THE "DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE" PROGRAMME OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND PEACE IN NIGERIA: A THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL ASSESSMENT
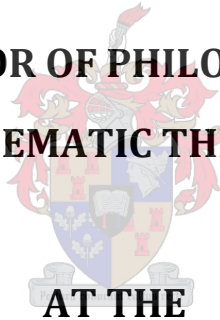
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DISSERTATION PRESENTED FOR THE

DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

PROMOTER: DR. CLINT LE BRUYNS

DECEMBER 2012

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously in its entirety or in part to any University for a degree.

Signature

Date

ABSTRACT

This dissertation has been motivated by the prevailing trends of violence in Nigeria and the detrimental effects on human dignity as understood from a theological perspective. The call for peace building by the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) is an important attempt to address the issue of violence which should be taken seriously by the Christian church in Nigeria in its own efforts to address this problem. The increasing deteriorating relations and persistent inter-religious, socio-economic, political and cultural violent strife constitute primary contributing factors that threaten peace in Nigeria. For a long time, this concern has necessitated careful, honest and sincere revisiting. This research which is based on the DOV is motivated by the framework of the global human community which has been marked by numerous structures of violence, injustice, oppression and discrimination causing suffering to millions of men, women and children.

Violence, whether physical, structural, psychological or in other forms, is shown to be a denial and abuse of life. Affirming human dignity, the basic rights of people and their integrity, shows that justice is vital to lasting peace and that the denial of the dignity of others serves as motivation for and usually also constitutes the first casualty of any form of violence. Violence, therefore, reaches beyond physical harm to the violation of the personhood of the other. Victims of violence referred to in this study are mostly the innocent and the powerless whose dignity is being violated by religious, social, economic and political structures. Nigerian history testifies to such denials of human dignity through the deplorable and persistent violence in the country.

Furthermore, the world is responding to this situation, and similar situations elsewhere, with growing concern and determination. Since 2001, the World Council of Churches has been addressing violence in many different ways. It has generated significant alliances and measures to prevent violence and educate people on peacemaking, by declaring 2001-2010, the Decade to Overcome Violence. Through the DOV, the WCC has declared prevention of violence a public and organisational priority, thus, requesting all member states to establish violence prevention programmes within their ministries.

One of the questions posed at the onset of the programme is whether it is possible to eradicate violence completely and establish world peace within a decade. However, the initiative does not

actually claim that it would overcome all forms of violence. At the end of the Decade, violence might still be witnessed, but by participating in this global movement for peace, the churches would have become sensitised to situations of violence within and around them and would have been sufficiently motivated to participate in the task of healing the brokenness around them. The desire and aspiration to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence in a Christian and ecumenical spirit, however, is rooted in the gift and promise that Christ made to his disciples: *"My peace I give you"*, and *"blessed are the peacemakers…"* (Matthew 5:9).

Against this background, engaging Hans Küng's work becomes consequential, since a number of key implications for the Nigerian church and society have emerged in the attempt to consider Küng's Christology of peace as a framework. Küng's work is employed as the basic framework of this research as he provides us with a Christology of active non-violence and an ideology of peace. He presents us with a historical Jesus who demonstrated peace building and reconciliation in his ministry. Therefore, if the Christian tradition wants to contribute to peace in the contemporary world, then it needs to rediscover the radical non-violence of its founder and take seriously his disclosure of God. For Küng, peace can only have its root in the world (and that includes Nigeria), if it is established through radical humanism, transcendence, love and obedience.

OPSOMMING

Die motivering vir hierdie tesis het ontstaan in die heersende tendens van geweld in Nigerië en die nadelige impak wat dit het op menswaardigheid, soos verstaan vanuit `n teologiese perspektief. Die oproep vir vrede deur die Dekade om Geweld te Oorkom (DGO) programme van die Wêreldraad van Kerke (WVK) is `n belangrike stap in die poging om die kwessie van geweld aan te spreek. Dit moet ernstig opgeneem word deur die Christelike Kerk in Nigerië en deel vorm van die kerk se pogings om hierdie probleem aan te spreek.

Die toenemend verslegtende verhoudings en volgehoue inter-religieuse, sosio-ekonomiese, politiese en kulturele geweldadige worstelinge vorm deel uit van die bydraende faktore wat vrede in Nigerië bedreig. Hierdie bekommernis is al vir `n geruime tyd een wat versigtige, eerlike en opregte aandag nodig het. Hierdie navorsing is gebaseer op die DGO en is geinspireer deur die raamwerk van die globale menslike gemeenskap wat gekenmerk word deur verskeie strukture van geweld, onreg, onderdrukking en diskriminasie – wat lei tot die lyding van miljoene mans vroue en kinders.

Geweld, of dit nou fisies, struktureel, sielkundig of in ander vorme gepleeg word, kan gereken word as `n miskenning en mishandeling van lewe. Deur menswaardigheid te bevestig, die basiese regte van mense en hulle integriteit, word daar gewys dat geregtigheid van kardinale belang is om volhoubare vrede te vestig. Die ontneming van hierdie waardigheid gewoonlik as `n motivering en eerste stap in die ontstaan van enige vorm van geweld beskou.

Geweld strek daarom verder as fisiese skade en sluit ook in die skending van die menslikheid van ander. Slagoffers van geweld in hierdie studie is meestal die onskuldiges en magteloses wie se waardigheid aangetas is deur religieuse, sosiale, ekonomiese en politieke strukture.
Nigeriese geskiedenis wys dat hierdie ontneming van menswaardigheid uit in die betreurenswaardige en aanhoudende geweld in die land.

Die wêreld reageer op hierdie situasie, en soortgelyke situasies in ander lande, met groeiende bekommernis en vasberadenheid. Die Wêreldraad van Kerke het sedert 2001 geweld op verskeie maniere aangespreek. Dit het betekenisvolle alliansies en maatstawwe in plek gesit om geweld te

voorkom en om mense op te lei in die sluit van vrede, onder meer deur 2001 – 2010 as die Dekade om Geweld te Oorkom te verklaar. Deur die DGO het die Wêreldraad van Kerke die voorkoming van geweld as `n openbare en organisatoriese prioriteit verklaar, en daardeur alle lidstate versoek om voorkomingsprogramme vir geweld binne hulle bedienings in plek te stel.

Een van die vrae wat aan die begin van die programme gevra word, is of dit moontlik is om binne `n dekade geweld geheel en al uit te wis en wêreldvrede te vestig, alhoewel die inisiatief nie aanspraak maak daarop dat dit alle vorme van geweld sal oorkom nie. Aan die einde van die dekade mag daar moontlik steeds' geweld voorkom, maar deur deelname aan hierdie globale beweging vir vrede, word kerke gesensitiseer oor situasies van geweld binne en rondom hulle en word hulle genoegsaam gemotiveer om deel te neem aan die taak om die gebrokenes rondom hulle te genees. Die begeerte en aspirasies om die gees, logika en praktyk van geweld te oorkom in `n Christelike en ekumeniese gees, is gegrond op die gawe en belofte wat Christus aan sy dissipels gemaak het: "My vrede gee ek vir julle" en "geseend is die vredemakers...." (Matteus 5:9).

Die bestudering van Hans Küng se werk, veral sy Christologie van vrede, is gevolglik belangrik, aangesien dit `n aantal sleutel implikasies inhou vir die Nigeriese kerk en samelewing en `n raamwerk bied vir vrede. Küng se werk word aangebied as die basiese raamwerk vir hierdie navorsing, aangesien hy `n Christologie bied van aktiewe nie-geweldadigheid en `n ideologie van vrede. Hy bied `n historiese Jesus aan wat vredemaking en versoening in sy bediening gedemonstreer het. Daarom, as die Christelike tradisie iets wil bydra tot die bereiking van vrede in die kontemporêre wêreld, dan moet dit die radikale nie-geweldadigheid van sy stigter herbesoek en sy openbarings van God ernstig opneem. Volgens Küng kan vrede slegs in die wêreld bewerkstellig word (en dit sluit Nigerie in) as dit gevestig word deur radikale humanisme, voortreflikheid, liefde en gehoorsaamheid.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God for enabling me to complete the research as well as to my late father Haji Kajom, my mother Rhoda Kajom and my devoted wife Grace D. Kajom, my lovely children Emmanuel, Daniel and Ezekiel for their love, concern, sacrifice, prayers and moral support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

There are number of people who have motivated me and contributed to the development of this dissertation without whose efforts it would never have materialised.

First, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to my supervisor, Dr Clint Le Bruyns for his limitless guidance, support, and patience, throughout my research.

My sincere thanks go to my wife, my children, the Kaduna DCC and ECWA Headquarters for their kind support and encouragement, to the members of the BCS congregation for their kind gesture to me and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) for their financial assistance during the course of my study. I would also like to thank the entire Kajom family for helping me come this far. May God reward their laudable efforts, which have made me what I am.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Prof. Nico Koopman and the staff of the University of Stellenbosch, for their kindness and support. I especially recognise Dr Len Hansen's help and meaningful suggestions.

My humble thanks to Human Dignity project (OSP Bursaries) for their financial scholarship that enabled me to continue with my studies after I had exhausted my income. Indeed, if it were not for their funding assistance, I would have terminated my studies halfway.

Above all, my thanks go to my friends Nathan Chiroma and Matthew Michael for their meaningful advice and sacrifice through the development of this study and especially to Dr. Funlola Olojede my language editor.

