



Assessing the Place of Christo-Peace in Transforming the Life of Nigerian Christians

Kelechi Johnmary Ani ¹ 

¹ School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

ABSTRACT

The quest for peace by men has remained a major existential need of man. People go to different places including the church in the search for peace. This study focuses on Christo-peace. Christo-peace is a form of peace that emanates from the communion of man with Christ as well as a strong belief in the teachings of Christ as well as the church. The study is a qualitative research that was developed from the random selection of scriptural quotations from biblical texts. It revealed that Christo-peace is gotten through prayers and ecclesia teachings of the church. It also found that this form of peace has a strong socio-psychological and spiritual impact on the lives of men. The study concluded that Christo-peace as found in the scripture has direct implications on the physical and mental peace of the Nigerian Christians. It recommends the advancement of peace-based preaching, increased prayers for the advancement of prophetic gifts that are needed for Christian understanding of time and the management of the culture of corruption in the Nigerian Christian churches as paths to Christo-peace by Christians, bearing in mind that there are multiple crises undermining the reality of peace on earth.

Correspondence

Kelechi Johnmary Ani

Email: Kani4christ@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Peace as a concept is traced to the Latin word called *pax* or *pacis*. It traditionally represents situations in a sovereign state where there is no war or conflict. It also symbolizes the cessation of violence between two or more warring/ conflict parties in its reactive sense or under the state of negative peace. To ordinary individuals and groups, peace means the absence of social fighting, and social upheavals, and the right to a genuine understanding among them.¹ Consequently, peace also represents a situation in which individuals are not quarreling or at loggerheads with each other, generally called being at peace with one's neighbours. It deals with a state of inner peace at the intra-personal level.

The concept of Christo-peace is an idea that generally represents the theological construction of peace according to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Scripture. From the birth of Christ to His death as recorded in the synoptic gospels, Jesus used the direct denotative construct of peace as well as indirect connotative parables and teachings to present His ideas and behavioural patterns that

¹ Ani Kelechi Johnmary and Alegu, Patrick A., "Factoring Historical and Contemporary Culture of Peace-Building for Sustainable Security and Tourism Development in Nigeria" in Kenneth C. Nwoko&Omon M. Osiki (Eds.), *Dynamics of Culture & Tourism in Africa: Perspectives on Africa's Development in the 21st Century*, (Illishan Remo: Babcock University Press, 2015 pp. 471-500)

will make the life of man better on earth. Most of those ideas that constitute Christo-peace are documented partly and fully in the gospels of Saints Mathew, Mark, Luke and John.

This study documents a paraphrased form of these peace ideologies as found in the theology of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christo-peace account used in this study is rooted in the New King James Version of scriptural analysis. In Mathew Chapter ten, Christ commissioned His disciples to go and preach to humanity. He gave them the special mandate in verse eight to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers and raise the dead as well as cast out demons freely. And in verses twelve to thirteen, He commanded them to go into houses with the greetings peace be unto you! If the household is worthy, the Lord's peace as carried by His Peace Ambassadors (the disciples) would reach them but if they are unworthy, that Christo-peace will return to the disciples.

Jesus Christ also stated that peace I leave with you, My Peace I give You, not as the world gives do I give to you. Thus let not your heart be troubled nor be afraid. This remarkably alludes to the distinct nature of Christ's peace that is different from other forms of peace that are driven by existential things. Existential things like wealth, music and alcohol could generate a relative sense of peace however, such peace is not comparable to Christo-peace. This is because in John 16:33, Christ declared that in Him humanity will have peace because in the world, man must have tribulations but humanity should be of good cheer for He has overcome the world. The implications remain that Christ understands and emphasizes the reality of those factors that undermine the peace of man here on earth, hence the hope and optimism inherent in the idea of Christo-peace. There are many other teachings like the parable of the Good Samaritan, teaching on forgiveness, love, truth, sacrifice, mercy, etc that have a direct bearing on the development of the overall idea of Christo-peace and the transformation of the world into a more peaceful society. In order parts of the scripture, He directly transformed the quantity of bread and fish in order to reach the food security and hunger management needs of the thousands of people who were listening to Him. It is these collections of peace-rooted ideas that are found in the scripture that will be examined in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study was developed using secondary data from the scripture and published academic works. The researcher consulted a number of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments of the bible in the quest to develop the content of the study. Specifically, the researcher concentrated on the central theme of peace as preached in the scripture, especially those scriptural passages on peace that have direct implications for the Nigerian nation-building process. These scriptural passages were selected randomly by the researcher. This was improved using published academic literature in a bid to strengthen the content. The analysis and presentation of the findings were done thematically in different parts of the research.

