36.

[228]Omololu Fagbadebo, "Corruption, Governance and Political Instability in Nigeria," *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 1, no. 2 (November 2007): 28.

[229]Cf. Obaji M. Agbiji and Ignatius Swart, "Christian religious leadership and the challenge of sustainable transformational development in post-military Nigeria: Towards a reappraisal," *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 80, no.1 (January 2015): 5.

Corruption is a special case that needs attention in Nigeria. This has already been presented in the first chapter. The best way to confront corruption is through education. Education will inform children about the negative impacts of corruption and how it affects the progress and development of society. Education will also provide children with the means to shun corruption and embrace sincerity and transparency.

c. Politics and Good Governance in Nigeria

Politics and government are major areas of common interest for both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It is also the area that divides the nation to a large extent. To this background, Matthew Hassan Kukah states that: "There is an urgent need for the leadership of both Muslims and Christians to find the best way of freeing religion from the grip of Nigeria's murky politics."[230] This clarion advice has been taken into consideration in recent times by religious leaders in Nigeria. One of the common factors of religious crisis in Nigeria has been the manipulation of religion by politics. Manipulation of religion has posed great challenges to both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Therefore, there is a need for attention to be given in this regard by both Christian and Muslim leaders. Such efforts by Christian and Muslim leaders were displayed in the 2015 general election in Nigeria. Because of the past political clashes between Christians and Muslims during election, Ian Linden affirms that: "Religious leaders, Christian and Muslim, are now in dialogue and working together to prevent violence whether religiously motivated or otherwise. Cardinal John Onaiyekan and the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar, have for many years combined their efforts to create a formidable leadership for peace and national unity."[231]

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[230]Matthew Hassan Kukah, "Christian-Muslim Relations: the Nigerian Situation," *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* 25, (2013):17.

[231]Ian Linden, "Nigeria: Religious Leaders and Elections," Centre on Religion and Geography, entry posted October 2, 2014, www.religionandgeopolitics.org/nigeria/nigeria-religious-leaders-and-elections (accessed March 18, 2017). Pastor Ayo Oritsejafor, president of both the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and of CAN is currently promoting a series of Christian-Muslim dialogue meetings on the theme of "Think Nigeria", in association with Mohammed al-Amin, a professor at the Nigerian Defense Academy. (Ian Linden, "Nigeria: Religious Leaders and Elections," 2014).

As a result of this effort, two camps were formed, co-ordinated by the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) during the presidential election. While one group was to be with Muhammadu Buhari in his home town Daura, Katsina State, the other would be with Jonathan Goodluck in Asorock (Presidential villa) Abuja during the announcement of the result of the election. Their role was to mediate and calm the candidates to accept the result of the election. That enabled Jonathan Goodluck to accept defeat even before the declaration of the winner. He called and congratulated Muhammadu Buhari over his victory in the election. The gesture of calling and congratulating Buhari created peace and helped to calm the tension in Nigeria at the 2015 election.

4.3.6 Conclusion

This section examined the efforts made to establish mutual relationships and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It explored the various areas where theologians and scholars made efforts to create unity and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The main emphasis of this part of the chapter concerns the promotion of peace, reconciliation, the common good, unity, education, progress and development in Nigeria. It gives priority to peace building because no success and development can be achieved in an atmosphere that lacks peace.

The theologians and scholars pay more attention to the collaboration of Christians and Muslims in building peace and harmony in Nigeria. They therefore emphasized the importance of solidarity and cooperation of Christians and Muslims in pursuit of the common good. Thus, the theologians and scholars demand that Christians and Muslims practice and live according the teachings of their religions so that they can promote the qualities and characteristics of peace as inscribed in the Bible and the Qur'an. In the words of Boer: "I am challenging Nigerian Christians and Muslims to hear these calls from prophetic voices within their religions and remake or redirect Nigeria's future history together;"[232]

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[232]Boer, *Christians and Muslims: Parameters for Living Together*, 105.

It is very remarkable for Christians and Muslims to unite for the good of Nigeria. Iwuchukwu also emphasized the fact that; "Since in both religions the society is the appropriate locus for empirical manifestations of religious virtues and beliefs, it is both imperative and possible that Muslims and Christians collaborate to not only talk the talk of faith but also walk the walk of their faith traditions."[233] It is therefore demanding for Christians and Muslims to be more practical in their religious expressions.

In trying to encourage Christians and Muslims to unite and live in peace and harmony, the theologians and scholars emphasized on the dialogue of life in Nigeria as the best approach by Christians and Muslims. The dialogue of life is already making a positive impact in many places in Nigeria. Muslims and Christians interact freely, and live and work together in peace and harmony. In many places, Christians and Muslims are seen to have common social and cultural celebrations and festivals without any religious distinctions or discrimination. Such positive impacts of the dialogue of life should be encouraged through education in areas where there are still challenges in Christian-Muslim relations.

As an extension of the effectiveness of the dialogue of life in Nigeria, it also examined certain areas such as the dialogue between Christian and Muslim women, the promotion of unity, and the collaboration of religious leaders in Nigeria. Women play a central role in society and have a great impact on interfaith dialogue. Such dialogue between Christian and Muslim women sets an example of unity in Nigeria. This is the unity that Christians and Muslims are expected to demonstrate in creating a peaceful society that will allow progress and development. This section therefore highlighted the need for women to be involved in the task of nation-building and education for the progress and harmony of the Nigerian society. It also emphasizes the efforts and impact of religious leaders, in areas of religious dialogue and collaboration between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Such efforts and their results focus on politics and governance, education, and

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[233]Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria,* 177-178.

the economy of the country; and the effort to fight against bribery and corruption in Nigeria. This is a major challenge to the progress and development of Nigeria and also affects Christian-Muslim relationships, because it denies people their basic rights and creates division and discrimination.

One key area of concern is the role of education in interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. This is a major responsibility laid on the religious leaders in order to promote interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. Religious leaders are the peace brokers who harness mutual and harmonious co-existence. They must help to build a society of peace, harmony and justice which the two religions stand to promote. This demands long-term commitment and sacrifice from both Christians and Muslims so that they can create a culture of peace. Because of their leadership positions, religious leaders provide guidance for interpreting and applying their religious teachings. One area of such guidance is for the Islamic leaders to provide education on the principle of *jihad* which is to do with the promotion of the course of Islam. However, the principle never suggests that the act of killing is an obligation in fulfilment of the principle of *jihad.* Religious leaders must create a culture of interfaith dialogue that will make their adherents understand and appreciate the faith of the other religion. For interfaith dialogue to be effective, individuals must be able to know those they are engaging in dialogue.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discusses the various contributions on interreligious dialogue and relationships between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. While the Nigerian Bishops pointed out some major areas, such as religious manipulations, domination and competition, as responsible for the crises between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria; they also cautioned Christians and Muslims to watch out against those who use religion for ulterior motives. The Nigerian Bishops focus on the theology of unity between Christians and Muslims. Christians and Muslims are to work in solidarity with one another to live in harmony as a family. The theologians and scholars focus on the effort to establish and promote peace between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, based on the teachings of

the two religions. They emphasize the theology of peace between Christians and Muslims. Such peace will create the atmosphere to unite and work for the common good and will bring about development and progress in Nigeria.

The chapter challenges government at all levels in Nigeria, as well as religious and traditional leaders to take their responsibilities seriously in protecting and defending human life and dignity in Nigeria, irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliations and backgrounds. Christians and Muslims on their part must shun their differences by embracing one another as brothers and sisters. They must be reconciled and forgive the ills of the past in order for peace to be fully achieved. Christians and Muslims must seek to pursue the common good that will bring about progress and development among them. The chapter therefore seeks to emphasize effective dialogue between Christians and Muslims, and the promotion of education in Nigeria. The objective of the educational aspect is for the unity and peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Christians and Muslims must engage in activities that promote unity, such as social or cultural celebrations and festivals. They must never allow religion to become a barrier in their daily encounters. The principle of tolerance and brotherhood is required for this to happen. Dialogue of life is therefore a proxy of inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria, and should be promoted according to the teachings is Christianity and Islam.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL INPUTS AND PROSPECTS OF CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM RELATIONS/DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to respond to the challenges raised in chapters one and four on the Christian/Muslim relationship in Nigeria; and searches for resolutions and ways forward as recommended from chapters one to four. While it is undoubted that interfaith relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is a challenge to peaceful co-existence; there are however some fundamentals that should serve to unite and harmonize both faith groups in the pursuit of the common good.[1]

In order to accomplish the fundamentals of uniting Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, this chapter will analyse the theological insights of previous chapters and apply them to the Nigerian situation between Christians and Muslims. It will therefore focus on three perspectives:

1. The nature of God

2. The dignity of the human person

3. The search for the truth

It will further explore the theological insights on three aspects of education, namely:

1. Forgiveness education

2. Peace education

3. Interpersonal communication/relationship education

Finally, the chapter will seek for a paradigm shift on change/conversion between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, building from the theology of the parable of the prodigal son.

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[1] Peter O. O. Ottuh, John A. Ottuh and V. O. Aitufe, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Nigeria: The Problems and Prospects," *An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 3 (2), S/No 10, (April, 2014): 46-62.

5.2 An Evaluation of the Theological Insights: Application to Nigeria

The theological insights herein are drawn from various principles of the preceding chapters based on three interconnected principal areas as expressed by John Renard:[2]

1. The nature of God

    a. Justice and Equality

    b. Love and Peace

2. The dignity of the human person

    a. The Defence and Protection of Human Life (Security of Lives and Properties)

    b. Welfare of Human Life (Governance and Common Good: Preventing Bribery and Corruption)

    c. Non-Discrimination

3. The search for the truth

    a. The search for the truth (Solidarity and collaboration)

    b. Religious freedom (Harmonious and mutual co-existence)

The idea of the search for the truth is at the center of the nature of God and human dignity because the truth in question concerns God and human beings. It is based on this perspective that interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria focuses on these main areas to emphasize the necessity of building a strong relationship between the two religions (Christianity and Islam).

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[2]John Renard, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Review of Six Post-Vatican II, Church-Related Documents," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 81. For him, "the future of dialogue on specifically religious topics, PMV recommends an emphasis on convergence of attitude about the mystery of God (to be taken up, perhaps, in colloquia devoted to the "Names of God," connections between faith and reason, and the "vision of God" in the two traditions). Human dignity could be studied with a focus on its scriptural sources, its exemplification in heroes and saints such as Abraham, and the concept of sanctity itself."

5.3 The Nature of God: A Central Theme for Interfaith Dialogue in Nigeria

The nature of God is a cardinal theological teaching particularly common to Christianity and Islam. Both religions share the common belief that we are all created by the same and one God. This concept is already highlighted in Vatican II, in *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium*. *Nostra Aetate* in particular upholds that the human race is made up of the community of peoples with the same origin and final goal.[3]

The various ideas that led to interfaith movements and organizations in the world also concern issues of doctrines related to the nature of God as the basis of truth found in various religions. This explains why the Second Vatican Council clearly highlights common belief in God as the foundation of interfaith dialogue, especially between Christians and Muslims which, according to Renard, should be based on two theological themes; namely the nature of God and the search for the truth.[4] The theme of the nature of God was also the focus of the various Popes.[5] The common belief in God should therefore be a source of unity for Christians and Muslims against any negative force that will divide them.

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[3]*Nostra Aetate*, no.1. Reflecting further, *Lumen Gentium* includes those who without fault of theirs have not acknowledged the gospel of Christ, but strive to seek God with a sincere heart and to do his will in their actions as being part of the people of God (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 16).

[4]Renard, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue," 80-81. These themes are to be based on religious topics and actions in dialogue with Islam especially. For him therefore, "The former include agreements on belief in one, subsistent Creator who has spoken through prophets and who will bring history to its fulfilment. . . The latter have to do with possible collaboration in articulating how faith relates to science and technology, to cultural and economic problems, and with the clear need to come to terms with the "different designs Islam and Christianity have for organizing and inspiring society."

[5]*Ecclesiam Suam,* no. 108. Pope Paul VI for example considers belief in one God as a centre of dialogue that should lead to mutual respect. Dialogue on the nature of God according to the Holy Father creates avenues for "discussion in the event of such an offer being favourably received in genuine, mutual respect." John Paul II particularly emphasizes belief in one God as the source of religious unity, brotherhood and solidarity in the world, and the means of promoting the common good, social justice and religious liberty. These are all the processes of establishing a solid relationship and foundation of peace between Christians and Muslims. He further posits that "The worship of the one God, Creator of all, encourages us to increase our knowledge of one another in the future… Christians and Muslims are called in one spirit of love to defend and always promote human dignity, moral values and freedom. . . By walking together on the path of reconciliation and renouncing in humble submission to the divine will any form of violence as a means of resolving differences, the two religions will be able to offer a sign of hope, radiating in the world the wisdom and mercy of that one God who created and governs the human family" (John Paul II, "Dialogue with Muslims: Together with us Adore the one, Merciful God," *L'Osservatore Romano* 1591, (May 12, 1999): 11).

For Benedict XVI this is the way to break the barriers of division and discrimination between Christians and Muslims.[6] Pope Francis also feels strongly that the common belief in God between Christians and Muslims should motivate them to work for the common good in the world.[7]

Building from the background of the Second Vatican Council and the Popes, the PCID elaborates on the nature of God in relation to human beings and the mission of the Church. The three documents of the PCID: *Dialogue and Mission, Dialogue and Proclamation*, and *Dialogue in Truth and Charity* seek the Church collaborates with other religions to promote principles that support human relationships on the basis of common origin and belief in one God.[8] Christians and Muslims are therefore called to co-operate with each other and love one another based on their common belief in one God. This also should form the basis of their unity.

Cardinal Francis Arinze further emphasizes that Christians and Muslims should create a mutual relationship based on their belief in one God to build peace among them.[9] It is in the light of *Lumen Gentium* no. 1 that the Nigerian Bishops maintain that "the Church's faith, which takes the form of charity, is the basis of her mission which is to bear witness to the Good News that God loves every human person that his love invites every human person to live in communion with God and in unity with all human beings. Therefore, to be true worshippers of the one true God is to be respecters of

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[6]*Africae Munus*, no. 94. The Pope Emeritus further emphasizes that "If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism. In her social apostolate, the Church does not make religious distinctions. She comes to the help of those in need, be they Christian, Muslim or animist. In this way she bears witness to the love of God, creator of all, and she invites the followers of other religions to demonstrate respect and to practise reciprocity in a spirit of esteem."

[7]*Evangelii Gaudium,* no. 252. Pope Francis emphasizes that Muslims must continue to have "a deep conviction that their life, in its entirety, is from God and for God. They also acknowledge the need to respond to God with an ethical commitment and with mercy towards those most in need."

[8]Jukko, "The Theological Foundations of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in Christian-Muslim Relations," 76. This perhaps explains why Jukko, affirms that "the link between common origin through creation, mutual affinity, faith in one God, and common work or action is repeated throughout SNC/PCID documentation. The combination of divine origin, the goodness of creation, and common faith in one God should not leave Christians and Muslims inactive but lead them to work together, to build up a better or a more humane world, to foster "social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom."

[9]Arinze, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the 21st Century." For Arinze therefore, "Christians and Muslims are called upon to develop such harmonious relations in the 21st century that while maintaining their differing religious identities, they can show the world that they share respect for God and that they believe that human conduct should follow God's will and law."

the dignity of every human person."[10] This requires an effective theological consideration and study of aspects of beliefs common to all religions, namely the forgiveness, compassion, supremacy of God, etc.[11] according to Nmah P. E. therefore, "The unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love for the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world."[12]

From a Nigerian Christian perspective, the nature of God, according to Gbadamosi Oluwatoyin Adebola, is in God's existence as proven by Natural Theology. This he opines "infers the existence of God from the order and beauty of the world."[13] God controls everything in the world, including the religion we believe and practice. This should provide the foundation and premise of interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, to pursue common goals that will build up the nation. I shall consider just two of these attributes from the nature of God.

i.   The God of Justice: Promoting Justice and Equality in Nigeria,

ii.   The God of Love and Peace: Christians and Muslims Response in Nigeria.

5.3.1 The God of Justice: Promoting Justice and Equality in Nigeria

God is seen both in Christianity and Islam as a just God. From a Christian perspective, several verses of the Bible indicate God as being just; but especially Psalm 25:8 states, 'God is fair and just'. The book of Ezekiel particularly demonstrates the just attribute of God in the analysis of the proverb on the 'sour grapes', (Ezekiel 18:2-32), where God vindicates Himself as being just to the house of Israel.[14] Other biblical references to the nature and attributes of God as just are also

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[10]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person," Communiqué at the End of the First Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Lugbe-Abuja, February 16 –22, 2013, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed March 12, 2019).

[11]Cf. Ashimi, "The Significance of Interreligious Dialogue in Building Muslim-Christian Relations in Nigeria," 63.

[12]P. E. Nmah, "A Common Word in Cross and Crescent: Christians and Muslims on Loving in Nigeria," *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 2 no. 1, Serial 5 (February, 2013): 212.

[13]Gbadamosi Oluwatoyin Adebola, "Natural Theology and Modern Science: An Exposition on Emerging Scientific Proofs for God's Existence in Christianity," *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 2 (2015): 24.

[14](NJB) Ezekiel 18:25-29. "Now, you say, "What the Lord does is unjust." Now listen, House of Israel: is what I do unjust? Is it not what you do that is unjust? When the upright abandons uprightness and does wrong and dies, he dies because of the wrong which he himself has done. Similarly, when the wicked abandons wickedness to become law-abiding and upright, he saves his own life. Having chosen to renounce all his previous crimes, he will most certainly live: he will not die. And yet the House of Israel says, "What the Lord does is unjust." Is what I do unjust, House of Israel? Is it not what you do that is unjust?"

express thus: For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He (Deuteronomy 32:4); The LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted and justice for the poor (Psalm 140:12); The Almighty will not pervert justice (Job 34:12); For I, the LORD, love justice, (Isaiah 61:8); For the LORD is a God of justice (Isaiah 30:18); the parable of the Just judge (Luke 18:1-8); for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

The Qur'an is equally clear on the justice of God. Muslims therefore believe that the reason why God sent the Prophets was to establish justice in the world.[15] The belief in the Prophets is very central in Islam. On this foundation of belief in the Prophets, the Qur'an puts the injunction on Muslims to live according to their teachings. The Qur'an demands Muslims to act justfully in everything as bearing witness to God.[16] Yasin T. al-Jibouri present an Islamic notion of the attribute of God as a just God based on the description of the characteristics associated with Allah. This, Al-Jibouri states that: "Meanings of variations of this Attribute's root word is qist, equity or fairness, are as follows: qasata means implemented justice; qasata means became inequitable or unfair; qasit is an unfair or inequitable person, an oppressor; muqsit is one who is fair in his judgment or decision."[17] It is from this premise that Al-Jibouri qualifies the nature of God being just in Islam and begets justice to all. Al-Jibouri posits: "Al-Muqsit is the Almighty Who is fair and equitable in all His decisions and decrees, who deals with everyone according to a system. Al-Muqsit comes to the rescue of the oppressed and brings about justice."[18]

In the overall context, justice, according to *Gaudium et Spes*, is among the characteristics required for the social order of society.[19] Consequently, it is the desire of the Catholic Church to work

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[15]Quran 57:25. "We sent aforetime our messengers with clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance, that men may stand forth in Justice."

[16]Quran 4:135. "O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do."

[17]Yasin T. al-Jibouri, *Allah: The Concept of God in Islam -A selection* (Morrisville: Lulu press inc., 2014), 74.

[18]Ibid, 75.

[19] Cf. GS. 26.

together with other religions and groups to promote justice in the world.[20] Justice also enhances

love for one another in society. The PCID is clear about this when it states that:

> Justice must nevertheless be tempered by *love*. This implies the ability to recognize that we all belong to one human family, and so to see our fellow human beings as our brothers and sisters. It gives the capacity to share in both sorrows and joys. It makes people feel the needs of others as if they were one's own, and this empathy leads them to share their own gifts with others, not only material goods but also the values of mind and spirit.[21]

According to Ogugua P. Anwuluorah and Samuel C. Okafor-Udah, the concept of justice extends

to equality which is an important aspect of human dignity.[22] Musa Y. Suleiman says that equality,

as understood in Islam, is giving priority to every human person in the same way as when human

beings come before God as in prayers, they are all equal.[23]

Gaudium et Spes again emphasizes that;

> Although rightful differences exist between men, the equal dignity of persons demands that a more humane and just condition of life be brought about. For excessive economic and social differences between the members of the one human family or population groups cause scandal, and militate against social justice, equity, the dignity of the human person, as well as social and international peace.[24]

Furthermore, Umaru highlights the fact that truth and justice are required to build up other virtues

that will encourage peace between Christians and Muslims.[25]

The emphasis of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria on justice through dialogue suggests that more

efforts need to be made towards achieving social justice and equality in the country. They consider

justice to be among the important issues to be addressed by the Nigerian government in order to

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[20]Cf. Agang, "Breaking Nigeria's fatal deadlock," 50.

[21]PCID, "Constructing Peace Today," Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1424 H. /2003 A.D.). "Love also makes allowances for weakness, and so includes the ability to forgive. This forgiveness is essential to the restoration of peace when conflict has broken out, for it opens up the possibility of beginning again, on a new basis, in a restored relationship."

[22]Cf. Ogugua P. Anwuluorah and Samuel C. Okafor-Udah, "The Perspective of Christian Moral Education for Good Governance in Nigeria," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 7, no. 1 (2015): 67. "This brings to fore the issues of marginalization in the distribution of natural resources in Nigeria. This has no doubt engendered a lot of conflicts in the Nigerian polity. Just social structure is inevitable in the allocation of resources in the country and should not be biased either by religious, ethnic or political inclinations."

[23]Cf. Musa Y. Suleiman, "Islam and Constitutionalism in Nigeria: 1999 Constitution and the Challenges of Islamic Law and Practices," *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* 10, no. 2 (January, 2019): 156

[24]*GS.* 29.

[25] Cf. Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, 153.

achieve peace and progress in the country. The Bishops surveyed the various challenges and situations of the country that resulted in grievances, protests, agitations and violence on account of injustice. They call on the "government at all levels to urgently address these anomalies, remove everything that smacks of injustice, and give everybody and every part of our country a sense of belonging."[26]

For genuine progress and development, a nation must be able to uphold the basic principles of justice and equality. A society can only be just and equitable if these principles are respected and applied in every aspect of life in society.

5.3.2 The God of Love and Peace: Christians and Muslims Response in Nigeria

Love and peace are important attributes of God in both Christian and Islamic tradition. God's act of creation demonstrates his nature of love as everything He created was 'good'.[27] Similarly, the orderliness in which God set everything in the world depicts the aspect of peace in God's character. From the biblical perspective, God is love and He created and redeemed the world in love.[28] Christian theology teaches two dimensions of love, the love of God and the love of neighbour. These are similarly expressed in Islam as a fundamental teaching. The love of God is central to Christian teaching as the very nature of God. Christians are invited to respond to God's love just like the Israelites in the *'Shema'*.[29]

The Christian perspective of love therefore derives from the context of the *Shema*.[30] The Christians' acceptance of the love of God compels them to imitate God in everything. Christians are called to

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[26]CBCN, "Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration." The Bishops further reiterate: "We insist that merit and ability should be the primary criteria in making appointments and genuine needs the criteria for the distribution of amenities. We also urge the Government to be always sensitive to the multi-religious and multi-ethnic configuration of the nation."

[27]Genesis 1:31. Also cf. Qur'an 13:16.

[28]1 John 4:7-10. "Let us love one another, since love is from God and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love. This is the revelation of God's love for us, that God sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him. Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God, but God loved us and sent his Son to expiate our sins."

[29]Deut. 6:4-5. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."

[30]Edward Collins Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994), 128. Thus Vacek states that the "full acceptance of God's love requires not just acknowledging God's

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love because love comes from God and everyone who loves is begotten by God, (1Jn 4:7). *Gaudium et Spes* expresses that: "For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: 'If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.... Love therefore is the fulfilment of the Law' (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20)."[31]

In Islam, love is equally considered as an intrinsic attribute[32] of God extended to human beings. This forms the center of belief in Islam, that is, God is the ultimate Being and all human beings must submit to and be drawn to Him in love.

The love of God and neighbour Nmah opines is common in Christianity and Islam. Nmah posits that; "What is common between us lies not in something marginal or in something merely important to each. It lies; rather, in something absolutely central to both is love of God and love of neighbour. God alone rightly commands our ultimate allegiance."[33] This is why Christians and Muslims should respect the right to worship God in Nigeria. Nmah, posits that: "Justice and freedom of religion are a crucial part of the love of neighbour. When justice is lacking, neither love of God nor can love of the neighbour be present. Again, when freedom to worship God according to one's conscience is curtailed, God is dishonoured, the neighbour oppressed, and neither God nor neighbour is loved."[34]

The above quotation is a clear reflection and summarizes the nature of Christian and Muslim approach to religion in Nigeria. It is also a call to religious teachings of Christianity and Islam on

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goodness, but also being genuinely affected by God's gift. An emotional acceptance of being loved is essential to a full Christian life."

[31]*GS.* 24. "To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance."

[32]Ghulam Sarwar, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings* (London: The Muslim Educational Trust, 1994), 19. The attribute affirms that, "Allah is All-knowing, All-wise and All-powerful. He is the Merciful and the Kind. He is with us all the time. He sees us, but we do not see Him. He is, was and always will be. He is the First and the Last."

[33]Nmah, "A Common Word in Cross and Crescent: Christians and Muslims on Loving in Nigeria," 205. "When anyone or anything besides God commands our ultimate allegiance-a ruler, a nation, economic progress, political issue or anything else-we end up serving idols and inevitably get mired in deep and deadly conflicts."

[34]Ibid.

the centrality of love, and its implication to interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence.[35] The character of God in association with peace is a replica in God's image and identity and His nature. This predicates why the concept of peace is often used as an adjective in relation to God ('God's peace' or 'the peace of God').[36]

According to Olawale Sulaima Kamal-deen "peace in Islam is bound with faith in God. The Qur'an declares, 'O ye who believe enter into peace (Islam), all of you' (2:208) . . . peace is revered by the Qur'an as one of the attributes of God (59:23) which are regularly recited by the Muslim in his private devotion. The Muslim believes that the regular mentioning of this and other attributes of God brings not only peace of mind but also the blessings of God."[37] Therefore, based on their belief that peace emanates from God, Christians and Muslims can develop common ties in promoting peace.[38]

Love and peace are therefore two complementary characteristics and attributes of God that in both Christianity and Islam are well taught and emphasized and can form the basis for dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims.

From a Christian point of view, Olugbenga S. Olagunju explores through the text of 1 Corinthians 13:4-10 and recommends it to Christians for application in promoting peace in Nigeria. He emphasizes that Paul teaches love as the solution to the problems of human relationships and co-

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[35]Cf. Ibid, 211. He further states that "Love of the neighbour is an essential and integral part of faith in God and love of God, because in Islam without love of the neighbour there is no true faith in God and no righteousness (Al – Baqarah 2:177; Matthew 22:38-40 cf. Mark 12:31; Leviticus 19:17-18). . . Whilst Islam and Christianity are obviously different religions-and whilst there is no minimizing some of their formal differences-it is clear that the two greatest commandments are an area of common ground and a link between the Quran, the Torah and the New Testament. That is the common word…Terrorism, extremism, mal- administration, corruption, hatred and the like are signs of spiritual lawlessness, immaturity, ignorance, arrogance, psychological disequilibrium and disinclination to change amounting to social and national embarrassment" (212-213).

[36]Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019. As emphasized in the declaration of Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb: "We, who believe in God and in the final meeting with Him and His judgment, on the basis of our religious and moral responsibility, and through this Document, call upon ourselves, upon the leaders of the world as well as the architects of international policy and world economy, to work strenuously to spread the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace."

[37]Olawale Sulaima Kamal-deen, "Implications of Scriptural Teachings for Interreligious Dialogue in Nigeria," *Dialogue & Alliance* 28 no 1 (Summer 2014): 107.

[38]Cf. Ibid, 114. "Whenever we consciously or unconsciously tear ourselves apart we should be alert and respond to God, who by His prerogative and mercy He brings about peace, making believers the instrument to achieve it."

existence.[39] This too is not unconnected with the Islamic concept of promoting peace through love. The Qur'an attests to the fact that Muslims are to unite with people of other religions who believe in one God.[40] This unity is symbolized in the love that exists among these religions, and thus makes them neighbours to one another.

Saheed Badmus Suraju further emphasizes that Muslims are called to be good to their neighbours especially to the Christians and to treat them kindly.[41] Building from this background, Muslims in Nigeria should see Christians as their neighbours, to love them and to live in peace with them.

It is within this backdrop that Nmah reiterates the need for Christians and Muslims to apply the fundamental aspect of their faith in their daily encounters. Thus, "the basis of peace and justice is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths. Love of the one God and, love of the neighbour, these principles are found repeated over and over in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity."[42] Love and peace are therefore indispensable for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

5.4 The Dignity of the Human Person: Christian-Muslim Response in Nigeria

The dignity of the human person is rooted in the reality that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.[43] At the center of this idea of the dignity of the human person created in

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[39]Cf. Olugbenga s. Olagunju, "Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 13:4-10: Its Implications for Peace in Nigeria," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 19, no. 1 (January 2014): 73.

[40]M.O. Adeniyi, "Promoting Peaceful Interaction between Muslims and Christians in Yoruhaland An Islamic Perspective," *Hamdard Islamicus* 27, no. 2 (April-June 2004): 62. "Again, the Qur'an teaches the unity of all religions under one God. Here we have the concept of 'brotherhood of faith'-what we may call Ikhwān al-Imān. When Abu Bakr says: 'Muslims are brothers in faith: brothers against common foes and brothers in the sharing of booty,' he was evidently narrowing down the implication of the above verse of the Qur'an. We may note here that 'brotherhood' is common to all the monotheistic religions-those who accept the supremacy of God and fall/bow in worship before Him."

[41]Cf. Saheed Badmus Suraju, "Peace and Religious Tolerance Education in Nigeria: The Islamic Perspective," *World Educators Forum* 3, no. 1 (November, 2014): 10.

[42]Nmah, "A Common Word in Cross and Crescent: Christians and Muslims on Loving in Nigeria," 212. "Love, according to these ethical teachings of Islam, brings men and women together with strong bonds. It is a fruit of piety without which the consequences is being mischievous. Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world's population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world."

[43]CCC. 1700. "The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God (article 1); it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude (article 2). It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment (article 3). By his deliberate actions (article 4), the human person, or does not conform to the good promised by God (article 5) and attested by moral conscience (article 5). Human beings make their own contribution to the interior growth; they make their whole sentient and spiritual lives into means of this growth. With the help of grace they grow in virtue (article 7)."

the image and likeness of God is the teaching on the equality of all human beings.[44] Every concern for the dignity of the human person therefore focuses on the respect that must be accorded to every human being created in the image and likeness of God. [45]

Nostra Aetate equally holds that "no foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned."[46] It is based on this point that the Second Vatican Council insists that human life must be respected, defended and protected in its totality.

The Popes further highlight the fundamental principles of human rights. They emphasize that these principles should promote human dignity and help to restore peace in the world. John Paul II for example is considered by many scholars as the champion of promoting human dignity. He emphasizes that the defence and protection of human life must be part of the Church's mission. According to him: "A special commitment is needed with regard to certain aspects of the Gospel's radical message which are often less well understood, even to the point of making the Church's presence unpopular, but which nevertheless must be a part of her mission of charity. I am speaking of the duty to be committed to *respect for the life of every human being*, from conception until natural death."[47] Continuing in the same direction, Benedict XVI upholds profoundly that "in the current world situation it is imperative that Christians and Muslims engage with one another in order to address the numerous challenges that present themselves to humanity, especially those concerning the defence and promotion of the dignity of the human person and of the rights ensuing from that dignity."[48]

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[44]CCC. 1935. "The equality of men rest essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it."
[45]CCC. 1930. The Catechism of the Catholic Church further affirms this when it states that "respect for the dignity of the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority. . . If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects."
[46]*Nostra Aetate*, no. 5.
[47]*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 51.
[48]Benedict XVI, "Speech to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy."