ABBREVIATIONS

BCS   Baptist Church Stellenbosch

CCPD   Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development

DOV   Decade to Overcome Violence

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

IMF   International Monetary Fund

JPIC   Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

PCR   Programme to Combat Racism

POV   Programme to Overcome Violence

SAP   Structural Adjustment Programme

UN   United Nations

UNDP   United Nations Development Programme

WCC   World Council of Churches

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Phenomenon of Violence in Nigeria

The multi-religious Federal Republic of Nigeria, located on the coast of West Africa, is the most populous of African states, with about 150 million people in 2006. Nigeria consists of 36 States with the capital at Abuja in central Nigeria. Robert reports that, "Approximately 45 per cent of the population are Muslims (following the Sunni tradition), and 55 per cent Christian, plus traditional practitioners."[1] There are more than 250 ethnic groups, the major ones being the "Hausa and Fulani" in the North, the Yoruba in the Southwest, and the Igbo in the East. Nigeria became a British colony in the late nineteenth century and gained independence in 1960.[2]

Nigeria's national anthem ends with the phrase "peace and unity," a theme which captures the dreams of the founding fathers of Nigeria, but which unfortunately has not been realised in a country plagued with different forms of violence. Violence in Nigeria is a multi-causal phenomenon. Similarly, as Enns, Holland, and Riggs have rightly noted, the "culture of violence" exists, which is socialised in the family, educational institutions, the workplace, and the media.[3] The sources and causes of violence are many and varied. In the Nigerian context, violence has been attributed largely to bad governance characterised by corruption, electoral manipulation, human rights abuses, and lack of accountability and justice in the distribution of

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[1]Robert, R. *Crafting the New Nigeria: Confronting the Challenge*. Boulder: Lyme Rienner, 2004, pp. 260-265.

[2]Robert, *Crafting the New Nigeria*, pp. 260-265. Robert furthermore states that, "Nigeria came under the colonial rule of the British (United Kingdom) during the second half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. The United Kingdom conquered the territory of present-day Nigeria, except for the section of former German-controlled Kamerun in several stages. The British dependencies of Northern and Southern Nigeria were merged into a single territory in 1914, and a legislative council, initially with limited African representation was created in 1922. Traditional native rulers, however, administered various territories under the supervision of the colonial authorities. In 1947, a federal system of government was established under a new Nigerian constitution introduced by the United Kingdom. This system was based on three regions: Eastern, Western and Northern. The idea was to reconcile the regional and religious tensions as well as accommodating the interest of diverse ethnic groups: mainly the Ibo (in the east), the Yoruba (in the west) and the Hausa and Fulani (in the north). However, the Nigerian government has been a multiparty government transitioning from military to civilian rule" (pp. 260-65).

[3]Enns, F., Holland, S. and Riggs A. (ed.). *Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation*. Grand Rapids: Cascadia Publishing House, 2004, p. 148.

national politico-economic resources[4]. Other factors include differences in values and unmet psychological needs, and so on. These causes of violence may be subsumed under political, cultural, socio-economic ethnic and psychological factors. The effects of violence manifest in a number of ways especially in insecurity, which could be political, socio-economic, socio-cultural or religious.

According to Enns, Holland, and Riggs, violence in Nigeria is a multi-causal phenomenon and as a social phenomenon, it manifests in a number of ways:[5]

1. Political violence is seen concretely as 20 years of armed internal conflict between the state and different insurgent groups. Since the 1980s, the state and the insurgency – the self-defence groups known as the paramilitary groups – have been parties to the conflict.

2. Socio-economic violence is the product of economic inequalities, reflected in conflict that goes beyond politics and manifests in the high levels of crimes against life, personal safety and property.

3. Socio-cultural violence is the result of the intolerance of those who conceive of people from marginalised groups as the enemy, stigmatizing them because of their ethnicity, gender, or behaviour. These include the group of people who have been executed by the misnamed "ethnic cleansing"[6] organisations.

4. The violence of drug trafficking and the struggle for territorial control that is linked to it has displaced thousands of people, the majority being women and children. In addition to overt violence, several other forces are wreaking havoc in the Nigerian society.

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[4]Ahmed, S. S. "Overcoming Conflict in Africa: Impact on World Peace". *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2009, Vol. 9, No.1, p. 7.

[5]Enns, Holland and Riggs, *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, p. 149.

[6]Breton, has defined ethnic cleansing as "the forcible removal of an ethnically defined population from a given territory" and as "occupying the central part of a continuum between genocide on one end and nonviolent pressured ethnic emigration on the other end". Therefore, ethnic cleansing likewise can be define, at one end it is virtually indistinguishable from forced emigration and population exchange while at the other it merges with deportation and genocide. At the most general level, however, ethnic cleansing can be understood as the expulsion of a population from a given territory. Breton, A. (ed.). *Nationalism and Rationality*. Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 248.

5. The study of ethno-religious violence has shown that Nigeria has witnessed numerous outbreaks of ethno-religious violence in the last two decades. Over the years, the search for durable peaceful co-existence among Nigerians seems elusive. Without a doubt, there is an urgent need to move from mere lip service and the use of platitudes to practical reality in the search for peace.

At this point, the discussion will focus on several studies which have described and investigated the concept of violence, eventually highlighting the Nigeria situation in a more structured way.

Paden opines that the key to instability in Nigeria is the continued pattern of religious imbalance within both the military and the political classes[7]. Nigeria remains a multi-religious (not a secular) society, and as such, its practical policies and its constitutional guidelines ought to protect and respect all religions. The larger issues of democratic rule and human rights have to take account of the fragile imbalance of the geo-cultural and religious zones in Nigeria.

Similarly, Robert notes that, unfortunately, with the return to civilian rule in 1999, and the establishment of the Fourth Republic, Christian and Muslim populations have clashed in several areas.[8] For example, in Kaduna State in 2000, tensions over the establishment of the *shari'a* law in the criminal domains (for Muslims only) resulted in violence and in the death of about three thousand people. Furthermore, in 2002, Muslims were enraged because of certain anti-religious comments made in connection with the Miss World beauty pageant that was scheduled to hold in Nigeria. More than a hundred people were killed in the violence that ensued. In the spring of 2004, an ethno-religious dispute also arose in Plateau State between cattle herdsmen (Muslims) and settled farmers (Christians), which resulted in the death of thousands of people. Reprisals followed in the Kano metropolitan area and about one hundred Christians were killed.

In February 2006, many Christians were killed in Borno State, followed by reprisals in the southeastern states, after the widespread dissemination of the Danish cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed which Muslims considered blasphemous. Robert reports that, "according to conservative estimate, about 4500 lives were lost; making Nigeria in global comparison, the site

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[7]Paden, J. *Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1986, p. 659.
[8]Robert, *Crafting the New Nigeria*, p. 665.

of the largest number of death that is caused by religion violence" [9]. Kiras rightly notes that in a world of meaningless violence, increased terrorism, racial and class struggles, domestic disturbance, full-fledged wars, guerrilla attacks and increasing rebel movements, the dire need of peace has become increasingly glaring; every line of good news published by the media meets with equal measure of bad news that have robbed the world of its peace[10].

Michael[11] confirms that there is crisis on almost every front of the human society - whether in the environment, the social spheres, economy, politics or religion. After World War II, the guilty conscience of the world was aroused about the brutality of war. However, despite the creation of the United Nations and the increasing presence of non-governmental organisations, which fight for peace, the world has witnessed some of its most brutal human crises such as the genocide in Rwanda and the merciless killings in Darfur, among others.

In the same way, Waruta and Kinoti state that violence implies all that militates against or hamper the normal development of an individual or of a group of people. For example, violence in Nigeria can be seen in forms of fratricidal or genocidal wars and the resultant civil problems are similar to what occurs in other African countries such as Uganda, Liberia, Somalia, Angola, Rwanda, or South Africa, just to mention a few. As a result, millions of people are displaced either inside or outside their countries. Dictatorial and oppressive regimes are a common feature while democracy, justice and respect for human rights are generally considered unattainable values[12].

According to Turaki, the implementation of a full *shari'a* legal system in Nigeria during the Fourth Republic (1999-2003), has raised and sharpened debates caused socio-political and religious conflicts and raised many issues for the contemporary Nigerian society. The issues

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[9]Robert, *Crafting the New Nigeria*, p. 666.
[10]Kiras, J. D. *"Terrorism and Globalisation": World Politics*. London: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 479-497.
[11]Michael, M. "The Bible, Peace and Violence" Unpublished Paper Presented at the ECWA Theological Seminary Jos Faculty Lectures on 28- 29th February 2008, p. 2.
[12]Waruta, D. and Kinoti, H. *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000, pp. 41-42.

include legal and constitutional matters as well as questions of national citizenship, human and religious rights, and peaceful co-existence of all people groups in Nigeria[13].

Kukah has also observed that violence affects numerous people, families and even churches in Nigeria all the time. It leaves the affected people, families and churches in extreme state of poverty and despair. Victims of violence suffer the consequences of socio-economic hardship, humiliation and embarrassment[14]. The tragedies of violence usually include premature death, leading to pains in the hearts of relations of the victims. Klauser also rightly notes that violence (war) has definitely sent many families, organisations and countries into deep mourning as they ponder over the loss of those whose lives were cut short at the time nobody expected[15].

Michael asserts that, "in this context of mistrust, insecurity, many Christians have also become unfortunately violent in order to confront the challenge of an increasing Islamic fundamentalism"[16]. Living in such a context of hostility between Christianity and Islam, the people in the Northern part of Nigeria have a foretaste of the global conflict between Christianity and Islam in a microcosm. In a way, Northern Nigeria becomes a prototype of the global scenario that is marked by a quest to forestall the spread of Islamic fundamentalism[17].

