

Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria: Christianity in Focus.

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Abstract

Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria has consistently been proven almost impossible amidst the various efforts to live together in harmony as a people: and this has been due to the activities evil men who have consistently taken undue advantage of the endemic ethnic biases or religious bigotries in the society to perpetrate their evil agenda. Over the years, Nigerians of different ethnic background have co-existed harmoniously. However, things began to change gradually in the buildup of the 1966 coup. Since then, there seems to have been no peace. Religious and ethnic sentiments now dominate the country's daily activities. Some individuals are of the view that the nation be divided into at least three nations. Could it then be concluded that these groups in Nigeria cannot co-exist? Is it possible for Nigeria to exist as an entity? What role can Christianity play to ensure peaceful co-existence? The paper adopted a descriptive and analytical research approach. The research revealed that the three main religions in the country all preach peace and oneness as it offers a deep sense of understanding, reconciliation and human fellowship. This paper recommends that Christianity should educate Nigerians about the significance of peaceful co-existence. Through, effective teaching of religious studies and uplifting of moral and spiritual values by the religious leaders will go a long way to bring about peace in Nigeria. The paper concludes

that Christianity is an indispensable tool in peacebuilding in Nigeria since it came with social reforms.

Keys words: Peace, Co-existence, Nigeria, Christianity, Dialogue.

Introduction:

Peace is something everyone wants to have for there cannot be any sustainable development in the atmosphere of war, or conflict. It is the common goal of any church for without it there cannot be true happiness or development. Peace is the basis of creativity and growth. Development and peace are also closely related. Today our country (Nigeria) has witnessed ethnic – religious crises that have led to significant loss of live and property. The country as also witnessed conflict between the rich and the poor. The poor are becoming increasingly aware of the injustice of the system. And they are opposing the system courageously sometime even violently. The growing violence in the country have made our country fast becoming a slaughter house where people and soldiers are mercilessly butchered every day like what is happening in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, plateau, Benue, Rivers State and other parts of the Nigeria. The causes of this violence are many and varied. The criminalization of politics and political involvement of criminals, religious fundamentalism and ethnic-culture diversity, and also the trans-border terrorism are factors that led to growth of violence in our country. No meaningful development can take place in the country where Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, kidnappers and oil vandals are terrorizing the lives of individual. It is in such conflictual situation that the church is called to be an agent of peace and reconciliation. Kamerijie (2003) reveals that currently the world’s attention is turning towards the linkage between security, conflict prevention, peace building and sustainable development. Peace relates to leadership and good governance fosters peace while lack of good governance robs a nation or a community of peace. Suffice to observe, peace is a necessary condition for sustainable development hence the church has a church has a crucial role to play in this regard by inculcating in their adherents the values of tolerance and good neighborhood.

In the past, the role of the church in peace and sustainable development was undermined. A number of scholars also influenced this conception or misconception. For instance, Karl Marx argued that, “religion is the opium of the oppressed mass”. In other words the church was considered as a drug to cure those who were languishing in poverty. Resultantly, the church was considered as a rehabilitation center for those who had failed to make it in life and was now living in the future promise of heaven. Thus, many church members who, by implication are poor were left out of national economic development (Rostow, 1960). The human power element is often left out yet development is the process through which people participate in planning and implementation of activities which are designed to

improve their standard of living and contribute to the betterment of their area. It involves the improvement of the standard of living of the majority of the people with as much relevance as possible upon their own initiatives, effort and resource (UNDP Report, 1997). The Church resources are people and its message. Therefore, it is important also to analyze the message that the church is preaching as a way of empowering its members (Sisay, 2005). Even though the role of the church in development has been given little attention in many countries especially in the developing world, over the past decade there has emerged the need for broader involvement of all kinds of major group into the effective implementation of principles and objective of sustainable development (Votrin, 2005). There is therefore always need for involving the civil society in development which the church leaders can spearhead. Hauck (2010) argues that despite all of its flaws and, at perceived irrelevance, the church is one of the most resilient, as well as one of the most ubiquitous social institutions. The preoccupation of the churches has, since time immemorial been associated with issues of justice and currently there has been a shift towards championing of development which is married to sustainability.