In recent times too, Pope Francis even goes ahead to enumerate the implications of these rights to human dignity. According to him, "what we are called to respect in each person is first of all his life, his physical integrity, his dignity and the rights deriving from that dignity, his reputation, his property, his ethnic and cultural identity, his ideas and his political choices."[49]

The PCID also emphasizes the need for Christians and Muslims to collaborate in promoting human dignity and protection of human life.[50] It is in the same vein that Cardinal Arinze highlights the urgent need for dialogue in the world, especially between Christians and Muslims in order to prevent the various abuses to human life and dignity, and to promote peace and the common good. He says that; "Wherever Muslims and Christians live together in peace, dialogue means Christians and Muslims coming together to address common problems and share their insights so that real cooperation can take place in working together for the good of the whole society. The aim of dialogue in this case is collaboration for the good of society."[51]

The Catholic Bishops of Nigeria, for their part, highlight that Christians and Muslims in the country must seek dialogue to promote human life and dignity as core religious values. They maintain that

> The right to life is the first of all fundamental human rights. Every threat to life is a violation of human dignity. In this regard, we must not fail to emphasize that the primary responsibility of government is the protection of life and property. We denounce the fact that Nigeria remains a place where some people wantonly kill in the name of religion, a land where the right to worship is restricted only to certain people. Religion and matters of faith should no longer be allowed to divide us.[52]

This is a call not just to the government but to every Christian and Muslim to imitate God and insure there is respect for human dignity and peace in society.

In the light of the above premises, it is important to consider the intrinsic nature of the dignity of the human person. The intrinsic nature of the dignity of the human person centers on the value of human life, and how it should be respected in its totality. The Catechism of the Catholic Church

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[49]Pope Francis, Message to Muslims throughout the world for the end of Ramadan on July10, 2013.
[50] Cf. *Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 61.
[51]Arinze, *The Church in Dialogue,* 319.
[52]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person," in *Our Concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak* (Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2015), 319.

confirms that: "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person."[53] This teaching is also common to Islam as attested in Qur'an 17:33. Mahmud Adesina Ayuba affirms that Islam, like other religions, upholds the dignity and sanctity of life, and should always be respected because 'human beings are God's image on earth.[54] Like Christianity, Islam also maintains that human life is ultimate and must be given the ultimate defence and protection.

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria can form a solid force in the defence and protection of human life and its intrinsic dignity. From the Christian perspective, this effort to defend and protect human life is a primary responsibility of every individual. The CBCN insist that the defence of Human Dignity is an Obligation of Faith. The Bishops state that: "Our Christian faith obliges us, not only to respect, but also to recognize and tackle all threats to human dignity."[55] Christians in Nigeria must therefore commit themselves to the practice of their faith with regard to the sanctity of human life, as a means of building a better society in the country.[56] This is a relevant position for Christians in Nigeria for interfaith dialogue.

From an Islamic perspective, Abdulkadir Mubarak upholds that the dignity of the human person is built on the precepts of the *Shari'ah* which are rooted in the Qur'an.[57] Mubarak thus posits that the dignity of the human person in Islam is centred on the rights of human person as taught in the Qur'an.[58] Mubarak therefore emphasizes the fact that human rights are those rights endowed by

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[53]CCC. 2270.

[54]Cf. Mahmud Adesina Ayuba, "Euthanasia: A Muslims Perspective," *Scriptura* 115 (January 2016): 6

[55]CBCN, "Faith and the Dignity of the Human Person," Communiqué at the End of the First Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Lugbe-Abuja, February 16-22, 2013, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed March 12, 2019).

[56]Ibid. The CBCN further maintain that "Protection and promotion of the dignity of every human person is integral to faith in God. These constitute the only way in which we can build a better world, a better Nigeria."

[57]Abdulkadir Mubarak, "Shari'a and Human Rights, the Challenges Ahead," *Kom* 2 no. 1 (2013): 20. "The Qur'an is the first and most important source of Shari'a. Believed to be the direct word of God as revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Angel Gabriel in Mecca and Medina, the scripture specifies the moral, philosophical, social, political and economic basis on which a society should be constructed."

[58]Ibid. "In the Holy Qur'an there is an affirmation of fundamental rights which all human beings ought to possess because they are so deeply rooted in our humanness that their denial or violation is tantamount to a negation or degradation of that which makes us human. From the perspective of the Qur'an, these rights came into existence

God to all human beings. In this case, human rights cannot be interfered with, or abrogated by any human authority.[59] From this background, Mubarak again affirms that:

> The basic concept of Islam in regard to the human rights is based upon equality, dignity and respect for humankind. As is clear from the Holy Qur'an, Allah Almighty has endowed on human beings the status of being superior to all other creations. The Holy Qur'an has described the position enjoyed by human beings in great detail that at the time of creation of Adam, Allah Almighty enjoined upon the angels to bow before Adam.[60]

This special position and value that God places on the human person necessitates the need for all human beings to give dignity to every person that God created in His image and likeness. Muslims in Nigeria are thus encouraged to acknowledge the precepts of Islamic teachings from the Qur'an that are outlined in the *Shari'ah* as a fundamental guide of the principles of human dignity; and to realize that "Islamic teachings and values are universal without any discrimination and biases of caste, creed, colour and religion."[61] Therefore, Muslims must adhere to the Islamic teachings on human dignity wherever they find themselves.

5.4.1 The Defence and Protection of Human Life: Security of Lives and Properties in Nigeria

Since the dignity of the human person and its intrinsic nature focus on human life, its sanctity and integrity, it must be defended and protected as a fundamental right by both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This has become a great challenge for the two religions (Christians and Muslims) in Nigeria, especially in the past twenty years. Many lives were lost and properties destroyed, making security very difficult to handle in the country. This is further confirmed by Philip O. Musa and Olalekan Ajibade, stating that:

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when we did; they were created, as we were, by God in order that our human potential could be actualized. Rights created or given by God cannot be abolished by any temporal ruler or human agency. Eternal and immutable, they ought to be exercised since everything that God does is for 'a just purpose' (The Holy Qur'an 17:70).

[59]Ibid, 23. "When we speak of human rights in Islam we really mean that these rights have been granted by God; they have not been granted by any king or by any legislative assembly. . . But since in Islam human rights have been conferred by God, no legislative assembly in the world or any government on earth has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God. No one has the right to abrogate them or withdraw them; nor are they basic human rights those which are conferred on paper for the sake of show and exhibition and denied in actual life when the show is over."

[60]Ibid.

[61]Ibid, 41.

Since the return of democracy to Nigeria, nation's security situation has become disturbing and worse on a daily basis. The social political affair has been characterized by numerous violent crisis. The sociopolitical activities have been characterized by one violent crisis to another. Criminal activities and violence has dominated the society. There has been armed robbery, political violence, militancy and of late the terrorist activities particularly that of *Boko Haram*. Lives and properties were lost to these attacks.[62]

Religious/ethnic conflicts and disturbances are also among the challenges to the security of lives and properties in Nigeria over the past three decades. Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman affirms that: "There is no disputing in the fact that the problem of religious violence casts a serious doubt to the stability order of the country. This is because without doubt, the country has recorded very bizarre experiences in the domain of religious violence."[63] This is a major area of tension between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

From 1980 onwards Nigeria has experienced persistent religious and ethnic conflicts that have claimed many lives and destroyed properties beyond measures. In very recent times Nigeria has been devastated by the terrorist groups of *Boko Haram* and the Militia Herders. This is further reemphasized by Oluwole Ojewale and Josephine AppiahNyamekye:

Bombings, kidnappings, and intimidation by *Boko Haram* have killed more than 20,000 people and led to the displacement of about 2.6 million others (Daily Nation, 2018). Violent conflicts between nomadic herders and farmers over the use of land and water, destruction of farms, and theft of livestock have also increased in recent years, killing an estimated 2,000-3,000 people since 2016 and costing the country at least $14 billion in potential revenues annually due to the loss of crops and livestock in Nigeria's rich agricultural zone.[64]

In the midst of all these attacks and conflicts, human lives are affected and abused; the peaceful co-existence of the people is also threatened. Christians and Muslims are caught up in between these challenges to defend and protect human lives and dignity, and to ensure peaceful co-existence. But

[62]Philip O. Musa and Olalekan Ajibade, "Implication of Nigeria National Security Challenges on Nigeria's Foreign Policy," Studies in Social Science and Humanities 5, no. 1 (2018): 1.

[63]Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman, "Religious Violence in Contemporary Nigeria: Implications and Options for Peace and Stability Order," *Journal for the Study of Religion* 29, no. 1 (2016): 85

[64]Oluwole Ojewale and Josephine AppiahNyamekye, "Nigerians worried about violent clashes, praise government efforts to address armed extremism," *Afrobarometer Dispatch* no. 199, (April 18, 2018): 1. "Benue and Plateau states in North Central Nigeria have been worst hit by these herder-farmer clashes."

unfortunately this has become very difficult for the two religions as they often find themselves clashing with one another in the process of trying to defend and protect the lives of their people.

In an attempt to seek solutions regarding the defence and protection of human dignity and security of lives and properties in Nigeria from a Christian point of view, Aghamelu Fidelis Chuka seeks the application of spirituality to personal as well as inter-personal communication and relationships. According to Chuka, this is the basis of moral integrity which lingers on the individual conscience to respond to his action in a given situation that warrants the exercise of his faith. Such situations, according to Chuka admonishes the individual to "rise above all encumbrances of concupiscence, greed, hatred, clannishness, fear, prejudice etc; and every other forms of impositions of his material nature, to embrace the call of conscience to a nobler and more dignifying existence characteristic of Christian love."[65] Conscience and faith, Chuka believes, can serve as an adequate remedy for Christians in the defence and protection of the dignity of the human person and security of lives and properties in Nigeria.[66] The formation of Christian conscience with regards to individual private and public affairs in Nigeria is necessary in an attempt to live and practice the faith they profess. Accordingly, Chuka posits that: "This admonition should serve as source of strength to Christians in battling all forms of challenges that are deliberately placed on their faith in Nigeria. The dynamics of these challenges are obvious and multifaceted. In general these are challenges that put to serious question our abilities to impact positively on our politics and preserve our Christian identity."[67]

Muslims also participate in the defence and protection of the dignity of the human person and security of lives and properties from the backdrop of Islamic law and teaching on peace and

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[65]Aghamelu Fidelis Chuka, "Formation of Christian Conscience for the Common Good in Nigerian Politics," *International Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 10, no. 1 (September 2018): 90.

[66]Ibid, 104. According to Chuka "Christian consciences make its demands on the whole human community of faith. From faith it derives the creative liberty that enables a Christian to respond creatively to problems of human common living and culture."

[67]Ibid, 125. "They are situations that bring about violations and corruption of the social order. Christian charity demands that they be confronted with equal force. Besides the blood-stained face of violence that can be easily recognized and identified, there are multiple acts of violations of humans at various levels of life … violations of codes of right conduct in private and public life."

security.[68] This teaching also extends to the value and the sanctity of human life and all that has to do with its dignity. On this premises, Muslims in Nigeria are encouraged to ensure that the defence and protection of the dignity of the human person and the security of lives and properties of the people are considered a priority of their faith practices.

The focus of the Nigerian Catholic Bishops on security demands a prompt response of government in Nigeria. The Catholic Bishops insist that the government of Nigeria should pay particular attention to the security of lives and properties on account of the recent killings and destructions of properties in Nigeria by different terrorist groups and bandits. The Bishops thus "call on the Government to take more seriously its duty of protecting the life and property of every Nigerian, bearing in mind that this is the primary responsibility of any Government."[69] This is a call for the government of Nigeria to pay full attention to matters of security in the country. It is the best way to prove that the dignity of the human person is well respected in Nigeria.

5.4.2 Welfare of Human Life: Good Governance and the Common Good in Nigeria

Because the value of human life is central to the dignity of the human person, it demands that the general welfare of human beings must be catered for by organized system of government. The concept of governance is not new to human existence because every organization or institution of human endeavour is co-ordinated by the activities of leadership which qualifies the nature of governance provided by such human organization or institution.[70] There are variations of definition

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[68]Rafatu Abdulhamid, "The Responsibilities of Muslim Women in Dealing with Security Challenges in Nigeria," *Wawasan: Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya* 2, no. 2 (December 2017): 164. Rafatu Abdulhamid affirms that security is very important in Islamic law and teaching. This is "because the Islamic law is purposely framed to ensure peace/security-of life, property, progeny, intellect, religion and honour. In Islam, whatever is necessary to enhance peaceful and meaningful existence of the community is considered a security measure for which every Muslim must work. Therefore, any act that threatens the security of any of the human endowments is prohibited by Islam."

[69]CBCN, "Our Concern over the Security of our Nation," Statement by the CBCN, Abuja, Catholic Secretariat, June 15, 2016, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed March 30, 2019). Furthermore, the Bishops "urge all Nigerians to assume their individual and collective responsibilities in the task of building a solid and vibrant nation, by respecting the existing laws and by using peaceful channels to resolve issues that may arise. Although it is the responsibility of the Government to make and enforce laws, the Citizens equally need to realize that no Government can be expected to direct the personal life of every of its Citizens. There is therefore a need for the conversion of hearts for all."

[70]Michael Leke Ogunewu, "Spirituality and Good Governance: The Role of Theological Institutions," *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* 16, no. 2 (January 2011): 109. "The concept of governance is as old as human civilization. It is not strange among humanity as every aspect of human affairs is governed in one way or the other. It has become an indispensable part of human life that it is always readily accepted among men."

to the concept of governance which are not just restricted to the political system of governance.[71] Michael Leke Ogunewu as such examines these various definitions of the concept of governance and deduced "that the term governance pervades all areas of human life… it is employed to encompass all spheres where men bear rule over their fellowmen."[72] It is from this context that the concept of governance is taken to include every aspect of leadership in society, but with much emphasis on the political perspective of governance.

The view that governance comes from God is central to both Christianity and Islam. Christians and Muslims believe that God is the one that vests authority and power. From a Christian perspective, right from the Old Testament, there are indications that God vested authority[73] to human beings right from creation. This belief that God has the ultimate power and authority is important. Even when He appoints rulers and kings, they are to act according to His will and authority. This is very central in the Old Testament.[74] The idea of God's authority being given to human beings is further confirmed in the New Testament. Okoli posits: "According to Paul in Romans 13:1-6; 'government should always be obeyed for God is the one who puts it there'. The bible therefore portrays that all governments have been instituted by God so that those who refuse to obey the laws of the land are refusing to obey God and will face the wrath of God."[75] This background provides the necessity for Christians of why governance must be carried out with sincerity and integrity in Nigeria.

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[71]Ibid, 111. "Some people speak of governance only with respect to political administration of a state, but this is far from been correct. Political governance which is commonly known as government is just an aspect of governance. Governance as a concept is a broad term which has attracted series of definitions."

[72]Ibid.

[73]AB Okoli, "Governance and Challenges of Development in Nigeria: Religious Perspective," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 1, no. 4 (2012): 35-36. Okoli asserts that human government and authority comes from God as indicated "right from the first book of the Bible-'Genesis'. In the account of first and second chapters of Genesis, male and female were given authority by God to subdue and dominate the earth. Other books in the Old Testament have litany of leaders that governed the Israelites at one time or the other. . . In each case, it was God who really rules through those put in power and authority."

[74]Cf. 1 Samuel 16:1-13.

[75]Okoli, "Governance and Challenges of Development in Nigeria," 31 & 38. "Since civil government is necessary and divinely ordained by God (Rom. 13: 1–7), it is ultimately under God's control."

In Islam, it is the sovereignty of God that seems to be more emphasized over his authority. This implies that every aspect of existence, including power and authority belongs to God.[76] This suggests that the concept of governance in Islam must rhyme with sovereignty of God who is the universal ruler. Consequently, Abdulkadir Mubarak highlights that governance in Islam connotes the idea of God's sovereignty and human authority. Mubarak opines it is a kind of conservative democracy in which the "advocates of Islamic democracy argue that the Oneness of God requires some form of democratic system; conservatives contend that the idea of the sovereignty of the people contradicts the sovereignty of God; often the alternative then becomes a form of a monarchical system."[77]

It is from the above perspective that many Muslims believe that in Islam, the spiritual and the temporal world cannot be separated.[78] Similarly, government cannot be separated from religion. This calls for concern especially in the case of Nigeria. As a pluralistic nation, there definitely must be a strike of balance as to which system of government will conform to the general good of the nation. This will help given that, for conservative Muslims, Islam has its own form of governance that can be considered compatible with democracy.[79]

Both Christianity and Islam associate governance with God. Since Nigeria is governed by religious people; either Christians or Muslims, they must be able to also undertake the responsibility of

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[76]Charas M. Tella, Ahmed Hammawa Song and P. Y. Mbaya, "Islamic Political Order as a Model of Politics and Governance for Sustainable Development," *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences* 2, no.2 (April 2014): 61. This is position is firmly confirmed by Charas M. Tella, Ahmed Hammawa Song and P. Y. Mbaya. They contend that "Quran chapter 3:110 says, being a Muslim has meant belong to religious community but also living under the Islamic law which is extension of Allah's absolute sovereignty, Quran chapter, 12, 25 verse 154, 40, and 2 respectively . Sovereignty means the source of power and Allah is the source of all powers and laws and cannot be change by any mankind nor is the order change by any parliament or government."

[77]Abdulkadir Mubarak, "Democracy from Islamic Law Perspective," *Kom* 5, no. 3, series 1–18 (2016): 8. "The sovereignty of one man contradicts the sovereignty of God, for all men are equal in front of God. Blind obedience to one-man rule is contrary to Islam." In this way, it is argued that the doctrine of Tawhid (oneness of Allah) virtually requires a democratic system because humans are all created equal and any system that denies that equality is not Islamic."

[78]Tella, Song and Mbaya, "Islamic Political Order as a Model of Politics and Governance for Sustainable Development," 62. "In the Islamic view point, it is a religion that makes no separation between the spirituals and the temporal world? Therefore, the two are fused together. It is a complete way of life with elaborates code of conduct as contained in the Muslim's Holy Quran and the saying or Deeds of the Prophet of Islam (Sunna) as well as that of the rightly guided caliphs."

[79] Cf. Ibid.

governance according to the desire of God. This means that leaders in Nigeria must respect their

positions on responsibilities entrusted to their care for the welfare of their people. It is therefore

important to inculcate religious values into the system of governance in Nigeria. Oluwaseun

Olawale Afolabi posits that "Religion can bring about sustainable political development through

the inculcation of high sense of morality, sense of duty, selfless service, public accountability,

respect for human lives, love of one's neighbour, sense of humility, abhorrence of violence, love

for peace, contentment with what one can legitimately have, corruption, justice etc. in the citizens

as well as the leaders"[80] A good governance is expected to combat all the social ills that hinder

progress and development in society, and promote values that will improve the welfare of its

citizens. The emphasis here lies on achieving good governance in Nigeria by Christians and

Muslims.

The concept of governance has traditionally been associated with politics in government, implying

the tasks of implementing governmental roles and policies in society. Good governance, on the

other hand, has various connotations. However, on a general aspect Adegbami Adeleke asserts that

> Good governance is about striving for the rule of law, transparency, equity,
> effectiveness/efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision in the exercise of
> political, economic, and administrative authority. In other words, it could be
> seen as a process where public officers and institutions conduct public affairs,
> and manage public resources effectively through the above listed conditions.[81]

The concept of good governance as such has implications for both Christians and Muslims.

Christian consideration for good governance, according to Okoli, entails transparency,

responsibility, accountability, participation and responsiveness and the respect and protection of

human rights and dignity. These are some attributes of good governance and once they are lacking,

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[80]Oluwaseun Olawale Afolabi, "The role of religion in Nigerian politics and its sustainability for political development," Net Journal of Social Sciences 3, no. 2 (May 2015): 47-48.

[81]Adegbami Adeleke, "Good Governance in Nigeria: A Catalyst to National Peace, Stability and Development," *African Research Review (AFRREV)* 11 no. 4 (September 2017):146-147. In a similar fashion, Alimi Imam Taufiq affirms that "Good Governance is the practice of governance in order to provide services to the people . . . the characteristics of good governance principles are participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision" (Alimi Imam Taufiq, "Transparency and Accountability in the Qur'an and its Role in Building Good Governance," *International Journal of Business, Economics and Law* 6, Iss. 4 (April 2015): 74-75).

they contravene the injunctions of God for governance.[82] From the Islamic point of view, good

governance, according to Taufiq comes from the Qur'an. And it is

> Based on the faith (īmān) (9:18; 34:15). Īmān will make people feel safe because
> of doing what has become obligations and they will be asked for it. Īmān is used
> to reveal two things in the Qur'an. First, īmān used for the name for a set of rules
> that must be obeyed and implemented by people. Second, īmān used for the
> submission of the soul for truth (al-ḥaqq) with authentication (taṣdīq) through the
> heart, speech and action (Al-Aṣfihānī, 1412 H).[83]

Both the Christian and Islamic perspectives consider good governance as the authority to act with

moral credibility and accountability as God's will and desire. Transparency and accountability are

the two words that stand out in the definition of good governance. These two words have a very

special role in building good governance for the common good. Adeleke especially emphasizes that

"transparency and accountability are 'two interrelated and complementary concepts' that are

indispensable to any governance system that will be termed 'good'. Transparency and

accountability remain requisite for the nation's development."[84] In order to achieve good

governance through transparency and accountability in Nigeria, it demands the collective

collaborations of Christians and Muslims through the implementation of religious and moral values

by those in positions of government and those who seek to undertake responsibilities of

government. From the Christian point of view, Okoli contends that:

> Other biblical principles that could promote good governance could be traced
> from the inherent moral values and ethics found in the Bible. These are to be
> taught in homes, schools, churches and social gathering. Among them is 'the fear
> of God,' 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follows his

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[82]Okoli, "Governance and Challenges of Development in Nigeria: Religious Perspective," 36. In Nigeria these "are all lacking among our leaders. Human rights are not respected and protected. In fact in most law court, justice are delayed and denied. This is against God's injunction in Exodus 23:6 where Leaders are warned not to deny justice in law court, that, 'By justice a king gives country stability but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down' (Proverbs 29:4). Incidentally, Psalm 106:3 places blessings to those who maintain justice, thus; 'Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right.'"

[83]Taufiq, "Transparency and Accountability in the Qur'an and its Role in Building Good Governance," 75.

[84]Adeleke, "Good Governance in Nigeria: A Catalyst to National Peace, Stability and Development," 147. This is because they provide the basis for 'good' policies formulation and implementation; emphasise the strategies for economic growth and development; and enhance efficient management of resources for the nation's sustenance and general development. Transparency in public offices means openness in governance, where the ruled can trust the rulers and be able to predict the rulers to some extent. Transparent governance could be said to be existing when the ruled have a very clear idea of what their government is doing. Transparent governance allows for transparent decisions and implementation; as well as enhances decisions made to be understood by those whom the decisions are binding on. It also enhances the decisions taken to be enforced in a manner that follows rules and regulations.

precepts have good understanding' (Psalm111:10). Proverbs 14:27 also states, 'the fear of God as a fountain of life turns man from the snares of death'. From all indications, one will see that the fear of God comes with life and wisdom. King Solomon in 1king 3:7-15 was a typical example of what wisdom epitomizes.[85]

The invitation for Christian leaders to exercise their responsibilities with diligence and outmost truth and honesty to their people is imperative of good governance. For the Muslim, there is also the emphasis on the relevance of moral values like other religions. According to Abdul Majeed Hassan Bello "The scripture of all religions reveal that their founders did not only provide moral leadership through preaching moral values and spiritual verities which aim at transforming the societies to which they were sent, they also offered leadership in secular matters that advanced the material conditions of those societies."[86] Bello pointed out that good moral leaders can also impact the society and influence many of the followers positively.

Gidado Abdu Dauda and Abubakar Sabo Yusha'u similarly emphasize that Islamic leaders should inculcate the virtues that will enable their adherents to be trusted both in private and public affairs. The concept of trust is represented by the term *Amanah* in Islamic teaching.[87]

The recent communiqué of the CBCN calls on Catholics to take on the responsibility of inculcating social teaching that can be translated into actions in society. This can consequently lead to good governance in Nigeria. According to the Bishops:

> For centuries, the Church has been an advocate of good governance for the
> Common Good. To this end, we call on all dioceses to promote the Social

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[85]Okoli, "Governance and Challenges of Development in Nigeria: Religious Perspective," 37. "When King Solomon who had the interest of his subjects asks for wisdom to govern his people rightly God not only gave him wisdom, but all other good things of life. Solomon thus became the most famous leader of his time. Even in our contemporary society, there is no gain saying that those who are God fearing make good names for themselves in the governance and they are cherished by the people."

[86]Abdul Majeed Hassan Bello, "Religion and Politics from Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Arts and Humanity.* (Duncan Science Publication, Calabar) 8, no. 2 (2011): 20. "But even more importantly, these religions leaders lived by the teachings they sought to inculcate. The teachings of the Prophets exemplified all that is good and noble and radically influenced their peoples in a positive direction. Therefore, the application of their unadulterated teachings can produce a leadership which cannot but bring about good governance so lacking in many countries of the world today."

[87]Gidado, Abdu Dauda and Abubakar Sabo Yusha'u, "Influence of Accountability and Transparency on Governance in Islam," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, No. 6 (2017): 453-454. They therefore recommend that religious leaders should ensure that those who govern are "committed to earning Allah's happiness through their intentions, actions and governance. In essence, only those with clear sign of piety should be given positions of responsibility. Leaders should be orientated on the concepts of *Amanah* in Islam and the implication of rendering *Amanah* to whom it is due. This is to enhance accountability in their activities."

Teaching of the Church, to simplify and to translate it into concrete actions and to use it for an effective socio-political formation of all the people. Special attention must be paid to young people and families so that the values espoused in Catholic Social Teaching would be inculcated early into children and young people.[88]

If good governance is established in Nigeria, it will provide for the general welfare of the people and bring about progress and development. These prospects of human welfare, progress and development in Nigeria will include the provision of infrastructures and basic amenities that will better the lives of people in the country, and thus give value and dignity to human life. But for this to be achieved, there must be a good system of government put in place, with good working structures-what M. J Balogun describes as strong and capable institutions. According to him, "strong and capable institutions are precisely what Nigeria needs to overcome the multiple socio-political and economic challenges facing it. However, efforts at nurturing such institutions are not likely to succeed until there is a broad measure of consensus on the underlying values."[89]

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria can therefore collaborate to achieve good governance by ensuring that those who govern in Nigerian have respect for God and for their people, and are of high moral integrity. However, one of the challenges to good governance in Nigeria is bribery and corruption. This also requires the collaboration of Christians and Muslims in the fight against bribery and corruption in Nigeria.

5.4.2.1 The Fight against Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria

The fight against bribery and corruption has become a common factor in Nigeria so that there can be progress and development if it is not tackled. George Ehusani posits that religious leaders must play a central role in this campaign.[90] This explains why Ojakaminor observes that "corruption has

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[88]CBCN, "Governance in Nigeria and the Common Good," A Communiqué issued at the end of the First Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Abuja, March 10-16, 2019, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed April 5, 2019). "However, because moral authority is crucial for good governance and transparent accountability, we as a Church commit ourselves to exercise authority based on sound Christian moral principles, truly inspired by the example of Christ and guided by His compassion.."

[89]M. J. Balogun, *The Route to Power in Nigeria* (Lagos: Malthouse Press, 2011), 57.

[90]George Ehusani,"Religious Organisations and the Challenge of Fighting Corruption," A paper delivered at the National Seminar on Corruption, organised by NASRUL-LAHI-IL-FATHI Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Lagos, August 5, 2004. In his words, Ehusani further maintains that "in the fight against corruption, we religious leaders would first of all have to do a serious soul-searching. We would have to purge ourselves of our own acts of complicity in corruption, repent of

always been an important trait of the successive Nigerian leaders and their respective governments. As a result, the common things for a despot to come into the scene preferably via the barrel of the gun and present himself as the sent liberator on a salvage mission."[91]

Consequently, Anazodo *et al* argue that a look into the activities of the Pilgrims Welfare Boards and Commissions for both Christians and Muslims will show "that corruption is not even a respecter of religion or faith. The religious groups encourage corruption in different forms. Some preach prosperity without accountability. Nigeria faces an existential crisis located at the nexus of governance and corruption. To fix this problem, it is imperative to diagnose it properly and then confront it collectively."[92]

Thus, religious leaders and organisations are also called to lead in the fight against bribery and corruption by confronting the problem of materialism and consumerism in Nigeria.[93] From this perspective, Matthew Hassan Kukah condemns the involvement of religious leaders in affairs of government for their prosperities. Kukah identifies such religious leaders as false preachers. According to him, "unless socio-economic conditions improve, our nation will be held captive by these false preachers today."[94]

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), on the Christian arm; the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA), and the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam (JNI) uniting the Muslims, have been playing the role of combating bribery and corruption in Nigeria. Their documents and seminars, always caution Nigerians to shun bribery

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the evils of the past and make an irrevocable commitment to a life of truth, probity, transparency and accountability in our individual and corporate lives and in our mosques, churches and institutions."

[91] Ojakaminor, *Nigeria We Hailed Thee!!*, 13-14.

[92] Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkah, "Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria," 53-54.

[93] Adenuga, Adetutu Adebimpe and Omolawal, Samuel Ayodeji, "Religious Values and Corruption in Nigeria-A Dislocated Relationship," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 4, no. 3 (May 2014): 527. This also explains why Adenugba *et al*, call on religious leaders to wake up to their tasks and responsibilities for preaching against corruption through their personal life-style. In their words, "They should not see religion as a means of amassing wealth neither should they spare the corrupt individuals and government officials in the course of preaching sermons. They should see their call as a means of inculcating the fear of God and the values of honesty, hard work, accountability and concern for the common good in their members."

[94] Matthew Hassan Kukah, *The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility* (Lagos: Sovereign Prints, 2010), 241-242.

and corruption. A good example is the prayer against bribery and corruption in Nigeria, published by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, to be prayed at all Masses in Nigeria.[95]

Finally both government and individuals have a role to play in the fight against bribery and corruption in Nigeria.[96] Because government has the responsibility of making sure law and order are being obeyed, they must also make sure acts of bribery and corruption are appropriately dealt with in society.

5.4.3 Tackling Religious Discrimination in Nigeria

The question of religious discrimination[97] is yet another important area that needs attention in Nigeria. This will ensure that the freedom to worship is respected. Yakubu Joseph and Rainer Rothfuss observe that: "Despite the protection of religious liberty rights under international law, '…the violations of religious freedom worldwide are massive, widespread, and in many parts of the world intensifying'. The situation in Nigeria today mirrors this worldwide disjuncture, common to countries where religious minority rights are violated between legal provisions and realities."[98]

Christian theology teaches that discrimination is totally against God's intention for all human beings. *Gaudium et Spes* specifically makes it clear that: "True, all men are not alike from the point of view of varying physical power and the diversity of intellectual and moral resources.

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[95]CBCN, Prayer Against "Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria," in *Our Concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak* (Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2015), 166. Also in a communiqué at the end of Plenary Meeting, Ibadan, September 7 -12, 1998. Father in Heaven, you always provide for all your creatures so that all may live as you have willed. You have blessed our country Nigeria with rich human and natural resources to be used to your honour and glory and for the well-being of every Nigeria. We are deeply sorry for the wrong use of these your gifts and blessing through act of injustice, bribery and corruption, as a result of which many of our people are hungry, sick ignorant and defenseless. Either, you alone can heal us and our nation of this sickness. We beg you, touch our lives and the lives of our leaders and people so that we may all realise the evil of bribery and corruption and work hard to eliminate it. Raise up for us God fearing people and leaders who care for us and who will lead us in the part of peace, prosperity and progress. We ask the through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[96]Adenuga, Adetutu Adebimpe and Omolawal, Samuel Ayodeji, "Religious Values and Corruption in Nigeria-A Dislocated Relationship," 527. Adenugba, *et al* further argue that "Government, religious leaders and the entire citizens have roles to play if Nigeria is to be transformed from the high position in the gang of the most corrupt nations in the world, to a high position among the most corruption free nations. On the part of the government, those in power must fear God and practise their religious obligations and national duties sincerely. This will earn them moral support from the followers."

[97]The problem of discrimination has already been highlighted in chapter one of the thesis. The concern of this unit is to decipher the way forward between Christians and Muslims to overcome religious discrimination in Nigeria.