THE NEED FOR PEACE

The quest for peace has become a powerful necessity in the contemporary global world due to the multiple crises, armed conflicts as well as violent behaviors that manifest in every environment including faith-based communities. This is because there are many factors that lead to the abortion of societal peace in many parts of the world and faith-based communities in particular. These factors can be summed together in one word called sin.

Sin manifests as violent behavior against oneself or others. For instance, when a young man rapes a lady or a lady engages in prostitution/ adultery and either of the protagonists of rape, prostitution, or adultery contacts HIV or any other sexually transmitted disease, he or she has violently attacked his or her existence due to weakness in faith and holiness. That is similar to the case of the prodigal son, who in the process of negative ambition, wasted his life and parents' resources. He immediately became the principal victim of his violent social behavior. He suffered and worked in dehumanizing environments until the point of his repentance (Lk 15:11-32).

Unfortunately, when a person exhibits unlimited wickedness, lack of forgiveness, and other forms of mortal sins against others; the actor(s) easily exceeds the limits of humane behavior in the quest to punish, exhibit anger and retaliate against the offender. When that point is reached and there

is no brokenness and forgiveness, man assumes the heart of the devil as he or she rejects all counsels and pleas thereby accepting the path of unlimited satanic wickedness that leads to outrage in the ears of those that hear the story. The United States of America recently witnessed complicated multi-national protests due to the activities of a man who knelt on the neck of another man unto death.¹ It was an inhuman behavior that generated global outrage and protest politics. That individual behavior undermined the degree of cohesive peace between black and white Americans. However, the question remains for Christians; How many people have I ever knelt on their necks? Is that not the same way some Christians kneel on the neck of others in a bid to show their strength? Herod did the same and made life horrible for parents and children within Christ's age grade (Mathew 2:16-18) in Bethlehem. The situation is worsened by the fact that many do not pray that the Holy Spirit will convict them personally and then ask God to break the wickedness in their hearts down or at least suppress the 'sinful flesh' in them and place them on the path of forgiveness. It should be noted that when the peace of a man is aborted, the peace of his or her family will also be aborted and by extension, the aggregate peace of the faith community, society, state, and other existential creation would have their peace undermined. At that point, things turn upside down at home, and at the workplace. Consequently, hell is let loose and the way forward becomes the intervention from God and men that may not be easily predictable because God could also allow His sword to drop and turn the family members against each other (Mathew 10:34), which is close to the academic interpretation that confrontation and war are paths to peace called negative peace when manipulated strategically.

However, the birth of Christ heralded the birth of the idea of Christo-peace. Isaiah 9:6 maintains that "for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given and the governments of the earth will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace." This form of the peace-based name is not peculiar to the traditional Hebrew society but shows the powerful place of Christ in the existential peace of man. For instance, amongst the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, names of persons like *Eze Udo* (King of Peace), *Ocho Udo* (Seeker of Peace), *Udoka Aku* (Peace is greater than wealth), etc connote the importance of peace in the traditional worldview of Igbo people. Unfortunately, the contemporary generation destroys their corporate image when they go all out to show their power and make life miserable for one another; both in the charismatic fellowships of Christians, church, school, marketplace, social gatherings, and in the political arena. It is the increasing appetite for wickedness, lack of brokenness, and the quest to destroy both the name and existence of another member of the faith-based Christian community directly or indirectly that have made violence a widespread behavior in the global church.