Conceptual Clarification

Peace Co-existence: This is simply an atmosphere of living together in peace rather than in constant hostility. Before peace can be said to exist anywhere, the citizens must be free from all forms of violence, be it political, economic, social, or religion.

The need for peace has been articulated in various quarters and it is true that any homes, institutions, organization or communities without peace are bound to suffer painful consequences. Creating an atmosphere or culture of peace has been a serious challenge in this modern time. According to Bujo (2003), in Africa communities, ethics demands that, there be peace among people as one who paid heed to the dignity of the human person also pleases God and that one who acted against the human person offended God. This view has been echoed by Appollos (2010) when he said that everyone should engage in peace-making including man, woman and young. This means that even though all the religions preach or champion peace, the reality is that, peace has been elusive in many parts of the country. Such a state of affairs is not strange and Appollos (2010) explained why, when he suggested that the society is made up of many social group or segments, some cooperating with one another while other compete or are in conflict with one another. Peace has been described by heinrich Boell foundation report (2002) as the freedom of fears of all kind, self-esteem, security of identity and sense of belonging as well as the opportunity to pursue, exercise and access freedom right and self-determination. Others view peace as the absence of war or conflict. Appollos (2008) suggests that as a process,

peace building is a planned activity directly toward achieving harmonious co-existence among the people.

Uche (2009) asserts that, peace is a household name in the family, Christian church, non-Christian bodies and societies. Peace can be seen as harmonious relation, freedom from disputers and absence of mental stress and anxiety. Peace can also be seen as a state of reconciliation between parties of variance. To be at peace is to be quiet, undisturbed, not in a state of war or commotion and to live well. According to Ibeanu (2007), peace is a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community. Iwe (1991) asserts that “peace is the resultant effect of balance and harmony among the constituent elements and forces an organism for man as an individual moral being; it is the price of righteousness and goodwill” (p.95). Peace may be seen as the highest political good which tends to consist in the harmonious operation of the forces of social life. Peace remains an empty word except it rest upon that is founded on truth built upon Justice, nurtured and give life by charity and brought into functional effect under the auspices of freedom. Peace is not given to fighting or quarrelling but connotes calm, quiet, untroubled, undisturbed especially by noise, worry, fear and anxieties.

The perspectives on peace correspond with that of war. Both peace and war have three dimensions: historical, political, cosmic-eschatological and interior spiritual according to Rayan (2011), spiritual peace is often born of, and grows through spiritual warfare against injustice and sin. In the Old Testament, Edom refers to peace as completeness and well-being. In the books of Genesis 63:27, Exodus 4: 18 and judges 19:20, peace is used when a person asks for prayers for the welfare of another. In the same vein, the books of Joshua 9:15; 1 king5:12 psalms 122:6; Jer. 29:7 are rich in associating peace with harmony, the good of a city, material prosperity, physical safety and spiritual wellbeing. Peace is God’s gift and messianic hope was of an age of peace, or of the advent of the prince of peace. The Gospel of Luke 10:5; 2:14.29f says that in Christ, peace has come and by him it is bestowed and his disciples are messengers. Uche (2009) as cited by Douglas (1963) says that “peace has full content of spiritual connotation as linking with such keyword as grace, life, and righteousness and from its use benediction” (p.956). in the new testament, eirene is the Greek term for peace which was at first used for greeting Mk.5:34 James 3:16 John 20:19. In the gospels peace is spoken of in relation to Jesus. At the birth of Jesus, the angels announced peace to those whom god love {luke2:14}. During Christ triumphal entry Jerusalem the crowds of disciples joy fully shout out the message of peace (luke.19:37-38). Kunnumpura (2011) cited Leon-Dufour linking Paul’s Christ saving work and peace and avows that “being our peace, Christ has made peace; he has reconciled the two people

uniting them into one sole body (Eph. 2:14-22). He has reconciled all creatures through Him, whether on earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of the cross" (Col.1:20).