[98]Yakubu Joseph and Rainer Rothfuss, "Threats to religious freedom in Nigeria: Analysis of a complex scenario," *IJRF* 5, no. 1 (2012): 75.

Nevertheless, with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent."[99] This is further emphasized in the Catechism of the Catholic Church on the aspect of employment for all.[100]

Christian women theologians also argue on the basis of discrimination against women; that God's redemption does not discriminate between nations or individuals. The theologians highlight that "God redeems nations and individuals from sin, oppression, injustices and all manner of dehumanizing structures. They affirm that the God of the Bible acts within human history, and that God sides with the oppressed. They argue that God does not discriminate on any basis of gender, race or ethnicity."[101] The precepts of Christian theology therefore totally condemn any form discrimination against anybody in society.

The foundation of Islamic teaching on religious discrimination is found in the Qur'an, where it states: "Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations."[102] There is a further foundation of this teaching in the Qur'an where it indicated that God created people differently and therefore discrimination is against what God Himself has created. It states: "O Mankind! We have created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most honorable of you in the sight of Allah is he who has most Taqwa among of you. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware."[103] Islamic scholars based their teachings against discrimination from passages such as

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[99]*GS*, 29. For in truth it must still be regretted that fundamental personal rights are still not being universally honored. Such is the case of a woman who is denied the right to choose a husband freely, to embrace a state of life or to acquire an education or cultural benefits equal to those recognized for men.

[100] Cf. CCC. 2433.

[101]David Kirwa Tarus, "Social Transformation in the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians," *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 33, no. 1 (2014): 7. "God is ever present and works in and through his people to correct injustice. . . The God of the Bible is concerned with liberating or saving humanity from oppressive human or inhuman forces. 'God is concerned for the wholeness of our being and for our relationship to God and to other human beings."

[102]Qur'an 25:1.

[103]Qur'an 49:13. Also Qur'an 30:22 says, "And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your tongues and colors; most surely there are signs in this for the learned."

this.[104] This indicates that Islamic tradition is open to all people and extends hospitality and generosity without limit on religious basis, no matter the culture and race of the people. Shittu Balogun Abdulazeez reiterates that "Islam discourages tribalism in all ramifications and encourages brotherhood based on trust and fair play. Allah the Most High says: O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do (Qur''an 5:8)."[105]

Looking at the stances of Christianity and Islam generally on discrimination, there is the need for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to basically implement their religious teachings to bring an end to religious discrimination.[106]

Matthias Basedau and Johanna Schaefer-Kehner call on both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to be conscious of the fact that discrimination can result in some forms of negative consequences.[107] Discrimination of any kind should therefore not be tolerated in Nigeria for the benefit of peace, progress and development.[108] Accordingly, the Nigerian Catholic Bishops continue to admonish

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[104]Abdul Razaq Kilani, for example, maintains that ""Islam condemns racism and ethnic prejudice. The Prophet (SAW) is known to have said: He who lives in factionalism and tribal partisanship (asabiyah) is not one of us. He who dies in factionalism is not one of us. He who fights for factionalism is not one of us. Islam extols the virtue of a unified community because it realises that when people are divided, the result is corruption, weakness and destruction" (Abdul Razaq Kilani, "Islam and Intra-Muslim Rivalry in Port Harcourt, Nigeria," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 21, no. 2 (October 2001): 358. See also Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, *Islam and the Worlds* (Kuwait: IIFSO, 1983), 64).

[105]Shittu Balogun Abdulazeez, "Peaceful Co-Existence in a Multi-Religious Society: An Islamic Perspective," in *Religion in Contemporary Nigeria*, eds. R. I. Adebay, Y. A. Quadri and R.W. Omotoye (Abuja: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2016), 105.

[106]Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman and Margaret Yemisi Ojo, "Imperatives of Socio-Religious Measures in Solving the Crisis in Nigeria," *AFRREV IJAH* 2, no. 2 (May, 2013): 32. As Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman and Margaret Yemisi Ojo observe that "Discrimination does not give room for national unity because the people discriminated against can never be glad with those in position of authority and at last leads to disunity. Religion does not support discrimination of human beings whether in Nigeria or in the world at large."

[107]Cf. Matthias Basedau and Johanna Schaefer-Kehnert, "Religious discrimination and religious armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa: an obvious relationship?, *Religion, State & Society* 47, no. 1 (2019): 33. "In addition, discrimination may take many forms, may or may not result in grievances and these grievances can lead to protest or not and dissent may take various violent or nonviolent forms."

[108]*DH*. 6. On a similar note *Dignitatis Humanae* recommends that "government is to see to it that equality of citizens before the law, which is itself an element of the common good, is never violated, whether openly or covertly, for religious reasons. Nor is there to be discrimination among citizens."

government and all citizens to eschew all forms of marginalization so as to protect and defend human dignity.[109]

5.5 The Search for the Truth and Respect for Religious Freedom

The search for the truth and religious freedom is the foundation that predicates the need for inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. One important aspect of the theology that emerged from the movements of interfaith dialogue and the Second Vatican Council was on this foundation. The Second Vatican Council was very clear about the religious search for the truth regarding the meaning of life and the transcendental. From the onset, *Nostra Aetate* highlights the fundamental questions about the nature of God and man, society and the eschatological dimension of life.[110]

Religion is about the knowledge of God and man. This requires adherents of various religions to unite in their quest for understanding the nature of God and how it relates to man and society. Christians and Muslims should consider this idea as the basis of interfaith dialogue, and to ensure unity instead of division among them. The principle of religious freedom must therefore be respected on the precept of the search for the truth. This is a fundamental right which must be accorded to every individual human person.

From this backdrop, *Dignitatis Humanae* emphasizes the right to religious freedom as a fundamental right in the search for the truth. It goes further to highlight that the right to religious freedom concerns the search for religious truth according to the individual's conscience. This right is imbued in the nature of the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God, and endowed with freedom of choice to act according to his/her conscience.[111]

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[109]Cf. CBCN, "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development," Communiqué at the end of the Second Plenary Meeting of the CBCN, Akure, September 8-16, 2016, http://www.cbcn-ng.org/ (accessed March 31, 2019). "For instance, curriculum reforms in the education should respect religious freedom, which includes right to promote one's religious beliefs and doctrines without violation of the rights of others. We insist on the teaching of religion in all schools in such a way that no religion is disadvantaged. We therefore call on law and policy makers to adhere to the principles of state secularity, recognizing the multi-religious nature of our nation."

[110]*NA* 1.

[111]*DH*. 11. The document clearly upholds that "God calls men to serve Him in spirit and in truth, hence they are bound in conscience but they stand under no compulsion. God has regard for the dignity of the human person whom He

In the same light, *Gaudium et Spes* highlights that the "recognition of God is in no way hostile to man's dignity, since this dignity is rooted and perfected in God. For man was made an intelligent and free member of society by God Who created him, but even more important, he is called as a son to commune with God and share in His happiness."[112]

In the search for the truth, the Popes consider religious dialogue as a way of creating more understanding between God and Man. In *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI points out that there is a relationship between God and man from the religious basis that should encourage dialogue.[113] Similarly, John Paul II highlights the reality that in the search for the truth, the Catholic Church must engage with others to seek answers on the questions and realities that surround human life and history. He therefore acknowledges that

> In the presence of the mystery of grace, infinitely full of possibilities and implications for human life and history, the Church herself will never cease putting questions, trusting in the help of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth (cf. *Jn* 14:17), whose task it is to guide her "into all the truth" (*Jn* 16:13). This is a fundamental principle not only for the endless theological investigation of Christian truth, but also for Christian dialogue with other philosophies, cultures and religions.[114]

In this sense, the church must acknowledge that other religions are also on the same venture of trying to discover the truth. The emphasis on respect for other religions was particular to Islam because it expresses common belief in God and on some fundamental moral values. Benedict XVI echoes this in his address to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy when he states that:

> I sincerely pray that the relations of trust which have developed between Christians and Muslims over several years, will not only continue, but will develop further in a spirit of sincere and respectful dialogue, based on ever more authentic reciprocal knowledge which, with joy, recognizes the religious values that we have in common and, with loyalty, respects the differences.[115]

Himself created and man is to be guided by his own judgment and he is to enjoy freedom."
[112]*GS.* 21.
[113]Cf. *Ecclesiam Suam*, no. 70.
[114]*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, no. 56.
[115]Benedict XVI, "Speech to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy," September 25, 2006, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. "In a world marked by relativism and too often excluding the transcendence and universality of reason, we are in great need of an authentic dialogue

Continuing in this same line of thought, Pope Francis also seeks mutual respect between Christians and Muslims that should be promoted in dialogue through education.[116] This suggests that there is the need for more knowledge and understanding, and to develop mutual respect for one another. The search for the truth should be able to promote this understanding and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Similarly, the PCID highlight the fact that Muslims are on the same path in the search for the truth that concerns human conditions and dignity. The Church should as such collaborate with Muslims in improving human conditions and dignity in their search for the truth. On this perspective, the three documents of the PCID all emphasize the importance of dialogue with other religions in order to achieve common goals. *Dialogue in truth and charity* particularly emphasizes the importance of promoting dialogue with other religions in the search for the truth and working together for the common good.[117]

Christians and Muslims are therefore to seek education in dialogue, understand their differences and respect these differences in their approach to one another. This is a very important point for the Nigerian situation on how Christians and Muslims can manage their differences.

Based on this, Cardinal Arinze urges that dialogue in a world of religious pluralism should be approached with trust and respect. Arinze prays "for a future in which the adherents of different religions take each other seriously, relate openly to one another, respect one another, and recognize whatever truth they find in the religions of their dialogue partners, ready to learn from them

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between religions and between cultures, capable of assisting us, in a spirit of fruitful co-operation, to overcome all the tensions together. Continuing, then, the work undertaken by my predecessor, Pope John Paul II."

[116]Cf. Pope Francis, Message to Muslims throughout the world for the end of Ramadan on July10, 2013, Libreria Editrice Vaticana.

[117]*Dialogue in Truth and Charity*, no. 37. Accordingly, the document states that "Dialogue in truth entails that all believers view dialogue not only as a means of enhancing mutual understanding, but also a way of serving society at large by bearing witness to those moral truths which they hold in common with all men and women of goodwill. In promoting dialogue in truth, followers of different religions are invited to make the contents of their beliefs explicit. The principal mission of the Church is defined as 'service to the truth': Truth about God, truth about man and his hidden destiny, truth about the world."

whatever shows itself to be honorable and good."[118] In this sense, Christians and Muslims should always value the religion of each other as an important aspect of respect for religious freedom.

5.5.1 Solidarity and Collaboration between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

While the Nigerian Catholic Bishops call on Christians and Muslims to seek the truth that will promote human values and the pursuit of the common good, they also emphasize that Christians and Muslims should develop mutual understanding and relationship with one another. [119] This also has been an emphasis of the PCID and Cardinal Arinze. The PCID admonishes Christians and Muslims to collaborate on the religious values they have in common to establish a solid foundation of peace. The PCID believes that "by recognizing what we hold in common and by showing respect for our legitimate differences, we can more firmly establish a solid foundation for peaceful relations, moving from competition and confrontation to an effective cooperation for the common good."[120] In this light Arinze emphasizes the need for solidarity and collaboration among all religions in the world for peace and respect for fundamental human rights. According to him, "the edifice of peace, at once so precious and precarious, can only be grounded on the firm foundation of an ethic of solidarity, of a sense of belonging, of mutual love and respect, and the upholding of fundamental human rights."[121]

Theologians and scholars in Nigeria also call on Christians and Muslims to pursue common goal. Gwamna for example highlights that "most religions share common concerns that calls for dialogue. These common concerns are human development, social justice, equality, peace, and

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[118]Arinze, *Building Bridges*, 115-116.

[119]CBCN, "Religion as Instrument for Peace and Integral Human Development." The bishops contend that such attitudes that will eliminate the spirit of unhealthy relationship must be eliminated between Christians and Muslims. In their very words, we read that "in this challenging time in our history as a people, we call for more concerted efforts in overcoming the spirit of unhealthy competition, suspicion, negativity and tenacious postures between Christians and Muslims. We urge all believers in the one True God not to relent in seeking the truth and upholding it. Together we must liberate religion from the forces that have held it hostage. We invite all and sundry to make religion an instrument of peace and development through a more sincere and committed inter-religious dialogue, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence."

[120]PCID, "Christians and Muslims: From Competition to Collaboration," (Libreria Editrice Vaticana: Message for the end of Ramadan'Id al-Fitr 1439 H. /2018).

[121]Arinze, *Religion for Peac*, x.

basic necessities of life."[122] They emphasize that Christians and Muslims should put into practice the teachings of their religions in order to promote the qualities and characteristics of peace in the country.[123]

Pope John Paul II equally highlights the importance of solidarity and collaboration of Christians and Muslims in his address to Muslim leaders during his 1998 visit to Nigeria.

> As Christians and Muslims, we share belief in "the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day" (*Lumen Gentium*, 16). Though we differ in the way we understand this One God, we are nevertheless akin in our efforts to know and follow his will. That religious aspiration itself constitutes a spiritual bond between Christians and Muslims, a bond which can provide a firm and broad-ranging basis for cooperation in many fields. This is important wherever Christians and Muslims live together. It is particularly important in Nigeria, where Christians and Muslims are present in such large numbers.[124]

On a similar context, the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, (also the leader of the entire Muslims faithful in Nigeria) encourages religious leaders in Nigeria to try and unite their followers for the common good. For him, it is imperative that all should learn to "speak truth and believe and trust one another, and not call upon their followers to take up arms. . . We must believe in one another, trust and love ourselves because that is what our two major religions advocate. We must continue to speak with one voice."[125] To achieve this, there is a need for conscientious commitment of both religions.

Such solidarity and collaboration can be exemplified with the efforts of Christian and Muslim women coming together in the spirit of dialogue. It was for this purpose that Sr. Kathleen McGarvey came up with the programme of dialogue that will unite Christian and Muslim women in Nigeria. In this programme, McGarvey "suggest some central issues which women would need

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[122]Gwamna, *Religion and Politics in Nigeria*, 170.

[123]Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, 146. Umaru further emphasizes this point that a close reflection into Christian and Islamic "teachings reveals a striking similarity in their ethical foundations and underlying principles for peace and cooperation. These religious traditions preach peace and advocate a social code that admonishes adherents to love and respect the other."

[124]John Paul II, Apostolic Journey of His Holiness John Paul II to Nigeria (March 21-23, 1998): Meeting with Muslim Leaders, Sunday, 22 March 1998.

[125]Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar III, "Religious, Community Leaders: Truth and Trust will Overcome Conflict in Nigeria as One," The Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace in Nigeria, January 18, 2018, Under King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) Dialogue center https://www.kaiciid.org/.../interfaith-dialogue-forum-peace-general-assembly-2018n (accessed March 16, 2019).

to clarify as they dialogue, brought together by their desire to confront their common concerns. Through their solidarity, participants would be enriched in their faith. The justice sought will be created in relationships between people of different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds today."[126] In this context, Christians and Muslims in Nigeria once more are reminded of their interdependence.

This implies that on the way forward towards solidarity and collaboration in Nigeria, many areas need to be examined. One of these aspects centres on religion and politics. There is need to find a dividing line between the two. The competitive struggles of religion and politics between Christians and Muslims have become an obstacle to unity. Josiah Idowu Fearon for example points out that: "Both the Muslims and the Christians have used religion as a tool to serve their political interests. It is not uncommon to see a person who was never religious begin to identify himself or herself with a religious group during elections and when the person eventually wins, depending on his or her religious platform begin to give preferential treatments to subsections of the population."[127]

The rivalry and competition in power and political control by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria need to be checked and eliminated for genuine unity, solidarity and collaboration to exist. Nigerians need to understand the significance that citizenship comes first before religious affiliation. Our belief should serve in building up our responsibilities to our nations and not to make us divide against the good of the nation.[128]

Furthermore, there is still a call for respect for other people's religion and culture in Nigeria because God is responsible for our identities as Nigerians irrespective of one's religious or ethnic

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[126]McGarvey, *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue*, 15-16.

[127]Josiah Idowu Fearon, "Fostering unity in a Fragmented Nation: The role of religion in Nigeria," Chatham House Meeting, Lagos, March 19, 2007, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/.../190307nigeria.pdf (accessed March 19, 2019).

[128]Ibid. Fearon fears that the result effect of this scenario is the "continuous distrust and hate among the two religious groups and an increased concern for the number of Christians and Muslims within government. It matters to each of the religious groups who is the president of the country, or the governor of a state. In a south-eastern state for instance, Christians would not allow a Muslim to become a governor even if they are absolutely sure their Christian rights would be protected. In like manner, the North would not want to have a Christian as the governor even if they were guaranteed of their religious freedom as Muslims."

affiliations. While it is unfortunate that our ethnic and religious differences have become sources of tension in political, social and economic relationship as Nigerians, it remains very important and necessary to seek ways to harness these same diversities for the common good.[129] Nigerians should be able to realize and appreciate that both Christianity and Islam have their values which should serve to promote the unity of the nation. Likewise not only religions, but every culture in Nigeria has some positives that should be appreciated by all.

Love and patriotism is also recommended as a way forward towards solidarity and collaboration in Nigeria. Love and patriotism according to Matthew Hassan Kukah is required to establish a good society that represents the kingdom of God on earth. Speaking on the perspective of patriotism and authority, Kukah posits that patriotism, which is love of our land "is a precondition for loving the kingdom of God. It is patriotism that energizes us and makes us seek to remake the world in the way we believe God wants it to be. If we love our nation, we would be concerned about how it is administered and by whom. If we love our nation, we would be concerned about whether those in authority exercise their power in the way God Himself would be happy with."[130] The call here is for Nigerians to become patriotic[131] and to love their nation as this will also guarantee the presence of peace and unity. Nigerians of every tribe and culture, gender, and religion should love and

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[129]Cf. Nasir Mohammed Baba, "Islamic Schools, the Ulama, and the State in the Educational Development of Northern Nigeria," *Bulletin de l'APAD* 33 (2011): 10.

[130]Kukah, *The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility*, 8. Such love and patriotism was commended by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria in one of their recent communiqués as a sign of solidarity and collaboration in the midst of various challenges in Nigeria. The Bishops "Commend the vast majority of Nigerians for standing together and remaining law-abiding citizens in the face of many difficulties, challenges and even provocation. We condole with the victims of terrorism, natural disasters, conflicts and violent crimes, while we continue to pray for the deceased. The solidarity shown by many Nigerians to those affected by the recent floods that affected some parts of the country is a sign of hope for our common peaceful co-existence…we equally commend the assistance rendered by individual Dioceses and other humanitarian agencies to the displaced and distressed persons. We appeal to the Government to carry the Church along in the work of the rehabilitation of such persons" (CBCN, "Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration").

[131]Augustine Atabor and Isaiah Negedu, "Nationalism in Nigeria: A Case for Patriotic Citizenship," *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 5, no. 3 (June 2015): 75&78. Patriotism according to Augustine Atabor and Isaiah Negedu "refers to a deep feeling of love for one's fatherland, a fundamental disposition for the common good. . . Patriotism is an emotional journey of loyalty, allegiance, impartial love and total obedience to one's country or one's chosen country other than one's country of birth, which bestows all the rights and privileges accorded to him/her by the constitution… Patriotism is the force of unity that holds a people together within a particular nation-state. Thus, it is implied that though there may be varieties in language, culture, religion and ethnicity, the shared grounds of unity becomes the most cherished relational bond that runs through a people within a nation-state as Nigeria. Though we do not enjoy this common bond because of mutual distrust, it does not entail that the Nigerian state would/must end up in dissolution."

appreciate their nation. They should all love and value each other as members of one family. With a patriotic spirit, Nigerians should learn to always seek dialogue in resolving their problems and misunderstanding.

The notion of family should always be employed as a symbol of solidarity and collaboration in Nigeria. It is with this notion that Christians and Muslims can work to provide the atmosphere of peaceful and harmonious co-existence.

5.5.2 Harmonious/Mutual Co-Existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

Among the many positive impacts of solidarity and collaboration is harmonious and mutual co-existence. Religious harmony is realized when there is mutual understanding and tolerance of the principles and basis of beliefs between adherents of different religions in society. In the view of Umar Labdo, harmony and unity can only thrive through understanding of each other's faith.[132] Conscious of the negative relationship that existed between Christians and Muslims in the past, *Nostra Aetate* therefore emphasizes the importance of seeking mutual understanding between the two religions. There is therefore the call that "since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom."[133]

Dialogue is seriously required in this regard. Owolabi Jacob Awoju contends that

> Religious dialogue is necessary among religionists in order to promote understanding among them. When Northern Nigerian religionists understand one another's faith without one's own religious prejudices, it will contribute immensely towards inter-religious understanding between Muslims and Christians in the region. Inter-religious dialogue would enable other faiths members to know the basic tenets of other religions being practiced in the Northern Nigeria.[134]

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[132]Cf. Umar Labdo, "Religious Harmony as Prerequisite for National Development: The Islamic Viewpoint," (Being a paper presented at a Sensitization Workshop on Religion as a Catalyst for Harmonious and Peaceful Co-existence organized by the Kaduna State Bureau of Religious Affairs, Kaduna, September 15 and 16, 2010).

[133]*NA*. 3

[134]Owolabi Jacob Awoju, "Enhancing lasting religious peace and harmony in the Northern Nigeria," *Journal Research in Peace, Gender and Development (JRPGD)* 4, no. 4 (July, 2014): 74. "If religious dialogue is encouraged by Muslim and Christian leaders in the region, it will bring a lasting religious peace and harmony to the inhabitants."

Such dialogue should also aim to encourage religious tolerance as the best approach to religious pluralism in Nigeria. Benedict XVI highlights the necessity of interfaith/intercultural dialogue to build up harmonious mutual understanding and co-existence between Christians and Muslims. In his address to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy Pope Benedict states:

> Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue is a necessity for building together this world of peace and fraternity ardently desired by all people of good will. In this area, our contemporaries expect from us an eloquent witness to show all people the value of the religious dimension of life. Likewise, faithful to the teachings of their own religious traditions, Christians and Muslims must learn to work together, as indeed they already do in many common undertakings, in order to guard against all forms of intolerance and to oppose all manifestations of violence; as for us, religious authorities and political leaders, we must guide and encourage them in this direction.[135]

It is from this backdrop that Ogbole Friday Abu and Ogunrinade Adewale O. also highlight the need to build mutual relationship despite the differences of faith commitment among people who live as neighbours, especially in the same towns and villages.[136] It is never by accident that there are different religions and cultures in Nigeria. These are "divinely designed by Almighty God to harness the human and material resources of the country for the benefit of humanity."[137] As a reminder, no meaningful development can be attained without peace and stability through persuasion and dialogue and this remains a collective responsibility of Nigerians.[138]

From a Christian point of view, Ebere Uke Ukah and Ema Ebere Ukeh Ukah suggest that the best way of achieving interreligious harmony is through love and morality. These items should be on

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[135]Benedict XVI, "Speech to the Ambassadors of Countries with a Muslim Majority and to the Representatives of Muslim Communities in Italy," September 25, 2006, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. "Dear friends, I pray with my whole heart that the merciful God will guide our steps along the paths of an ever more authentic mutual understanding. At this time when for Muslims the spiritual journey of the month of Ramadan is beginning, I address to all of them my cordial good wishes, praying that the Almighty may grant them serene and peaceful lives."

[136]Cf. Ogbole Friday Abu and Ogunrinade Adewale O., "Nigerian Pluralistic Society and the Relevance of Religious Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 3, no. 3 (September 2013) 346.

[137]Abdullahi Saibu, "Towards Achieving Ethno-Religious Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria," (Being a Paper Presentation at the 1st Annual International Conference on Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution and Peace Building, Organized By The International Center for Ethno-Religious Mediation (ICERM), New York, October 1, 2014). Saibu further emphasizes that "whether Islam or Christianity, what is common to both sides is that adherents of both faiths are human beings and fate also binds them together as Nigerians. Both love their country and God. In addition, Nigerians are very hospitable and loving people. They love to live in peace with one another and other people in the world."

[138]Cf. Labdo, "Religious Harmony as Prerequisite for National Development: The Islamic Viewpoint."

the agenda of any meaningful discussion among the adherents of the different religions.[139] The

application of love and morality implies the implementation of religious and ethical values that will

enhance the good of the nation.[140] By implication, there is the need for Nigerians to work on

character formation for the harmony and development of the nation.

The Islamic perspective of harmonious co-existence in Nigeria, according to Labdo, focuses on

dialogue between faiths because it is the just and sure way of "resolving differences and

disagreement and ensuring understanding and harmonious living between followers of different

faiths and religions"[141] It is from this perspective that the need for dialogue between Christians and

Muslims in Nigeria is rooted. As Christians and Muslims, the demand is that of understanding and

collaborating with one another to achieve the common good according to the plan of God.[142] It is a

call for relationships! This is why Akinade examines specifically on the nature of the relationship

that has been in existence between Christians and Muslims and advice on how this can improve.

Christians and Muslims must realize the diversified nature of the Nigerian society, and should be

ready to respect one another so that harmony can be achieved.[143]

Since the search for the universal truth also centred on truth about God, human beings and society;

it is also the basis that provides understanding for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to know their

differences and appreciate one another. It further opens up the reality of religious pluralism in the

country. Thus, religious inclusive pluralism can become the best option towards effective dialogue

and harmonious co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Iwuchukwu posits that

Christian theology demands an inclusive pluralistic relationship from the scriptural basis as proof

of God's universal love and concern for all. It is an idea that is very necessary and important,

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[139]Cf. Ebere and Ema, "Love and Morality as Panacea for Religious Tolerance in Nigeria," 181.

[140]Okpe Nicholas Ojoajogwu, "Religion as a catalyst of nation building in Nigeria," *Net Journal of Social Sciences* 2, no. 2 (June 2014): 74. This in part is the position of Okpe Nicholas Ojoajogwu when they maintain that in Nigeria "the utilization of religious values by different religious adherents of their respective ethical norms can result into the development of the physical, mental, psychological and spiritual potentials of man in order to facilitate effective nation building in all ramifications."

[141]Labdo, "Religious Harmony as Prerequisite for National Development: The Islamic Viewpoint."

[142]Cf. Saibu, "Towards Achieving Ethno-Religious Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria" and Abu and Adewale O., "Nigerian Pluralistic Society and the Relevance of Religious Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace." 346.

[143]Cf. Akinade, *Christian Responses to Islam in Nigeria*, 38.

especially in Northern Nigeria since it will help to bring about an effective relationship and harmonious co-existence between Christians and Muslims.[144]

By exploring the teaching of the Qur'an Abdulazeez calls on Muslims to draw inspiration from the precedents of the Holy Prophet Muhammed.[145] Based on the example of the Holy Prophet Muhammed, Abdulazeez concludes that in order for dialogue "to materialise and transform into meaningful experience in today's world, all and sundry, especially Muslim faithful must abide by the teachings of Islam and strive to emulate the Messenger of Allah, the best example for mankind. By so doing, Nigeria, and indeed, our world will be safer and better for all to live in."[146] In conclusion, while Irene N. Osemeka says "much as religious pluralism is relevant and perceived as a panacea for the prevention of violence in multi-religious communities,[147] religious pluralism should be considered by both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria as the way forward to religious competition and rivalry between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

5.6 Conclusion

From the prospects of theological insights on the common belief in God between Christians and Muslims, the dignity of the human person; the search for the universal truth and religious freedom; it is possible for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to dialogue together and change the pattern of relationship to a better one that will make positive changes and bring about transformation and development of the Nigerian society. According to the declaration of Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb; "Dialogue, understanding and the widespread promotion of a culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and of living together peacefully would contribute significantly to reducing

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[144]Cf. Iwuchukwu, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Post-Colonial Northern Nigeria.* 164&172. Iwuchukwu further posits that, "once an inclusive pluralistic worldview becomes operative and appreciated by Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria, the door toward effective dialogue becomes most accessible to them."

[145]Abdulazeez, "Peaceful Co-Existence in a Multi-Religious Society: An Islamic Perspective," 108. According to Abdulazeez "the Prophet migrated to the city of Yathrib (later named al-Madinah) as a Messenger of Allah and as a statesman to unite warring tribes, which had been torn apart by incessant civil wars. Having met another religious group, the Jewish community, in Yathrib, the Prophet sought their cooperation in moving the society forward and in defending it against internal oppression and external aggression."

[146]Ibid, 115-116.

[147]Irene N. Osemeka, *"The Management of Religious Diversity in west Africa: The Exceptionalism of the Wolof and Yoruba in the Post-Independence Period," Historia Actual* 33 (2014): 63

many economic, social, political and environmental problems that weigh so heavily on a large part of humanity."[148] From this perspective, for dialogue to be effective in Nigeria, it requires the impact of education; forgiveness, peace education, and the influence of good interpersonal communication and relationship are required for these to be realized.

5.7 Implication of Theological Insights/Prospects for Education in Nigeria

This aspect concerns three principal areas that were already mentioned at the introduction of the chapter; which are very fundamental to enable Christians and Muslims to reconcile and live in peace with one another in Nigeria. These areas have also been highlighted in chapter three by the Popes, the PCID and Cardinal Francis Arinze. The Nigerian Bishops and theologians/scholars in chapter four also emphasize the need for forgiveness, peace education and effective communication and relationship as the way forward for Christians and Muslims to live together in peace and harmony.

5.7.1 Forgiveness Education: Reconciliation and Peace Building in Nigeria

In a society where hatred and enmity are on the increase, the characteristics of forgiveness form the basis of the agenda for peace and reconciliation. Forgiveness is seen to stand at the center of reconciliation and the mending of a broken relationship.[149] Sharon Chubbuck provides the scope within which forgiveness education could be approached as a study. Chubbuck considers; "the goal of forgiveness, and cultural tools for achieving forgiveness. Study of how cultural realities can shape the nature and experience of a forgiveness intervention is clearly needed, and given the

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[148]Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019.

[149]The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality, s.v. "Forgiveness." Forgiveness can be referred to as "the removal of obstacles that lie in the way of intimate union with God and others. Traditionally, forgiveness has been understood as directed first toward guilt for sin (which destroys or weakens the relationship with God and neighbor), and then toward the remnants of past sin (which continue to affect those relationships and which incline the individual to repetition). Forgiveness is thus part of the broader reality of reconciliation with God, others, the world, and even with oneself."

complexity of how we come to understand cultural knowledge, qualitative as well as quantitative data is needed to support this research."[150]

For a coherent approach to forgiveness education that will provide a conceptual understanding, Suzanne Freedman tries to explain the importance of what forgiveness education means to children first.[151] Following a survey carried out among 21 students attending an alternative school in a Midwestern city, Freedman was able to provide a foundation for forgiveness education and what it focuses on. From this foundation she asserts:

> Forgiveness emerging as a powerful healing tool for adult survivors of deep, personal and unfair hurt, leads to thinking about how to implement forgiveness education and intervention in schools so students can cope with anger and deep hurt. Forgiveness education can be implemented with individual students, small groups, and in classrooms by school counsellors, psychologists and teachers. Forgiveness education has also been proposed as a specific form of bullying prevention and intervention.[152]

From the foregoing, we can say that while forgiveness education provides the basic principles of developing positive attitudes that will promote reconciliation and peaceful co-existence, forgiveness itself is the means to eliminate bitterness and anger among people. Sampson M. Nwaomah as such calls for a practical response to forgiveness principles in Nigeria and demands strategies that will enable the achievement of the objectives of these principles through government efforts and policies.[153] Religions also have a major role towards the promotion of forgiveness and educational policies that will advance forgiveness in Nigeria.

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[150]Sharon Chubbuck, "Forgiveness Education: Urban Youth's Perceptions and Collective Narratives," *Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict* 1, no. 1 (January 2010): 79-80.

[151]Suzanne Freedman, "Forgiveness as an educational goal with at-risk adolescents," *Journal of Moral Education* 47, no. 4 (January 2018): 415-416. "Forgiveness education has been studied as an approach to decreasing anger in children and adolescents experiencing stressful life events and deep interpersonal injuries."

[152]Ibid. Freedman further establishes that forgiveness education "focuses on reducing anger, dealing with hurt, expanding perspective-taking skills and enhancing empathy and compassion. It teaches children and adolescents to view their offenders as human beings who deserve respect and to respond with kindness and compassion even to antagonists" (Freedman, "Forgiveness as an educational goal with at-risk adolescents."