The fact is that there is now the demarcation of residential areas (e.g. in Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Sokoto) based on residents' religious profession, with Christians seeking accommodation among other Christians and Muslims seeking residence in locations with a heavy Muslim presence. This growing division between Christians and Muslims is indeed a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which enjoins Christians to be "peacemakers" (Matt. 5:9), since it moves towards alienation instead of peacemaking. Bridging the increasing gulf between these two groups in Northern Nigeria is not just a necessity but a necessity of the Christian message.

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[13]Turaki, Y. *Historical and Religious Experience of Islam in West Africa.* Jos: Challenge Press, 2003, p. 115.

[14]Kukah, M. H. *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1999, pp. 102-115.

[15]Klausner, S. Z. "Violence" In M. Eliade (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Religion.* Vol. 15. New York: Macmillan, 2007, pp. 451-457.

[16]Michael, *The Bible, Peace and Violence,* p, 3

[17]Michael, *The Bible, Peace and Violence*, p. 4.

According to Howard, peaceful coexistence and security has been one of the major struggles of humankind, from time immemorial[18]. The fabrication of weapons as well as the construction of shelter and fences to keep wild animals and enemies at bay clearly demonstrates this struggle. No society can attain and maintain any reasonable level of socio-economic progress without the security of lives and property of the people. No wonder, Obigbolu identifies security as the third priority of humankind in the hierarchy of needs. Perhaps, it is against this background that Obigbolu also describes security as the most probable of all basic constitutional responsibilities of government to its citizens[19].

However, Kastfalt laments the state of security in Nigeria noting that the security of many communities and the country at large has degenerated beyond mockery; people can hardly sleep with both eyes closed for the fear of victimization, even from the next-door neighbour.[20] The recent upheaval of the Boko Haram sect in some northern states prompted the killing of many innocent lives and the destruction of property worth millions of dollars. Shehu Yar Adua, the late President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria identified security as the rallying point of the economy and its strategic position in the attainment of the Vision 2020 and Millennium Development Goals[21]. In a 2009 edition of the *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Shauna Mottiar also points out that in the South-South of Nigeria, the issue of protracted violence in the Niger Delta area is also a threat to peace in Nigeria.

The basis of the struggle against the manifestation of injustice serves as the background for this research. It should be acknowledged that, in many instances, the struggle for justice is the cause of conflict or disruption, as Enns rightly declares, "There can be no peace anywhere unless there is justice for all, everywhere"[22].

Kanyandago has also shown that violence is not predominantly a threat in the form of nuclear war as in the cold war era. Rather, we see how violence presents itself today in multiple forms as

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[18]Howard, M. "The Concept of Peace in Encounter" In Mary N. Getui & Peter Kanyandago (eds.). *From Violence to Peace: A Challenge for African Christianity*. Nairobi: Acton Publisher, 1983, p. 4ff.

[19]Obigbolu, F. "Nigeria: Peace and Security Tool for National Development." *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2009, Vol. 9, No. 17, pp. 12-29.

[20]Kastfalt, N. Religious and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity. London: British Academic Press, 1994, p. 4ff.

[21]Obigbolu, *Nigeria: Peace and Security,* p. 25.

[22]Enns, Holland and Riggs, *Seeking Cultures of Peace,* p. 26.

a threat to human relationships and life, to all of creation and, therefore, as a challenge to all Christian churches[23].

In Getui's opinion, the various faces of violence testify to the reality and magnitude of violence, not only in Nigeria and Africa, but in the world at large.[24] What is significant in this study is the recognition that reconciliation and peace are not only necessary, but are viable or feasible, and that religion, in particular, Christianity as well as the diverse African (Nigerian) traditional religious heritage, can be utilised towards this end.

The assessment and appropriation of the position of Nigeria regarding its participation in peace building especially in non-violence projects are crucial. The evaluation will be based on the role and policy of the Decade to Overcome Violence programme.

For Wallin, the common element of peace building in the many peace movements has been the attempt to persuade people and governments to adopt alternatives to existing policies which are more peaceable[25]. Thus, the strategies of these peace movements often cover a narrow spectrum of education, dissent, protest, and active resistance. Human violence against other humans is most disturbing and it is the most challenging problem facing the world (specifically Nigerian communities) today.

According to Huber[26], whoever switches on television programmes, or looks at movie or video advertising will quickly realise that we are confronted with a new "culture of violence" - violence, even in its most sadistic, dehumanising forms, is shown openly and used as a means of so-called entertainment. Many indicators suggest that the uninhibited presentation of violence in the media contributes remarkably to a preparedness to use violence in real life. Furthermore, Brandes observes that violence surrounds us every day – in our families, in schoolyards, when using public transportation, and even on the highways; and every day we ourselves participate in this violence, at least, in those acts of violence that affect nature and the matrix of natural life.

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[23]Kanyandago, P. "From Violence to Peace: Statement and Outline of the Problem" In J. K. Mugambi & Carroll Houle (eds.). *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology*. Nairobi: Acton Publisher, 2001, pp. 174-189.

[24]Getui, M. "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe" Unpublished Paper presented at the Universal Forum of Culture, Barcelona, Spain, September 2004, p.7.

[25]Wallin, J. "Fundamentalism and the Modern World" *Sojourners Magazine*, March-April 2002, 29, p. 26.

[26]Huber, W. *Violence the Unrelenting Assault on Human Dignity*: Augsburg: Fortress. 1996, p. 15.

Nothing renders the search for sound ethical guidance more acute today than this outbreak of violence in its various forms[27].

The above comments are simply preliminary observations which reflect the real-life experiences of people who are directly affected by violence; they are not intended as a comprehensive theory of violence.

1. 2 The World Council of Churches and the Transformation of a Culture of Violence into a Culture of Peace

In 2001, the World Council of Churches, hereafter referred to as WCC, launched its Decade to Overcome Violence Programme,[28] which is an invitation to member churches and others to join in the transformation of the culture of violence into a culture of peace[29]. The Decade to Overcome Violence, hereafter referred to as DOV, has in itself the thrust to discover afresh the meaning of sharing a common humanity. Its aim is to articulate a call to repentance for our own complicity in violence, and explore, from within our faith traditions, ways to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. It is meant to be a forum for different people from all walks of life to work together for a world of peace in the context of local communities, secular movements and diversity of religious faith. It offers the time to analyse and expose different forms of violence and their interconnections with the aim of practicing solidarity with victims of violence[30].

Dickinson states that, "The WCC is committed to learning from the experience of the victims of violence and the oppressed and also from the experience of churches and other groups struggling against violence and oppression in their own situations"[31]. The various activities and *modus operandi* of the DOV will be explored in detail in this study.

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[27]Brandes, A. "In Die Stuttgatter Zeitung". *Journal of Controlled Release*, 5 September 1988, Vol. 154 (2), pp. 164-167. Reprinted in *Der Journalist.*

[28]"A basic framework for the Decade to Overcome Violence" Working Document Adopted by the WCC Central Committee, Geneva, 1999 *Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting of the Central Committee*, Geneva, WCC, 1999a, pp.59-63.

[29]Raiser, K. *Welcome and Remarks from WCC*, Geneva: WCC, 2000, p. 109.

[30]*A Basic Framework for the Decade to Overcome Violence*, p. 190.

[31]Dickinson, R. D. "Overcoming Violence: A Historical Reflection on a Decade to Overcome Violence". *The Ecumenical Review*, 1997, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 192-210.

"Overcoming violence" is not a new concern. Since its inception, the ecumenical movement, and more particularly the WCC, has been deeply engaged in the thinking and effort to "overcome violence." In recent decades, that concern has been mostly, but not exclusively, focused on the structural or systemic violence in political, economic, racial and gender relationships[32]. Thus, the DOV theme officially adopted by the WCC in 1999 is a natural outgrowth and expression of a long and continuing tradition. The decade runs from 2001 through 2010[33].

Announcing the DOV signals willingness among churches to deal with the question of violence. Enns, Holland and Riggs note that the search for possible ways to overcome violence may be seen as one of the central themes running through the WCC's movement[34]. There is a concern and goodwill to address the different manifestations of violence as well as the reality of violence itself. At the same time, we are well aware that we ourselves are part of the very violence we are trying to overcome. It is inherently a part of our own being. However, within this decade, which serves as a constant reminder of the many different issues of violence, we increasingly realise that we have accepted violence as unavoidable for too long. Nigerian Christian churches[35], in particular, as well as institutions of other faiths, are themselves often a part of the problem and only rarely a part of the solution. The DOV therefore does not preach to the world to do something about violence but presents first a challenge to the churches to see how much they themselves are part of the problem. Such recognition could be relevant to other faith communities as well[36].

The WCC has an overarching objective of a cultural transformation, that is, an attempt to build a counter culture to the culture of violence. The DOV programme aims to address the spirit, logic and practice of violence. Violence does not fall from heaven; it takes place where norms, values, belief systems and cultures provide the needed legitimization[37]. Similarly, Ucko points out that the main objective of the decade is to build a culture of peace by striving to overcome the spirit,

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[32]Thomas, M. M. *Risking Christ for Christ's Sake*. Geneva: WCC, 1987, p. 189.
[33]Thomas, *Risking Christ*, p. 201.
[34]Enns, Holland and Riggs, *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, p. 180.
[35]The term "Christian Churches" is used here as a proper noun to refer to the whole Christian religious tradition through history or to a community of believers. The term is not meant to refer to a particular "Christian Church" (a denomination or building) but to the body of Christ as an entity.
[36]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 192.
[37]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 193. Rollo, M. *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence*. New York: Norton and Co., 2003, p. 18.

logic and practice of violence. The WCC understands its role as a facilitator in this process in terms of analysing, interpreting and challenging various responses to violence[38].