Nigeria:

Nigeria is made up of about two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. She is rich in diverse cultures (Ejikeme, 2016). The dominant religions include Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion. Due to differences in tribes and religious beliefs, there are numerous incidences of hostilities, resulting in destruction of lives and properties. Hostilities are recorded along the line of tribes and religions. The elements that underline conflict according to Higazi, (2011) include "ethnicity, politics and religion". The hostilities have become so pronounced that unity of the nation is under threat. Some of these threats are political crisis, militancy, land disputes, trade disputes, and religious crisis among others. It has become very difficult for an individual to live in a different culture or religion in Nigeria without being afraid of being killed. This is probably why Olawale, (2013) tagged Nigeria a "security risk nation" to which many international communities have warned their nations not to live or even travel to Nigeria. Nigeria has been experiencing a number of crises, social vices, and lack of cordial relationship among her citizens since independence. In most states of the federation, one hears stories of violent conflict involving individuals or groups. For instance, Odi Massacre in Bayelsa state, Urhobo - Iteskiri crisis in Warri, Jimeta clash in Jos (Egwu, 2001 and Alanamu, 2004), Boko haram uprising in the northern states, among others. In these conflicts, "people are displaced, properties are destroyed and lives are lost" (Orude, 2009). Obuseh (2016) is of the view that Nigeria cannot live in peace because "of is selfishness"". Supporting this view on why Nigerians would not co-exist peacefully is Oluwaseun (2014) who sees religion as a threat to Nigeria peaceful co-existence.

Christianity featured prominently in the "series of events that led to the development of Nigerian nation, and were able to bring about certain political, economic and technological changes in the region" (Ajayi, 1991). Their activities helped to break down ethnic prejudices and to bring their converts in loyalty transcending ethnicities. Hence, patriotic Nigerians came to believe that by practicing Christianity they were paving the way for the creation of the Nigerian nation. The Nigeria state of their dream was one in which Christianity would flourish, inter-tribal wars would cease and the industrial, technological and intellectual revolutions which had occurred in Europe would repeat themselves in Nigeria. By encouraging a common consciousness, Christianity would reduce to a minimum all other sectional loyalties such as the many incipient tribal/crisis groups that divided Nigeria. It becomes very necessary to ask if Christianity, being a major religion in Nigeria,

has no capacity to contribute to Nigeria's peaceful coexistence. Peaceful coexistence in Nigeria means Christians, Muslims and African Traditional religionists engaging in ecumenical discourse and working together in different contexts to engage with and proffer solutions to social, political, economic and cultural problems instead of the hate filled Antagonistic discourse of superiority and dominance. Whether Islam or Christian, what is common to both sides is that adherents of both faiths are human beings and faith also binds them together as Nigerians. Adherents of both religions love their country and God. However, it has been observed in recent times that some of the potent tools used by mischief-makers to cause dissatisfaction, hatred, disunity and tribal war are ethnicity and religion. Rupisinghl (1991) defines co-existence as "to exist together (in time or place) and Bassey Andah (2008) exist in mutual tolerance".

Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria implies recognizing our differences and appreciating them. Importantly, Nigerians should focus on areas where they agree and work together to strengthen the common ties and design a mechanism that will enable them to actually appreciate their areas of disagreement with mutual respect for one another. It is the responsibility of Nigerians to work collectively to protect and safeguard our co-existence. In doing so, Nigerians must avoid extremism, exercise caution by recognizing the religious differences, show high level of understanding and respect for one another such that all and sundry are given equal opportunity so that Nigerians can live in peace with one another irrespective of their tribal and religious affiliations. What practical ways and potential responsibilities can be explored by Christianity so as to sustain peaceful co-existence? These are the problems that this research resolves. The research adopted historical phenomenological in view of need to draw conclusions from the historical setting of problems associated with the quest for peaceful co-existence. The goal of this paper is to examine roles Christianity ought to play in pursuit of peace.

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

The word Peace in Christianity is translated from the Hebrew word 'Shalom', which is a key word in the Bible and 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 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).