[153]Cf. Sampson M. Nwaomah, "Religious Crises in Nigeria: Manifestation, Effect and the Way Forward," *Journal of Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology in Practice* 3, no. 2 (August 2011): 103.

5.7.1.1 Christian and Muslim Basis of Forgiveness

Christian forgiveness takes its root from the gospel's narratives of Jesus' teachings and examples. Even though forgiveness is associated with sin, it also concerns wrongdoings and offences against God and fellow human beings. It is within this context that Jesus made forgiveness a priority of relationships. At the peak of his teaching and ministry, Jesus highlights forgiveness as a cardinal requirement for his disciples, and the condition for obtaining God's forgiveness.[154]

In Matthew 18:15-22, Jesus further demands that his disciples make reconciliation with one another and seek forgiveness from each other always. This demands that brothers be reconciled on their differences without hesitation no matter the gravity of the offence by exploring all avenues possible.[155] The parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35 is another relevant text applicable to the principle of forgiveness for Christians to imitate the forgiving attitude of God. Thus Matthew 5:23-24 shows us how Jesus emphasizes that reconciliation and forgiveness is required for Christians as they approach God in prayer.[156] The situation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria demands for the application of Matthew 18:15-22.[157]

Forgiveness in Islam is equally rooted in God. Such forgiveness according to Islamic teaching must come through sincere repentance, and it is the means to salvation. Muslims also believe there is no sin or offence beyond God's forgiveness as taught in the Qur'an 39:53. Forgiveness is said to be an

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[154]Matt. 6:14-15. "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

[155]Cf. John A. Ottuh, "Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria (Matthew 18:15-22): A Hermeneutico - Inculturation Approach," Journal Of Humanities And Social Science 7, Issue 6 (January- February 2013): 22.

[156]Ottuh, "Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria (Matthew 18:15-22)," 23. Ottuh consequently highlights the fact that implementation of Matthew 18:15-22 in the Nigeria context requires the value of brotherhood which has already been emphasized by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria and the PCID. He posits that "one of the key themes of vv. 15-17 is *adelphos* and it means brother. *Adelphos* here as it is used in the text to denote: a near kinsman; in the plural, a community based on identity of origin or life; or a neighbour. The word *adelphos* carries with it embedded idea of love (*agape*). In Nigeria the understanding of brotherhood like in the community of Matthew will make people live together in peace regardless of gender, status, religion or ethnic affinities. When all Nigerians see one another as brothers and sisters it will be easier to resolve issues."

[157]William E. Phipps, *Muhammad and Jesus: A Comparison of the Prophets and their Teachings* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 113. Phipps also contend that, "by means of a weighty conjunction, Jesus coupled acceptance by God with human forgivingness: . . . Pleading for God's mercy while sacrificing an animal is less demanding than working patiently to overcome one's alienation from other humans. Jesus thought it improper to seek divine forgiveness if a similar attitude was lacking in one's own human relationships."

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important virtue in Islam.[158] For Muslims, forgiveness comes from the fact that they believe in a God of mercy who is compassionate and loving. Muslims are also to extend the same compassion and love to their fellow human beings indiscriminate of religious beliefs or affiliation.[159] This implies that forgiveness is also an indispensable characteristic of relationships in Islam just as in Christianity.

It is a fact that human beings are imperfect and are always bound to offend one another. Without forgiveness, there is no way human beings can live peacefully. This is why forgiveness should form the center of human relationships, and should be unconditional. This we read in Matthew 18: 21-22 and Luke 17:3-4. The affirmation of Jesus as contained in these passages is also acclaimed in Islam as Phipps confirms:

> According to early Muslim tradition, Muhammad advised: *If anyone would like God to save him from the anxieties of the Day of Resurrection, he should grant a respite to one who is in straitened circumstances, or remit his debt. . .* Muslims also remembered this exchanged between Muhammad and one of his followers: *How often shall I pardon a servant?*-The prophet replied: *Forgive him seventy times daily.*[160]

From Muhammad's position and Jesus' response to Peter, it is very clear that there is no limit to forgiveness in both Christianity and Islam. Seventy is a semantic expression of the unlimited condition to forgiveness. Thus, forgiveness should not be conditional, but something that must flow naturally and always from the conviction of the individual. Since forgiveness is a vital virtue and relevant to both Christianity and Islam, it is also necessary that it should form an important agenda for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

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[158]Yake, M. Daji, "Preaching Peace and Living Peacefully in Northern Nigeria: Bridging the gap between Theory and Practice," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 5, no. 3 (March 2015): 190. According to Yake, M. Daji "another virtue in Islam is forgiveness (Quran 23:96). Muslims are urged to live in harmony and peace with all fellow humans. . . If one were to seek the true face of Islam in its own sources, history, and true representatives, then one would discover that it contains no harshness, cruelty, or fanaticism or even terrorism. It is a religion of forgiveness, pardon, and tolerance."

[159]Hathout, *Reading the Muslim Mind*, 34. Hathout states clearly that: "Muslims' great hope in God's forgiveness is expressed by being themselves forgivers. The role of forgiveness, between individuals, tribes or nations, is of the essence of Islam. Even when the law intervenes by meting out a punishment commensurate with an aggression, the wronged party is encouraged to forgive."

[160]Phipps, *Muhammad and Jesus*, 113.

5.7.1.2 Forgiveness Education in Nigeria

The structure of forgiveness education in Nigeria will take into cognisance the importance of forgiveness in the educational curriculum of Nigeria, in the light of Christianity and Islamic teachings. It will also consider the processes through which forgiveness can be achieved through education in Nigeria in two dimensions.

1. Importance of Forgiveness Education in Nigeria

2. Implementation of Forgiveness Education in Nigeria: Christian and Islamic Teachings

5.7.1.3 Importance of Forgiveness Education in Nigeria

From the analysis of the Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria, it is clear that all the efforts made have not yet achieved the success of peaceful resolution. This is reflected in various aspects of life in society; because the lack of forgiveness affects the normal process of living together and pursuing the common good between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria as Ogbuehi Friday I. affirms: "The incessant religious conflicts have hampered national development as well as encouraged suspicion, reprisal attacks, disunity, acrimony and rancour among the adherents of these religions."[161]

This background shows that education is also an important agenda of interfaith dialogue that can result in forgiveness and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It was based on this that the government of Nigeria set up the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) to work out strategies that will enable peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This organization, according to Mashood Omotosho, has been at the forefront of making

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[161]Ogbuehi Friday I., "Critical Appraisal of Dialogue as a Strategy for Religious Conflict Resolution in Nigeria," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 8, no. 2 (2016): 159. Ogbuehi categorically states that: "There is no doubt that religious conflicts have turned some parts of this country into 'war zones' where lives and property are not safe. Despite all the measures employed, particularly religious dialogue to arrest the perennial religious conflict in Nigeria, yet resolution of religious conflicts have remained a mirage."

sure the mechanism of peace building and harmonious co-existence are put in place for Christians and Muslims to live together in Nigeria.[162]

The pattern of forgiveness education in Nigeria is to provide strategies that will serve the purpose of achieving reconciliation and peace between Christians and Muslims. Forgiveness education is therefore needed to provide the process and strategies to go about seeking peace and making reconciliation possible.

The best strategy for forgiveness education in achieving peace and reconciliation is conflict resolution approach which should be; "aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation. By conflict resolution, the deeply rooted sources of conflict are expected to be addressed and resolved and the behaviour is no longer violent, nor are attitudes hostile any longer, while the structure of the conflict has been changed."[163] Forgiveness in this approach serves as an antidote to achieve reconciliation. It is therefore appropriate for Christians and Muslims to work together towards developing strategies that will make forgiveness and reconciliation possible among them. And the readily available tool to achieve this is education.[164] Hence, forgiveness education will enable Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to achieve the following three objectives:

a. Letting off Bitterness and Avoiding Revenge

b. The Importance and Processes of Reconciliation in Forgiveness Education

c. Restoration of Friendship and Building Trust and Confidence

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[162]Mashood Omotosho, "Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Inter-Religious Mediation Peace Strategy," *Africa Development* 39, no. 2 (2014): 146. Omotosho affirms that the organization "also work to achieve signed peace agreements between prominent religious leaders and state or local government. The effort includes working with violent youths through Christian and Islamic teachings that emphasise forgiveness and non-violence."

[163]Ali Ibrahim Abbas, "Peace and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria: An Imperative Tool for Countering Violent Extremism," (A Presented at the conference: *Peace Building, Security, Sustainable Development and the Reconstruction of North Eastern Nigeria* Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) North East Zone Federal University, Kashere, April 24-27, 2018). Abbas emphasizes that in conflict resolution, "the outcomes of the resolution are to be mutually acceptable by parties concerned for sustained peace. However, there are differences in the approach to conflict resolution depending on the culture and civilisation of the people and their society."

[164]Ibid.

a)   **Letting off Bitterness and Avoiding Revenge:** Forgiveness is not about pretending that all

is fine. It is an effort to eliminate the pains and anguish of what has been done to us. Retaliations

are bound to occur if the pains and bitterness of the offences and crimes are not eliminated.[165]

Christians and Muslims need to intensify their efforts in making sure that misunderstanding and

crisis do not escalate to further conflicts and violence among them.

Since both Christianity and Islam teach the virtue of forgiveness they must also find ways of

ensuring that such teachings are implemented by their adherents. Among the major roles of Nigeria

Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) and other interfaith groups in Nigeria, Omotosho states;

> The activities of inter-religious groups in resolving the disagreement and violent
> clashes among various religious groupings in the country reveal the capacity of
> religious communities to educate their members on the root causes of religious
> intolerance and conflict. The inter-religious dialogue facilitates peaceful
> coexistence and also serves as effective advocates for the prevention of religious
> conflict locally and regionally.[166]

It is therefore necessary to apply the principle of forgiveness that will eventually provide healing

and genuine reconciliation. Such principles of forgiveness, according to Clifford Meesua Sibani

and Fred Ndimafeme, should also focus on the promotion of justice through forgiveness. Sibani

and Ndimafeme emphasize the position that reconciliation cannot be effective if there is no

justice.[167] Consequently, Sibani and Ndimafeme insist that "the church must be seen to be involved

in an active struggle against injustice, ethnocentrism and oppression. Where there is fairness and

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[165]Miracle Ajah, "Reprisal attacks: a theological reflection of Genesis 34 on reactions to evil and human wickedness in Nigeria," *Scriptura* 113 (January 2014): 1-2. This has been the case with many situations of conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria as Miracle Ajah affirms: "Nigeria's Muslims and Christians mostly co-exist peacefully but periodic flare-ups of sectarian violence or outbursts of retaliation have killed hundreds since independence from Britain in 1960."

[166]Mashood Omotosho, "Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Inter-Religious Mediation Peace Strategy," *Africa Development* 39, no. 2 (2014): 142. Omotosho also says that the Inter-religious groups "play a central role in mediation and negotiation among religious fundamentalists, and lead their communities in the reconciliation and healing required to transform their divergent views and disagreements into a true and lasting peace."

[167]Clifford Meesua Sibani and Fred Ndimafeme, "Biblical and Ethnic Violence in Nigeria: The Christian Approach," *IDEA – Studia nad strukturą i rozwojem pojęć filozoficznych* 29, no. 1 (2017): 430. Cited Miller, W. R. *Nonviolence: A Christian interpretation* (New York: Shocken Books, 1966), 168. "When church leaders preach reconciliation without having unequivocally committed themselves to struggle on the side of the oppressed for justice, they are caught straddling a pseudo neutrality made of nothing but thin air. Neutrality in a situation of oppression always supports the status quo. Reduction of conflict by means of a phony 'peace' is not a Christian goal. Justice is the goal, and that may require an acceleration of conflict as a necessary state in forcing those in power to bring about genuine change."

equity for all ethnic and religious groups in respect of employment, political appointments, school admissions and all normal amenities in any of our communities, there is greater willingness to accept people from other ethnic groups."[168] Promotion of justice from a Christian perspective is thus the best process of providing genuine forgiveness. However, Sibani and Ndimafeme further reiterate that the application of love through forgiveness can also serve in providing genuine forgiveness. This is the principle presented by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.[169] The true test of the Christian faith lies in the ability to forgive. Sibani and Ndimafeme also emphasize the fact that: "Only love for enemy and the determination not to use force or violence will win conflicts and win the enemy. These attitudes provide a theological base and framework within which to carry on the vital task of building structures that can eventually eliminate war and its causes in our society."[170] This is the foundation through which Christian forgiveness education should teach and encourage reconciliation and peace in Nigeria.

Islam also follows similar patterns, according to Garba M. Bodinga and Aisha A. Abdulmalik. They emphasize that justice and forgiveness from the Qur'anic point of view are the moral codes in Islamic educational teachings that can repel evil with good.[171] By highlighting the Islamic principle of forgiveness without revenge, Bodinga and Abdulmalik show that love and tranquillity among people helps and portrays that forgiveness is a virtue in the sight of God and that it promotes friendship, reconciliation and integration.[172] Forgiveness and adoption of non-violence will therefore serve as a panacea to religious violence, providing peaceful co-existence between

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[168]Ibid.

[169]Matt 5:44-45. "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Martin Luther King Jr, *Strength to love* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 50. Further comment from Martin Luther King Jr states: "No one is so wicked that there is no good element in them; and no one is so good that there is no bad element in them"

[170]Sibani and Ndimafeme, "Biblical and Ethnic Violence in Nigeria: The Christian Approach," 431. "Let us note that there is a violence that liberates and there is a violence that enslaves; there is a violence that is moral and there is a violence that is immoral. The choice is yours."

[171]Qur'an 41:34. It states: *"Nor can goodness and evil be equal. Repel (evil) with what is better; then it will be between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!"*

[172]Garba M. Bodinga and Aisha A. Abdulmalik, "Islamic Education as a Means of Promoting Peace, National Unity and Integration in Nigeria," (A Paper Presentation at the 2017 Conference on Islam in Nigeria, *Islamic Welfare Foundation*, Ibadan, 20-23 November 2017).

Christians and Muslims in Nigeria if it is genuinely implemented. It will eliminate the hurt and bitterness that will trigger revenge and retaliation, and thus provide harmonious co-existence.

b)   **The Importance and Processes of Reconciliation in Forgiveness Education:** Reconciliation in the context of forgiveness is not an easy task. It can take a long time and can involve tough processes.[173] Because of the tedious process involved in reconciliation, Omotosho suggests that reconciliation should be able to produce a lasting result and remedy to conflicts and bad relationships. Consequently, reconciliation has to be whole in process and provide restoration to individuals and groups. Omotosho thus emphatically surmises that "The process of reconciliation is basically one where there is restoration of good relationships between individuals and groups. It is rooted in individuals but has lasting effects on social harmony in the state. Though there are several dimensions to reconciliation, the main ones include spiritual, social, psychological, and political."[174]

These dimensions of reconciliation, though distinct in principles, are all geared towards the same objective; the restoration of relationships and harmonious living and they should be harnessed by the activities of inter-religious dialogue.[175] Christians and Muslims should therefore seek to dialogue on how to make reconciliation more effective and fruitful in Nigeria. The process of reconciliation is required to begin the healing process that will remove the hurt and psychological trauma that might linger in the mind. It becomes a social responsibility of Christians in Nigeria to be actively involved in the reconciliatory processes with their Muslim counterparts.

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[173]Michael Drumm and Tom Gunning, *A Sacramental People: Vol II-Healing and Vocation* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2000), 42. Michael Drumm and Tom Gunning state that: "Most adults can recall a time when they felt genuinely hurt by another person or an institution or a system. Presuming that they were truly injured, and that they didn't just want to take offence, what does it mean to say that they might forgive and be reconciled? At a human level, there are several arguments for attempting reconciliation. If one continues to bear the hurt then the offender dominates one's life and, as the victim, one's suffering endures."

[174]Omotosho, "Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria," 143.

[175]Ibid. "Interreligious dialogue means more than a coexistence of different religious traditions and institutions. The dialogue includes purposeful activities of collaboration between religious institutions in favour of social peace and prosperity . . . inter-religious dialogue is certainly a bridge-building exercise. It has to do with the way and means of relating with people of different religions. It includes creating harmony in the society, encouraging the development of friendship and spirit of tolerance."

Forgiveness education is thus important in transforming a community through reconciliation, and this is a unique mark of Christian identity.[176] Uchem maintains that for forgiveness and reconciliation to be achieved, certain conditions must also be met. These conditions will warrant the authenticity of the forgiveness and reconciliatory processes. It must be concrete and hence cannot happen in an abstract condition. This suggests that the basic rights of people must be respected.[177]

From an Islamic perspective, Muhammad Auwal Suleiman considers reconciliation as:

> A process in which two people or two groups of people become friendly again after they have quarreled or have not been in contact with each other. According to this definition reconciliation is a reuniting and harmonizing of two hostile people or groups by calling them to come together within the context of understanding and respect in order to foster mutual understanding, stimulate communication, correct stereotypes, work on specific problems of mutual concern, explore similarities and differences, and facilitate means of witness and cooperation between them.[178]

The above definition of reconciliation also highlights some importance of reconciliation and why it is required in peace building and harmonious co-existence. Moreover, the Qur'an also insists that Muslims must always seek peace through reconciliation. It demands that such reconciliation must be carried out in a just and fair manner.[179] The teaching on reconciliation in Islam is developed from the practice known as *Ṣulḥ* and *Tahkim* which enjoin all Muslims to avert the occurrence of

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[176]Rose Uchem, "Transforming Community Through Reconciliation," *AMC: African Journal for Mission in Context* 2, (2011): 41. Reconciliation from a Christian point of view according to Rose Uchem "is the outcome, an off-shoot of forgiveness. To reconcile is to bring together once more severed parts of a whole. I really think that to forgive, to reconcile is an integral part of who I am and want to be as a Christian, another Christ. It has to do with my basic identity as a disciple of Christ. This, in my view, is the kernel of what it means to be a Christian."

[177]Ibid, 41&43. Uchem further emphasizes that: " To forgive is to let go any such intentions, plans and desires to inflict pain or hardship on another in reaction to what we ourselves have suffered at their hands or those close to them. Thus, the terms „forgiveness and reconciliation" imply the presence of conflict and conflict is part of our human situation. The demands of forgiveness and reconciliation, therefore, bring us face to face with the reality of sin and guilt…We cannot justifiably ask people to forgive when the necessary conditions have not yet been met or set in place, namely, the demands of social justice to find out the truth about a conflict situation; to give voice to all sides and to redress whatever injustice is at play. Thus, we cannot talk about reconciliation outside of ecumenism and social justice."

[178]Muhammad Auwal Suleiman, Reconciliation as a Platform for Peaceful Co-Existence among Aggrieved Persons, Ethnic and Religious (Munich: Grin Verlag, 2018), 8.

[179]Qur'an 49:9. "If two groups of believers happen to fight, then, make peace between them (by eliminating the cause of fight). However, if one group continues to wrong the other unfairly, then (all of) you fight against this group till it complies with command of Allah. Then if it complies, so make reconciliation between them justly (i.e. simply stopping fight is not enough. Make them meet each other and advise them to avoid any future dispute). And judge with justice (let not any personal feelings influence your judgment). Indeed, Allah loves those who are just.

disputes especially whenever there are disagreements.[180] Human beings are not perfect and thus there is always the possibility of misunderstandings, arguments and quarrels. The ability to forgive and reconcile in order to maintain relationships and live peacefully remains indispensable. Reconciliation is therefore to be encouraged and commended in both Islam and Christianity.

c)   **Restoration of Friendship and Building Trust and Confidence:** Friendship can also be affected by misunderstanding and offences among friends. Friends do hurt each other. When such happens, friendship fades away. The situation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria can be seen in the light of the above statement. This is also the reality Omotosho describes in the following statement:

> It should be reiterated that before the military handed over power to the civilians in 1999, the country had already witnessed a series of religious crises, and scholars have argued that the long years of military rule increased the gap of distrust as the politicians deliberately employed state power to heighten primordial sentiments, thereby increasing intolerance in Nigeria. The current political and religious sentiments are thus fuelled by some religious fundamentalists and individuals who benefit at the expense of the state.[181]

It is from this premise that Abbas made a passionate appeal to Nigerian leaders to make efforts towards restoring trust and mutual friendship in Nigeria through fair play, equality and tolerance.[182] Within the Christian tradition, trust is known to be necessary in relationships. However, trust can only be built on the foundation of truth. This according to Aihiokhai can be achieved through transformative dialogue. If transformative dialogue is to be established among members of different religions Aihiokhai asserts; "they need to make a determined effort to engage each other in the context of truthfulness and openness."[183] Through such dialogue, a process of healing the wounds of violence can take place. Felix and Ayodele suggest that for such healing processes to be effective there is a need for a ministry of peace to be established among Christians in conjunction

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[180]Cf. Suleiman, Reconciliation as a Platform for Peaceful Co-Existence among Aggrieved Persons, Ethnic and Religious, 11. Suleiman emphasizes that Muslims can avoid violence "through reconciliation and negotiation, therefore, Islam has an effective mechanism and procedure for reconciliation in virtually all human spares, be it social, economic and political which may be related to family cases, commercial disputes, criminal disputes, political and land boundary disputes."
[181]Omotosho, "Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria," 138.
[182]Abbas, "Peace And Conflict Resolution in Nigeria."
[183]Aihiokhai, "Love One Another as I have Loved You: The Place of Friendship in Interfaith Dialogue," 497.

with their Muslim partners. [184] In order for this to be implemented, Christians need to employ the ethical principles of the teachings of Jesus on love and forgiveness which are the panacea to restoration of friendship.[185] In a similar manner Christians must imitate Jesus in building friendship through love and forgiveness.

Islam on its part focuses on what the Qur'an teaches regarding trust and mutual relationships which has background from family ties. Bodinga and Abdulmalik confirm that "the Glorious Qur'an commanded good behaviour and treatment of Kith and kin without any recourse to their religious background and regarded kindness to them as duty of righteousness on the Muslim (Qur'an 2:177, 4:37, 16:90)"[186] From this background, Islamic teaching further extends mutual trust and relationship with non-Muslims. Such relationships, according to them, permit inter-marriages between Muslims and Christians, and create peaceful co-existence. These also provide the background for dialogue on religious freedom and mutual understanding between Muslims and Christians. [187] Aihiokhai advocates that there should be common celebration among Christians and Muslims at religious festivities; these can serve as a way of restoring trust and mutual relationship.[188]

Consequently, in forgiveness, a new relationship may emerge, which may be more cherished and appreciated. Thus Forgiveness education assists in restoring friendship. It does so by providing the

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[184]Cf. Felix and Ayodele, "Infrastructure for Peace: The African Experience," 39.

[185]Aihiokhai, "Love One Another as I have Loved You," 498. According to Aihiokhai, "this claim is hinged on the account of the farewell discourse between Jesus and his disciples in John's Gospel. The salvific element in Christ's ministry as understood within Christian salvation history is not distorted by this hermeneutic approach to Christology; rather, the place of friendship in Christ's ministry helps to highlight divine love and care for fallen humanity... The entire ministry and mission of Jesus can be summarized as a call to and actual practice of friendship."

[186]Bodinga and Abdulmalik, "Islamic Education as a Means of Promoting Peace, National Unity and Integration in Nigeria."

[187]Cf. Ibid. Any Muslim can eat and marry the non- Muslim who are chaste women, Almighty Allah says:*This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the people of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them, (lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers... (Q.5:5).*

[188]Aihiokhai, "Love One Another as I have Loved You," 494. Aihiokhai further reemphasizes: "What I am advocating for here has great implications. First, it affirms the belief that collective humanity's religiosity is a gift from God and denies any legitimacy to unhealthy proselytizing. This practice will help the different religious communities to engage in mutual education and interactions to help dispel unfounded myths about each other and refocus the desire to proselytize the other."

skills that will enable people to try and reconcile amicably. This also needs maturity, prudence and patience on the part of both Christians and Muslims.

5.7.1.4 Implementing Forgiveness Education in Nigeria: Christian and Islamic Teachings

The desire by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to live in peace and unity despite the multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition remains an ideal and priority for the progress and development of the country. On account of this effort by Christians and Muslims to achieve the goal of unity and peaceful co-existence, the Nigerian's National Policy on Education emphasizes and encourages a sense of unity and religious tolerance between Christians and Muslims so that peace and harmony in Nigeria could be maintained.

Thus, the educational curriculum at the primary school level in Nigeria is composed of ten basic compulsory subjects that will aid the child in the formation process, to develop his learning abilities. The second level of the curriculum targets communication, reasoning and intellectual growth; human physical development and spiritual development. And so, "by applying these skills, students are not only expected to construct their knowledge of the subject matter but also to establish confidence and positive attitudes toward the subject matter."[189] It is hoped that through religious instructions in the curriculum, unity and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria may be realized. This therefore necessitates the thorough examination of the implementation of some basic principles of unity and peaceful co-existence from a religious point of view in the curriculum. It then implies that the approach of implementing the principles of forgiveness and reconciliation in Nigeria will not just be for the purpose of knowledge, but also make positive change of behaviours and attitudes among Christians and Muslims.

Jesus Himself is the model of perfection in matters of forgiveness in Christian theology. He offered forgiveness on many occasions as a spiritual remedy to those who needed it. Two common examples are when He forgave the paralytic brought to Him, (Matt. 9:2-8, Mk. 2:2-12Lk, 5:17-26).

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[189]Adeneye O. A. Awofala and Oludola Sarah Sopekan, "Recent Curriculum Reforms in Primary and Secondary Schools in Nigeria in the new Millennium," *Journal of Education and Practice* 4, no.5, (January 2013): 102.

He also forgave the sinful woman her many sins, (Lk. 7:36-50). The climax and ultimate lesson on forgiveness from Jesus was on the Cross. His death was to attain reconciliation and forgiveness of the entire human race from God the Father. It is a forgiveness of sacrifice, where Jesus is the victim. Jesus' last prayer before his death was to ask for the forgiveness of His executioners (Lk 23:34). [190]

Forgiveness of an enemy is a difficult task. Jesus however set an example that it is possible. Christians should therefore learn from Jesus and seek no retaliation and non-violence to resolve any conflict or misunderstanding. Instead, Christians should apply a just means of resolving conflicts and misunderstanding. This must be emphasized by religious leaders and instructors in places of worship and places of learning. From a Christian perspective, forgiveness is rooted in the willingness to be sorry. It begins with one's resolution for reconciliation first with God, then with one's neighbour (brothers and sisters).[191] However, the authentic realization of God's forgiveness and reconciliations begins among human beings as stressed by Jesus.[192]

Since all human beings are in dire need of forgiveness either from God or fellow human beings, it is also reciprocal that they become people of forgiveness. In Islam, the principle of forgiveness as already indicated emanates from God. Just as God forgives humans their sins, He expects them to also forgive their fellow human beings. Muhammad in one of his prayers emphasized divine forgiveness to lead to perfect goodness.[193] Humans must seek forgiveness among themselves and it

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[190]Frederick Chukwuma Obodoagha, "Breaking Barriers that Divide Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and Building a Redemptive Relationship," (PhD diss., George Fox University, 2015), 2. In the light of the actions of Jesus on the cross, Frederick Chukwuma Obodoagha observes that "Christians do not have to behave like people with whom they disagree or follow their lifestyle. They can disagree with their actions and not cover their past. But they must not kill, persecute or harm them, for they have been commanded to forgive their tormentors."

[191]CCC. 1490. This in part is the position of the church when it lays down that for a genuine and authentic forgiveness or reconciliation with God to take place, "the movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future, and is nourished by hope in God's mercy."

[192]Matt 6:15. "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Obodoagha stresses this point, stating that: "Granting forgiveness to a person who has inflicted a wound makes sense only in the context of understanding how much the wounded person has been forgiven by God" (Obodoagha, "Breaking Barriers that Divide Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and Building a Redemptive Relationship," 2.)

[193]William E. Phipps, *Muhammad and Jesus: A Comparison of the Prophets and their Teachings* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 114. Thus, Phipps says that, "Muhammad was instructed to ask his people to pray for more than their own pardon: Implore God to forgive your sins and to forgive believing men and women. Phipps further affirms that: "The

should be granted to all who seek it with sincere and true disposition. Daji highlights that: "one of the key teachings in Islam is 'forgiveness'. Islam teaches that a true Muslim should forgive anyone who does him wrong, hence any Muslim who doesn't forgive his neighbor who wrong him isn't living to the expectations of Allah."[194] The Qur'an also demands Muslims should *practice forgiveness, command decency and avoid ignorant people.*[195] Not to be forgiven in Islam attracts the consequence of condemnation and punishment from God. However there is a significant problem of how some Islamic fundamentalists interpret and apply this passage of Qur'an towards the ignorant people (those they consider as infidels-non-believers). They are considered as pagans and enemies to Muslims.[196] There is a boundary of associating with such infidels and working out the process of reconciliation and forgiveness. This position will definitely pose challenges to interfaith dialogue in Nigeria where there are such people who are considered as infidels.

Furthermore, Muslims believe that in Islam forgiveness on moral grounds is entirely the action and responsibility of God; and He does not require any human intermediary. In this perspective, Hassan Hathout argues that: "An individual can ask God any time, any place for forgiveness directly; he or she needs no intermediary or intercession, for every person, male or female, has a direct line to their creator: whenever they cry for mercy and forgiveness, He responds and forgives."[197] Forgiveness in Islam remains within the authority of God and no human institution has the obligation to act for God in this regard. All that is required from humans is the desire for a sincere repentance, expressed in deeds.[198] This will also pose challenge to reconciliation and seeking for forgiveness among individuals.

Quran sets limit on forgiveness by excluding pagans who are Muslim's enemies. Believers should follow the example of Abraham who was allegedly said to those who opposed his family in his native town: We are through with you and all that you worship other than God. We reject you: hostility and hatred have come between you and us forever unless you believe in God only."

[194]Daji, "Preaching Peace and Living Peacefully in Northern Nigeria," 194-195.
[195]Qur'an 7:199.
[196]Phipps, *Muhammad and Jesus*, 114. See also quotation from Ecclesiastes 12:11-14, and Robert Gordis, *The The Wisdom of Koheleth* (London: East and West Library, 1950), 50.
[197]Hassan Hathout, *Reading the Muslim Mind* (Burr Ridge: American Trust Publications, 2002), 34.
[198]Ibid. Hathout however emphasizes that: "Our repentance should be sincere and serious, and if it resides in the heart, it should show in deeds. It would be a contradiction if someone stole my wallet and refused to return it, repeating

From the human point of view, for authentic forgiveness and reconciliation to take place, the following three characteristics must be displayed:

1.   **Acceptance of guilt and fault:** For a genuine and authentic forgiveness to occur there is a need for the offender to acknowledge and accept his/her guilt or fault. This simply means that he/she is quite conscious and aware of the fact that what he/she commits is wrong and offensive to the other party. In the Old Testament when atonement for sin is required, there is usually a guilt offering to make the atonement genuine.[199] Invariably, a true atonement for sins or offences can only be achieved by those who truly acknowledge the fact they have sinned and offended someone. For Mbachi, there is always "something about genuine repentance that produces genuine confession . . . whenever true confession takes place, there is a genuine release from the guilt. There is indeed, a real cleansing and resulting joy of being forgiven."[200] This can subsequently be seen in the light of reconciliation and forgiveness in human relationships. Here, the role of conscience must be placed as a measure of considering a true and sincere acceptance of guilt and fault; and the subsequent relief from the guilt after forgiveness.

2.   **Sincere and Genuine Contrition:** One must be sincerely sorry for what he/she has done in order to be forgiven. The offender needs the grace to be sorry, the hope of being forgiven and a way of making up.[201] The first aspect which is the act of being sorry is a very important process of seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. The act of being sorry must be expressed in a way that shows one is truly and sincerely sorry for what he/she has done wrong; which implies one really wants to be forgiven.

'Forgive me God' even a million times. Justice should first be done when a third party is involved."

[199]Carter, *The Forgiveness of Sins*, 40. Carter states that when "sin or guilt offerings are sacrificed for specific offences: here the language of forgiveness is used as the sacrifice prescribed for those who are aware of their sin and of their need for forgiveness for that offence."