Consequently, the thrust of the WCC's DOV could also be a framework for inter-religious exploration. Violence is a part of our human existence, it is a part of our religious traditions and therefore an issue that is central to inter-religious co-operation and reflection. The struggle against the spirit, logic and praxis of violence is a moral and spiritual struggle in which religious communities must lead the way. Such a struggle against violence must begin with a self-critical assessment of the role of religion, which is a challenge to the Nigerian churches[39]. It is in the context of the highlighted observations and conclusions that this research seeks to engage with the violent condition of Nigeria. Primarily, it seeks to critique the DOV programme of the WCC and appropriate it within the Nigerian context.

In an effort to be faithful to the Assembly's mandate, the focus of the WCC's work during the DOV is on the concept "overcome" rather than "violence". Therefore, the methodology that will be employed in this study will bring out the positive experiences of churches and groups working to overcome violence. The DOV initiative must grow out of the experiences and works of local churches and communities. The WCC could facilitate the exchange, act as a switchboard, and highlight experiences of local movements engaged in peace building, peacekeeping, and the prevention of violence. However, the DOV should move beyond the structures of the WCC in Geneva to include all member churches, non-member churches, NGOs, and other organisations that are committed to peace.

In order to move peace building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the Churches and to build stronger alliances and understanding among churches, networks, and movements which are working towards a culture of peace, the WCC has come out with the goals of the DOV. After years of elaborate discussions and intense preparations, the DOV (2001-2010) was formally launched on 4th February 2001 during a meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC in Berlin, Germany. The meeting provides helpful information about the aims of the DOV which the research hopes to explore.

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[38]Uncko, H. "Religion and Violence: An Inter-Religious Exploration. Introduction to a Multi-Faith Consultation." *The Quarterly of the World Council of Churches*, 2000, p. 105.
[39]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 192.

1.3 Definitions of Violence

Violence, defined as physical assault or the threat of physical assault against a person or property, occurs in almost every society. All aggression and violence can be seen as attempts to correct a perceived injustice. We see so much violence in the world today because serious injustices do in fact exist[40].

Violence is, on the one hand, an act of aggression and abuse that causes or intends to cause injury to person(s), and by some definitions, to animals or property[41]. Central to this concept of violence is the presence of the definite intention to cause significant (usually physical) injury, damage and harm. Another view of violence is when the word is used to denote the use of (legal) political force, such as executed by the police or military force. It does not mean that all police or military force is legal; it just indicates that we are talking about the public domain[42].

Therefore, violence is often a crime, and damage to property is typically considered minor relative to violence against persons. The term "violence" also connotes an aggressive tendency to act out destructive behaviours. Violence can be divided into two forms – random violence, which includes actions carried out by sanctioned or unsanctioned violent groups such as in wars (i.e. inter-societal violence) or in some cases, certain types of revolution or terrorism. The second has to do with distribution "the means of sharing the economic, social and political resources within a society", where perceived imbalance in distribution coincides with identity differences. A full discussion, of the various forms and shapes of violence will follow later in this study[43].

1.4 Statement of Problem

It has been widely acknowledged that the twentieth century was an age of great violence, and there are threatening signs that the twenty-first century may be even more violent and insecure[44]. Although Nigeria experienced a civil war in the past, violent conflicts remain a threat which makes Nigeria an unsafe place for many. Sophisticated arms supplied by western powers are

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[40]Grinnell, R. M. (Jr.) and Williams, M. *Research in Social Work: A Primer*. Ithaca: Peacock Publishers, 1990, p. 4.
[41]Dentan, T. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 18.
[42]Appleby, R. S. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p. 54.
[43]Ellul, J. *Violence Reflection from a Christian Perspective*. Edinburgh: SCM, 1970, p. 127.
[44]Manchala, D. *Nurturing Peace: Theological Reflections on Overcoming Violence*. Geneva: WCC Risk, 2005, p. 2.

used by the "Boko Haram"[45] to devastate and kill innocent men, women and children including political opponents. In Nigeria, religion plays a major role in fuelling and perpetrating violence[46]. A close examination of the history of Nigeria has shown that the country has constantly faced a life of uncertainty[47], that is, in addition to poverty, corruption, injustice, oppression, hunger, and political instability which further fuel all possible forms of violence. In the face of these different forms of violence in Nigeria, peace becomes an important subject of discussion which is also vigorously sought after[48]. Violent conflicts, wars, hostility and injustice are the greatest challenges confronting Nigeria in the present decade. Even though 'peace talks' seem to be implemented to counter violence, at present, violence and untold suffering in many parts of Nigerian indicate that "peace is not only important, but it is a rare and urgent commodity that the nation needs and must continue to struggle to achieve it at all cost in other to survive as a nation[49].

Clearly, the reoccurrence of violence in Nigeria which devastates many people and organisations (e.g. churches) is certainly a great challenge to the country, and one is left to wonder how peace initiatives can be achieve in such a context. The way forward in such a context becomes even more difficult for Christians, as there appears to be growing confusion regarding the theory of Christology of peace today. However, this research sets out to proffer Küng's Christology of peace as a framework for the DOV programme to overcome violence and to contribute to the conversation on how to nurture the culture of peace in Nigeria.

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[45]Boko Haram (figuratively, "Western or non-Islamic education is a sin") is a controversial Nigerian terrorist Islamist group that seeks the imposition of Shariah law in the northern states of Nigeria. The group presently has an undefined structure and chain of command. The official name of the group is Jama'atuAhlisSunnaLidda'awatiwal-Jihad, which in Arabic means "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad". The literal translation is "Association of Sunnis for the Propagation of Islam and for Holy War". It became known internationally following sectarian violence in Nigeria in 2009.

[46]Getui and Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace*, p.14.

[47]Awolalu, J. O. "Sin and its Removal in African Tradition Religion" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 1976, Vol. (9), pp. 21-57.

[48]Appiah, K. *In My Father House: What Does It Mean to Be an African Today?* Great Britain: Mickays of Chatham Plc., 1992, p. 19.

[49]Harris, R., Archer, G. L. and Walke, B. K. *Shalom Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1981, p. 71

1.5 Research Question

In the light of the various forms of violence in Nigeria and the quest of the WCC to address violence from the perspective of the Christian faith through the DOV programme, the research question of this study is formulated as follows:

What is the significance of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) programme of the World Council of Churches to the peace building effort of churches in Nigeria? What efforts have the churches made to achieve a violence-free decade in the society, or in what ways have they contributed to the violent nature of the decade?

Punch[50] outlines the main objectives of a research question thus: 1) it organises the project, and gives it direction and coherence; 2) it delimits the project, showing boundaries; 3) it keeps the researcher focused during the project; 4) it provides a framework for writing the project and 5) it points to the data that will be needed.

The research question here, therefore, points to the main objective of this study namely to explore what lessons could be learned by Nigerian churches from the DOV programme's call to overcome violence in the society and promote peace and dialogue.

The dissertation will be structured according to the central research question stated above. All the data and the arguments that will be raised in the course of the study will stand in the service of this central aim, that is, to discern what the DOV means to Nigerian churches in their quest to be churches that serve peace in Nigeria. The research question therefore will lend coherence to the study.

The central research question also serves to delimit the scope of the study. Of the multiplicity of themes that relate to peace, this study will limit its focus to the DOV, the themes of the DOV, and the central aim of discerning what the DOV means to Nigerian churches in the area of peace building.

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[50]Punch, K. F. *Introduction to Social Research: Quantitive and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications, 2005, pp. 36-37.

1.6 Motivation

This research is motivated by the prevailing trends of violence in Nigeria which has tampered with God's plan for human dignity. The call for peace building by the DOV programme of the WCC is a serious issue that needs urgent attention and action. The increasingly deteriorating relations and persistent inter-religious, socio-economic, political and cultural conflicts of a violent nature constitute the factors that threaten the peace of the nation. This concern has been screaming, for a long time, for a careful, honest and sincere re-visitation. The urge to ameliorate the global and local scenarios described above is the motivation behind this research, which looks at the unique place of peace in the DOV programme and its implication for the human condition or interaction in Nigeria. Similarly, the research on the DOV programme is motivated by the framework of the global human community that has been marked by numerous structures of injustice, oppression and discrimination which cause suffering to millions of men, women and children.

1.7 Research Methodology

The methodology of a research project indicates the path that will be travelled to answer the research question. This study will be done by means of a literature review (through evaluation method). However, theological and Christological categories will be employed to proffer solutions to and make recommendations in line with the research problem.

In other words, the study will employ both interpretive and critical epistemological methods — interpretive in the sense that it will carry out a contextual analysis of the state of peace in Nigeria. A phenomenological understanding of peace and/or lack of peace is gained through a textual analysis of the works of various authors (in literature). Cavell[51] introduces traditional epistemology by acknowledging two forms of interpretive understanding — phenomenological interpretation and conceptual interpretation. Phenomenological interpretation is based on empirical facts, while conceptual understanding is based on the meaning of concepts made up by claims of reasons that lead to the understanding of various concepts through scepticism, using consciousness and senses. This study will employ Cavell's[52] epistemology of conceptual

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[51]Cavel, S. *The Claim of Reason*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, pp. 191-143.
[52]Cavel, *The Claim of Reason,* p. 191.

interpretation in order to understand political, social, economic and religious conflicts as well as different faces of violence and their implication for Nigerian peace initiatives.