This spiritual study is a search for peace from Christ's existential actions as documented in the bible, and other biblical teachings on peace that are generally baptized as Christo-peace. The value of Christo-peace is rooted in the fact that it has become necessary to heal the individual Christian and transform faith-based communities, churches and societies that man lives in, from all manners of unforgettable hurt. This will lead Christians to a state where they will sing that "they have also healed the hurt of my people slightly, saying, 'peace'! When there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).² The truth is that the world is currently at a stage where wicked individuals, organizations and states abort or sometimes prevent the culture of peace by replacing it with a culture of violence, insecurity, and impoverishment of the masses through religion. This is done through the global manipulation of insecurity to undermine religion and societal peace in a bid to attain certain interests of the violent actors. This culture of violence has become the order of the day at home, where spouses kill each other, and it manifests in churches, where Christians violently hunt others with fake prophecies and miracles,³ as well as in businesses, where kidnapping and hostage-taking has become a strategy of making more

¹ Evan Hill et al., "How George Floyd Was Killed in Police Custody," *The New York Times* 31 (2020).

² Kelechi Johnmary Ani, "Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: Implication on Socio-Economic and Psychological Perceptions of Muslims in Igbo Land," in *New Face of Islam in Eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad: Essays in Honour of Simon Ottenberg*, ed. E. Uchendu (Abuja: Aboki, 2012), 189–202. Kelechi Johnmary Ani, "The Impact of Religious Conflicts on Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria," in *Boko Haram and Terrorism: Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria*, ed. S. O. Anyanwu and I. U. Nwanaju (Enugu: Snaap, 2012), 156–72.

³ Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Patrick Austin Alegu, "The Christian Missionary Activities in Igboland: A Study on Language and Social Distortions," in *Religious Conflicts and Dialogue Initiatives in Nigeria*, ed. Isidore U. Nwanaju, vol. 4 (Abakaliki: Citizens' Advocate Press, 2015), 131–45.

money. In politics, mass impoverishment and violent killings are used to sustain power and attain state interest or deal with an assumed critique (s) and enemy of the state, thereby leaving the world in a progressive state of violence, armed conflict, mass poverty, and sin that undermines societal peace.

Sources of Christo-Peace

- a. **Prayer:** Prayer is a very effective way of attaining peace. When a man prays, he or she connects his or her spirit to the powerful forces of creation. This act makes the person praying to develop increased hope and faith that the factors that were undermining his or her spiritual as well as inner peace would be eliminated by the powerful intervention of God. Thus, parents teach their children to pray. From the old testament of the bible, God personally instructed Moses to inform Aaron and his sons that they should bless the children of Israel through these prayers; “the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace (Numbers 6:23-26). This implies that God fully understands the place of inner peace in the existential lives of men and women on earth.
- b. **God’s Commandment:** Another source of Christo-peace is obedience to the commandments of God and the law of the land. When a man obeys the ten commandments of God, the tendency to fall into sin is minimized. It also creates the needed purity of character, which is fundamental for physical peace. The same is applicable when a man diligently obeys government policies that are not a sin to his or her faith. Such character position towards official policies of the state naturally aborts the chances of breaching the law as well as the consequences that sometimes include being locked up in prison. According to David in Psalm 119:165: “Great peace has those who love Your (God’s) law and nothing causes them to stumble.” It should be noted that keeping the word of God and His commandments creates a high degree of integrity that is fundamental to becoming an incorruptible statesman. When a man lives such a form of life, characterized by obeying the scriptures and teachings of his or her church doctrine, the peace that comes straight from the throne of God drops directly into his or her life.⁴ It is such a culture of keeping the commandment of God that moves heaven to fulfil the words of Isaiah 26: 3 “You will keep him in perfect peace.”
- c. **Time:** Time is of the essence in the analysis of peace. Scholars have written on the importance of time in peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, conflict resolution etc.⁵ It should be noted that there are times when war is used as an instrument to pursue sustainable peace. Ecclesiastes 3: 8 states that there is a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace. There are often strategic periods and times when peacemaking, forgiveness, etc must be done in a bid to attain peace. The peace process and peace accords will be more effective if ripeness in peacebuilding is considered even in managing both inter-faith and intra-faith conflicts. The understanding of time in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is more real when explained in relation to imposed religious festival dates or dates for doctrinal programs, crusades, revivals, etc that are time-specific. Again, it has strong weight when explained in relation to birthdays and dates of death as advocated by Ecclesiastes.
- d. **Confrontation and Avoidance:** David declared open confrontation and war with Goliath not because he wanted to exacerbate conflict (I Samuel, 17). However, David was very certain that a counterattack on Goliath would lead to his death and that Goliath’s death would cause sustainable peace to the people of God who were already traumatized. Scholars have argued that violent confrontation at the moment of mutual violent stalemate and massive losses as well