[200]Mbachi, "The neurotic Christian: implications for Christian ministry in Nigeria," 163-164. "This is maximally appreciable in the life of one who not only have the sensation that God has forgiven him and goes ahead to forgive himself and subsequently be released from the awful weight of guilt that he has carried. For 'He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, he who confesses and forsakes them will have mercy'"

[201]Cf. Magsam, *The Theology and Practice of Love*, 205. "We can obtain the pardon for our sins in two ways. The first is by an act of perfect sorrow (see contrition), not any sorrow, but the sorrow that is inspired by the love of God for his own sake." (Virtue's Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Forgiveness of Sins"). The second is the sacramental confession. Our act of sorrow is also applicable to whoever we must have offended, and this must be out of love for the person.

3.   **Humility to repent and amend:** This is the willingness and readiness of one to express how truly repentant he/she is and the resolve not to repeat.[202] Thus remorse for human sins is not only limited to God but even those we offended in the community. Sean Fagan argues that, "for repentance to be genuine, therefore, it must be not merely a turning back to God, but a firm desire to be reconciled with the community . . . Reconciliation with the community is the outward sign of reconciliation with God."[203] Therefore, true repentance can only be demonstrated in sincere resolve to turn away from the offences of one's sins.

5.7.2 Peace Education: Its Relevance to Nigeria

The background to peace education as an agenda of the educational system goes back to the First World War (1914-1918); when the desire to include the aims and objectives of peace and reconciliation programmes was brought before the understanding of the world. This saw the co-operation of various national and non-governmental organizations to ensure it is implemented. As a result, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation came into existence. This was followed by the inauguration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) after the Second World War in 1946. In the history and development of peace education, a paradigm shift on 'creating the culture of peace' became more important.[204] The impact of peace education in South Africa will be used in the next section as an example for Nigeria.

The United Nations founded UNESCO as an organization that will oversee and plan, develop and implement the international policies of peace and security in the world's educational system. Agostino Casaroli states that, "the church, and the Holy See in particular, have always sensed that

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[202]Cf. Saint Philaret, "On humility and repentance," *Orthodox Tradition* 33 no. 1 (January 2016): 8. We need to be truly sorry for our sins; it is not enough to regret them. Freely and deliberately we must detest them above all other evils. This does mean that they cease to attract us. It does mean, however, that we intend to do all in our power to avoid them in the future and make reparation for the past, otherwise our repentance is false and does not merit forgiveness. (Virtue's Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Forgiveness of Sins").

[203]Sean Fagan, *Has Sin Changed?* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillian, 1978), 169.

[204]Vaughn M. John, "Peace Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Needs, Responses, and Constraints," *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 6 no. 1 (May 2018): 61. Vaughn M. John argues that: "This conception has been promoted by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and many peace institutes and university programs globally. In South Africa, the notion of a culture of peace stands in stark contrast to 'cultures of violence' deeply embedded in society."

the aims of UNESCO are congenial to her own."[205] The organization began its peace movement by intensifying efforts to end the threat of nuclear war and stop the arms race, as well as helping in the disarmament process among nations. Alongside with this was also the introduction of environmental protection in the peace education programmes in the 1990s to guard against terrorism; and also the awareness of the problems of the gap between developed and underdeveloped nations.

5.7.2.1 Peace Education in Nigeria

Peace Education, according to Hannah Okediji, is considered an interdisciplinary area of education. Its goal is teaching about peace and for peace. It also aims to assist students "acquire skills for non-violent conflicts resolution and to reinforce these skills for promotion of the values of peace."[206] It concerns the promotion of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are required for positive behavioural changes to take place in individuals to prevent violence and conflicts in general.[207]

A critical evaluation of current relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria shows that today more than ever before, peace education is needed in Nigeria.[208] This is why Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu argue about the necessity of peace education in the educational curriculum of Nigeria

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[205]Agostino Casaroli, "The Functions and Future of International Institutions," in *Catholic Social Though and the New World Order,* eds Oliver F. Williams and John W. Houck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 107.

[206]Hannah Okediji, "The Role of Education in Fostering Peace and Unity in Nigeria Between 1914 and 1938," *History Research* 5, no. 3 (July-Sep., 2015): 157

[207]Oluwatoyin Olusegun Olowo, "Effects of Integrating Peace Education in the Nigeria Education System," *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 18 (2016): 10. Owolo further explains that: "Going by UNICEF position, peace education has a place in all societies not only in countries undergoing armed conflict or emergencies. This is so because lasting behavior change in children and adults only occurs overtime, effective peace education is necessarily a long-term process, not a short- term intervention. While often based in schools and other learning environment, peace education should ideally involve the entire community. Education also concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for creating atmosphere of peace within the individual or for achieving inner peace."

[208]Paul C. Obidike, Kalu E. Uma and Hyacinth N. Aniagolu, "Peace Education in Nigeria: Imperative for Conflicts Resolution and Economic Recovery," *International Journal of Current Research* 8, Iss. 3 (March, 2016): 28772. Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu further stress that: "Indisputably, smooth economic activity in a country depends significantly on an environment devoid of conflicts, disagreements and sufficient responsiveness of the leaders to the welfare of the people. . . Prior to and after independence, conflicts of interests in diverse ways resulted to quagmire of problems that led to the destruction of lives, economic crops, bridges and other worth millions of naira, which have retarded the acceleration of economic development. It is easy to destroy than to build, and the positive developmental effect of destroyed resources cannot be realised. Consequently, conflicts slow down the needed development of an emerging economy."

for the future generation especially since it is very much underestimated over the years.[209] They emphasize that peace education is necessary in order to reduce or prevent violence and conflict in society. This demand has become mandatory not only in the formal educational structures, but parents and guardians also need to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills of peace education since they play a vital role in the informal peace education or what may be referred to as 'the hidden curriculum'.

The demand for peace is important in a society where wars and conflicts are endemic. From the Church's perspective, peace and the conditions necessary for peace have always been an important aspect of Catholic social teaching.[210] Similarly, there has been an increase in awareness of peace education that will lead to unity among people. Peace education is expected to be rooted first in the family and then in school programmes. This is because both the family and school have the strongest impact on children.[211] This makes it imperative for the government and religious leaders especially in Nigeria to make peace education more effective by providing the structure, materials and strategies of implementing the programme of peace education in Nigeria.

5.7.2.2 Impact and Prospect of Peace Education: The South African Experience

A research-based school programme on conflict resolution and inter-group relations was planned by Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). The ESR is an annex of Resolving Conflict Creatively Programme (RCCP) whose objective is making sure young people acquire and develop the necessary emotional and social skills that will enable them to build strong and healthy relationships and to avoid or reduce violence and prejudice. It is based in South Africa and it is

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[209]Ibid, 28774. They also emphasize that "It is necessary to reach every youth at whatever level with educational programme that is relevant to conflict resolution. This is possible through education and youth policy, school and training arena and social work activities involving the media, health care and socio-economic structure. It also necessitates sufficient empowerment of the youth through equipping them with personal, social and conflict management techniques, so as to develop critical judgment and participate actively and confidently in the society."

[210]Peter J. Henriot, "Who Care about Africa? Development Guidelines from the Church's Social Teaching," in *Catholic Social Though and the New World Order,* eds Oliver F. Williams and John W. Houck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 222. Henriot argues in this regard that, "the Popes and the Second Vatican Council have endorsed strongly the building of a world order in which peoples and nations could live in harmony."

[211]Cf. Katerina Dekanovská, "Education for Peace in Religiously Plural Societies," *Dialogue & Alliance* 28 no.1 (January 2014): 42.

considered as an agenda for peace education.[212] In order to ascertain its efficacy, research was conducted by Anne-Marie Maxwell in 2002. The research indicated a positive change in behaviour and attitudes by pre-school children that were exposed to peace education programme in South Africa. It proved that there is a reduction in aggressive attitudes and behaviours as a result of the peace education programme introduced in those schools in 2000.[213]

As the kids advanced in age and maturity, their qualities of behaviour became evident in the normal reduction in aggression associated with simple maturity in children over a period of perhaps seven months. The research also shows an improvement in pro-social behaviours and attitudes among the children. There were other reports that show the effectiveness of peace education programmes in South Africa.[214] Many educationists also noted the success of peace education and why it should be embraced in families, schools, and communities in South Africa. It is evident from the results of the research that children who are exposed to peace education behaved with less hostility in situations of conflict.

Within the context of religion, Swart and Yates noted that, "high levels of violence and crime in South Africa that are not only threatening children's quality of life, but their lives as such, are an added critical problem. Practical Theology can address this challenge by, among other things, guiding Christian churches and communities to focus on the modelling of, and schooling in, Christian values."[215]

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[212]Iganatius Swart and Hannelie Yates, "The Rights of Children: A New Agenda for Practical Theology in South Africa," *Religion & Theology* 13 no. 3 (April 2006): 316. Ignatius Swart and Hannelie Yates observe that because in South Africa "children are confronted daily by circumstances that are exceedingly complex and problematic, to such an extent that not only their quality of life but their lives themselves are under threat," as a result of conflict, the need to implement peace education in South Africa became of paramount importance."

[213]Anne-Marie Maxwell, Penny Enslin and Tudor Maxwell, "Educating for Peace in the Midst of Violence: A South African Experience," *Journal of Peace Education* 1, no.1 (March 2004): 102-105

[214]Ibid. Such reports include the 1993 report titled 'Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking among Youth,' prepared by the Centre for Conflict Resolution. It was commissioned by the Human Science Research Council who made most initiatives of the peace education in South Africa.

[215]Swart and Yates, The Rights of Children: A New Agenda for Practical Theology in South Africa," 333.

From the South African Studies and researches, it can be concluded that peace education will more likely enable students to resolve conflicts effectively and restore peace.[216] This is because peace education enables students to understand their world in a less hostile environment as their moral character will also be enhanced by the peace curriculum. It tends to "draw out of people their natural inclinations to live in peace. Peace educators educate people about the processes that promote peace, using teaching skills to build a peace culture. They are interested in all different aspects of violence from the interpersonal to the geopolitical. They see that education provides an important strategy to achieve peace."[217] This is a call to the government in Nigeria to devise the means and strategies of implementing peace education programmes in schools and other institutions of learning and instructions for the country.

5.7.2.3 Structure of Peace Education in Nigeria

Because of the focus on peace development and co-existence in Nigeria, the structure of peace education will be in three important dimensions: 1. Peacekeeping (Military), 2. Peace-making, and 3. Peacebuilding.[218] The concepts of peacekeeping, peace-making, and peacebuilding provide the vision of how peace and harmonious co-existence in Nigeria can be co-ordinated and implemented. For Sola Olorunda peacekeeping, peace-making and peacebuilding are the basic strategies for achieving peace. Elaborating more, he maintains that

> Peacekeeping generally involves police or military action and strives to achieve peace through strength and force. Peacemaking involves communication skills like conflict resolution and mediation strategies for interacting non-violently with

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[216]Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu, "Peace Education in Nigeria: Imperative for Conflicts Resolution and Economic Recovery," 28774. they affirm that the contributions of peace education and request it is essential in different aspects of society. According to them "change in people's behaviour is pursued in peace education while peace building includes both social and economic justice. They are both essential to actualize human right. It has been asserted that a good peace education enables people to think and reason constructively about events in a sub-structure or super structure which need be resolved and consequently develop constructive attitudes of living harmoniously in a community. Peace education has to be well structured and sustained."

[217]Isaiah Ekundayo Dada, "Interreligious Curriculum for Peace Education in Nigeria: A Praxeological Intervention for the Advanced Training of Religious Leaders," (PhD diss., Montreal university, 2016), 117. Dada also maintains that peace education is important "because it provides awareness about different peace strategies, including peacekeeping (or peace through strength), peacemaking (or peace through communication) and peacebuilding (or peace through a commitment to nonviolence)."

[218]These already appeared in previous discussions of the thesis, especially in chapter four, talking about the unity of Christians and Muslims in conflict resolution.

others. Both of these categories are reactive approaches that kick in after a violent incident has occurred. Peace-building is a more proactive approach that uses peace education as a means of creating a more stable and peaceful culture, thereby preventing violent incidents from occurring.[219]

Peace education therefore aims to create a general programme that will teach people how they can relate and interact with others in a peaceful manner. Peacekeeping, peace-making, and peacebuilding have the objectives of reducing conflicts and violence, as well as providing the techniques on maintaining peace. It is in this light that Chilaka Francis Chigozie and Odoh Samuel Ituma emphasize the necessity of collective effort in providing the machinery for creating and maintaining peace in the world.[220] Peace education is therefore required to provide the culture of peace and its sustainability in society.

5.7.2.4 Peacekeeping Programme: Its Relevance to Education

Peacekeeping is an active and operational concept that is applied to the process of resolving an on-going conflict situation in a country. It is to be understood as the "deployment of national and multinational forces for the purpose of helping to control and resolve an actual or potential armed conflict between or within a state."[221] According to Muritala Dauda, Mohammad Zaki Bin Ahmad and Mohammad Faisol Keling:

> Peacekeeping mission is not specifically mentioned in the Charter of the UN, the concept of peacekeeping was introduced to enhance Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which provides for the pacific settlement of disputes. Within ECOWAS, the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defense empowers member-states to intervene militarily when the security of a member is threatened.[222]

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[219]Sola Olorunda, "Peace Education for Sustainable Development in Southwest, Nigeria," entry posted June 25, 2018, under ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/.../325895133_Peace_Education_for_Sustainable_Develop... (accessed Aprils 15, 2019).

[220] Cf. Chilaka Francis Chigozie and Odoh Samuel Ituma, "Nigerian Peacekeeping Operations Revisited," *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, and management studies* 4, no.2 (January 2015): 2.

[221]Olaifa, "Curbing Violent Extremism Through Peacebuilding in Nigeria," 223. Furthermore, Olaifa states that peacekeeping "is primarily a military model of observing ceasefires and force separations after inter-state wars and one that incorporates a complex model of both military and civilian, working together to build and restore peace in a conflict torn region."

[222]Muritala Dauda, Mohammad Zaki Bin Ahmad and Mohammad Faisol Keling, "Nigeria's Role and its Peacekeeping Challenges i-n Africa: An Assessment," *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies* 2, iss. 3 (2017): 51.

Peacekeepers in the context of the above are meant to act as a "buffer zone between warring parties so as to prevent the resumption of armed combat and actually guarantee that efforts aimed at peace making, peace building and preventive diplomacy can proceed as envisaged. Peacekeepers are usually mandated to maintain neutrality and to use armed force to stave off direct attacks."[223] Since the inception of the peacekeeping mission, Nigeria has participated tremendously in its operations in many African countries around the world.[224] Despite a few challenges, Nigeria's involvement in the peacekeeping mission has been very successful. It is time for Nigeria to come back home and implement those policies and approaches employed during the peacekeeping missions in other countries, so as to achieve similar results. This is an urgent call and the consistency of ethno-religious conflicts in the country calls for this urgency.[225]

It is therefore expected that due to Nigeria's participation and experiences in peacekeeping missions and operations, the country will benefit and do better back home in curtailing and maintaining peace.[226] Peacekeeping is necessary in education so that it will highlight the laxity that makes peaceful co-existence inefficient in Nigeria and provide strategies that will enable Nigeria to forge

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[223]Agada John Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," (PhD diss., Walden University, 2018), 61. Elachi also comments that: "The United Nations has had occasion to deploy peacekeepers to stop one country from attacking the other or for humanitarian reasons such as preventing genocide or to protect food convoys meant for refugees of such conflict."

[224]Muritala Dauda, Mohammad Zaki Bin Ahmad and Mohammad Faisol Keling, "Nigeria's Role and its Peacekeeping Challenges in Africa: An Assessment," *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies* 2, iss. 3 (2017): 46. They note that "the Nigeria's role in the maintenance of peace and stability in the African continent is great due to its Afrocentric policy. Nigeria has taken part in a numerous peacekeeping and peace-making processes in the continent. In fact, the country's good largesse has cut across the African continent and beyond where the Nigerian peacekeepers had made the country proud in their efforts abroad when returning peace and stability back to the conflicts zones."

[225]Ibid. This at least is the position of Dauda, Bin and Keling who while expounding the Nigerian situation, recommend that there is the need for a focus on the country's role on peacekeeping in Africa. For them, "while Nigeria has been making series of sacrifices both length, breath, left, right and centre, committing huge resources (both human and material resources) towards its peace maintenance in the continents particularly the African region, its home / domestic has been faced with series of havocs. These domestic problems ranging from poverty, insecurity, unemployment, malnutrition, ethno-religious crises and many other more had drawn the attention of scholars on the needs for Nigeria to be more rational in its big brother roles in Africa."

[226]Chilaka Francis Chigozie and Odoh Samuel Ituma, "Nigerian Peacekeeping Operations Revisited," *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, and management studies* 4, no.2 (January 2015): 8. For them, this is necessary because any serious assessment of Nigeria's participation in the peacekeeping operation will reveal that the country is yet to reap the benefit of her contributions due to some problems. Such as the lack of effective organization to coordinate peace keeping operations, prevent improper accounting and make effective use of reimbursements. Until these issues are properly addressed, Nigerian peacekeepers will continue to suffer. They further observe that "despite these laudable contributions, the country's contributions has not been formally incorporated and given a more focused expression by Nigeria's official voice on the foreign scene, principally by the President and key officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs."

ahead in developing peace and security.[227] It is one thing to provide the military strategies to curtail peace, it is yet another thing for these strategies to be understood and appreciated by those warring parties so that peace can be achieved among them. Education plays a central role in this regard.

5.7.2.5 Peace-making Programme: Its Relevance to Education

In order to have a clear understanding of the concept of peace-making, it is important to examine Elachi's perception and explanation on the subject matter. According to Elachi; "peacemaking is primarily concerned with ensuring the cessation of hostilities and the actual implementation of peace accords."[228] Following this conception, peace-making can be seen as a procedure of applying the principles of peace to resolve conflicts and crises so that peace can be restored and maintained. The activity of peace-making is possible in situations where no matter the gravity of conflict situations, the condition for peace to be achieved is yet guaranteed. Since peace-making involves *prima facie*, "the application of peace maintenance to the cease-fire situation, with appropriate rewards for compliance and sanction for non-abidance with the agreements or decisions. It not only reinenforces the cease-fire, it build upon it the conditions for a stable peace."[229]

Peace-making involves some levels of commitment in discussing existing tensions and hostilities between peoples or parties or communities. Its success "relies on the tools of creative problem solving such as 'genuine communication, effective listening, step-by step problem solving and shared decisions about actions'. Individuals and the wider society also employ peacemaking."[230] It is indeed a daily affair of people. Consequently, it involves the application of certain factors of human existence, namely internationally agreed standards of 'fairness, justice, equality, respect, non-discrimination, tolerance and love.[231]

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[227]Ibid.
[228]Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," 60.
[229]Chigozie and Ituma, "Nigerian Peacekeeping Operations Revisited," 4.
[230]Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," 60-61.
[231]Cf. Ibid, 60. Furthermore, "Durable peace results when parties to a conflict feel that their concerns or sensitive issues are adequately addressed in a fair and equitable way."

Peace education therefore becomes the necessary tool in implementing the practice of peace strategies by individuals and society. It is among other things a "deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace making skills in homes, school and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instrument of socialization."[232] Peace-making is implicitly an agenda that every individual must be involved in so that people can achieve peace and cordial relationships, hoping that with such efforts and collaborations Christians and Muslims can live in peace and harmony in Nigeria.[233]

5.7.2.6 Peacebuilding Programme: Its Relevance to Education

Peacebuilding is central to both peacekeeping and peace-making. It pertains to the prevention of conflicts and the creation of sustainable peace as it seeks to address the root causes or the potential causes of violence so as to nurture and sustain the desire for peaceful conflict resolution, and help stabilize the society both politically, socially and economically.[234] In peacebuilding, there is always the effort to improve the feature of peace among people and to ensure that conflicts and misunderstandings do not disrupt the existence of this peace. It is to be seen as an important and viable means of

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[232]Dada, "Interreligious Curriculum for Peace Education in Nigeria: A Praxeological Intervention for the Advanced Training of Religious Leaders," 123. Enaigbe Patrick and Igbinoghene Nicholas, "Challenges of Managing and Planning Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria," *African Research Review* 10, no. 4, Serial no. 43 (September, 2016): 85. It is in this light that Isaiah Ekundayo Dada further maintain that "peacemaking: from Practice to Theory, offers and engages the voices of peacemakers in their experiences and personal stories, providing a depth of understanding that shape peacemaking's choices and tenacity."

[233]Omotosho, "Managing Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: The Inter-Religious Mediation Peace Strategy," 141. This idea is akin to Omotosho's conviction that peacemaking is undoubtedly "a key objective on the agenda of the federal government [of Nigeria] and other relevant non-governmental organisations…There are significant numbers of international and local faith-based organisations operating in Nigeria, and they are making impressive move towards peace and reconciliation among the divergent religious groupings in the country."

[234]Benjamin Chuka Osisioma, "Conflict Management and Peace Building in Nigeria: Finding the Common Ground," (Presented at the NIM South-East Zonal Summit Held at Akanu Ibiam International Conference Centre, Abakaliki, September 6, 2016, 7). Osisioma again affirms that "peace building covers a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society, at the community, national and international levels, to address the root causes of violence and ensure civilians have freedom from fear, freedom from want and freedom from humiliation before, during and after violent conflict." Furthermore, Chilaka Francis Chigozie and Odoh Samuel Ituma also point out that peacebuilding is concerned with the prospects of peace. They decipher that "Peace Building is a situation of low conflict with high prospects for peace. It is related to peace maintenance, however, is specifically concerned with establishing the institutional foundations and ideological bases for peace. This involves the socio-economic and political restructuring of the domestic society and justice within the system of international relations" (Chilaka Francis Chigozie and Odoh Samuel Ituma, "Nigerian Peacekeeping Operations Revisited," *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, and management studies* 4, no.2 (January 2015):4).

> Preventing the possible outbreak of armed conflict. It is also a way of guarding against its reoccurrence, continuation and other emergencies in political development, humanitarian and human rights mechanism. The above definition, therefore, implies that the process of peacebuilding involves both pre-conflict and post-conflict stages.[235]

Peacebuilding is therefore structured on factors and principles that will ensure the existence of peace and give way to progress and development in society.[236] From the perspective of, Eme Okechukwu Innocent and Martin Ifeanyi, in Africa peacebuilding strategy serves "as a more practical and sustainable way of avoiding wars in the continent. Peace-building is in consonance with its infrastructure and is a more sustainable approach to ensuring regional peace and stability and, therefore ensuring development for the peoples of Africa."[237] Elachi further elaborates that peace building concerns laying foundations for peace in a society that has been devastated by conflict and violence, and allowing them build up the necessary factors that warrant peace and unity, so that progress and development of the various structures of society can be achieved.[238]

One of the strategies of peacebuilding is to be able to create behavioural changes in people's attitudes towards the culture of non-violence. Peace education therefore serves as the means to inculcate these changes. [239] To realise this objective, especially within the Nigerian context, a lot of efforts and commitments are required from government, religious and civil leaders, institutions and

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[235]Agada John Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," 62

[236]Benjamin Chuka Osisioma, "Conflict Management and Peace Building in Nigeria: Finding the Common Ground," Presented at the NIM South-East Zonal Summit Held at Akanu Ibiam International Conference Centre, Abakaliki, September 6, 2016, 8. For Osisioma "Peace building can [also] come in form of direct effort that focusses intentionally on the factors driving or mitigating conflict, in an attempt to reduce structural or direct violence. Alternatively, it may refer to efforts to coordinate a multi-level, multi-sectoral strategy that includes the funding and proper communication and coordination mechanisms between humanitarian assistance, development, governance, security, justice and other sectors within the polity."

[237]Eme, Okechukwu Innocent and Martin Ifeanyi, "The Role of Nigeria in Promoting Preventative Diplomacy in Africa: (1999 – 2008)," *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* 2 (2011): 279.

[238]Cf. Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," 62. Elachi says that it is "against this backdrop, the peacebuilding process recruits actors from all levels of society. The domain of peacebuilding is "quite complex and diverse" and has generated controversies based on methodology."

[239]Paul C. Obidike, Kalu E. Uma and Hyacinth N. Aniagolu, "Peace Education in Nigeria: Imperative for Conflicts Resolution and Economic Recovery," *International Journal of Current Research* 8, Iss. 3 (March, 2016): 28774. In conjunction with this idea of inculcating changes of behaviours to non-violence through peace education, Paul C. Obidike, Kalu E. Uma and Hyacinth N. Aniagolu state clearly that "change in people's behaviour is pursued in peace education while peace building includes both social and economic justice. They are both essential to actualize human right. It has been asserted that a good peace education enables people to think and reason constructively about events in a sub-structure or super structure which need be resolved and consequently develop constructive attitudes of living harmoniously in a community."

the general public. There is a need to focus on discouraging practices that perpetuate conflicts and violence. Attention should rather be given to those societal "norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, laws, institutions and policies that foster social justice and sustainable peace. . . Peacebuilding makes a radical departure from the old dictum that recommends that if you want peace, prepare for war to the new notion that says if you want peace prepare for peace."[240] Christians and Muslims in the country must remain true to what they profess.

5.7.2.7 Implementing Peace Education in Nigeria

The implementation of peace education is an important aspect of the structure and strategies of peace education. This is because the effectiveness of peace education is achievable and thereby considered successful through its implementation. To implement peace education in Nigeria therefore, some factors must be considered. It is from this perspective that Aisha Ahmed Hamman focuses on the provision of the curriculum of peace education that will include the formal classroom teacher's activities within the school curriculum. In Hamman's view; "To achieve the goals of peace education through the conscious classroom teacher directed work, the integrative approach to Peace Education instruction and Element of Peace Education are integrated into all learning subjects and implemented bearing in mind the eight keys to promoting a culture of peace as well as the basic elements of Peace Education."[241] In this regard, it is important that teachers should be well equipped in peace education strategies and principles/approaches.

The main process of implementing peace education is through the academic institutions (school based environment). This should also put into consideration the age limit and level of understanding of the students. Appropriately, secondary school level should be the focus for the purpose of perspective understanding. In putting into consideration this idea, Ekpoh Uduak Imo

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[240]Elachi, "Exploring Peace Education for Consensual Peace Building in Nigeria," 63. Elachi further states that the ultimate aim of peacebuilding; "is to enhance political discourse and also set new standards of social justice that ensure the promotion of human rights as envisaged by the United Nations."

[241]Aisha Ahmed Hamman, "Inclusion of Peace Education in Teacher Education Programme Curriculum: Tool for Promoting Peace and Unity in Nigeria," *Interdisciplinary Journal of African & Asian Studies* 1, no. 3 (2017): 3. Hamman reiterates that: "The integration occurs at the levels of content, instructional methods and material. While developing and presenting the learning content of any subject of study, the teacher endeavours to identify and highlight any item or idea that is related to the basic element of peace education."

highlights that peace education should be introduced into the school curriculum as the core subject so that the culture of peace and the relevance of education in this regard can be built. Since the first approach to peace education is to school-plan the curriculum, it gives priority to teacher-student relationships and learning ability. Consequently, a teacher education programme becomes imperative because it will help in bringing back peace and unity in the society.[242]

It is therefore recommended that attention should be given to teachers' training on peace education as well as the best way this can be impacted effectively on their students. Hamman therefore further recommends that:

> There should be training and establishment of peace support groups in schools. The management should try to encourage the students to be interested and committed to the peace education that can be integrated through effective participation in extra-curricular activities like games, clubs and societies, religious groups, involvement of students in the school decision-making process, students-teachers forum, students representatives council; all which enhance students' commitment, active participation and interest in peace education.[243]

The demand for establishing peace in the Nigerian society is a universal one and so it should be an indispensable component of our educational system in the country. Here due consideration needs to be given to teacher training institutes.[244] This too will help in areas of sowing the seeds of conflict resolution in the society.[245] Many would need to be involved in the implementation, namely the home, religious institutions, culture, the government and indeed every individual in society. The implication is that while peace education extends to all the structures of the society, the contents

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[242]Ekpoh Uduak Imo, Assessing the Institutionalization of Peace Education and Peace Culture at Post Primary School Level in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Education and Research* 3, no. 7 (July 2015): 181. Imo further states that the programme should involve extra-curricular activities that will foster and instil peace values. According to Imo: "Appropriate pedagogical training such as role play and inquiry method should be organized for secondary school teachers. This will help the teachers to be adequately prepared to inculcate the concept of peace education and peace culture in the student."

[243]Hamman, "Inclusion of Peace Education in Teacher Education Programme Curriculum: Tool for Promoting Peace and Unity in Nigeria," 4.

[244]Ibid, 5. Hamman further notes that "the effective delivery of Peace Education at all levels, teacher Education programmes in particular will go a long way in bringing back peace as well as creating a peace literate society. The teachers' role in this regard cannot be overemphasised."

[245]Lilian-Rita I. Akudolu and Doris Chinyere Umenyi, "Institutionalizing culture of peace in basic education through appropriate curriculum implementation," *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 8, no. 1 (2016): 20. Akudolu and Umenyi insist that it should cover areas of "formal and non-formal curriculum implementation at the Pre-Basic, Basic and Post-Basic education levels. This will institutionalize culture of peace not only in Basic Education but in the society."

and forms might however be based on individual contextual situation and reality.[246] From the family basis, the home must develop interest in the concepts and principles of peace. This is where the hidden curriculum is required.[247] The involvement of the home in peace education is also a major responsibility of parents and guardians. This implies that parents and guardians must be interested in peace education and all that concern the promotion of peace in society because "the family is another most important institution that can easily influence children's concepts of hate and love."[248] Without the interest and involvement of parents and guardians, it will be difficult to implement peace education effectively and successfully. Outside the home, the primary school is the next stage for implementing peace education, since it is the foundation of school learning; and provides the basis of peace knowledge. Paul Nwakpa however observes that this has not been effective in Nigeria so far even with the presence of religious studies in the curriculum.[249]

From the religious point of view, Christians and Muslims in Nigeria can collectively enhance the implementation of peace education by promoting the "virtues ethics" which their religions teach. Looking at the reality from the Christian viewpoint, Kenneth Omeje contends that "these important virtue ethics needed for the wholesomeness of the individual can be derived from the biblical teachings of Jesus Christ which emphasize virtues such as love, kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, hospitality, patience, generosity, servant-oriented leadership, selflessness and forbearance."[250] From the Islamic perspective, Abdullahi Shuaib notes that "Qur'an 5:2 and 60:8-9 teach that the basis of mankind interaction and relationship must be righteousness and piety-driven to '…Help

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[246]Dada, "Interreligious Curriculum for Peace Education in Nigeria: A Praxeological Intervention for the Advanced Training of Religious Leaders," 115. According to Dada: "Groups and individuals both project onto the concept of peace education their own particular vision of a desirable society. The meaning of peace education is therefore often ambiguous and shares different elements making a broad descriptive overview of the discipline impossible."

[247]John Heywood, *Instructional and Curriculum Leadership: Towards Inquiry Oriented Schools* (Dublin: Original Writing Ltd, 2008), 298. The hidden curriculum according John Heywood concerns "all the learning that takes place outside of the formal learning in the classroom-room, in the institution, and more generally in society at large."

[248]Enaigbe and Igbinoghene, "Challenges of Managing and Planning Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria," 89. Enaigbe and Igbinoghene opine "that a cooperative learning environment, conflict management initiative, the constructive use of controversy, and establishment of resolution dispute centers in the family and schools will enhance a constructive relationship which will ultimate help prepare children to live in a peaceful world."

[249]Cf. Paul Nwakpa, "Planning and Implementation of Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria Education System for Peace Building In Nigeria," *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science* 3, iss. 7 (2015): 31

[250]Kenneth Omeje, "Strengthening Peace Research and Peace Education in African Universities," *African Sociological Review* 19, no. 1 (2015): 20.

one another in righteousness and piety…' as well as compassion and kindness respectively."[251]

Christians and Muslims must therefore use any avenue within their reach to ensure peace education is well established in Nigeria.

Finally, we must consider the role of the government in the implementation of the peace education curriculum. Since it is generally the responsibility of government to co-ordinate the affairs and activities of society, it must put in place the necessary structures and hence facilitate the implantation of the peace education curriculum through the ministry of education. This is because;

> Whether private or public schools, primary or secondary, the government is the only authorized agent that produces the curriculum for these schools through the ministry of education. Thus the implementation strategy addresses primarily the ministries of education, which is vested with the responsibility for primary and secondary education at national level in Nigeria.[252]

Since the ministry of education is charged with the responsibility of giving priority to implementing peace education in Nigeria due to its urgency, Government must therefore commit to the whole project of peace education by training teachers on peace strategies. Government should also aim at the promotion and encouragement of parents/guardians and the general society in peace activities. They should also ensure that religion is used as an instrument of peace and unity in the country.