Conceptual analysis is deemed relevant to the understanding of the concept of peace as described by the WCC and in the Nigerian context. This will be examined in detail to ensure the validity of the research. Interpretive evaluation is also carried out to understand the programme of the DOV from the WCC documents. Therefore, the conceptual interpretation and evaluation approaches will be used in this study[53]. An interpretation of the Nigerian context and the understanding of the ideologies and conceptions of peace by the WCC through the DOV create space for a critical evaluation of Küng's conceptual framework of Christology of peace as a normative approach to this study[54]. In order words, Küng's framework serves as the basis for the interpretation of concepts that are considered relevant to the Nigerian context. This does not suggest that Küng's conceptual framework is the final word but that the concepts are considered valuable at the time this research is being conducted. Further details on this point will be provided in the course of the discussion.

1.8 Research Structure

The research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 covers the background of the study, the research problem, research question, theoretical framework and research methodology.

Chapter 2 will explore the political, social, economic, ethnic and religious factors that contribute to the reality of violence and the quest for peace initiatives in Nigeria. The chapter will examine the literature on the nature, manifestation, forms, and causes of violence in Nigeria. The comments are intended to be simply observations reflecting the real-life experiences of people who are directly affected by violence, and are not intended as a comprehensive theory.

In Chapter 3, the literature that explains the nature and goals, contents, processes and programmes of the DOV will be analysed. The chapter is based on the assumption that the DOV programme of the WCC can influence peace and provide possible ways to overcome violence in Nigeria.

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[53]Derrida, J. *Writing and Difference*. London : Routledge & Paul 1978, p. 172.
[54]Bak, N. *Completing Your Thesis: A Practical Guide*. Hartfield, Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2004, p.79.

Chapter 4 is an overview of the ecumenical attitudes and responses to the DOV agenda. In the chapter, relevant theological prose on ecclesiology and peace building from the circles of the international ecumenical movement will be analysed. The aim is to evaluate the potential of the DOV to assist churches in various parts of the world in their call to peace building.

Chapter 5 will focus on the global dimension of violence and its effects on Nigeria by considering the persistence of violence or the causes of the outbreaks of persistent violence in Nigeria. Additionally, the elements that keep violence alive (that help to sustain, maintain or preserve violence) will be examined.

In Chapter 6, the study will consider Hans Küng's works on Christology, or Küng's Christology of peace as a framework for overcoming violence which will serve also as an Christological framework of peace. Küng's work remains the basic framework for this research because it provides four relevant compounds namely:

- Radical Humanism
- Radical Transcendence
- Radical Love
- Radical Obedience

The final chapter, Chapter 7 is titled "Synopsis, Recommendations and Conclusion". It will highlight the implications of the DOV for churches in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

THE REALITY OF VIOLENCE AND THE QUEST FOR PEACE INITIATIVES IN NIGERIA

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provides the background for the whole study. It presents the aim of the research taking into account the prevailing trends of violence in Nigeria and examining the wide varieties of violence holistically as well as the basic goals of the DOV that peace-making must be at the core of the life and witness of the churches. It is significant at this point to consider the reality of violence in the contemporary history of Nigeria which does not capture the dreams of the founding fathers encapsulated in the Nigerian national anthem that ends with "peace and unity" alongside the quest for peace. The proposal here is that Nigerian churches could learn from this great initiative of the DOV in order to overcome the challenges posed by the violence being witnessed in the nation.

The birth of the Nigerian State was a British formation and its structural plan of federalism a colonial paradigm. Nigerian federalism arose as the product of the very vigilant and scheming method dictated by the British colonial mandate from 1851 when Lagos was invaded until the time of independence in 1960. On the gradual assimilation of Nigeria by British colonial venture[55] from the onset of colonialism, Ibrahim notes that, "Nigeria's colonial legacy was a result of Frederick Lugard's system of indirect rule that had the fundamental under-pinning of 'divide-and-rule', which was anchored in the guiding principle of non-centralised administration or detached government for 'different people'"[56]. Yusuf also rightly claims that "the British colonial rulers adopted the policy of indirect rule… in the processes of governance, however, this policy led to the growth of certain definite structures and institutions, which to a degree still

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[55]Aikali, R. "Democracy and Political Violence in Nigeria" Kaduna: NDA Officers Training. (Course Notes) 2000, p.532.

[56]Ibrahim, J. "The Transformation of Ethno-Regional Identities". In Jega, A. (ed.). *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria.* Kano: Clear-impressio Ltd., 2003, pp. 162-167.

portray the contemporary Nigerian state"[57]. Thus, the basic principle of indirect rule which is divide-and-rule has negatively affected the Nigerian federal policy.

Nigeria is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse nation-states in Africa. Palmer-Fernandez notes that Nigeria is the most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated population of over 150 million. Its ethnic-cultural landscape of about 250 ethnic stocks is highly complex and diverse[58] but three ethnic groups are the most dominant namely Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba. The other ethnic minorities are subsumed under the umbrella of these three and are in active rivalry with one another in various spheres of Nigerian life[59].

In the case of a nation-state such as Nigeria, its communities, which had been previously independent and distinct, were forcefully amalgamated into a federation by the colonial government. It has been noted that, "The amalgamation of the Northern protectorate and the Southern protectorate into one country, Nigeria, in 1914 created conflicts between them"[60]. The British colonial power created extreme centrifugal forces in the federation which made it practically impossible for the different nations which were forced together against their aspiration to identify themselves as one nation. Thus, the seed of the national problem which became obvious after political independence was sowed.

The underlying universal issue of the national problem is social injustice rooted in inequality and oppression of the dominated classes by the dominant. Whether on a local or international level, it prevents the creation of equal opportunities or access to societal wealth. Naturally, all dominated classes or groups at a particular time in history are destined to struggle to emancipate themselves from the dominant group. Marx once said that, "the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle; freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journey man"[61]. In other words, the oppressor and oppressed were in constant opposition to

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[57]Turaki, Y. "Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations" *Christian Challenge*. April 2007, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 237-256.
[58]Palmer-Fernandez, G. P. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Religion and War, Religion and Society: A Berkshire Reference Work*. Routledge: Acid-Free Paper, 2004, p. 520.
[59]Putzel, J. "Globalisation, Liberalization, and Prospects for the State". *Journal of Political Science*, 2001, Vol. 3 (1), pp. 5-16.
[60]Saggar, S, "Radical Islamism and Counter Terrorism Strategy" *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relation*, April 2007, Vol. 8 (2), pp. 237-256.
[61]Marx, K. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, 1970, p.137.

one another and carried on an uninterrupted fight, now hidden, now open, which ended each time either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes[62]. This assessment characterises the Nigerian situation.

The phenomenon of violence is multi-dimensional in the Nigerian context. The fact is that no single dimension can exhaustively capture the nature of violence and its various manifestations[63]. Therefore, this chapter aims to identify the causes of violence; outline its various manifestation and nature; comment on the effects of violence in contemporary Nigerian society; and propose possible measures that could be taken to facilitate peace and overcome violence, which is the main goal of the WCC which launched the DOV. To achieve these aims, it is worthwhile to identify certain dimensions while focusing on the political, socio-economic, social, religious and cultural dimensions of violence and the quest for peace in Nigeria.

2.2 Types of Violence in Nigeria

Robert, a percipient Afro-pessimist and noted observer of global affairs, has speculated that Nigeria is one of those complex societies where a "dilution" or even a "crack-up" in the next decade and half is to be expected[64]. Until recently, many Nigerians would have disagreed with this prediction; but thanks to the persistent political, social, economic, ethnic and religious violence, this may no longer be the case. The country's view of itself is undergoing a serious change. As a result, some concerned Nigerians are once again calling for a national conference where all the ethnic groups will negotiate the terms of association with one another under one national umbrella. The frequent chaos and bloodshed periodically unleashed because of the factors mentioned above caused the different ethnic groups to call for an urgent sovereign national conference.

Nigeria is no stranger to violence. Of the fifty-one years of its political independence from the United Kingdom (gained in 1960), thirty-four have been spent under various military dictatorships. Over three years were wasted on a horrible civil war that claimed nearly a million

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[62]Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* p.137.

[63]Adekunle, J. O. *Religion in Politics: Secularism and National Integration in Modern Nigeria.* Africa World Press, Inc. Trenton, 2009, pp. 3-4.

[64]Robert, *Crafting the New Nigeria: Confronting the Challenge*, p.16.

lives. For eight years (1999-2007), one of Nigeria's former military rulers, Olusegun Obasanjo, controlled political power as the civilian president of a new democratic nation. Since Obasanjo's comeback (he had previously ruled Nigeria from 1976 to 1979 as a military head of state), more than ten thousand Nigerians have perished in numerous apparently uncontrollable political, social, economic, ethnic and religious disturbances. Obe argues that if the proposed sovereign national conference leads to the break-up of Nigeria, that might not be a tragedy: "The bigger tragedy is the history of this nation's 51 years of independence, and the paralysis that has continued to exploit true national emancipation in the last five years of artificial and fast-vanishing 'democracy'"[65]. Today, many Nigerians—except for a few ostriches with their heads in the sand—know that the general mood of the country appears to favour self-determination rather than democracy. This is not necessarily the best political option.