In another place Jesus taught the people not to retaliate any evil done to them as it used to be, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, if one should strike you on the right cheek, turn the left cheek (Mathew 5:38-39, NKJV) but now to always forgive those that offend them and he charged them to forgive their neighbors even seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22, KJV). With all these scriptural teachings of the church, Christians are supposed to live in peace and harmony in the society.

The role of Christianity has always been a significant one. Apart from the fact that all churches are involved in the spiritual development of the people within the community where they reside, it is important to note that the other aspects of development which these people need to achieve in order to create balance in their lives are not given attention. However, some churches, such as the Methodist Church, have in the past been involved in areas like education, health and social development. On the other hand, most of the Pentecostal churches are only involved and interested in the spiritual aspects more than social aspects. The Church was one of the two biggest powers in the medieval historical era, and stood alongside the empires and kingdoms. The Pope was as powerful as the kings of the past. The origins of the role of Christianity Church in a community development cannot be separated from the Church itself. The two are integrated parts of a whole. Christianity churches have always been encouraging all round development, in order to ensure that the lives of citizens are enriched (Smith, 2011). With the advent of the Enlightenment and its consistent differentiation between the public world of facts and private world of ideas, politics and the state were assigned to the former, and religion and moral to the latter.

Bosch (1991:407) states that; "Evil is not only in human heart but also in social Structures". The mission of the Christianity includes both the proclamation of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation. He also asserts that if the Church went back to its main task of proclaiming the gospel and converting people to Christ, it would have a far greater

impact on the social, moral and psychological needs of people than anything else that it does.

Dialogue:

According to Ikwun(2010), dialogue is the solution to all problems. Dialogue is the repellent of quarrels and disputes. It breeds understanding, peace and unity. During dialogue conclusions or solutions are reached peacefully without squabbles. Dialogue leaves for interlocutors a favorable exchange of ideas irrespective of sex, age, tribe religion, culture and political set up. For Obasi (2009), the Catholic Church for example, established the justice, peace and development Agency in all her diocese and parishes to preach and teach peace, help the poor and reconcile conflicts through the process of dialogue. The agency is working hard to address the issues of crises in the society.

Challenges Facing Christianity in The Quest for Peace**Poverty, Disease and Unemployment:**

According to Kunhiyop (2008), poverty manifests itself in many ways. Some of the most common are prostitution, exposure to risk, corruption, robbery, street life, increased unemployment, living in squalor, shanties, shackles, infant high mortality, acute malnutrition, short life expectancy, human degradation, living in overcrowded and in poorly ventilated house. There is always the saying that “a hungry man is an angry man and that an angry man is a fighter”. When there is hunger in the land, there is bound to be pains, sorrow and problems which could lead to anger and fights. The independent task force (2006) asserts that conflict in Africa has taken a terrible toll on the continent. These conflicts have become a breeding ground for terrorists infiltration and the spread of disease.

Problem of leadership:

Leadership is one of the most essential necessities of human life. According to Chukwudi (2014), the governor of Imo state, Rochas Okorcha said “when there is no security or peace in the State or nation, a leader must be held responsible”. BBC focus on Africa (2009) reveals that most of African parties are internally undemocratic; their leadership is controlled by small elite with power patronage and government spoils divided among competing faction based on interests, ethnicity class or religion. Issue of harassment, hostility from authorities and government in Africa state have aided in the disappearance of peace. Security, government interferences and dictatorship may destabilize peace even if the church is not alive to her responsibilities. Censorship, bad laws, poor leadership, lack of legislative framework backing peace directly and absence of proper policies all contribute to make the work of the church doubly difficult.

Lack of Financial Support:

According to Lydia & Carren (2013), funding poses one of the biggest handicaps for the church to create a peaceful state. The church requires resources to enable her institutionalizing meaning peace and change. The stakeholders (Church) must go beyond analyzing the level of conflicts and criticism on prevailing circumstance by economically empowering those affected by the conflict.

Corruption:

Kunhiyop (2008) sees corruption as making some morally corrupt practices or becoming morally corrupt. Corruption is another stumbling block for peace in Nigeria. The church is also involved in its own forms of corruption which includes favoring the rich, practicing ethnicity within the church and misappropriation of the fund Oko (1018).