5.7.2.8 The Challenges to Peace Education in Nigeria

The implementation of peace education in Nigeria has been very difficult over the years. The following may be considered as the challenges to peace education in Nigeria:

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[251]Abdullahi Shuaib, "Towards Achieving Ethno-Religious Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria," (Paper presented at the First Annual International Conference on Ethnic and Religious Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, New York City, October 1, 2014). "As for such (of the non-Muslims) as do not fight against you on account of (your) faith, and neither drive you forth from your homelands, God does not forbid you to show them kindness and to behave towards them with full equity: for verily, God loves those who act with fairness. God only forbids you to turn in friendship towards such as fight against you because of (your) faith, and drive you out from your homelands, or aid (others) in driving you out: and as for those (from among you) who turn toward them in friendship, it is they, who are truly wrongdoers!"

[252]S. D. Edinyang, V. N. Effiom and I. E. Ubi, "Strategies for Implementing Human Rights Education in Nigeria," *Global Journal of Educational Research* 12, (2013): 28. "Ministries of education are thus the principal actors. The implementation strategy of human rights education in the school system in Nigeria aside the institutions/agencies deal with."

i.   Enforcement and non-acceptance of peace education by policy makers and government. There is the inability to adopt and enforce peace education despite the fact that its values on children are appreciated.[253] This aspect needs to be looked into by government and policy makers in Nigeria.

ii.   Lack of adequate knowledge on peace education as well as teaching its aims and objectives. This highlights the fact that teachers of peace education are ill equipped and this makes the whole venture of peace education more difficult.[254] It is pertinent that a more general approach be given by society to have interest on peace education in Nigeria.

iii.   There is also a lack of proper and comprehensive peace education curriculum(s) on the challenges of peace in Nigeria.[255] There is a need therefore to bring the curriculum development on peace education to the secondary school level in the Nigerian context. This will be more cognitive and efficient based on the level of understanding of the children as well as the basis of formation in peace and conflict resolutions. This is necessary to achieve the objectives of peace education.

iv.   There is a lack of financial support for peace education as there is no solid commitment to finance and promote peace education in Nigeria.[256] It is ironic that investment are made in other

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[253]Enaigbe and Igbinoghene, "Challenges of Managing and Planning Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria," 89. Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu, "Peace Education in Nigeria: Imperative for Conflicts Resolution and Economic Recovery," 28775. This is further confirmed by Enaigbe and Igbinoghen who pointed out that peace education is ineffective in Nigeria because of "Lack of political will to adopt it as part of the education policy despite the increasing appreciation of its positive impact on the psycho social behaviour of children who have already benefited from the programme."

[254]Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu, "Peace Education in Nigeria: Imperative for Conflicts Resolution and Economic Recovery," 28775. Obidike, Uma and Aniagolu highlight on this point and affirm that: "Peace issue in Nigeria is somehow left to the politicians and theoreticians while the advocates of peace, that is the teachers, are ill equipped and not properly motivated to carry on the role of enlightenment and education of the populace on the need to pursue conflict resolution without violence"

[255]Omeje, "Strengthening Peace Research and Peace Education in African Universities," 28.This point has been highlighted by Omeje at the university level with emphasis on the African continent. According to him, for efficient peace education programme; "A more constructive and dynamic stakeholder-centred curriculum development and review model that is at the same time consultative, inclusive, participatory and integrative has to be embraced at the university level…Such a framework model should be designed to bring together key stakeholders in university peace education programmes to brainstorming workshops aimed at (re-)crafting training curricula in a way that they will enjoy African authenticity and conflict-sensitivity. Inclusive stakeholder workshops of this nature are not only necessary for developing new peace education programmes but also for reviewing existing programmes and ensuring both their content validity and context relevance on a periodic basis (e.g. five-yearly)."

[256]Hamman, "Inclusion of Peace Education in Teacher Education Programme Curriculum: Tool for Promoting Peace and Unity in Nigeria," 4. This is emphasized by Hamman. She highlights that: "Adequate funding should be provided since peace education is a new concept in the school curriculum. Adequate funds should be provided to make

aspects of development in Nigeria without investing much on education, particularly peace education that provides the atmosphere for the general development of the country.

v.   There is also the reluctance of parents and guardians to encourage children to get involved in activities and programmes that will promote peace education in Nigeria.[257] The important role of the family can never be underestimated given that it is the "number one informal school for educating the citizens on the virtues of peace."[258] The relevance of the hidden curriculum is applicable in this area of parents and guardians involvement and interest in peace education implementation. Apart from the roles of family and parents, the larger community too has a role to play in the implementation of peace education.[259]

There is nothing to contradict the assumption that peace education has been fruitful in so many parts of the world due to the co-operation and support of so many movements and international organizations around the world, such as the United Nations (UNESCO). As such, Nigeria must make relentless efforts to ensure peace education becomes effective among its citizens. [260] All hands must be on deck in the effort to implement peace education in Nigeria.

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available necessary instructional facilities, qualified teachers and public enlightenment of peace education in the school. Learners' support services should be provided in the school system."

[257]Enaigbe and Igbinoghene, "Challenges of Managing and Planning Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria," 89. Enaigbe and Igbinoghene note that, "parents and guardians are often reluctant to support their children and wards to actively participate in peace education programme and activities. Socialization begins at home and nurtured by the school . . . besides the school the family is another most important institution that influences children's concepts of hate and love."

[258]Umaru A. Pate and Sharafa Dauda, "Cross Cultural Communications, Peace Education and Development in Nigeria," *The Online Journal of Communication and Media* 1, Issue 1 (January 2015): 15. Furthermore, Pate and Dauda opine that: "But the question is: to what extent is the family institution undertaking its responsibilities in the present day Nigeria? How hospitable is the environment of the family and the larger society toward peace building in the country? Evidently, the family can be a very useful platform for strengthening the process of cross cultural communications especially noting that many Nigerian settings are multicultural and heterogeneous."

[259]Ibid. According to Pate and Dauda, "the community provides an enlarged setting for the mainstreaming of peace education as the solid foundation for societal peace building in the country. Communities, be them physical or psychological are bound to be diverse on the basis of ideology, ethnicity, religion, economic status, political affiliations, social standing, etc. A culture of peace interacts with other determinants of social perception and action to promote peace building in the community."

[260]Ibid. In this regard, Pate and Dauda highlight that "Apart from the school system and possibly the family setting, there are other institutions that play critical roles in the informal education of the individual in Nigeria. Few among these are peer groups, religious institutions, the mass media, civil society, work places and similar platforms that provide effective and relaxed avenues for the inculcation of peace education in the society."

5.7.2.9 The Ways Forward for Peace Education in Nigeria

The prospects and effectiveness of peace education provides the foundation to seek a way forward to effective peace education in Nigeria. Thus, peace education contributes immensely to the provision of genuine peace between individuals and among nations.[261]

i.   Poverty is a major challenge of developing countries (including Nigeria). This has an encompassing effect that cuts across all aspects of human existence, education included. It does have a considerable effect on peaceful co-existence.[262] If there is a way forward towards effective peace education in Nigeria, the living conditions and welfare of the people must be put into consideration. Many have claimed that poverty has been among the factors responsible for the insurgences in Nigeria, particularly the '*Boko Haram*'.[263] Here, the Nigerian government must rise to its responsibility of controlling the rate of poverty in society by focusing on what causes it.

ii.   Another important point for the way forward concerns the application of the teachings of Christianity and Islam in society. In order to implement the principles of peace education, Christians and Muslims must consider their traditional foundations and teachings on peace. Both Christians and Muslims have common beliefs in their sacred scripture as the source of their religious practices and teachings.

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[261]Ursula King, "Religious education and peace: an overview and response," *British Journal of Religious Education* 29, no. 1 (January 2007): 122. Peace education according to Ursula King, "depends on what is understood by both peace as well as education. The nature of war and violence have changed in the contemporary world, and it is not enough to work only for the abolition of war-violence, strife and hatred of the other(s) have to be addressed in all their ramifications."

[262]Gabriel Terwase Ngbea and Hilary Chukwuka Achunike, "Poverty in Northern Nigeria," Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies 2, iss. 2 (April 2014): 267. Describing the situation, Gabriel Terwase Ngbea and Hilary Chukwuka Achunike note that "poverty has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods: hunger and malnutrition, ill health, limited or lack of access to education and other basic services, increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments, social discriminations and exclusion." For them it also "characterized by a lack of participation in decision and in civil, social and cultural life."

[263]Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo, "Political Elites and the Rise of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria," in Terrorism and Political Violence, January 8, 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/deref/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.tandfonline.com%2Floi%2Ftpv20 (accessed April 15, 2019). This in part forms the opinion of Wisdom Oghosa Iyekekpolo as he affirms that "studies on the Boko Haram insurgency onset have largely emphasized economic poverty, religious ideology, and the historical north-south identity fractionalization. Studies which focus on Nigerian politics as the cause of the Boko Haram insurgency have largely analyzed how corrupt politicians have caused economic poverty and inequality which have resulted in grievances in northern Nigeria."

From the Christian point of view, the response to violence is to follow the legacy of Jesus who was a peaceful Messiah and called all his followers to live in peace with all people as one family. Thus for Christians, the search for peace comes from the understanding that all human beings are children of one Father who is God, and that he demands Christians to always work for peace.[264]

The Qur'an and the Hadith are the sources and models of teachings on peace in Islam. Islam from its original meaning is understood as the *path to peace* (cf. Qur'an 5:16), and submission to this path as the essential of Islamic belief. Since Allah is the source of Islam, His nature and attributes convey the meaning of peace which Islam stands for. Muhammed is also regarded as the Prophet of peace through his acts of peace and mercy towards humankind as recorded in the Hadith (Hadith 21: 107). The understanding of these concepts enables Muslims to seek how to collaborate for world peace.

It is from this background that the need for Christians and Muslims to focus on peace education becomes necessary. The invitation for Christians is that of a "deep faith commitment that reaches out to the other in love, even in the face of opposition, conflict, and violence. [Such invitation preaches] peace, reconciliation, harmony and a sincere willingness to engage with people of other religious traditions."[265] Muslims are also called to make a consistent effort on how to implement the principles of their teachings on peace and harmony, especially in the African continent.[266]

Just as Christians are called to bear witness to their faith through practices that will promote harmony, Muslims are also called upon to seek for the means to work for a just and lasting peace in society. Education is therefore needed on both sides for all this to be achieved. Thus peace education plays an important role among Christians and Muslims working for peace in the world. Nigeria must seek to implement this in the peace agenda and educational curriculum of the nation.

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[264]In Matt 5:9, Jesus presents the reward for peace-making when he says in the gospel that "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

[265]Umaru, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Northern Nigeria*, 153.

[266]Cf. Jibril Aminu, "Towards a Strategy for Education and Development in Africa," in *Islam in Africa: Proceedings of the Islam in Africa Conference*, eds. Nura Alkali et al (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993), 93.

Peace education is to be considered as an endeavour that can easily provide much positive impact on society.[267]

Hamman and Nwakpa provide some proposals of developing peace education. While Hamman refers to these prospects as "conditions"[268], Nwakpa calls them "requirements".[269] Whatever the nomenclature employed, these prospects seem consistent with what can foster the implementation and promotion of peace education. It is from this backdrop that I wish to adopt and recommend four practices as important to peace education.

i. Practicing positive behaviours: this entails being kind to other children. It can be done within the child's immediate environment. It is after the child knows how to be kind to those around him/her that he/she can extend such kind acts to a stranger or those outside.

ii. Preventing bullying among children: Children should be taught and cautioned on the negative impacts of bullying in society. They should use words that are kind and friendly among them. Children should also be informed on how to stand against any bullying actions from anyone else.

iii. Involvement in activities of care and support: children should be encouraged to render services of hospitality and generosity. This will bring to their awareness the different talents in the

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[267]Okediji, "The Role of Education in Fostering Peace and Unity in Nigeria," 164.This explains why Okediji emphasizes that "peace educations are taught in the school lessons to involve relevance to the immediate environment empowering individuals to achieve a just society in which all human rights of every citizen is valued and respected. This is in line with the Nigerian education philosophy and objectives."

[268]Hamman, "Inclusion of Peace Education in Teacher Education Programme Curriculum: Tool for Promoting Peace and Unity in Nigeria," 3. 1. Respect all life, respecting the right and dignity of each human being. 2. Non-violence rejection of violence, obtaining just by convincing and understanding. 3. Sharing developing attitude and skills for living together in harmony, putting an end to exclusion and aggression. 4. Listening to understand, giving everyone a chance to learn and share through the free flow of information. 5. Preservation of the planet, making sure that progress and development are good for everyone and for the environment. 6. Tolerance and solidarity, appreciating that people are different and that everyone has something to contribute to the community. 7. Equality of men and women, ensuring an equal place for men and women in building the society. 8. Democracy, making decisions by having your say and giving others theirs.

[269]Nwakpa, "Planning and Implementation of Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria Education System for Peace Building in Nigeria," 29. 1. To inculcate in children the spirit of peaceful coexistence in the society. 2. To inculcate the spirit of loving one another as on loves himself. 3. To inculcate the spirit of forgiving one another. 4. To inculcate the spirit of cooperation 5. To inculcate the spirit of self-control and self-discipline 6. To inculcate the spirit of obedience 7. To inculcate the spirit of oneness. 8. To inculcate the spirit of tolerance.

world and how to use them humbly for the common good. They should be taught how to love one another no matter their differences and to always support one another.

iv.	Children should also be taught the strategies for resolving their differences and misunderstanding among them. They should know how to compromise for the sake of peace and never use violence or retaliation in the process. This can lead them to have a good understanding of conflict resolution.

5.7.3 Interpersonal Communication and Relationships

As an important theme in interfaith dialogue, interpersonal communication is the channel through which effective interactions and expressions of ideas and information are carried out. According to Virginia Hamilton, this form of communication

> Involves face-to-face meetings between two participants. I have excluded any communication which I would call 'mediated', such as telephone conversation, where some artificial medium carries the conversation between the participants. This is because any medium has particular characteristics which can have implications for communication. In everyday life, we may not be aware of these characteristics or may not consider them. As a result misunderstanding can occur.[270]

On the other hand, Anthonia u. Ejifugha describes interpersonal relationships as "the social link between two or more persons. Most often this link is based on the emotion of love or liking. Man is naturally attracted to companionship with fellow man either same sex or opposite sex. The desire to develop interpersonal relationship is intrinsic in man it commences with the birth of a new born baby by a parent. This is described as birth bonding."[271] Therefore we stick to Hamilton's and Ejifugha's concepts of interpersonal communication and relationships respectfully for the purpose of education and Christian/Muslim co-existence in Nigeria.

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[270]Virginia Hamilton, *Interpersonal Communication Competence* (San Diego: Cognella, Inc. 2014), 4.

[271]Anthonia u. Ejifugha, "Teaching and learning of Social Skills In Schools: Implications to Social Health," (Being a paper presented at the 1st International biennial Conference on Teaching and Learning held at the Federal College of Education Technical, Omoku Rivers State Nigeria, September 5-8, 2011). Birth bonding according to Ejifugha "is a call for interpersonal relationship between mother and child or between father and child. This takes the form of visual, tactile or voice bounding. These are conscious processes that take place between a parent and a child, for the purpose of developing interpersonal relationship. It is naturally initiated by a parent."

Language plays an important role in interpersonal communication and relationships, because language is the medium through which individuals understand themselves in interpersonal communication.[272] It is because of the central role language plays in interpersonal communication that we should also take into consideration the appropriate language medium for understanding each other that will create effective interfaith dialogue. Children must be educated in this regard to improve their interpersonal relationships because interpersonal communication involves complex social processes.[273] A number of key features are hereby put forward; namely the forming of the content of communication, the composition of message, the encoding of message and signal transmission, reception decoding, and interpretation by the receiver.

The natural characteristics of communication as well as scientific advancement and technology are all meant to improve human relationships through interpersonal communication. The aim is to be able to understand one another. Therefore, when Christians and Muslims seek to live together in peace and to interact through dialogue, the principle of interpersonal communication should be applied always.

5.7.3.1 A Religious Consideration for Interpersonal Communication and Relationships: Implications for Christian and Muslim Dialogue in Nigeria

Interpersonal communication and relationships are also an important aspect of religion. This is because interpersonal communication and relationships enable individuals to understand one another on the basis of religious beliefs, and to collaborate for the common good. Boniface

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[272]Tatiana Slama Cazacu, *Dialogue in Children* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1977), 29. Tatiana Slama Cazacu argues that: "The criterion for establishing if in an expression through *language* the function of communication plays the principal role is defined by the PURPOSE the expression serves (namely, the communication of a psychic state) and by the intention of the one expressing himself (to address someone, to communicate material for reflection-an idea, an affectionate state, an order, etc)." Patience Achakpa-Ikyo Ngunan and Regina Ogaba-Egba also illustrate that language is important to interpersonal communication and relationships because it gives meaning and enable people to understanding themselves much better. They posit that: "Communication is essential to the human race as oxygen is to all creatures; without communication, humanity would be extinct; it is the bane of our existence because it is the means by which we pass across thoughts, emotions and deeds in a language/manner that is meant to be understood from one person to another" (Patience Achakpa-Ikyo Ngunan and Regina Ogaba-Egba, "Digital Divide: A Gap in Interpersonal Communication Amongst Nigerian Family Relationship," GSTF Journal on Media & Communications (JMC) 3, no.1 (August 2016): 16).
[273]Cf. Owen Hargie, *Skilled Interpersonal Communication: Research, Theory and* Practice (New York: Routledge, 2017), 5-6

Obiefuna and Amara Uzoigwe put forward the notion that religion is central to human existence; therefore religion also co-ordinates human relationships.[274] This explains why interpersonal communication and relationships are required in religious collaboration and interreligious dialogue. Furthermore, interpersonal communication and relationships play a central role in the foundations and development of many religious beliefs and traditions. In Christian tradition especially, most of the beliefs and doctrines emerged within the context of human interactions and relationship. For instance, in interpersonal communication, vocabulary and grammar are used within linguistic context. Timothe James Crutcher states that if this so in language communication, then it is also the same "for theology and the symbolic or linguistic communication of sacraments. Even religious language must ultimately be grounded in this relational core of humanity, and not immediately in some one-to-one correspondence with ultimate reality-whatever that may be."[275]

The creation narrative in Genesis is a reflection of God's act of communication. The fall of man as well as redemption is also within the context of communication. From this perspective, theologically speaking, human creation, as well as human salvation are both actions of God's communication with humanity, and an important theological implication of interpersonal communication.[276]

In Islam, God is involved in communication as seen in the concept of the *Risāla* which, according to Islamic scholars, is the channel of communication between Allah and mankind. [277] For Islam, God's communication with human beings is the goal of human existence and salvation. In other

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[274]Cf. Boniface Obiefuna and Amara Uzoigwe, "Studying Religion for Sustainable Development in Nigeria," *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 13, no. 1 (2012): 133.

[275]Timothe James Crutcher, "Personally Speaking: Reflections on Relational Thinking for the Ecumenical Sacramentological Dialogue," *Questions liturgiques* 81 no. 3 (April 2000): 218. Crutcher maintains, "of course, these relational 'impulses' which ground language must find some expression in order to be communicated, but language itself neither arises out of nothing nor is given wholesale from the heavens."

[276]The language in Genesis 1:26 "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness," implies the action of interpersonal communication that God was involved in a conversation.

[277]Sarwar, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings*, 26. Ghulam Sarwar, further gives the narrative that within the context of the *Risāla* Allah has been able to communicate with mankind and thus provides "man with guidance to follow the right course and so make this world a happy and peaceful place to live in. There will be a great reward in the life after death for those who follow this guidance."

words, God did not just create human beings only to abandon them on their own. He communicated with humanity about how they can be happy in this world, and at last in heaven.

Christian and Islamic traditions both acknowledge that human Salvation is also an action of God's communication with humanity. All through scripture, God communicated his salvation through human instruments, the patriarchs and the prophets. For Christians, Christ is the ultimate communicator of God's salvation to be understood within the context of the mystery of the incarnation. This same Christ in himself acted within the framework of human communication to bring about God's salvation. He proclaimed the kingdom of God through his preaching. He was well involved in interpersonal communication throughout his ministry. In these teachings and ministries of Christ, many linguistic features manifested. He made use of different figures of speech like metaphors, allegories, and most of the time, he demonstrated his messages with parables. And for Muslims, Sarwar affirms that "since the beginning of creation, Allah has sent His guidance for mankind through His selected people. These chosen people are called prophets or messengers. They asked the people of their time to obey and worship Allah alone. They taught, guided and trained the people to follow the way of Allah."[278] From this theological background, Christians and Muslims may be able to see a common point where interpersonal communication is also necessary and important in interfaith dialogue.

There is a need to seek interpersonal communication to promote effective interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims. One of the goals of interfaith dialogue is to promote unity and good relationships among the various religions of the world. Through this medium, Christians and Muslims can have the best experience of each other. Judith Simmer-Brown highlights that;

> Listening to them, respecting and suspending judgment about them. . . (Christians and Muslims) generated a pilgrimage of integration and healing that has been pivotal in their educational journeys. While they are, of course, concerned about the ways they may be excluded or targeted because of their own religious beliefs or spiritual practices, they recognize the exclusivist and the prejudiced voices

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[278]Ibid

within themselves. Hearing them, they are able to begin the work of embracing and liberating these fragmented identities, and of opening freshly to others.[279]

Thus, as Christians and Muslims interact through dialogue, they create the opportunity to discuss and explain their faith and beliefs more clearly. They then have better knowledge of each other's beliefs and in so doing; they can seek and promote good governance and the common good of society.[280] These areas of common good sometimes pose challenges for both Christians and Muslims in society. They are challenges which should however "prompt cooperative efforts to protect life wherever threatened, and to promote freedom, peace, justice and equality in the spirit outlined in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World."[281] Interfaith dialogue will create an enabling environment for Christians and Muslims to interact and exchange ideas with the use of interpersonal communication, and consequently tackle these challenges. Christian and Muslim understanding of God's justice should therefore shape their relationship across all frontiers.[282]

5.7.3.2 Interpersonal Communication and Relationships as an Aspect of Education in Nigeria

Communication provides the necessary support for and strengthens the process of the growth and development of a relationship. It is with this that the importance of interpersonal communication and relationships can be considered an important agenda of educational curriculum and interreligious dialogue in Nigeria. Through this, children can be taught the basic skills of human interpersonal communication which covers aspects such as self-expression and clarity of speech,

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[279]Judith Simmer-Brown, "Listening Dangerously: Dialogue Training as Contemplative Pedagogy," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 33 (January 2013): 39.

[280]Robert Conrad, "Points of Tension: Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 19 no. 2 (April 1992): 113. This also involves addressing issues of human rights and social justice. Within this backdrop, Robert Conrad argues that "if Christians and Muslims together can agree to carry out the provisions of the Nigerian constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; . . . if Christians can witness to the gospel without demeaning Islam; and if Christians can live their faith as responsible citizens, there may be greater peace, justice, and stability in Nigeria. It is the will of God that the people God has created live together in a peaceful and just society whether in Nigeria" or anywhere in the world.

[281]Maurice Borrmans, "The Doctrinal Basis Common to Christians and Muslims and Different Areas of Convergence in Action," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 14 no 1 (January 1977): 32.

[282]Agang, "Breaking Nigeria's fatal deadlock: Christians and Muslims will find peace if they work together for justice," 50. For Christians especially, Sunday Agang emphasizes that "The church's understanding of God's justice should shape its relationship with the rest of the world, particularly other faiths that do not share its perspectives. God is just because he brings justice to unjust men and women and makes them right. His justice is a saving justice (Ps. 31:2; 146:7). Through this justice, God creates peace-a shalom that lasts."

listening and understanding, good use of language and respect for one another.[283] Learning these skills can also foster interfaith dialogue among young people who are readily available targets for religious bigotry. Ahmad Aliyu Deba, Mohd Khata Jabor, Yahya Buntat and Aede Hatib Musta'mal highlight the importance of interpersonal skills in communication and relationships. They assert that:

> The skills of interpersonal relation is about building work-mutual relationships needed to achieve an outcome within a workgroup, or achieve goals through team based collaborations. It involves the capacity to understand others and build rapport, which in turn involves understanding one's own values, goals, expectations and emotions, and making choices about regulating one's own behaviour, taking the needs of others, and the often implicit following the social set of rule of the job place framework into account.[284]

For all these to take place, effective communication skills are required by individuals to get involved in the dialogue processes. Education should be able to build self-confidence and enable students to comport and express themselves clearly. It builds more trust and conviction with one another in a spirit of love and sincerity. Through such formation, students will be able to communicate and interact with one another in friendship and openness. Interpersonal communication also focuses on developing language techniques that will create effective interaction and communication among students. This includes politeness in speech, avoidance of aggressive or provocative speech, and respect for each other's thoughts and opinions. All these have some implications on the style of communication and the manner in which people express themselves and communicate their feelings and opinions with one another. This can take different forms.

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[283]Ngunan and Ogaba-Egba, "Digital Divide: A Gap in Interpersonal Communication Amongst Nigerian Family Relationship," 16. The importance of communication cannot be overemphasized. Ngunan and Ogaba-Egba contend from this perspective that "communication is at the heart of all social intercourse. It maintains and animates life. It is the motor and expression of social activity and civilization. It leads people from instinct to inspiration through variegated processes and systems of inquiry, command and controls; it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feelings of togetherness through exchanges of messages and translates thought into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humblest task of human survival to supreme manifestations of creativity or destruction."

[284]Ahmad Aliyu Deba, Mohd Khata Jabor, Yahya Buntat and Aede Hatib Musta'mal, "Potential of Service-Learning on Students' Interpersonal Skills Development in Technical and Vocational Education," *Asian Social Science* 10, no. 21 (October 2014): 3.

i.   Assertive Communication style: This is a style of communication where individuals present their feelings and opinions very clearly with firm conviction in order to seek their needs or rights without infringing on the rights of other people.[285] Assertive communicators are very respectful to others and value themselves in their capacity, with the proper use of their time, emotion, physical and spiritual disposition.

ii.   Passive communication style: This is a style in which people avoid expressing feelings or opinions in order to identify or meet their needs and protect their rights. This communication style renders knowledge one-sided and thus lifeless and petrified.[286] From a general perspective, individuals on this level or style of communication do not respond when hurt or offended, and allow annoyances and grievances to accumulate unconsciously. They however feel remorseful, confused, ashamed or guilty in the end.

iii.   Aggressive communication style: This is a violent way of communication where individuals express their opinions or feelings against the rights of others in order to demand their own rights or needs. [287] Aggressive communicators usually try to dominate and control others, and are also intolerant. They often see themselves as superior and others as inferior and are always bossy, pushy and intimidating.

iv.   Passive-aggressive communication style: This is a dual face of communication where individuals seem passive from the exterior, but subtly or indirectly act violently and are resentful

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[285]Akinwale Ayotunde Samuel and C. A. Okotoni, "Assessment of Principals' Communication Styles and Administrative Impact on Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Advanced Research and Publications* 2, iss. 1 (January 2018): 44. Being assertive Akinwale Ayotunde Samuel and C. A. Okotoni, implies "being able to stand up for your own or other people's rights in a calm and positive way without being either aggressive or passively accepting 'wrong". Assertiveness means standing up for your personal rights - expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways."

[286]Joseph Agofure Idogho, "Learning for Transformation: Empowering the Nigerian Child through Drama," *Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts* 6, no. 1-2 (2017): 188. This type of approach in education observes Joseph Agofure Idogho posits makes the student to be "experientially alienated from reality and understands it as a static phenomenon that can be compartmentalized and memorized."

[287]Orebiyi Anthony Olajide and Orebiyi Taiwo Philip, "Communication Styles and Collective Bargaining In Kogi State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies* 4, no. 1 (January-February 2017): 3. Orebiyi Anthony Olajide and Orebiyi Taiwo Philip further explain that "aggressive communication style is when individuals express their feelings, opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Consequently aggressive communication style displays verbal and/or physical abuse."

behind the scenes.[288] Passive-aggressive communicators often feel incapable of handling situations or problems directly and therefore express themselves in the way that undermines their object.

Students need to be aware of these various styles, and what is good and bad about them. All these form the fundamentals of the curriculum on good communication that can lead to effective dialogue among children.

5.7.3.3 Developing Friendship through Interpersonal Communication in Nigeria

Communication has been identified as an aid to good relationships. This unit is a recommendation towards education that can enhance Christian/Muslim relationships in Nigeria. The effort will be to highlight the characteristics of good friendship that can be promoted through communication between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. They include qualities such as honesty/truthfulness, respect, trust and loyalty. These are aimed at promoting intimacy and love among friends.[289] It is therefore mandatory for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to utilize these good qualities to ensure good relationships between their adherents.

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[288]Cf. A. O. Oniye, L. A. Yahaya, A. A. Odebode, and E. E. Alade, "Communication styles and sexual behaviours as predictors of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria," *African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 9 (December 2016): 15. They further state that: "This is a combination of styles; passive-aggressive couple avoids direct confrontation (passive) but attempts to get what they need even through manipulation (aggressive). This style of communication often leads to family politics and suspicions. It tends to result in a win-lose situation."

[289]David Imhonopi, "Management and Human Values in Nigeria: A Theoretical Approach," *International Journal of Development and Management Review* 8, no. 1 (June 2013): 277. David Imhonopi affirms from a Christian point of view; that these are among the qualities that strengthen the bond of relationship between managers and their workers. Imhonopi contend that, "without the human values of love, mutual respect, integrity, honesty, loyalty, commitment, friendship, compassion, egalitarianism, equal opportunity and fairness in place, inter alia, and managers' wrong perception of workers, managers will resort to underhand and unethical practices in a bid to outdo, outclass and out-profit their subordinates and even the organisation." Asif Olatubosun Azeez and Sherifat Tanimowo Adeshina also point out that Islamic code of conduct provides the basis of relationships among Muslims. These codes of conduct according to them are either positive and negative. The Positive codes of conduct are deeds which Muslims are expected to practice in their relationships and daily encounters. "They include truthfulness, goodness to parents, patience, generosity, forgiveness, loyalty, justice, good relationship with others, equality, cleanliness, orderliness, sincerity, punctuality, responsibility, time consciousness, decency, humility, kindness, obedience, brotherhood etc. While the negative ones forbidden for Muslims are greediness, stubbornness, drinking intoxicants, theft, prostitution, fornication and adultery, rudeness, injustice, arrogance etc." (Asif Olatubosun Azeez and Sherifat Tanimowo Adeshina, "Islamic Studies in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects," International Journal of Humanities and Social Science 3, no. 2 (January 2013): 180).

5.7.3.4 Honesty and Truthfulness as Moral Values: Respect, Trust, Loyalty Indispensable Characteristics of Relationships

Honesty and truth are very essential in human relationships. These virtues lie primarily in the ability of people to be sincere and transparent in their relationships with one another within the community. Honesty and truth also help to build trust and confidence in people living together. They also lead to justice and transparency among individuals in society. These two concepts will be used in the same context in this unit. Thus, Kehinde E. Obasola clearly highlights the significance of honesty and truth as reputable virtues. Obasola asserts that:

> These are two words used interchangeably and both mean the same thing. It behoves us as citizens of this nation to cultivate both virtues. As far as these moral virtues are concerned, people should realize the need for them to have a reputation for both virtues. Truthfulness connotes a state of reality or factualness. Truthfulness exalts a nation. Honesty is manifested in trustworthiness, truthfulness, sincerity, integrity and fairness. It means the absence of deceit and untruthfulness.[290]

The virtues of honesty and truth have some moral implications which Christians and Muslims in Nigeria must advocate and promote in human relationships.

Borrowing a leaf from the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church on truth as a virtue, the Christian viewpoint on truthfulness tells us that the virtue "consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation and hypocrisy."[291] Looking at truthfulness from this perspective tells us that Christians are invited to be upright in their relationships by applying the virtues of truth and honesty in everything. Such virtues, according to Veronica C. Agunwa Teresina, should also be inculcated in the formation process of children, especially in early childhood.[292]

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[290]Kehinde E. Obasola, "A Critical Analysis of the Role of Moral Values as a Catalyst for Social and Political Development among People in Nigeria," *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 3, no. 1 (February 2015): 6

[291]CCC. 2468.