Much of the bloody disorder in the northern cities of Kano, Kaduna, and Jos, and so on, is restricted at poorer neighbourhoods, a situation that suggests that there is an economic dimension to the general atmosphere of distrust and violence in the country. In these poor, overcrowded and starved communities, gangs of Muslim and Christian youth burn down churches and mosques and savagely hack each other to death over trivial provocations. Therefore, there is also a religious angle to the carnage, a mindless clash of imported civilisations. Reprisal killings of Muslims in the southern cities of Aba, Umuahia, and Lagos follow the same sordid pattern. The near coincidence of religion and ethno-regional settings has caused some analysts to point the finger at ethnicity as the main cause of the violence. The resultant public friction, frequently exacerbated by social conditions such as population explosion, economic migration, and the anti-poor policies of the government, is what is usually described as ethnic conflict. However, Tabiu explains that it appears that these types of public conflict are rooted more in multiple socio-economic factors rather than in ethnic causes alone[66].

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[65]In an opinion piece in the *Guardian*, Nigeria's elite newspaper, Obe further observes that democracy has not been economically kind to many Nigerians, and the prevalence of public violence, since 1999 when Obasanjo was sworn in as a civilian president, ranks among its most bitter disappointments. Consequently, faith in the country and in democracy is dwindling fast. Obe, A. "Why we need a Sovereign National Conference". Guardian Lagos 1, June 2004, pp. 12-35.

[66]Tabiu, M. "An Overview of *Shari'a* Law and Practice in Nigeria". Paper Presented at the International Conference 2-5 on Shari'a in Nigeria, Abuja 2003, p. 29.

Crafty politicos, of which there is no scarcity among Nigeria's ruling class, have on occasion readily exploited the nation's religious divide for personal political gain[67]. Obasanjo originally dismissed the illegal imposition of Islamic *shari'a* in some northern states—a blatantly theocratic move that disregarded and shamed the countries penal code—as merely "political *shari'a*". Many Nigerians believe that this politically calculated inaction by the president was an appalling and harmful damage to the supremacy of the national constitution, and a tragic vote against the country's fledgling democracy and the rule of law. Politics therefore is a third cause of violence in Nigeria, accompanied by economic hardship and religious differences.

Another cause of conflict is the absolute disregard for the rule of law by many Nigerians, including the ruling elites themselves. Government officials appear to lead the way against the rule of law by treating judicial decisions as mere recommendations rather than commands. Two years ago, for example, the nation's Supreme Court ruled all special accounts operated by the federal government to be illegal. Rather than obey the ruling, the executive arm of the federal government, whose officials are sworn to implement the law of the land, ordered the Central Bank of Nigeria to disregard the order. Consequently, the governor of the Central Bank (appointed to the high office by the president) mirthfully defied the court, declaring with impunity that he did not intend to close the special account in question. Ordinary Nigerians generally take their cue from this kind of official disregard for the rule of law.

The classification of the forms of violence in Nigeria into economic, religious, social and the political is necessary for understanding the specific instances of the most recurring communal violence in the country as well as the peculiar processes and forces that have defined the interminable violent expressions of these conflicts.

2.3 Political Violence

It is clear to many Nigerians, including the most "detribalised" among them, that they are first and foremost citizens of their home states before they are citizens of Nigeria. This is the silent

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[67]In her article on Sovereign National Conference cited above, Obe notes that, "For example, the initial impetus for the emergence of Islamic *shari'a* law in the emirate states of northern Nigeria (a situation which has ignited its share of fury and blood-spilling) has been attributed to political inducement by none other than the president, Olusegun Obasanjo, himself. He originally dismissed the illegal imposition of *shari'a*—a blatantly theocratic move that disregarded and shamed the country's penal code—as merely "political *shari'a*", in contrast to authentic Qur'anic *shari'a*. 'Political *shari'a* would die out naturally', he said, and he therefore refused to nip it in the bud".

and divisive theory of Nigerian citizenship recently put under the national spotlight by the indigene–settler debate[68]. The home-state view of Nigerian citizenship, which has been operational (if not official) since self-rule in 1960, holds that no Nigerian can be the citizen of a state other than his or her own state of origin, no matter how long he or she has lived and paid taxes in another state of residence. Surprisingly, the Nigerian constitution appears to support this view. The result is a diminution of "Nigerianness" in all Nigerians and the transfer of political loyalty from the Nigerian nation to its constituent ethnic communities, which in many cases have become coincident with the religious and zonal boundaries of the states.

Vilela claims that, "the failure of the government over the years (and to this day) to forge and implement a national theory of Nigerian citizenship feeds public violence"[69]. A national theory of Nigerian citizenship is one which supports a generalised citizenry, where states are required to honour the national citizenship of so-called non-indigenes and where such citizens are allowed to own property in any part of the state, in which they reside, and to run for and hold office there after a reasonable period of residency. Nonetheless, some northern states are even proposing different rates of school fees between indigenes and settlers. The current situation whereby Nigerians are virtual foreigners in states where they are not considered indigenes is not only unfair, it also enshrines an "us-versus-them" psychology of separateness that is easily exploited by the country's many political warlords and serves as the bedrock of political violence.

Generally, the patterns of settlement in Nigeria's urban areas have served to sustain this spirit of divisive and ethnic autonomy, which originated in the colonial policy of divide and rule. Many injudicious analyses still blame colonialism for this anomaly even after fifty-one years of independence. In many urban areas in Nigeria are found numerous ethnic enclaves that continue

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[68]Aikali, R. "Democracy and Political Violence in Nigeria" Kaduna: NDA Officers Training. Course Notes, 2000, p. 341 - "Thus, its definition of Nigerian citizenship includes membership in a community indigenous to Nigeria, a definition that plays directly into the hands of state irredentists. Some unscrupulous politicians have traded national unity for local power by dismissing other Nigerian citizens resident in the host states as non-indigenes, and therefore as mere settlers".

[69]Vilela, A. Upeace Foundation Course Lecture on "Sustainable Development" to Students of 2009/2010 in September 2009 at Upeace 2009, pp.1-12.

to reinforce the "us-versus-them" dynamic[70]. Where such enclaves exist, a squabble involving only two people from different ethnic groups can easily escalate into a larger confrontation.

2.3.1 Political instability

Political instability often arises due to the inability of opposition and relevant actors in governance to resolve perceived or real grievances. Vilela points out that, "Political violence is both causative and symptomatic of political instability in Nigeria"[71]. It is symptomatic as it reflects an inchoate political system. It is also causative because it feeds the political crises that manifest regularly. Electoral violence, if not properly addressed, could ultimately lead or escalated violence. Political violence does not facilitate the building of a strong, efficient and virile democratic nation (social development). It is anti-people because issues of peace building, human rights, gender equality, cultural rights and identities are often ignored or trampled upon. These adversely affect human security, peace and the social development of the country.

According to Sen[72]:

> A sense of exclusion can arise even in well-established, participatory democratic systems. This is because political inclusion is not only about the form that political systems take (for example, the type of electoral system), but, just as importantly, about how political participation is facilitated throughout the political cycle (and not just at elections). Thus, how debate is managed in local and national political forums, including parliament itself, will reflect on the extent to which the rules of engagement, written or unwritten, provide a containing environment for expression of conflict. It will also be reflected in a context that does, or does not, also allow members to express their strong concerns and feel that they have been listened to-and thus accorded respect.

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[70]Vilela also states that, "an example is the clash which erupted in February 2002 between the poor residents of Hausa and Yoruba enclaves in Idi Araba, Lagos State, in the south-west geopolitical zone. The pandemonium, in which property was destroyed and an unknown number of people were killed, resulted from a simple disagreement between a Hausa and a Yoruba over the use of a public facility. The escalation of this kind of simple quarrel between two individuals into an ethnic war is a direct function of the urban compartmentalization of peoples. This compartmentalization combines with increasing poverty and unemployment to provide a ready pool of hoodlums for recruitment into momentary religious and ethnic armies. The point is that the existence of ethnic enclaves in urban areas, rather than ethnicity *per se*, is a root cause of some of Nigeria's violence. This diagnosis suggests an easy solution: a preventive policy of urban dwelling that promotes ethnic unity and peace rather than separatism. But Nigerians do not do preventions and other boring things like that. They prefer vehement denial, full-blown disease and bitter palliatives. This is also true of those many Nigerian crisis situations in which ethnicity coincides with religion". Vilela, *Sustainable Development,* pp. 1-12.

[71]Vilela, *Sustainable Development*, p. 18.

[72]Sen, A. (ed.). *Peace and Democratic Society.* Cambridge: Open Book Publisher, 2011, pp. 84-85.

2.3.2 Insecurity

Political violence breeds insecurity as it is often characterised by loss of lives and properties (www.org/nigeria1007) as was the case during the November 2008 political violence in Jos where more than 500 people were killed, thousands displaced and properties worth billions of naira were burnt, looted or destroyed[73]. In addition to the insecurity, there are attendant costs such as increased security votes and the resources spent on repairs of damaged infrastructure, which could have been better spent on human and social development. Obviously, such trends adversely affect the social and economic wellbeing of the country.

According to Salvatti, "it is axiomatic that development cannot occur in the absence of peace and security."[74] He furthermore says, the economy suffers in an atmosphere of insecurity and political instability as investors become wary that their investments would be insecure[75]. Thus, direct foreign investment is often lost in such circumstances which have contributed to the state of underdevelopment in Nigeria. Short the UK's Secretary of State for International Development asserts that, "businesses have a strong interest in peace and security in the countries in which they are operating or might wish to operate"[76]. Another effect of political violence is that it has helped to propagate the ongoing cycle of violence in the country:

> Acts of violence impact negatively on the children living in such societies. In line with the social learning theory, such children would likely end up being violent. The ongoing violence by youths in the Niger-Delta Region of Nigeria (which has witnessed considerable political violence) supports this violence[77].