⁴ Kelechi Johnmary Ani, “Catholic Church, Human Sexuality and Management of Infertility-Based Conflict,” in *The Church and Igbo Society: Proceedings of the International Symposium Organized by Whelan Research Academy, Owerri, Nigeria*, ed. T. I. Okere, 10th ed., vol. 2 (Owerri: Assumpta Press, 2013), 228–40.

⁵ Roger Mac Ginty, “Political versus Sociological Time: The Fraught World of Timelines and Deadlines,” *Building Sustainable Peace: Timing and Sequencing of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peacebuilding*, 2016, 15–31; Susan Hogben, “Life’s on Hold: Missing People, Private Calendars and Waiting,” *Time & Society* 15, no. 2–3 (2006): 327–42.

as weak moral will on the side of the two conflict partners naturally promotes the search for peace using both the idea of ripeness and mutual hurting stalemate.⁶ David attacked Goliath at a time when the morale of his people was weak. It is also worthy of note that avoidance is a time-based tool for conflict management (called *igbara nsogbu oso* (running away from trouble) a popular philosophy amongst the Igbo people). The divine order that Christ should be taken to Egypt to protect him from the desperately wicked onslaught of Herod (Mathew 2:13), the jealous king who forgot that he had no right to eternal existence and perpetual reign is practical evidence of using avoidance and time management properly in promoting sustainable peace within a society. This culture of avoidance is a strongly rooted traditional conflict management culture of the Nigerian people⁹ notwithstanding the increasing cases of confrontations and clashes between Christians and practitioners of other religions in the Nigerian state.⁷

- e. **Catechetical Teachings and Church Doctrines on Peace:** The teachings of different Christian church doctrines on the path to peace epitomize their importance in the transformation of the lives of their members. In some emerging African Pentecostal churches, there is a strong enculturation of the traditional African peacebuilding tenets into modern Christianity in a bid to expand the gospel of Christ and win more faithful easily.⁸

CHRISTO-PEACE

Christ's great commission that His disciples should go and heal the sick as well as cast out demons is fundamentally a peace-building strategy. This is because sickness of the body naturally weakens and eradicates personal internal peace. The sick people are found in every knock and cranny of the globe. Sometimes, the pains they undergo become very excruciating thereby making them seek words of hope. The scenarios faced by many sick people in Nigerian hospitals are often very dehumanizing and helpless. There are those who feed through the nose and others who have oxygen connected to their nose. To make matters worse the immediate environment of Nigerian hospitals that are characterized by high levels of filth as well as dilapidated structures often sing the song of death rather than creating hope for life and quick recovery. Alas, the good news is that if the Ambassadors of Christo-peace as found in the numerous Christian denominations that are located in every remote and developed part of the globe would arise to seek the increased face of Christ, they could be used to end the pains in the hearts of such sick souls. It is no longer media news that many of those whose cases have become hopeless in professional hospitals across the are now moving into the global village after one form of encounter with Christ, the Healer.

On the other side, the African states in general and Nigeria in particular Nigerian State still need Ambassadors of Peace that have the grace to cast out the demon of suffering that has become widespread in their nation-building process. The late literary legend Chinua Achebe stated that the trouble with Nigeria and Africa is the problem of leadership, there is a need for the Nigerian State to be exorcised from the influence of bad leadership that places millions of Nigerians at the low alter of dehumanization due to all manners of hard-biting economic problems. The grip of the aristocrats of men and women who are possessed to inflict leadership pains on Nigerians and Africans is found at every level of national leadership in the African continent.