[292]Veronica C. Agunwa Teresina, "Peace And Unity In The Family," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 1, no.5 (2013): 142. Early childhood is a crucial period in the formation of children and so Teresina believes that "they learn and are encouraged to live virtuously. All parents want their children to be upright, honest, kind and helpful to others and will spare no pain to instill these qualities."

From a general perspective, Kamal-deen Olawale Sulaiman and Margaret Yemisi Ojo emphatically expound on the religious teaching and position on honesty. They assert that:

> Religion teaches honesty to all and sundry. Honesty is manifested in trustworthiness, truthfulness, sincerity and fairness. Also, it is the absence of deceitfulness and untruthfulness. In a country where honesty does not reign, it is crystal clear that there can never be unity among affected ethnic groups. This is because cheating, misappropriation and embezzlement are acts of dishonesty. An honest person is found to be faithful in taking care of what belongs to other people or the nation.[293]

This suggests that the lack of truthfulness (honesty) in human relationships is to be understood as a moral evil. For the Christian, the lack of truthfulness also contravenes the eighth commandment.[294] Honesty and truth therefore encourage fidelity which complements faithfulness in friendships. Christians are therefore to see to it that they are faithful in relationships.[295]

Honesty and truth are also special moral virtues in Islam that determine one's condition and position as a Muslim. Without these two virtues, one cannot consider himself/herself as a true Muslim. The Qur'an says: "O you who have believed fear Allah and be with those who are true."[296] Consequently, Olufadi Lanre Abdul Malik and Abudllahi Saadullahi Hamad highlight that Islamic education should aim at inculcating positive character that will express acts of honesty and truthfulness. According to them, "The purpose of Islamic education is not to cram the pupil's head

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[293]Sulaiman and Ojo, "Imperatives of Socio-Religious Measures in Solving the Crisis in Nigeria," 29-30. Sulaiman and Ojo reiterate that "in Nigerian politics the manifestations of dishonesty include falsehood during electioneering campaign, rigging in elections, inflating census figures, overestimating of contract prices, misuse of public funds, and other forms of corruption."

[294]CCC. 2464. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church "the eighth commandment forbids misrepresenting the truth in our relations with others. This moral prescription flows from the vocation of the holy people to bear witness to their God who is the truth and wills the truth. Offences against the truth express by word or deed a refusal to commit oneself to moral uprightness: they are fundamental infidelities to God and, in this sense, they undermine the foundation of the covenant."

[295]D.A. Falade, "Christian Religious Knowlegde and the Teaching of Moral Values in the Nigeria Junior Secondary Schools: Problems and Prospects," *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 9, no. 2 (December 2014-February 2015): 150. It is from this angle that D.A. Falade advocates the story of Ananias and Saphira in Acts of the Apostles as something Christians should watch against unfaithfulness. Thus, Falade says: "Students are to learn this story and bring out the moral lessons which include: danger of unfaithfulness, repercussion of lying and the need for truthfulness." In true friendships, all dishonesty, insincerity and untruthfulness should be eliminated.

[296]Qur'an 9:119.

with facts but to prepare them for a life of purity and sincerity. This total commitment to character-building based on the ideals of Islamic ethics is the highest goal of Islamic education."[297]

Character formation in Islam is of supreme importance and is meant to build a sense of integrity of truth and sincerity in Muslims. Muslims have to be honest and truthful to themselves as well as to others with whom they relate.[298] The virtues of honesty and truth are therefore required to be practiced and taught by Muslims in order to foster relationships. Teachers of the Islamic faith are themselves required to practice what they teach.[299] Thus, a true Islamic society is one that nurtures the spirit of honesty and ensures the practice of truthfulness among its members.

In every human relationship, respect, trust and loyalty are the characteristics of authentic friendship. There is interconnection between these three concepts of respect, trust and loyalty so that it is difficult for any to exist without the others. Respect paves a way for trust and loyalty and likewise, trust provides the basis for respect and loyalty in a relationship. Loyalty on its part increases the respect and trust in a relationship. This is why they are greatly required to improve the quality of relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Since these characteristics are indispensable in a real and authentic relationship, they must be encouraged and promoted in Nigeria. It becomes the responsibility of Christianity and Islam to ensure that these qualities are implanted among their adherents so that there will be quality relationships among people. This would imply taking further steps of action towards interreligious dialogue in the spirit of building mutual relationships.

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[297]Olufadi Lanre Abdul Malik and Abudllahi Saadullahi Hamad, "The Impact of Mosque in Development of Islamic Education in Nigeria," *MyJurnal* 2, no. 1 (2014): 95.

[298]Lateef Oluwole Abbas and Moshood Olaniyi Busari, "Universalising the Concept of Identity with Islamic Theological Perspective," Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies 6, no. 1 (2016): 63. It is from this premise that one's moral identity is structured in Islam. Thus, Lateef Oluwole Abbas & Moshood Olaniyi Busari assert that "a person is said to have a moral identity if the moral values and norms like fairness, honesty and kindness in him or her are more central to his or her identity when compared to other values." Islam as such upholds Muslims to always avoid lies as against truthfulness and honesty.

[299]Malik and Hamad, "The Impact of Mosque in Development of Islamic Education in Nigeria," 96. From the teaching and professional perspective in relationship, Abdul Malik and Hamad emphasize "Muslim teacher to have moral values and professional knowledge and to be able to actualize these in daily life routines. They must be honest and sincere, and cultivate 'faith in absolute values such as justice, mercy, truth, charity, love and righteousness, all of which are enshrined in the names of God'."

Akanji recommends for Nigerian Christians an approach of hospitality towards Muslims. Such hospitality will provide the relational tie that will enable Christians and Muslims to embrace themselves as brothers and sisters, members of one family.[300] Islam on the other hand seeks that her members engage more in dialogue with Christians for a cordial relationship. Such dialogue according to Sulaiman is expected to be effective and should provide mutual friendship between Christians and Muslims in the common search for the truth.[301] In so doing, the point of view of adherents of other religions especially Christianity, will be respected and appreciated.

5.8 A Paradigm[302] Shift of Change/Conversion in Nigeria: Parable of the Prodigal Son

The concept of a paradigm was first identified by the American physicist and philosopher Thomas Samuel Kuhn (1922–1996). He implored the term "to underscore the dependence of scientific research upon concrete examples that bridge what would otherwise be gaps in the specification of the content and application of scientific theories."[303] Therefore, a paradigm may be considered as a basic change in the concepts and experimental practices of scientific procedures and discipline.[304] The

[300]Akanji, "Towards a Theology of Conflict Transformation: A Study of Religious Conflict in Contemporary Nigerian Society,"319. According to Akanji, "the theology of hospitality is therefore suggested as a gradual, practical and, in my view, effective method of transforming relationships between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria since it operates as spirituality and strategy."

[301]Sulaiman, "Sustaining the Mutual Co-existence between Muslims and Christians through Interreligious Dialogue in Yoruba South Western Nigeria," 3. Sulaiman further states that such dialogue "is a means by which people discover one another and discover the hopes and peaceful aspirations that too often lie hidden in their hearts. It is a central and essential element of ethical thinking among people, and an indispensable tool for the recognition of the truth."

[302]Brand V., "Empirical Business Ethics Research and Paradigm Analysis," *Journal of Business Ethics* 86, iss. 4 (June 2009): 432. According to Brand V., "The term 'paradigm' is widely used to describe the ultimate framework within which a piece of research is located, but there is no complete agreement amongst commentators as to what paradigms are available to underpin social research, and different typologies exist. Descriptions of paradigms invariably rely, to a greater or lesser extent, upon what might be called their 'components': contrasting ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs."

[303]Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (Chicago: University Press, 1977), 284. Consequently, it "functions by permitting the replication of examples any one of which could in principle serve to replicate it. In a science, on the other hand, a paradigm is rarely an object for replication. Instead, like an accepted judicial decision in the common law, it is an object for further articulation and specification under new or more stringent conditions." Emrys Westacott explains that a paradigm theory is a general theory that helps to provide scientists working in a particular field with their broad theoretical framework–what Kuhn calls their "conceptual scheme." It provides them with their basic assumptions, their key concepts, and their methodology. It gives their research its general direction and goals. And it represents an exemplary model of good science within a particular discipline. (What Is a Paradigm Shift?: A very common phrase: but what, exactly does it mean?," Thought co., entry posted August 4, 2017, https://www.thoughtco.com › Humanities › Philosophy › Theories & Ideas (accessed December 7, 2017).

[304]Turkan Firinci Orman, "'Paradigm' as a Central Concept in Thomas Kuhn's Thought." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, no. 10, (October 2016): 51. Turkan Firinci Orman further posits that a paradigm can

change in the experimental or theoretical concepts leads to the next level of consideration in the paradigm theory. This is where the concept of a 'paradigm shift' comes to focus.

A 'paradigm shift' happens when a theory of paradigm is being replaced by another.[305] However, before a paradigm shift occurs, Fenwick W. English argues that scientists operate on individual theory of the paradigm, until a consensus is reached or a particular theory is agreed upon.[306] A paradigm shift can simply be referred to as a change or alteration from the former theory and principle to an established new approach or a different and significant process of doing things. What changes during a 'paradigm shift' are theoretical views of those working in the field of a particular subject or theory.

A sample theological example can be applied here with the parable of the prodigal son (or the parable of the two brothers as Jerome Biblical Commentary [JBC] puts it). The parable emphasizes the change in the forms of relationships between the father and the younger son, from a normal relationship to a distant relationship and then a more dignified and intimate relationship.[307]

In the Nigerian context, the parable calls for a serious re-ordering of the priorities of the relationship between Christians and Muslims. From the contributions of the various chapters of the thesis, a paradigm shift on Christian/Muslim relationships in Nigeria will represent a change in attitudes and behaviours of conflicts and competition for unity and love of one another. It goes

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be considered as "a specific theoretical orientation, based on a particular epistemology and research methodology, reflective of a particular scientific community at a particular time in history. It also frames and directs the nature of the type of research inquiries generated from that theoretical orientation, as well as provides the fundamental basis for evaluating the results of the generated research."

[305]Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 94. In Kuhn's perspective, "when paradigms enter, as they must, into a debate about paradigm choice, their role is necessarily circular. Each group uses its own paradigm to argue in that paradigm's defence."

[306]Fenwick W. English, "What Paradigm Shift: An Interrogation of Kuhn's Idea of Normalcy in the Research Practice of Educational Administration," *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 4, no.1 (January 2001): 31. English says that: "Change in theories occurs rarely because of purely theoretical inadequacies. The history of science is littered with jealousies and passions dictating what scientists do, just as one would expect to find in any other field of human endeavour."

[307]Olubiyi Adeniyi Adewale, "Re-examining the Message of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the Light of its Context," *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 57. Cited from the work of S. C. Barton, "Parables on God's love and forgiveness", in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables*, ed. R. N. Longenecker, (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2000), 214. Olubiyi Adeniyi Adewale puts it in the words of S. C. Barton that the parable of the prodigal son "has to do with the reordering of one's priorities and practices in a way appropriate to the coming of God in mercy and justice."

from the conventional dialogue process of coming together to interact and discuss, to an educational level where interfaith dialogue becomes an agenda for education in Nigeria.

Education is the key to unravel all that lies behind the misunderstandings and conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Education is also the mainstream of a critical and more rational understanding of Christian-Muslim relationships and applications of the principles of interreligious dialogue. This will be more relevant in the theology of change and conversion to be discussed subsequently.

5.8.1 Synthesis and Application of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32 in Paradigm Shift

In order for the new paradigm to have relevance to this thesis, it will be placed within a theological discourse and context. This will be discussed within the framework of biblical exegesis, and the appropriate scriptural passage is Luke 15:11-32, (the parable of the prodigal son) where Jesus depicts the misery of sin and the joy/celebration of reconciliation and forgiveness. The younger Son's terrible condition in a distant country is the symbol of the misery of sin and being cut off from the love of the Father. His return and reception by the Father represent the attitude of change and conversion of the sinner.[308]

This return of the younger son in the parable eventually becomes a source of joy and celebration for both parties, namely the sinner (younger son) and God (the Father and his entire household, those who recognize the values of being in the presence of God). The elder Son's attitude to the celebration of his brother's return appears indifferent and self-centred.

It is the attitude of the younger brother that forms the basis of the paradigm shift. Thus, the movement of the sinner from the presence of God and his return, and his subsequent conversion demonstrate a shift in a paradigm from negative relationships and attitudes between Christians and

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[308]Brown, Raymond Edward, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, *The Gospel according to Luke 119:11-32*, The New Jerome Biblical Commentary (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), 148. Jerome Biblical Commentary describes the situation of the younger son's return thus; "The remembrance of his father's goodness revives hope and compunction. The father first seeks the lost son by the memory he has instilled; he is seeking the boy before the lad thinks to return."

Muslims to a more positive development and friendly approaches to one another. The parable of the prodigal son is chosen because it is illustrative of the demands in the Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria. As the younger son realized his miserable condition and responded in view of making a better life with his father; so also Christians and Muslims in Nigeria should respond adequately to the principles of positive change in order to better the condition of their relationships.

5.8.2 Characteristics of the Three Personalities in the Light of the Thesis

There are three main characters that stand out in the parable, namely the father, the elder son, and the younger son. The characteristics of these three individuals in the parable synthesize the new paradigm and the educational curriculum which will encourage interfaith dialogue. Furthermore, the parable succinctly identifies the father as the loving and merciful God. The elder son is referred to as the obedient and faithful servant, while the younger brother is the repentant sinner.[309] This thesis however is not concerned with the theological identity of these characters, but with their implications to interfaith dialogue and the Christian-Muslim relationship in Nigeria.

a)   Characteristics of the Father in Interfaith Dialogue

The image of the father in the parable of the prodigal son can also be seen in the context of the Second Vatican Council. It was the Second Vatican Council that set the objectives of interfaith dialogue for the Catholic Church, and provides its principles and theology. *Nostra Aetate* opens the door of dialogue with other religions in order to unite the human race despite religious variations. It wishes the different religions of the world to be united and to live in peace and harmony. Consequently, this same character of the father in the parable is exhibited through the contributions of the Popes, Pontifical Councils and theologians.

The Catholic Bishops and local theologians/scholars in Nigeria also imitated the character of the father to unite and reconcile Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. All those working to promote the

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[309]Pablo Polischuk, "A Metacognitive Perspective on Internal Dialogue and Rhetoric: Derived from the Prodigal Son's Parable," *Journal of Psychology and theology* 43 no. 1, (March 2015): 61. Pablo Polischuk argues that: "Most interpreters agree that the well-known parable stands as a superb example of God's boundless mercy, unilateral love, and exuberant joy manifested toward his undeserving, lost children. The encompassing love of the 'prodigal father' for both children is exemplified in the parable."

course of dialogue and peaceful co-existence also reflect the character of the father. In the parable of the prodigal son, the unconditional and ever-abiding love of the Father is brought to the forefront as a just and merciful father. It is this unconditional love and continuous effort of the father that the Church and all those involved in the process of dialogue should imitate.[310]

b)   The Characteristics of the Elder Brother

The character of the elder son in interfaith dialogue represents all those who object to the principles and teachings of religious dialogue. They are basically all those who are responsible for the crisis and conflicts of religion. These characters do not see the need for religious dialogue and they do not see the need for Christians and Muslims to live together in peace. They have no respect for the dignity of the religions or beliefs of other people. Such characters may be identified with all religious extremists and fanatics. Religious bigotry and manipulation are also characteristics of the elder brother's character in interfaith dialogue. In the parable of the prodigal son, the elder brother exhibited reluctance and an ungrateful attitude towards the father's love for the younger brother. Similarly, the enemies of the principles and teachings of interfaith dialogue; and all those against the peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims do not cherish the good of other religions and the values of human respect and dignity.

c)   The Characteristics of the Younger Brother

The younger brother in interfaith dialogue represents the religions of the world, Christianity and Islam especially. Their need for dialogue and peaceful co-existence signifies the desire to change from negative attitudes of rivalries and conflicts to unity and harmonious living. This attitude demonstrates the readiness and yearning to return to the unconditional and everlasting love of the Father. Just as the younger brother in the parable of the prodigal son discovered his abnormal

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[310]Martyn Percy, "Generous Liberalism: A Search for our Spiritual Soul," *Modern Believing*, 56 no. 3 (January 2015): 262. Martyn Percy argues in this perspective that "the parable of the prodigal plays with our sense of justice. And the older son hates it. Because the message of the parable is this: the love of God is so complete as to be almost unjust - and certainly unfair. Indeed, the love of God might be a bit mad. You see, God loves people who don't deserve it. Not just the goody-goodies. He loves the lost; the hopeless; the squanderers and the reckless. God's love is mad; in human terms, at least."

condition of living and was ready to return to his father, so also did Christians and Muslims discover that their relationship is negative and there was a need to act. Polischuk argues that this transition (paradigm shift) of the younger brother happens in a process of dialogue within himself.[311] His willingness to return to his father serves as a model to inspire Christians and Muslims to talk and reconcile, and to live in peace with one another. As the parable ends with a sentiment of gladness, restoration and celebration;[312] so also is the objective of this thesis to provide means for reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria through interfaith dialogue and education.

In the light of the parable of the prodigal son, Benson O. Udezo and Emmanuel Ajakor emphasize that the parable is included in the biblical lessons of reconciliation and peace in the world. This is in connection with the biblical stories of Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers in the Old Testament.[313] It is from this perspective that the next section seeks to examine the best approach to reconciliation between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. I strongly recommend the need for true change and conversion among Christians and Muslims in order for authentic reconciliation, peace, progress, stability, unity and love to be realized in Nigeria.

5.8.3 A New Paradigm of Change/Conversion among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria

Change is a necessary factor for human development and relations. If there is to be effective dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, change is the first factor to be considered. Here, change implies taking a different positive lifestyle in attitudes and

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[311]Polischuk, "A Metacognitive Perspective on Internal Dialogue and Rhetoric," 67. Polischuk states that "the Prodigal could be described as a person "beside himself" as compared to his present insight, disposition, and choices. Thus, coming into himself denote a metacognitive perception of his own state, status, and predicament-a top-down, augmented elucidation that results in a cathartic experience and is mediated by means of the super-conscious exercise (i.e., an executive agent delving into his intrinsic considerations, musings, and deliberations). The outcast, rebellious, and sinful son came to repentance with regret and remorse. He was able to see himself in an objective, mindfully detached fashion and to engage in comparative dialogues and ruminations over his lost status and miserable experiences compared against the benefits experienced by those who remained in the father's house."

[312]Ibid, 61. Polischuk again tells us that in the parable of the prodigal son, "the older son's attitude is depicted to establish the basis for Jesus' contrasting, assertive, and validating account of the father's redeeming action toward the undeserving outcasts. The story ends with restoration, celebration, and gladness."

[313]Benson O. Udezo and Emmanuel Ajakor, "The Implications of Pauline Concept of Reconciliation for Rebranding Nigeria," *Journal of Religion and Human Relations* 1, no. 2 (2009): 236. For Udezo and Ajakor "these biblical examples point to the fact that reconciliation is an indispensable action that should be carried out in order to enthrone peace, progress, stability, unity and love between individuals and nations."

behaviour.[314] From a theological perspective, it simply means 'conversion', either of religious affiliation or religious conviction.[315] In the context of this work however, 'change' is employed to mean a change of behaviour and character. First I will examine the Christian and Muslim approaches to the concept of change/conversion in Nigeria.

1. Christian Perspective to Change/Conversion in Nigeria

From a Christian point of view, Benson Ohihon Igboin sees conversion as "a total and radical reorientation of one's Life to God (not religion), that one surrenders, not only oneself, but also one's unadmitted deepest pretence to absolute personal autonomy."[316] Such conversion enables one to be more positive in behaviour and act in a truly human nature; that is, being good, true, and noble in life. This can manifest itself in two different perspectives; active or passive conversions. With the former being an act of God while the latter the resultant effect of this divine act as reflected in the life of the convert.[317] The two are complementary. While God is at work in the process of one's conversion, it is expected that the result of such conversion should be reflected in one's life and in his/her relationship with other people in society. Therefore, Christian conversion must be productive, that is, it must be effective in good actions toward one's fellow human beings.[318]

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[314]Ngozi Iheanacho and Chidiebere Ughaerumba, "Identity and Religious Change: The Nigerian Experience," *Revista Ciências da Religião* 12 no. 1 (January 2014): 83. Ngozi Iheanacho and Chidiebere Ughaerumba opine that, "changes in behaviour are often associated with the acceptance of a new belief system that serves to justify and explain the new personal ethic that a person is developing or has developed."

[315]Walter Conn, *Christian Conversion: A Developmental Interpretation of Autonomy and Surrender* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 5. In Christian tradition, Walter Conn argues that, "conversion means a radical turning, or a redirection of one's life, the first word in each pair, emphasising repentance, specifies a turning *from* (sin), while the second indicates a turning *toward* (God)." A typical example of such experience in the New Testament was St. Paul's encounter on the road to Damascus. Through this experience, St. Paul discovered a new focus and dimension in his personality. The Damascus encounter was an experience that compelled Paul to have a turning point, a change in both dimensions from sin toward God. Conn therefore further argues that: "Christian conversion is essentially an *invitation* to a life not only dedicated to the love of neighbor but focused and empowered by the mysterious presence of God at its vital *center*. Though it requires the fundamental cognitive, affective, moral, and faith transformations of one's being."

[316]Benson Ohihon Igboin, "Bias and Conversion: An Evaluation of Spiritual Transformation," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 37, no. 2 (April 2013): 169.

[317]Cf. Ibid.

[318]Ibid, 170. It is in this sense that Igboin speaks of moral conversion. According to him, "moral conversion engenders a radical drive towards the good as against 'apparent good' that satisfies temporally. It demands a responsible act on the basis of 'vertical freedom' and advances towards authenticity to 'opt for the truly good'." This is the type of conversion that is required from Christian's point of view in Nigeria.

Conversion also leads to transformation and renewal of one's life. Such transformation and renewal expands one's faith and increases the love of one's neighbour. It therefore makes conversion effective and provides more "concrete possibility of overcoming moral impotence, of not only being able to make a decision to commit oneself to a course of action or direction of life judged worthwhile or personally appropriate, but of being able to execute that decision over the long haul against serious obstacles."[319] Thus one's action is motivated by his/her conviction deep within his/her conscience. As such, one cannot compromise the truth whatever the situation and circumstance. Due to the need for social transformation required in Nigeria the Church is called here to be the beacon of hope in this venture. [320]

2.   Islamic Perspective to Change/Conversion in Nigeria.

Change or conversion in Islam is identified with submission to God. Abdul Gafar Olawale therefore presents the strategy for change in Nigeria from an Islamic perspective from the *Ḥadīth*,[321] Qur'ān and *sunnah*, which are the main sources of guidance for Muslims in particular. Since the Qur'an is the ultimate scripture for Muslims, it exalts that change must be a human effort to improve.[322] Invariably, there is always an opportunity from God for human beings to change

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[319]Ibid.

[320]Ayandokun, "The church's role in re-orientating her members on the pursuit of justice and peace in Nigeria," 61. Esther O. Ayandokun further argues in her article on the aspect of change and transformation; that the church in Nigeria must lead the way for others to follow in the spiritual and social transformation. Ayandokun emphasizes that "the church needs to help in using all the ministries of the church to teach all members to live right and condemn every act of unrighteousness and injustice that are now prevalent. The church members must be conscious of who they are and what they should portray with the goal of living right. The church should not allow for any form of injustice. Rather, the church should speak against all forms of injustice as a model to all"

[321]AbdulGafar Olawale, "Noble Morality: The 18th Ḥadīth of Imam an-Nawawi's Collection as a Strategy for Change in Nigeria," *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 2017): 1. The Ḥadīth according to Olawale, "encourages fear of God wherever one finds oneself, to follow-up an evil deed with a good one, and to behave good-naturedly towards people. These will lead to a positive effect in one's relation with the Divine, to oneself, as well as to others."

[322]T.B. Irving, "Islam and Social Responsibility," in *Islam: Its Meaning and Message,* ed. Khurshid Ahmad, (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1980), 105. The principles of change and conversion in Islamic according to T.B. Irving, demands that religion should be totally obligated to Allah ultimately. Thus Irvin argues that, "Islam sets up its value system plainly concerning our necessity to think clearly about the Deity, and to worship Him sincerely. Only after we accomplish this, and establish His pure worship, do we consider the other sins or crimes which might be committed against society or our fellow men." Suratul Rad, 11 of the Qur'an states: *Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. And when Allah intends for a people ill, there is no repelling it. And there is not for them besides Him any patron*.

before He (God) takes action on them.[323] Olawale affirms that "the *Ḥadīth* covers the rights of God over an individual, rights of an individual over himself, and rights of other people over a person. This means that the statement of the Prophet is a comprehensive piece of advice and it has the ability to transform an individual as well as the society if sincerely applied."[324] This admonition of the Prophet must be embraced by all Muslims in Nigeria for effective relationships and peaceful co-existence with Christians.[325]

For Muslims therefore, conversion has to do with acceptance of Islam and the way of God.[326] Such acceptance leads to transformation which can also be considered as the act of repentance. It demands a constant effort in order to respond positively to God and follow his path.[327]

5.8.4 The Necessity and Processes of Change and Conversion in Nigeria

The Second Vatican Council targets change that would bring about transformation and renewal of the Church in the modern world. So the agenda for interreligious dialogue in Nigeria should consider what will change and better the relationship between Christians and Muslims. *Nostra Aetate* in particular reflected on the nature of such change that is required from Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It states: "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

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[323]The 18th of forty *Ḥadīth* serves as advice of the Prophet Muhammed to his companions and has some implications societal change in respect for an individual to change for better. It reads: *Have Taqwaa (Fear) of Allah (Be pious) wherever you may be, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed which will wipe it out, and behave well towards the people.*

[324]AbdulGafar Olawale, "Noble Morality: The 18th Ḥadīth of Imam an-Nawawi's Collection as a Strategy for Change in Nigeria," *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 2017): 2.

[325]Ed Husain, *The House of Islam: A Global History* (London: Bloomsbury Publishers, 2018), 31. In Islam, true religion has its foundation from God and leads to fellow human beings. However, whatever dimension change or conversion takes, it should also promote human relationship. The *Shahadah* (declaration of the Islamic) according to Ed Husain, highlights "believing in the one God and his messenger, Mohamed, and the last of the prophets." This explains why a Muslim gives priority to God and the holy prophet.

[326]Yasin Dutton, "Conversion to Islam: the Qur'anic Paradigm," in *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies*, eds. Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant (London: Cassell, 1999), 151. Yasin Dutton argues "there is no word in Arabic for 'conversion' *per se*. Rather, there is the idea of 'becoming a Muslim', for which the verb *aslama* (literally, 'to submit') is used. It is from this verb that the words 'Muslim', which is, grammatically, the active participle and means 'one who submits, a submitter', and 'Islam', which is the verbal noun-equivalent to the gerund in English-and means 'submitting, submission'."

[327]John Renard, *Understanding the Islamic Experience* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 127. Thus, John Renard argues that, "for most Muslims, the process of travelling toward union with God has been less spectacular and very much a day to day struggles."

urges that sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all men, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values."[328] It is impossible for interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to triumph if they still bear grudges and carry the bitterness of the past. It is necessary for Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to bury the hatchet and seek a brighter future that will bring about progress and development to the nation. This is why change and conversion are needed in almost every facet of Nigeria, and this is why it is an important pillar of the new paradigm.

The first process of change in Nigeria will be the ability of Christians and Muslims to put their grievances/differences aside and embrace one another as brothers and sisters. This was an important aspect that the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria emphasized in their 2011 communiqué on common destiny. According to the Bishops, this is the key to a healthy and virile society that seeks to recognize the worth and value of every member. The Bishops therefore stress the need for all to embrace one another regardless of race, colour, geographical location or religion since no one is an island. We mutually depend on one another and we should therefore seek ways for collaboration and exchange for greater humanity.[329] Every individual is unique and different, but our uniqueness and differences should never become barriers for us to live in peace and unity with one another.

Another important step towards authentic change among Christians and Muslims in Nigeria is sincere and honest practice of religion. It is generally believed that Nigeria is a religious nation, with the number of places of worship, and the religious expressions of individuals. The positive impacts of religion in society, Ojo says, should be acknowledged and appreciated.[330] Religion has been an instrument of moral and character formation in society and Nigeria is no exception. When channelled

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[328] *Nostra Aetate*, no. 3.

[329] Cf. CBCN, "Nigeria: Our Common Destiny," in *Our Concern for Nigeria: Catholic Bishops Speak* (Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2015), 299.

[330] Rapheal Joseph Ojo, "Religion, National Transformation and the Nigerian Society: Some Reflections," *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 2, no. 2, (June 2014): 167. Ojo argues that: "One thing that is certain in the religious discourse in Nigeria, and in most of the nations around the globe is that, there has always been tacit acknowledgement of the functionality of religion in relation to matters which today are identifiable in the mainstream development dialogue; these include issues of morality, leadership and concerns about forging peaceful co-existence."

properly, religion in Nigeria can constructively bring about peaceful co-existence and help to bring the change desired into the country.[331] We know however, that the reality is somehow different in the country. Rapheal Joseph Ojo posits that the reality of things seems contrary "to what the manifest function of religion is supposed to be in any given society where religion is practiced like Nigeria. . . 'Nigeria is a religious but criminal society'. Many people have seen reasons to justify their actions (which in most times are not in the interest of humanity) as having divine support and approval."[332]

This kind of situation portrays religion as a cover up to people's hypocrisies, and fake practices of religion. Such hypocritical practices are condemned both in Christianity and Islam. Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees as a public show to attract men's admiration and praise without any inner sincerity or authenticity (Matt 23:1-32, cf. Mk 7:1-16.) The Qur'an was also explicit about fake religion as an act of deception by liars in the following verses: 9:107 cf. 2:8, 2:9, and 4:142, 63:1. True religion should therefore manifest good deeds in people. This is an important aspect of consideration by both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.[333]

If religion is to provide positive change in Nigeria, it should seek values[334] that are built on religious teachings and principles. This is because the necessity for change and conversion by individuals in Nigeria implies that everybody in the country must be sincere and truthful to their religious

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[331]Ibid. This according to Ojo is because "there is a connection between religion or religiosity and its outcomes in terms of individual attitudes and behaviour, and how it can in turn, have an enduring implication on the societal development and transformation. These concerns can be seen as being germane for Nigerian development as it reflects as the core value been projected by the Nigeria's national motto-'Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress'."

[332]Ibid, 166. (See also, Odumuyiwa, E. A. (2002, "Nigeria as a Religious but Criminal Society", being an Inaugural Lecture Presented at Olabisi Onabanjo University). This is the reason why the Nigerian Bishops in chapter eight observed that religion has been used for the wrong motives in Nigeria, though such religious shows and manipulations are condemned both in Christianity and Islam as false and hypocrisy.

[333]Kaigama, *Peace, not War*, 131-132. It is in this light that Kaigama challenges both Christians and Muslims on the authenticity of their religions in Nigeria "Does the fact that Islam and Christianity are the two predominant religions and that we have evidence of religious piety all over the place make us 'the most religious nation on earth'? Is there a deliberate attempt to understand and relate our two religions to concrete daily life or is there instead an unhealthy claim to superiority and mutual antagonism? Why should anybody kill in the name of religion? When can we deploy the rich religious values of Christianity and Islam to fight social vices such as corruption and violence, which seem to defy solution in our contemporary Nigeria? Endless questions, no answers."