One could argue that acts of political violence are likely to result in hostile goals such as *the desire for revenge* on the part of political opponents which in turn could lead to conflict escalation. This perhaps explains why almost all political parties in Nigeria are involved in electoral violence.

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[73]Obateru, T. *Daily Trust Newspaper*, 6th December 2008.
[74]Salvatti, R. "Building Positive Peace: The Role Economy Plays both in Flecking Conflict and Building Peace". A Lecture Delivered to Upeace 2009/2010 Students during the Foundation Course, 7th September 2009, p. 2.
[75]Salvatti, *Building Positive Peace,* p. 2.
[76]Short, C. Statement to International Development Committee, UK, 1998. Quoted in *The Business of Peace*, Session 11 of the Upeace Foundation Course Reader for Upeace 2009/2010 Students 2009, p. 13.
[77]Dike, E. V. *Democracy and Political Life in Nigeria*. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, 2001, p. 37.

2.3.3 Weak governance and corruption

Weak governance and corruption are some of the causes of structural violence[78] in Nigeria, as they exacerbate the effects of poverty and make people desperate enough to seek any means just to survive, including crime and violence. This situation seems to have created a *runaway norm* of *tolerating corruption* at all levels of government[79]. An average of $4 to $8 billion per year was reportedly lost to corruption between 1999 and 2007 (www.org/nigeria1007). Corruption is closely entwined with political violence in Nigeria. Public revenues are not only stolen, but are often used to pay for the services and weapons used for political violence. Among other factors, lack of accountability and dearth of social security could be adduced for the level of corruption. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) set up to fight corruption has achieved some success but more needs to be done, especially as regards corrupt former top political office holders (www.org/nigeria1007).

Another contributory factor to political violence is the proliferation of small arms in the country. It is reported that there were over one million illegal small arms in circulation in Nigeria as of 2004[80]. The weapons are used to perpetuate violent conflicts and create new cycles of violence and crime. They also undermine the work of humanitarian and relief organisations and militate against sustainable development. Aribisala concludes that, "… above all, small arms threaten peace and development, democracy and human rights" (ECOWAS, www.globalpolicy.org).

2.3.4 Political conflict

Political conflicts emanate from power struggles within the political class and often involve the manipulation of the people, who are inevitably less informed about the essence of the political struggle. The elite and the politicians often influence governmental policies for their own selfish purposes. This is usually done without consultation with the people or civil society. For example, in the creation and location of local government headquarters, community members are often not consulted. Uneze notes that the struggle for political position may then be presented along ethnic

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[78]Oyovbaire, S. E. "The Theory of Federalism: A Critical Appraisal". *Nigeria Journal of Political Science*, 1995, Vol.1 (1), p. 23.

[79]Dretke, J. P. *A Christian Approach to Muslims: Reflections from West Africa.* Pasadena: William Carey Library. 2003, pp. 45-49.

[80]Amaize, E. "Armed Youth Attack Igbinedion's Campaign Team", 2009 March 6 *Vanguard*, 4-12. Logos: Nigeria and also BBChausa.com 15th January 2009 *Proliferation of Small Arms.*

and religious lines in order to earn the support of the populace and make them the vanguard for the fight of the elite for the latter's ambition[81]. Relevance or consideration for political appointments and ability to influence contract awards depend on the ability to deliver an area or people (the fact of being able to determine which way a people will respond). Furthermore, no effort is spared in staking claims on the ability to deliver. Where others are in doubt, a conflict is created to show that the claimant is in charge, i.e., that the people would file behind him[82]. In the Southeast zone, for example, such direct political conflicts manifest in the following forms:

1. Conflict between the governor and his deputy

2. Conflict between the governor and the State House of Assembly

3. Conflict between the governor and the churches

4. Conflict within the political parties

5. Tensions and manipulations between the Federal Government and the State Government; and

6. Tensions between politicians and their financial backers.

In all these conflicts, lives were lost and property destroyed. A particular problem is the "incumbency syndrome", known in the local parlance as "*tazarce*" (Hausa word for succession). Political office holders concentrate their efforts entirely on the issue of retaining their post into a second term. This has created much violence in Nigeria at the three levels of government. However, given the enormous economic interests attached to these offices, there are always political aspirants resolved to contest against the office holders. While the incumbents strive to maintain the *status quo*, the opposition is bent on dislodging them from the use of state machinery to perpetuate themselves in office. Issues are seldom raised. Rather, geo-political zones, religion and historical (real or imagined) animosities are dredged up[83].

Additionally, Dretke claims that another form of 'political' violence is the failure to take action on Commissions of Enquiry, thus allowing conflicts to continue and escalate[84], as in Warri,

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[81]Uneze, A. "APP Senatorial Candidate Escapes Attack," *This Day*, 8th March 2003.
[82]Aijmer, G. and Abbink, J. *Meaning of Violence: A Cross Cultural Perspective*. Glamorgan: Oxford press. 2000, pp. 18-25.
[83]Uneze, "APP Senatorial Candidate Escapes Attack", pp.18-25 sees also "Nigeria Lost 276bn to Bunkering in Nigeria-Delta". *Vanguard,* 9th March 2005.
[84]Dretke, *A Christian Approach to Muslims*, p.11.

Tafawa Balewa and Jos. In such conflicts, however, the government does not come out unscathed. Since the issues at stake have to do with the interests, positions and values of different parties, it is a tough call to expect reports of Commissions of Enquiry and White Papers on them to satisfy all parties. Such reports and White Papers are based not so much on "justice", but on what makes sense in terms of political expediency and/or legality. Consequently, implementing such reports and White Papers would be in the interest of one party or some of the parties at conflict. Refusing to implement the recommendations would also not go down well with those who stand to benefit from the implementation of such reports and White Papers.

2.3.5 Electoral violence

As elections approached, political violence increased across Nigeria. In a small number of high profile cases, there have been arrests, but the vast majority of cases of political violence have not led to prosecution. In recent years, a great deal of violence was associated with jockeying for position within the political parties. The conduct of local government primaries for the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), organised at the state level, resulted in many conflicts, causing countless deaths, injuries and damage to property, as well as stoking resentment and hostility among the candidates and their supporters. With their feelings already running high, many of the same politicians had to face each other again in the general elections after some candidates who lost in the primaries moved into other political parties. This kind of violence has pitted politicians and supporters against each other in a big way. Killings of high profile politicians have continued rapidly, worsening citizens' confidence in the political system even in areas that have not been directly affected by political clashes. The reports of political violence are so numerous that the Human Rights Watch cannot verify whether every incident was in fact politically motivated[85]. The total number of cases being reported leaves little doubt that political violence poses a grave danger to the rights of Nigerians across the country, as well as to the prospects for a violence-free and peaceful election. As an illustration of the frequency of

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[85]Human Rights Watch (January 4, 2003), 'Nigeria at the Crossroads: Human Rights Concerns in the Pre-election Period', (www.hrw.org).

reported cases, a non-exhaustive search of electronic media outlets over a two-week period in early March 2003 yielded the following results[86]:

- Early March – Sokoto: PDP/ANPP clash between armed supporters (Oyerinde, A. This Day, March 8, 2003);

- March 2 – Enugu: ANPP gubernatorial candidate petitions police regarding telephone calls threatening assassination if he does not give up his bid (Uko, U. This Day, 2nd March 2003);

- March 3 – Ebonyi: State chairman for the ANPP reports shooting attack on him while in vehicle ("Ebonyi ANPP Boss Escapes Assassination," This Day, 8th March 2003);

- March 4 – Edo: At least one person killed in PDP/ANPP clash after PDP state governor's campaign convoy is attacked; bus and several houses burnt (Amaize, E. Vanguard, 6th March 2003);

- March 4 – Ekiti: State ANPP leader dies of injuries from acid attack in late December (Ekiti AD Women's Leader Dies of Acid Attack" Vanguard, 5th March 2003);

- March 5 – Abuja: Marshall Harry, ANPP Vice Chairman for the South-South Zone, shot dead in his Abuja residence (Amaize, E. This Day, 5th March 2003);

- March 6 – Cross Rivers: Several supporters injured and four cars vandalised in attack on ANPP senatorial candidate's convoy (Uneze, A This Day, 8th March 2008);

- March 10, 11 – Kebbi: PDP/ANPP clash in which two reported seriously injured, eleven homes burned, fifty-three people arrested ("Two Seriously Injured, 53 arrested over Clashes in Nigeria," Agence France-Press, 12th March 2003), etc.

In some cases, political violence was carried out in locations where violent conflict was already a problem. This was the case in parts of the Niger Delta, for example, and in central states such as Taraba, Benue, and Plateau that have experienced scores of violent inter-communal clashes in the last few years. The elections also appear to be creating a new reason for fighting[87]. Disturbing

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[86]Dretke, J. P. *A Christian Approach to Muslims,* p. 45. This is just a sample of reports during this period; it does not cover all reported cases and does not include the many cases that never reached the national media.
[87]Dretke, J. P. *A Christian Approach to Muslims*. In July 2002, two people in Taraba were reportedly killed and twenty injured in inter-factional disputes at the PDP primaries (Agence France-Press, July 6, 2002). "In Benue, a conflict between the PDP and the ANPP on February 18, 2003, led to at least seven deaths in Jato-Aka, the hometown of the ANPP's gubernatorial candidate Paul Unongo as well as of the governor's special adviser on political affairs, Orya Korinjo. The crisis was apparently triggered by the killing of a guard at a hotel owned by Paul Unongo. According to media and other accounts, the guard was killed by PDP supporters, although a representative of the government claimed he was killed due to infighting among ANPP thugs who then used the killing as an excuse to begin attacking PDP supporters. Unongo's supporters responded by attacking PDP members in Jato-Aka. ANPP supporters attacked and killed Korinjo's elderly father with machetes and burned his home. At least four other

reports of politically motivated violence continue to emerge from across Nigeria. Oyerinde remarks that in these case studies, "politicians or their close political supporters were responsible for committing violence for political ends"[88]. In most of the cases, there has been little or no progress in bringing the perpetrators to justice. It is worth repeating that the cases presented above or described elsewhere in this project do not exhaustively describe all incidents of political violence in Nigeria.