The command of Christ that His disciples should go from house to house and speak peace to human hearts that are filled with all manners of existential problems is a call towards the radical approach of preaching peace to individual households in the families that make up the globe. This is

⁶ I. W. Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond," in *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, ed. Paul Stern and Daniel Druckman (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2000).

⁹ Ani Kelechi Johnmary & Victor Ojajorotu (2018) "Oral History: Path to Unravel Traditional Crime Control Strategies for Nigerian Security Management", *African Renaissance*, 15(4):193-208; Ani, Kelechi Johnmary (2013), "Globalisation and its Impact on the African Political Culture", *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues*, 17 (2): 44-61

⁷ Kelechi Johnmary Ani and Chukwuemeka Oko Otu, "Ogo-Christian Conflict in Afikpo and the Need for Sustainable Peace," *African Renaissance* 12, no. 2 (2015): 145-66.

⁸ Ani and Otu, "Ogo-Christian Conflict in Afikpo and the Need for Sustainable Peace."

exceptionally needed in the Nigerian State of today as the wind of multidimensional violence, inter-communal conflicts, kidnapping, militia activities, Boko Haram terrorism and herdsmen onslaughts are hitting hard on every remote part of the country. Such family-targeted targeted education would at least increase the consciousness of peace in different families found in the contemporary Nigerian State.⁹ It would at least empower them ideologically to conquer psychologically, from the massive negative influence of violence, conflict, and terror reportage that make the headlines of Nigerian and African print and electronic media in the morning, afternoon, and night of each passing day.

However, Christ, the Absolute Peace Himself presented a form of environmental peace to the troubled earth in Luke chapter two verse fourteen, when His birth was heralded with the salutation; glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of goodwill. The truth remains that no other time than the twenty-first century does the earth seriously groan and wail for peace. This is because the forms of environmental problems facing the globe from tsunamis to earthquakes, climate change damages, and other forms of man-driven violence cannot be over-emphasized. The fact that the ozone layer is melting and heat is already killing people in different parts of the earth calls for a new peace of Christ upon the earth. Such heat has become a day-to-day reality as it has sent thousands of Nigerians living in the northern parts of the country to the grave while others are left mourning, in their hospital beds. The Nigerian environment is also under the heavy burden of floods, desertification, and the food insecurity that goes with it. While some of these environmental problems are caused by the reckless activities of man, others are natural and, hence can only be managed by God's divine power.

In the gospel of John 14:1, Christ warned humanity that their heart should not be troubled. All they need is to repent from their selfish personal beliefs as well as self-centredness and move towards the consciousness of Christ as a way to the Father. Thus, He encouraged man in verse fifteen of the same chapter to love Him and keep His commandments as a policy guide and behavioural ethics toward a better world order. Then in verse twenty-seven, Christ, the Ultimate Peace stated that "I leave you with peace". The peace He will give humanity is not as the world gives in peace-making or summits as such mediated or negotiated peace often goes with a lot of price tags. The peace theology of Christ that the hearts of men should not be troubled remains a strategic message of hope to millions of Nigerians. This is because Nigeria, the acclaimed Giant of Africa is currently on its knees. It has been crippled by poverty, lack of energy, and collapsing health and education sector. The dream for sustainable social amenities in Nigerian villages is close to a neurotic hallucination, as the government of many states of the federation can no longer pay their civil servants their due wages for months. The worst case scenario is that the political messiahs, who came with the chants of change, have badly mismanaged the economy that many Nigerians have been sentenced to a world of perpetual fasting as hunger forces them to pray all manners of wicked prayers in their current state of economic hopelessness.