[334]Ojo, "Religion, National Transformation and the Nigerian Society: Some Reflections," 179. Such values include the principles of love, peace, unity, justice and equality. Ojo highlights that "religious values are quite important in the sense that, they influence the choices people make in life and thus, decide their behaviours. Since we have earlier pointed out that there is a symmetrical relationship between religious values, character building, national transformation and development in every society, therefore, it behoves on all religious institutions and leaders to put the proper mechanism in place to impart necessary religious values that can aid growth and development. In turn, this process will bring the nation out of its doldrums of arrested growth and development."

teachings and practices. This means that whatever is against the teachings and tenets of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria must be avoided. Since both religions preach about peace, unity, equality, justice and above all, love of one another, this should be put into practice by Christians and Muslims. This is the ultimate way to overcome all the problems and challenges of the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

5.9 Conclusion

Thus far we have seen that despite the many ills in areas of violence and unrest, religion may be considered as a possible and authentic instrument that will advance the course of the change agenda desired in Nigeria. This is why Christians and Muslims must consider their religious teachings that strengthen the bond of relationship rather than what divides and creates barriers in their relationship and peaceful co-existence. According to the declaration of Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb:

> The firm conviction that authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted in the values of peace; to defend the values of mutual understanding, *human fraternity* and harmonious coexistence; to re-establish wisdom, justice and love; and to reawaken religious awareness among young people so that future generations may be protected from the realm of materialistic thinking and from dangerous policies of unbridled greed and indifference that are based on the law of force and not on the force of law.[335]

Of major importance to those factors that contribute to Christian/Muslim unity and peaceful co-existence are on the nature of God, the dignity of the human person and search for the truth. Thus Christians and Muslims have a common belief in one God, they both have similar respect for the dignity of the human person and they also yearn for the truth about existence and human aspirations. It is from these prospects that Christians and Muslims can have a common goal to pursue the unity and progress of Nigeria. From the parameters of these three theological insights, we see how they also provide some implications for the Nigerian situation in the relationship between Christians and Muslims. These include the promotion of justice and equality, love and peace, security, good governance, non-discrimination, solidarity/collaboration and

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[335]Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together." Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Abu Dhabi, February 4, 2019.

harmonious/mutual co-existence. All these prospects are required for effective Christian/Muslim relationships, inter-religious dialogue and the unity and progress of Nigeria.

The relevance of education is important in achieving those prospects set forth from the theological insights. 1). forgiveness education, 2). Peace education and 3). interpersonal communication/relationship are highlighted. Through forgiveness education, true and authentic reconciliation can be established between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Peace education, on the other hand, will co-ordinate the restoration and maintaining of peace by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Interpersonal communication/relationship is required for better understanding of one another and to relate cordially and mutually between Christians and Muslims.

Nigeria needs change in every aspect, be it social, cultural or religious. It is a change that provides renewal or transformation, and in fact a conversion from the old fashion of relationships among citizens. This necessitated the need for change and conversion in Nigeria from the theology of the parable of the prodigal son.[336] This theological application enjoins both Christians and Muslims to approach change in a sincere and truthful manner; they should see the need of this change in a positive way and be able to accept and apply it in their encounters with one another.

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[336]Benson Ohihon Igboin, O. Familusi and Jacob K. Ayantayo, "Religion and Change Agenda in Nigeria," *Africology*: *The Journal of Pan African Studies* .9, no.1,(March 2016): 615. In the light of this change, Benson Ohihon Igboin, O. Familusi and Jacob K. Ayantayo also reinstate that: "In view of the Nigerian clamour for change whether in social, political, educational, cultural or family structures, patterns and institutions, we believe that religion has a role to play. The transformation or change mantra in Nigeria that has characterized political engineering and configuration has religious colouration to a greater or lesser extent."

GENERAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Religion is supposed to be a major tool and instrument in reconciling people and bringing peace. Both Christianity and Islam, the two major religions in Nigeria hold this teaching in great esteem. However, the experiences in Nigeria indicated that religion has become a major instrument of creating conflicts and divisions among the people. All these pose a great challenge to interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Chapter 1 highlights the background where the problems and challenges of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria lie. It exposes the crux of the thesis' argument on the need for effective approach to interfaith dialogue by Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. In an attempt to seek for a way forward and to resolve these issues and problems, I argued that there are more prospects to build peace and unite Christians and Muslims in Nigeria than to divide and create conflicts and crises. I build my arguments from theological synthesis of various contributions from the universal Church, the local Bishops as well theologians and scholars of both Christian and Islamic traditions in Nigeria.

Chapters 2 and 3 are a general outlook and historical survey of the movement towards interfaith dialogue in the world. It focuses contextually on the Second Vatican Council's Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents on Inter-Religious dialogue: the contributions of the various Popes, the PCID and Cardinal Arinze. At the Second Vatican Council, the Church reflected on her relation to non-Christian religions in *"Nostra Aetate."* The document highlights the importance of dialogue with other religions. It targets more specifically on understanding the central aspects, and the common teachings of all beliefs. It also emphasizes how to respect one another and accept each other as believers in the same God.[1] When dialogue becomes practical these principles highlighted will also come into play.

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[1] *Nostra Aetate,* No. 2. It states: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men."

Chapter 4 targets the contributions made by the Catholic Church in Nigeria as well as the local theologians and scholars of both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It focuses on some sensitive areas of religious and social factors and influences between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

Chapter 5 is a synthesis of the contributions of previous chapters and their theological insights; which are surfaced in principles that will enhance interreligious dialogue, peaceful co-existence and respect for human life and dignity in Nigeria. 1). Belief in one God by Christians and Muslims, 2). Respect for human life and dignity, and 3). The search for the truth. I further argued that the implication of these theological insights can best be implemented through an educational curriculum on forgiveness, peace and interpersonal communication/relationship. I also emphasized that all these can never be achieved without the disposition of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria to have a positive change and conversion in behaviours and attitudes that depict their religious teachings and beliefs.

In order to proffer a strategy that will foster the possibility of future and fruitful dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria, I emphasized on educational foundation in interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Education is required to change and assist children to accept one another despite religious affiliations and differences. I am convinced if both Christian Muslim children have the basis of religious teachings, principles of forgiveness and peaceful co-existence and the skills of good relationships as they engage with one another; they will be solid foundations towards interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. This educational foundation I think should also emphasize on teaching respect for one another and for each other's religion in Nigeria. I hope by this approach; children will acquire and develop positive characters and behaviours that will build trust among them. The paradigm shift I proposed is to build the foundation on children who are the future of society. It will strengthen the bond of unity and enable future interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria more effective.

The implication of the theological prospects of the thesis on education and the paradigm shift on change and conversion should also be geared towards what students are taught in schools, what goes on in the homes and what is being preached in churches and mosques. Therefore, what is articulated in the theological insights has also implication for education in Nigeria. Christian and Muslim students should be able to remember and understand the theological principles and concepts of interfaith dialogue, and the activities and practices involved in interfaith dialogue and peace living. They should have the basic understanding of the goals of interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence, and practice the skills used in interfaith dialogue at the different stages of their development. They should also have the ability to think critically and discuss religious and interfaith issues objectively among themselves. They should have a sense of responsibility and respect the rights and freedom of others to be different and hold different opinions. From what children acquire in the homes and from their religions, they should appreciate the different cultures and religions around them, respect each other, and also appreciate the common beliefs and values.

How all these can be implemented in schools I feel requires the work of experts in education. However, I am definitely convinced that the processes that take place in schools also need the support of the home and community. (The revitalising and reinforcement of the Irish [Gaelic] language is a common example to demonstrate this). There is the effort to promote the language by the government and society, but it is still not successful. Students learn Irish in schools but they forget it. One of the arguments about this has been that it is very difficult for children to learn Irish, unless is spoken in the home and is commonly used in society. This example applies equally to interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. If for example parents or society in Nigeria are anti-Christians, or anti-Muslims, it will definitely affect the learning process and change of attitude in children towards each other regarding their religions. Therefore, there has to be some parents' education for both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. This is why the home and family, as well as the churches

and mosques have major and significant roles to play in achieving the aims and objectives of interfaith dialogue.

I am sure that the new paradigm will face some challenges in its implementation. Although it has a universal consideration, it may be perceived with a bias mindset by some who may think it is presented from a Catholic perspective and context; with background from the Second Vatican Council and the biblical parable of the prodigal son. This challenge will also call for dialogue and understanding among religious leaders to consider education as the best way forward on the Christian-Muslim encounter in Nigeria. Therefore, it is necessary to have an educational plan for the new paradigm of interfaith dialogue.

Another challenge to the implementation of the new paradigm is on the deradicalization of religious extremists who already have made up their minds against the unity and peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. Such individuals of religious bigotries can never be convinced of any agenda that will unite Christians and Muslims in Nigeria under any level. Therefore it is like a waste of time to present such a new paradigm and educational plan of interfaith dialogue before them. It will become the task of religious leaders from both sides to negotiate in convincing their extremists to consider education on common ideals for the good of both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

For all these to be implemented and effected requires a general cooperation and support, which include the provisions of tools and equipments that will ensure the effectiveness and achievement of the aims and objectives of interfaith dialogue through education. This will include the provisions of educational facilities, workshops and seminars for teachers and parents, and organization of extra curricula activities for children. Provisions of these have already posed great challenge to education in Nigeria as already highlighted by the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria. Igbokwe also said;

> That the structures and appropriate activities that foster effective implementation
> of the curriculum are either inadequate or lacking in Nigerian schools. Foremost
> among the myriad of challenges of Basic Education in Nigeria are the issues of
> teacher quality and development, lack of enough specialist teachers; dearth of

relevant support materials for teachers and inadequate supervision and mentoring of teachers.[2]

Therefore, religious leaders in collaboration with the Ministry of Education at the State and Federal government levels should work in collaboration to ensure the aims and objectives of the interfaith dialogue curriculum are properly implemented in schools and outside. These will cost a lot of money and time. Therefore, resources, funds and commitment by both government and religious organizations should be provided to support the implementation of the interfaith dialogue curriculum.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no research that can be absolute and comprehensive. Therefore, this thesis is still open to many areas and aspects of effective interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. The observations provided here open up areas of further research on the subject of interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims. The recommendations offered suggestions on further efforts that will help make the Christian-Muslim encounter successful. I therefore pose the following questions as worth giving attention to, for a fruitful and effective future interreligious dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.

a)   How can Christians and Muslims further manage and sustain dialogue and cordial relationships in Nigeria?

b)   What are the demands of religious leaders in Nigeria to enable their members live according to the teachings of their religions?

c)   Are there other prospects that can be included in the educational curriculum of interfaith dialogue for effective dialogue and peaceful co-existence between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria?

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[2] Charity O. Igbokwe, "Recent Curriculum Reforms at the Basic Education Level in Nigeria Aimed at Catching Them Young to Create Change," *American Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 1, (January 2015): 36.

d)   How can parents and society develop interest on interfaith programmes/activities for effective implementation of the prospects of interfaith dialogue and peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society?

e)   What must be done by interfaith educational Curriculum to deradicalize religious fundamentalist and extremist traits?

f)   Who are those that manipulate religion for selfish reasons and create conflicts and division between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria and how to overcome their influences?

The following recommendations and suggestions are also worth giving considerations.

1. Nigerians must acknowledge that injustices and inequalities existed in society. Sometimes these vices are carried out in the name of religion. Therefore, it must be tackled with honesty, sincerity and commitment. The injustices and inequalities have both also created a state where only one element in the community is appreciated in Nigeria. This has led to a situation where non Muslims or non Christians are discriminated against in the apportionment of jobs, admissions and positions in colleges, universities etc. Nigerians should watch against such elements and consequences. There must be an understanding on both sides that injustice exists. If one doesn't accept this, and there's no willingness to compromise, conflict will continue or ensue. An unjust society is heading towards anarchy and violence. Nigeria must avoid sowing the seeds of conflicts by removing all forms of injustices, partiality, discrimination (clannishness or favouritism) etc.

2. Nigeria must know that Conflict resolution is hard work and requires immense patience and persistence. It demands the consisted efforts of all parties and the development of a never give up mentality

3. For a positive resolution in Nigeria, the approach should be 'carrot and stick' method to stay with the negotiations so that grievances will be addressed and nobody will feel left out. Christians and Muslims must 'bury the hatchets' and work on equal pedestals of unity for the common good and progress of the nation.

4. Youth formation and empowerment must be given due consideration in Nigeria. There are many young people who lack basic life formation and are idle in Nigeria. Such youths can be easily influenced and radicalized by terrorist groups and extremists. This must be checked by Nigerians and the government.

5. The peaceful co-existence of Christians and Muslims in neighbouring countries to Nigeria is a point of consideration for Nigeria. Why is Nigeria the only West African country where Christians and Muslims cannot live in peace with one another? This must be investigated further to discover the possibility of religious peace working in other neighbouring countries to Nigeria.

6. Finally, Nigeria must make sure that her institutions and places of learning are also involved in the peace processes and resolutions. Dialogue must be included in this agenda.

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Appendix

NIGERIA GEO-POLITICAL ZONES
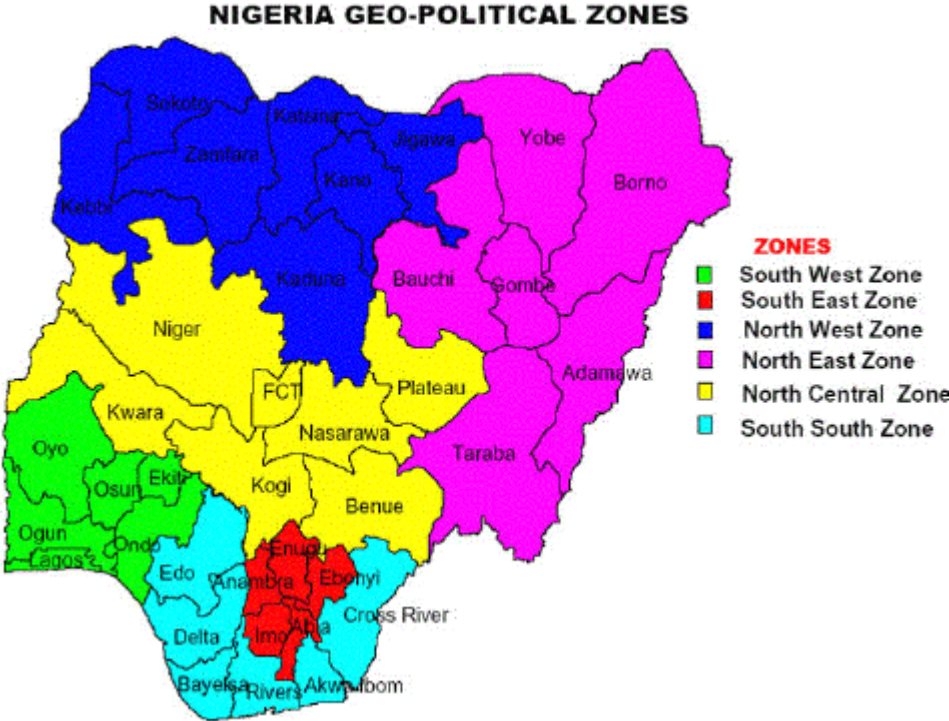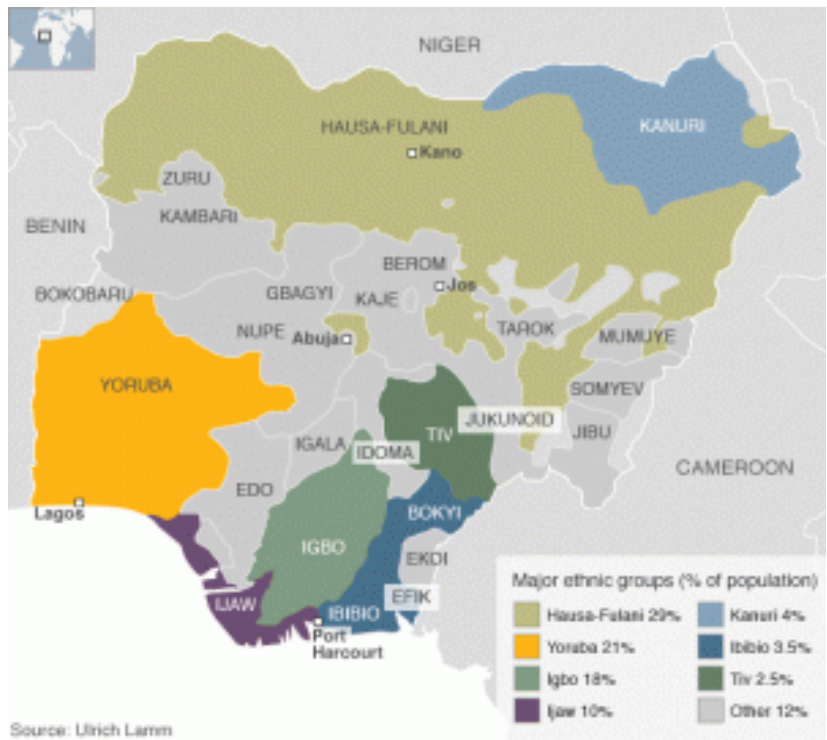
Map and Major Ethnic Groups

No.	Date	State(s)	Nature	Remarks
1	1Jul. 1999	Ogun	Violent clashes between Yoruba traditional worshippers and Hausa groups in Sagamu, Ondo state.	The crisis originated from the killing of a Hausa woman by the Oro Masqueraders for violating traditional rites.
2	22 Jul. 1999	Kano	Reprisal to the Sagamu crisis above.	The casualty figure was not reported.
3	20 Dec. 1999	Kwara	Muslim fundamentalists attacked and destroyed over 14 churches in Ilorin.	Properties worth several millions of naira were destroyed and an unspecified casualty reported.
4	21–22 Feb. 2000	Kaduna	Riots over the introduction of Sharia.	An estimated 3 000 people died.
5	28 Feb. 2000	Abia	Religious riots in Aba, and minor disturbances in Umuahia.	Over 450 persons killed in Aba, Abia state, as reprisal for the Kaduna crisis.
6	8 Sept.	Gombe	The Kaltungo religious crisis.	The crisis erupted over the

	2000			implementation of Sharia in the state.
7	12 Oct. 2001	Kano	Religious riot in Kano.	In protest to US invasion of Afghanistan over Osama bin Laden. Over 150 persons were killed.
8	7–17 Sept. 2001	Jos	A religious riot between Muslims and Christians in Jos. Mosques, churches and several properties were damaged or torched. The clashes started on September 7 and lasted nearly two weeks, ending on September 17.	The riot broke out when the Islamic Brigade attacked a Christian woman who attempted to cross a public highway barricaded by Muslim worshippers on Friday. Over 300 people were killed.
9	16 Nov. 2002	Kaduna	The *Miss World* crisis in which Muslims attacked Christians and churches.	The crisis was triggered by an article authored by Isioma Daniel in *This Day* newspaper, alleging that Prophet Mohammed would have loved to have the girls. Over 250 people were killed and several churches destroyed.
10	8 Jun. 2004	Adamawa	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Numan	Caused by the location of the town's Central Mosque close to Bachama

			town.	paramount ruler's palace. Over 17 persons killed.
11	18 Feb. 2006	Borno	Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims in Maiduguri.	The riot was caused by the Danish cartoon on Prophet Mohammed, in *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper. Over 50 persons killed and 30 churches destroyed; over 200 shops, 50 houses and 100 vehicles vandalised.
12	22 Mar. 2007	Gombe	Muslim pupils killed their Christian teacher, Mrs Oluwatoyin Olusesan.	The pupils claimed that their teacher desecrated the Qur'an while attempting to stop a student from cheating in an examination hall.
13	28 Nov. 2008	Plateau	Religious violence between Muslims and Christians in the city of Jos.	The crisis which was triggered by the controversial results of a local election later turned religious. Over 700 people killed and thousands internally displaced.
14	21 Feb. 2009	Bauchi	Ethno-religious conflict at the Makama New Extension.	Over 11 people were killed, more than 400 houses burnt, and over 1 600

				families displaced.
15	26–30 Jul. 2009	Bauchi, Borno, Kano, Yobe	Religious violence unleashed by the radical *Boko Haram* sect on Christians.	Over 700 persons killed, 3 500 persons internally displaced, 1 264 children orphaned, over 392 women widowed, and several properties destroyed.
16	29 Dec. 2009	Bauchi	Religious violence unleashed by the *Kala-Kato* sect on Christians.	Over 38 persons killed; about 20 suspected members of the sect arrested; and over 1000 people internally displaced.
17	17–20 Jan. 2009	Plateau	Resurgence of religious crisis in Jos.	Police announced at least 320 killed, but aid workers and local leaders place death toll at over 550. Over 40 000 persons displaced.
18	7Mar. 2010	Plateau	Attacks by Fulani Moslems on Christian-dominated villages of Dogo Nahawa, Shen and Fan in Jos.	Over 500 people – mainly women and children – were killed.
19	17Mar. 2010	Plateau	Suspected Fulani militia men attacked residents of Biye and	13 persons killed.

			Batem in Jos.	
20	11 Apr. 2010	Plateau	Attack on a Christian village of Berom stock, some 30 kilometres south of Jos, by suspected Fulani herdsmen.	The attackers targeted the homes of some officials in Kura Jenta, in reprisal to the killing of about 150 Fulani Muslims, who were allegedly killed and dumped in wells on 19 January 2010. No life was lost but 3 houses and 6 vehicles were torched. This violence was ethno-religious.
21	22 May 2010	Plateau	Murder of three (Muslim) Fulani herdsmen at Tusung Village in Barkin Ladi Local Government, Plateau state.	The attackers were alleged to be Berom Christian youths. It was ethno-religious.
22	22 May 2010	Plateau	Attack on some Christians, who were returning from their place of worship along Bauchi road in Jos.	Reprisal attack by Muslims over the killing of 3 Fulani Muslims. At least 1 person died while many were injured.
23	17Jul. 2010	Plateau	Muslim Fulani herdsmen launched an overnight attack on a Christian village, Mazah, north of the city of	About eight people were reportedly killed, including the wife, two children and a grandson of a Pastor. Seven

			Jos.	houses and a church were also burned during the attack.
24	29 Aug. 2011	Plateau	Clashes between Muslims and Christians at Rukuba road and Farin Gada in Jos during the Ramadan prayers.	No less than 20 persons were killed, 50 injured, over 50 motor vehicles and 100 motor cycles were torched.
25	16Jun. 2011	Police Head-quarters, Abuja	Suicide bomb attack at the Police Headquarters, Abuja by suspected Boko Haram Islamists whose ideology is framed around religion (*Wahabism*).	Authorities said 6 persons were killed and 73 vehicles destroyed.
26	26 Aug. 2011	UN House, Abuja	Suicide bombing at the UN House, Abuja by suspected *Boko Haram* Islamists.	23 persons (11 UN personnel and 12 non-UN personnel) were killed.
27	5 Nov. 2011	Potiskum, Damaturu and Maiduguri	Coordinated attacks on churches and police stations by suspected *Boko Haram* Islamists.	More than 90 persons were reportedly killed, several churches and police stations torched.

| 28	25 Dec. 2011	Madala, Niger state, near the FCT	The bombs were alleged to have been planted at the Church's parking lot.	At the last count, 45 persons were killed. Some died instantly, others from injuries sustained from the explosion. Over 80 others were receiving treatment for various degrees of injuries.
29	5–6 Jan. 2012	Gombe, Gombe state	Gunmen stormed a Deeper life church in Gombe, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers. The *Boko Haram* Islamist sect claimed responsibility for the shooting.	6 persons were reportedly killed while many others were injured.
30	5–6 Jan. 2012	Mubi, Adamawa state	Suspected *Boko Haram* militants stormed a gathering of Igbo Christians and shot sporadically, killing over a dozen and injuring others in apparent execution of an ultimatum given by the *Boko Haram* Islamist sect to Southern Christians living in the North to	22 persons were reportedly killed; a dozen others were injured.

			leave.	

Table 1: Some cases of religious violence in Nigeria, 1999–2012

Source: Adapted from Onuoha 2010 with additions and modifications by the author. The data are by no means exhaustive

Violence

Deaths per state from May 2015 - Jan 2019
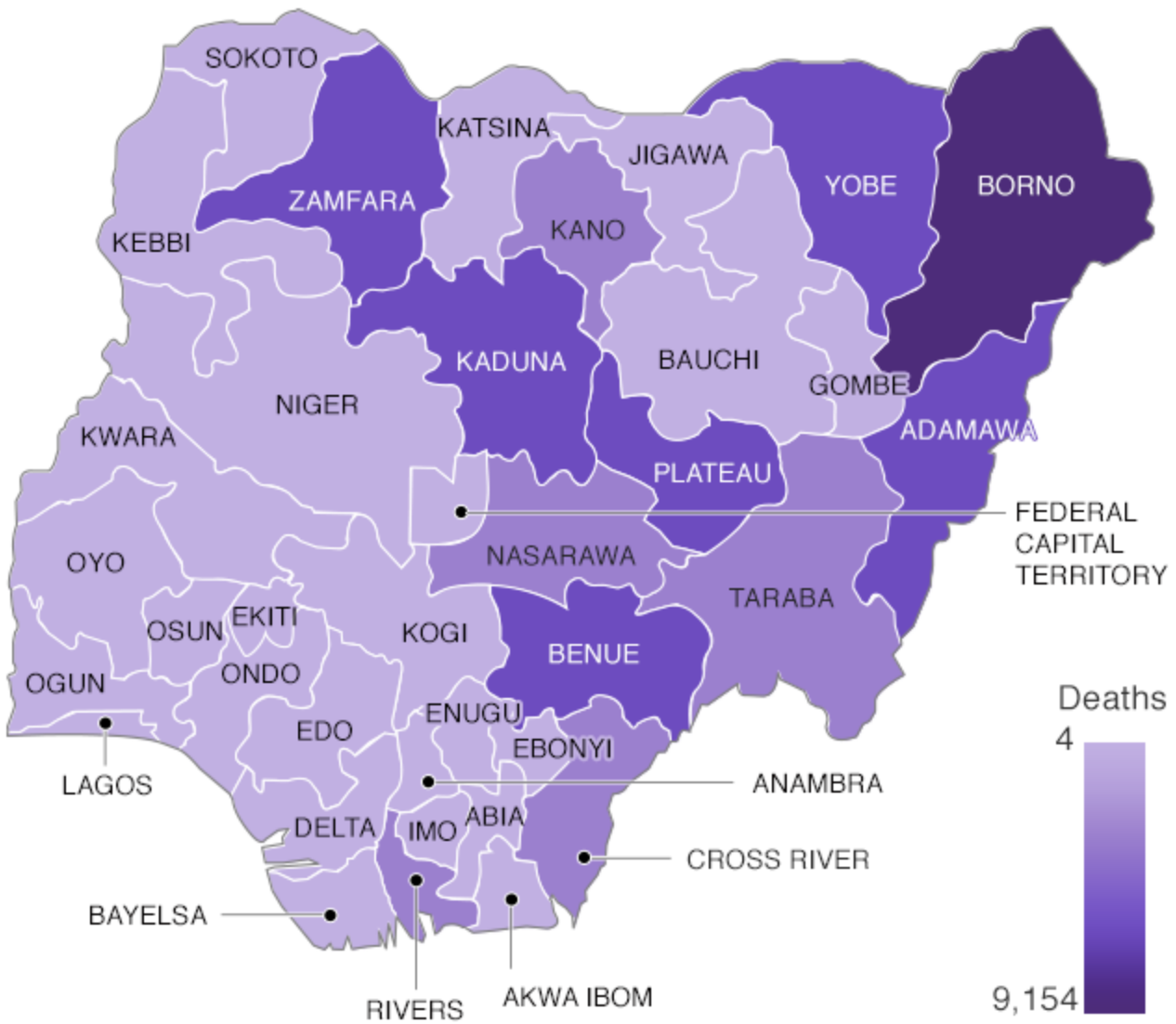
*Deaths include those from Boko Haram, between Boko Haram and military, sectarian actors and state actors

BBC

Main Causes of Violence in 2018

Crime overtook political and religious issues as the most important cause of lethal violence in

Nigeria in 2018, with 3,425 fatalities recorded in 1,191 incidents. Zamfara state was most hit

with fatalities from lethal criminal incidents as it recorded 896 victims, seconded by Kaduna

state with 262 casualties. Both states are from the North West region which has largely been

ravaged by banditry and cattle rustling. Lagos state came third in the ranking with 225 fatalities

as it witnessed numerous incidents of cultism, domestic violence, hooliganism and extra-judicial

killings. States with the least lethal crime incidents included Yobe, Borno and Gombe states, all

in the North East.

Other causes of lethal violence in 2018 included land issues (2,106 fatalities), cattle grazing

(1,867 fatalities) and road accidents (1,302 fatalities).

Absolute number of deaths by Causes of violence
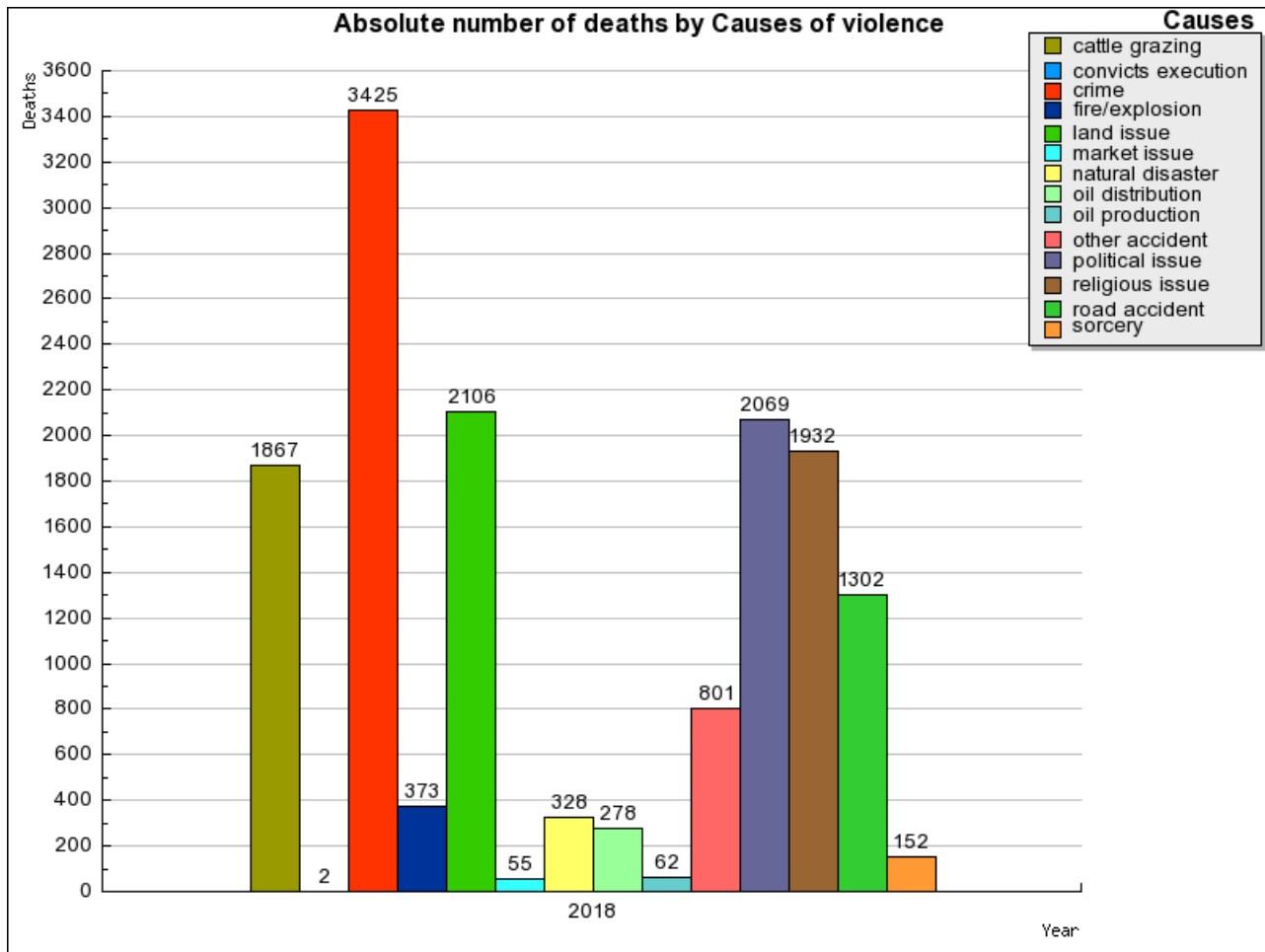
[1]UKOJI Vitus, AYODOKUN Abiola, and *EZE Victor*, Nigeria Watch: Eighth Report on Violence in Nigeria (2018), *IFRA-Nigeria Working Papers Series* no. 59 (March 2019): 9-10.