Lack of Trust:

The church is seen as the hope of the common man; a voice to the voiceless, but most times the media don't present the message of the church to the populace as presented. There is lack of trust between the church and the media. They view the media as untrustworthy, making them difficult to partner.

Gender Related Challenge:

Although women are important contributors of peace in Nigeria, this is a serious absence of deliberate gender consideration within the church. This is contrary to the economic commission for Africa (2004) which considers gender equality to be very important for the wellbeing of communities. It reveals that the objective of gender equality as enshrined in the treaties protocol and constitution of regional economic communities and Africa state is neglected.

The Theoretical Grounds for the Role of Christianity in Peace Co-existence and Sustainable Development

In view of the challenges facing democracy and the Church in Nigeria, Christians all over the nation has in one way or the other played a crucial role. It is of utmost importance to note that the church here does not mean the building where Christians go to worship but the Christian themselves on their gathering as a whole either the church leaders or congregation groups and Christian association is also of utmost importance here.

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Conferences, Seminar and Workshop:

Oko (2018) asserts that Christianity through her conferences, synods, seminars and workshop have issued communiqué at the end of the session to duce the crisis calling to the end of ethnic, communal and religious conflicts. She also assisted the victim of such crisis with food, shelter and medicine so that they can be peace. Through this medium, men and women have been given a sense of meaning through elimination of many of their distresses.

Employment of Labour:

Christianity through her leaders has always been a voice to the voiceless. She has always been in the forefront to speak and fight for the poor. She is an employer of labour through many schools, hospital, clinic and maternity homes established in different parts of the country which is profit oriented. These church agencies create job for many jobless people, thereby reducing the tension and crisis unemployment should create for the society. According to Oko (2015), these projects provide employment opportunities for lots of members. The medical doctors, nurses and other employed by the church hospitals are so many. Other workers are also employed to take care of the care of the management of other non-medical unit like security; accounting, driving etc. salaries and other privileges are paid to these people to help alleviate the economic problems of the society. According to Ejenobo (2009), Ayo Oritsejafor founder of the world of life Bible Church, and former CAN president led members of the church to establish what has become known as Eagle Flight Microfinance House. Ayo reasoned that since the ordinary groundnut seller cannot walk into the conventional commercial bank and be given a loan of ten thousand naira the church will do something to aid all these small-scale businessmen and women to boast their trade. The result has been overwhelming. The church has established skill acquisition centers where unemployed youths can be gainfully employed.

Health Care System:

Christianity in this country has been doing its best to see that our country is a better place to live. It has been providing and helping people to have good health care services. For example, there are the seventh Day Adventist Hospitals in Aba, Methodist General

Hospitals Oron and Ituk-mbang, Faith Clinic Foundation in Nsukka, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Umuahia, Mercy Hospital, Abak Akwa Ibom State, leprosy home Uzuakolie, and many others built by church organization (Jerome 2010).

Agricultural Sector:

Christianity encourages people, especially its members to embark on farming by providing fertilizer and soft loan to them. The members also encourage the farmers by buying their harvested goods. The church also encourages their members to be hard working as no religion encourages laziness. Finally, the role of church in national development cannot be overemphasized because they are involved in all area of human life.

Skill Acquisition:

The church leaders should together with schools encourage students to engage in meaningful activities such as dramatization, miming, poetry, singing, projects. According to Adejobi (2009), "the more children are exposed to reading materials that promote images of other people's culture, religion, uniqueness, social identity, among others, the less likely they are to find faults with one another and the more they are able to live among and work together for the benefit of mankind and for the good of the society". The church leaders should re-orientate the members of the society towards peace and tolerance rather than towards violence. Adams (2000) affirms that "church leaders should liaise with curriculum planners, to ensure that the tenets of promoting peaceful co-existence such as kindness, loyalty, honesty, love, optimism, compassion, etc. are included in reading comprehension passages of the English language curriculum.