The teachings of Christ centred on love, forgiveness, and truth and they are fundamental for re-the engineering of Nigerian society. The love for one another, which by extension promotes the national spirit of unity, is completely dead in the Nigerian State. Every true observer of the Nigerian reality knows that in all sectors of the Nigerian national life, ethnicity, religion, state of origin, local government of origin and communal cleavages are the order of the day. It defines appointments, promotions, business affiliations, etc. Thus, the Christo-peace theory of love is needed to create the necessary national bonding that currently exists only in media jingles and during football matches. Truth commissions are needed to unravel many hidden secrets of mass killings, conflicts and deep-rooted corruption that is currently been undermined by wrong policies. The current anti-corruption mantra and its body language of political witch-hunting is only going to succeed if truth becomes the determinant of the actions of men and women in the process of Nigerian nation-building. Forgiveness is also necessary to ensure that the individuals and groups in Nigeria reconcile with each other and live happily with one another.

⁹ Vincent Okwudiba Anyika and Kelechi Johnmary Ani, "Track Five Diplomacy: The Role of Peace Education in Peacebuilding in Ebonyi State, Nigeria," *African Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 12, no. 3 (2023): 183.

The Impact and Implications of Christo-Peace

The section below provides the characteristics of Christo-Peace.

- a. **Good Sleep:** The ability to sleep peacefully is fundamental evidence of a good life. A man who has sustainable deep peace lies down to sleep wholesomely. Ironically, the man whose life is characterized by multiple, intractable and progressive challenges finds it difficult to sleep well. This is because all manners of existential worry eliminate the factors necessary to re-enforcing deep sleep in the person's life. David acknowledged that his life of deep sleep comes from God. In Psalm 4: 8, he stated "I will both lie down in peace and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Every man who hardly sleeps could consult the fountain of God's peace through deep repentance as well as the total acknowledgement that God still restores 'all that the devil has stolen', that keeps him or her awake.
- b. **Family Peace:** Family peace is another evidence of the reign of Christo-peace. When a family fears the Lord and keeps His word, that fear of God, removes the excessive behaviours that undermine family peace. The fear of God will naturally remove drunkenness, which relatively eliminates physical violence at home. The fear of God checks wasteful spending on prostitutes, hard drugs, cultism, etc; which directly creates more savings and wealth for domestic investment and improved standard of living that ignites the flame of good life and re-enforces social peace. Christ stated "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you" (Mathew 10:13). Christ made this declaration when he sent the twelve disciples on evangelism. It should be noted that the central or determining factor towards the receipt of this form of family peace is the 'worthiness of the household' and it is a known truth that Christian fellowships often transform human behaviours into positive and worthy social characters that would create progressive conditions for sustainable peace.
- c. **Psychical Peace:** Christo-peace advances the nature of psychical peace in the heart of men and reduces the numerous things that trouble the heart. St John captured it properly, when he quoted Christ saying "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). The peace of the heart is connected to the peace of the mind. It is popular knowledge that a proper interpretation of the psychical reality of man and its neurotic trauma and stress often triggers medical troubles. However, when the above form of peace is developed in the heart of man, it helps in the management of multiple forms of sicknesses that are connected directly to the network between the psyche and the heart. Christ even went further to argue that "these things I have spoken to you that in Me, you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulations but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Christ simply maintains that true life in Him is a major source of peace of mind or psychical peace. The long-run effect in the country will be the increase in the human and social capital of the country.¹⁰
- d. **Peace in the Faith-based Community.** The culture of peace in any Christian community lays the enabling foundation for understanding one another, which naturally allows for tolerance, love and spiritual bonding to grow. However, when a member of the Church, especially the born-again people, church leaders, priests, pastors and bishops begins to engage in violent acts of wickedness and sin; the overall fruit of the Holy Spirit will drop in that faith-based community. While that happens, the push-and-pull effects of managing an intractable wound on faith would start as some will advocate widespread secrecy, while others will champion open confrontations. Unfortunately, both processes of managing faith-based wounds have their own multiplier negative effects. When a matter of faith is openly confronted by church leadership, it allows for open revelation of truth and popular knowledge of a matter, which makes it a reference evidence in ecclesia history. It also leads to true reconciliation and

¹⁰ Peter S Onwe and Kelechi Johnmary Ani, "An Appraisal of Intercultural Philosophy and Social Capital as a Panacea for Nigerian National Development," *Journal of Nation-Building and Policy Studies* 8, no. 2 (2024): 5.

sustainable peace as well as speedy healing. On the other hand, when a wound of faith is covered up to avoid negative stains on the church, it creates room for gossiping, and rumours as well as leaves neurotic experiences that create violent psychology on the offended partner and his or her apologists. And that creates room for conflict re-occurrence, thereby making love and bonding difficult in the community of faith. However, the love and unity that reigns in faith-based communities during the reign of peace has the power to convert an observer or sinner into Christianity. In 2nd Corinthians 13: 11, Paul urged categorically that brethren should live in peace: “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you”. Peace simply makes a faith-based community complete as people bring in their talents, gifts, money, etc to serve God perfectly. Peace brings comfort to the Church and places the burning fire to fellowship in the hearts of members. This peace in faith-based communities explains the increasing boom in the multiplication of churches as well as the heavy corruption going on in some of these churches.¹¹ However, the fundamental fact is that people approach the churches due to the peace they derive from theological programs there-in.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need for the Christian community in Nigeria to understand the time and season like the biblical sons of Issachar. This is the time when the globe has become overtaken by war, conflicts and crises. Hence, the people of God must as a matter of urgency pursue peace with all men. This culture of peace has remained elusive in the Nigerian national behavior hence there is a fundamental need for Christian preachers and theologians to concentrate on preaching and advancing peace talks while bearing in mind that the harsh economic realities of the Nigerian state have been undermining the inner peace that the Lord gives to the church in Nigeria. Again, there is a need for increased prayers for prophet grace that is divine and not those driven by charms and cultic influences. This prophetic grace has the capacity to prophesy into the future of the citizenry and influence the lives of Christians towards peace as currently witnessed in Zion Pryer Ministry Outreach. The government on the other hand needs to also use the instrument of the law to check the excesses of the Christian churches, especially in relation to fraudulent exploitation of members and deceitful preachings. The members of the church must pray more for the will of God towards unity and peace amongst the souls in the Christian community. This will help in enhancing the corporate culture of peace in the Christian faith and in the country at large.

CONCLUSION

The above analogy presents the place of Christo-peace in a faith-based community and how Christo-peace could transform the individual and collective lives of members. Consequently, man must struggle to live a holy life. The Christians need to eschew all manners of wickedness and abort lack of forgiveness and other sins that undermine self as well as society at large. By doing so, they would be preparing themselves for the eternal abode of peace, where their souls would enjoy optimal and perpetual peace. As difficult as it is to pursue peace in this violent world; Christians still have to put all they have into the quest to pursue peace with all men (Hebrew 12:14) using all forms of strategies because “the glory of this later temple (of ours when man makes heaven) shall be greater than the former (in this violent world), says the Lord of Hosts. And in this place, I will give peace says the Lord of Hosts” (Haggai 2:9). On the last day, holy men who lived a good life on earth will enjoy eternal peace because according to St. Paul in Romans 5:1, he maintained that “therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Finally, it should be noted that peace on earth is central to the plan of God during the creation of man. Luke 2:14 refers to it where it documents and advocates for “glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.” It must be noted that until humanity openly declares war on wickedness, crisis, etc forgiveness, and other multiplier effects of sins that uproot the foundations of

¹¹ Kelechi Johnmary Ani, Vincent Okwudiba Anyika, and Dominique Emmanuel Uwizeyimana, “The Political Elite, Church and Corruption in Nigerian Environment,” *Journal of Reviews on Global Economics* 8 (2019): 1598–1603.

sustainable peace; the world will not know peace. The earlier men courageously pursue the path of peace, the better for man in his dream to attain his manifest destiny on earth and make heaven afterward.

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ABOUT AUTHOR

Kelechi Johnmary Ani bagged a doctoral degree in Peace Studies from the Department of Politics and International Relations, North West University, South Africa. He is of the Afrocentric Governance of Public Affairs Policy, North West University, South Africa.