Religious Education:

In secular usage, religious education is the teaching of a particular religion (although in the United Kingdom the term religious education instruction would refer to the teaching of a particular religion, with religious education referring to teaching about religions in general) and it's varied aspects: its beliefs, doctrines, rituals, customs, rites, and personal roles. In western and secular culture, religious education implies a type of education which is largely separate from academia, and which (general) regards religious beliefs as a fundamental tenet and operating modality, as well as a prerequisite for attendance.

Voice to the voiceless:

When we become a voice for the voiceless, we are inserting our own opinions into their story. We end up shouting our own view without first listening to their experiences, their needs, and their voices. Instead, we need to give voice to the voiceless. There's a different

and it's a big one, giving voices to the voiceless requires listening to them, learning from them, and amplifying their voices over our own.

Welfare:

The Christian [church](#) has responded to the matter of human illness both by caring for and healing the sick and by expressing concern for them. The practice of healing has retreated into the background in modern times, but healing played a decisive role in the success of the early church and was important in missionary [apologetics](#). In the Gospels, [Jesus](#) appears as a healer of body and [soul](#). The title "Christ the Physician" was the most popular name for the Lord in missionary preaching of the first centuries. Even the [Apostles](#) are characterized as healers. The Apologists of the 2nd to 4th century used numerous miraculous healings as arguments for the visible presence of the [Holy Spirit](#) in the church.

Care for the sick

In the [Gospel According to Matthew](#), Jesus says to his [Apostles](#), when the Son of Man comes in majesty to render final judgment on all of humankind, he will say to the chosen ones at his right hand, "I was sick and you took care of me," and to the condemned at his left hand, "I was...sick and in prison and you did not visit me." When the condemned ask the Lord when they saw him sick and did not visit him, they will receive the answer, "Just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

In the early church, the care of the sick was carried out by the [deacons](#) and widows under the leadership of the [bishop](#). This service was not limited to members of the Christian [congregation](#) but was directed toward the larger [community](#), particularly in times of pestilence and plague. Eusebius noted in his *Ecclesiastical History* that while the heathen fled the plague at [Alexandria](#), "most of our brother-Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty" in caring for and frequently dying with the victims, was not elaborate.

Care for widows and orphans

The Christianity [congregation](#) has traditionally cared for the poor, the sick, widows, and orphans. The [Letter of James](#) says: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction." Widows formed a special group in the congregations and were asked to help with nursing care and other service obligations as long as they did not need help and care themselves. The church had founded orphanages during the 4th century, and the monasteries took over this task during the middle Ages. They also fought against the practice of abandoning unwanted children and established

foundling hospitals. In this area, as in others, a secularization of church institutions took place in connection with the spreading autonomy of the cities. In Protestant churches the establishment of orphanages was furthered systematically. In Holland almost every congregation had its own orphanage, which was sustained through the gifts of the members.

Recommendations:

1. Exemplary leadership is recommended to those in authority. This will make them to provide top security which will discourage poverty, unemployment and hunger in the nation.
2. Prayer for the nation is recommended as a motive force for genuine peace. It is hoped that the prayer will make Nigerian leaders rule or lead in fear and justice to ensure peaceful harmony. Kukah (1995) avows that this is the basis of the legitimacy of a government and for political stability in Nigeria.
3. As a bride to nation-builder, the church must invest in intra in massive human right educational programmes needed to raise the level of general consciousness in any given area so as to arouse actively the people's initiative and participation in nation building.

Conclusion:

Christianity is a potent factor for peace. According to Udechukwu (2007), for development to take place in a pluralistic ethnic and multi-religious society like Nigeria, peace must reign in all its ramifications. For without peace there can be no development. The church in Nigeria should never abdicate its prophetic role in the promotion of national interest. The church must be heard at all times; for it is her duty to speak when everyone else is silent. The church has every possibility to contribute to national integration political mobilization, reformation of ethnic identity, nationalism, and peaceful co-existence, economic, social and political development but though their leaders have failed. (Afolabi, 2015). For Christianity to be relevant to the concrete situation of our country, the Christian church has to work for peace and reconciliation as laid down in the Holy Scripture.

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