2.3.6 Succession and dethronement conflict

Conflicts over chieftaincy in the traditional institutions have been on the increase in Nigeria, particularly in the last twenty years. The military found traditional rulers useful in the bid to legitimise itself in office, having dismantled the democratic structures. Though the power/influence of traditional rulers has diminished over time, the economic interest attached to those offices and the calibres of persons seeking them have continued to be a source of stiff competition and rivalry. Attempts to influence the government to favour one candidate against another have empowered the government to become an active participant in the selection process as opposed to the known traditional methods. This has led to the politicization of traditional institutions and the proliferation of chieftaincy thrones. Where the interest of the government of the day is perceived as threatened, the occupant of the traditional throne is removed without regard to due process, which always results in conflict. A classic example is the manipulation of the Sultan's selection and dethronement during the Babangida and Abacha regimes. Similarly, in the South West, the fracas that ensued as a result of the contest for the vacant throne of the Olowo of Owo has been politicised with different political parties endorsing different contestants. Field reports also suggest that the flow of state resources through traditional leaders is a cause of widespread concern[89].

PDP supporters were reportedly killed, and several other homes destroyed. Again accounts vary as to whether this was strictly a reprisal attack or whether there was fighting between the two groups. In a press statement in early March, the police announced that ten people had been charged with arson and conspiracy to commit murder, and that three others, including local PDP and ANPP politicians, were wanted by police in connection with the killing."
[88]Oyerinde, A. "No one died in party clash–Police", *This Day*, 8th March 2003, pp. 29-37.
[89]Short, C. *Statement to International Development Committee*, p. 13.

2.3.7 Territorial disputes

In Nigeria, territorial boundaries are frequently changed and often without proper reason and consultation. In extreme cases, this may result directly in violence, or it may produce a situation of deep grievance that may boil for many years:

> Thousands of people from a particular ethnic group associated with Cross River State found themselves suddenly part of Akwa Ibom. Over the last eighteen months or so they have been displaced to Cross River and are effectively living as refugees with little State or local government support. The likelihood of these groups retaliating if nothing is done to resolve their grievances is high[90].

Another characteristic of political violence is that it finds expression in the oppression, marginalisation, and even torture of those who are considered political opponents. Political violence could also be used in areas that are not political. For example, politicians often have business and economic interests. The political process can be used or made available to the economically disadvantaged or to destroy business competition, which may in fact represent no political threat. In the same way, the process can be used to achieve both ends simultaneously. In an environment where the maintenance of power is a motivating end, those who are in power can be convinced that the violence being perpetrated is for their political survival. This can happen in business competition or social interaction[91].

The lack of basic needs is a fertile area that spawns violence. The perception of such injustice is one avenue that may well lead to political violence. Just as the self-interest of the politician to maintain his position, privilege and power urges him on, so also do the wealthy seek to maintain their individual *status quo*. They have the ability to use their economic advantage and the temptation to use their access to political power to raise barriers to efforts that alleviate the pressure of poverty is a factor. By discouraging attempts to empower the people, they often hope to maintain the bonds of economic dependence and so keep the people in effective servitude. For the labour organisers and supporters, fear of arrest and dismissal from their jobs cause them to instigate young people to cause violence while they remain in the background. The employers of labour can swiftly replace those who attempt to speak out with other jobseekers. Unemployment is a decisive factor in maintaining people in a state of powerlessness. If one falls out of favour

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[90]Salvatti, *Building Positive Peace*, pp. 9-11.
[91]Ackerman, P. and Kruegler, C. *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Dynamics of Power in the 21st Century*. Westport: Pracger Press. 1994, p. 10.

with the employer, it is all too easy to reduce him or her to a complete lack of standing in the society.

Political violence also finds its roots in non-political motivations such as ethnic discrimination in which case individuals may release rioters, oppression or terror on people or groups they do not like because of their ethnic background. Due to its ambiguity, political violence becomes an easy excuse for carrying out these terrible acts. According to Getui:

> This may range from absolute tribalism to racism and even to ethnic cleansing. When those in power have discovered that the demographic number of a certain ethnic group will not favour them remaining in power, ethnic cleansing has been used to maintain power"[92].

Nigerians are all too aware of the recent history of the massive displacement of its citizenry and the destruction of life and property.

The ongoing political violence that poses a great challenge for the Nigerian society could lead one to ask, what should be the political response of the Nigerian state and its allies to violent attacks? There is no reason why more healthy compromises cannot be found when it comes to justice for all Nigerians. The government and all leaders should agree on a peace plan which demilitarises any form of conflict and use the country's resources for humanitarian projects aimed at justice, agricultural and technical development, education, and the promotion of peace, which would go a long way in creating job opportunities for youths instead of using them for political ends through violence. If the Nigerian government, leaders and the society at large would embark on this peace plan, it could serve as their contribution to the DOV goals of overcoming violence and establishing a culture of peace in the nation.

What then should be the Christian response to this growing violence? The call by the DOV is a concerted Christian voice addressed primarily to the Christian community worldwide. Inspired by the example of Jesus of Nazareth, it invites Christians to the way of just peace. Aware that the promise of peace is a core value of all religions, it reaches out to all who seek peace according to their own religious traditions and commitments. Snyder is certainly right to regard the call for

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[92]Getui, M.N. and Kanyandago, P. (eds.). *From Violence to Peace: A Challenge for African Christianity.* Nairobi: Kolbe Press, 1999, p. 101.

greater efforts to spread the Gospel of love and peace as the true battle of Christians. According to Rahner[93], violence is only conquered by conquering sin. For that reason our Saviour, who has conquered sin, but who knows that sin continues to conquer human hearts, said, "There will be wars and rumours of wars… nations will arise against nations… but see to it that you are not alarmed…" (Matt. 24:6-8). Christians believe in the coming of that kingdom and of the King of peace, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will establish peace[94].

However, it remains a fact that human history is illuminated by courageous pursuits of peace and the transformation of conflict, advances in the rule of law, new norms and treaties that govern the use of force, and judicial recourse against abuses of power that involve even political leaders. History is stained, however, by the moral and political opposition of these abovementioned causes. Although the spirit and logic of violence are deeply rooted in human history, in recent times, the consequences of such sins have increased exponentially being amplified by the violent application of politics.

2.4 Religious Violence

Nigeria is characterised by a multiplicity of religious traditions including indigenous religions, the various strands of Christianity and Islam, as well as spiritual science movements. The major religions are Christianity and Islam, both of which are deeply influenced by the indigenous religions. Census figures on the numbers of Christians and Muslims are controversial in the context of the ongoing debate on Nigeria's status as a "secular" state. As there are no concise official figures, the unauthenticated percentages of Christians and Muslims are projected between 40-50 percent for either of the traditions, depending on the information source. It is assumed that the indigenous traditions and other minority religions share 10-20 percent of the population. Religion has become a matter of political significance and tension in Nigeria[95]. The religious tension is clearly connected to the growth of uncompromising Islamic and Christian activism. The relationship between Islam and Christianity has led to a growing culture of religious violence, particularly in northern Nigeria.

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[93]Rahner, K. *Foundation of Christian Faith.* New York: Crossroad, 2010, pp. 138-175.
[94]Snyder, H. A. *Earth Currents: The Struggle for the World's Soul.* Nashville: Nashville Press, 1995, p. 157.
[95]Palmer-Fernandez, *Encyclopedia of Religion and War*, pp. 564-567.

Moreover, the interplay of religion and politics is not a new development in Nigeria. Historically, religion has been a major part of politics and this situation has not radically changed. Although Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society, the idea of severing religion from politics is reflected in the secular nature of the country. Being a secular country does not preclude the practice of religion, but it does not encourage the interference of religion in politics. While many Nigerians strongly support the secular clause in the constitution, successive governments have not remained totally neutral as to ensuring fair treatment to all religious groups. Nigeria, with its complex ethno-cultural composition, grapples with several crises and conflicts, many of which are associated with religion. In some cases, the causes of the conflicts and violence are either remotely related or not at all related to religion, but because of the sharp religious divide, the country is vulnerable to religious violence. Since 1980, or more specifically, since 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule, there have been many instances of religious riots, which have claimed thousands of lives and ended in the destruction of properties.

According to Boer, Nigeria's recent history has seen the celebration of Christian festivals by Muslims, and Muslim festivals by Christians[96]. Such great examples of peaceful co-existence are now increasingly rare. The reason is growing intolerance caused by a new religious fundamentalism that is relentlessly raising the passion of the perpetrators of those conflicts which are inflamed by religious differences. A good example is the November 2002 bloodshed occasioned by the Miss World beauty contest—a violent eruption that ruined the country's external image. More than two hundred people died in Muslim–Christian clashes in Kaduna that were ostensibly sparked by Muslim anger at Nigeria's hosting of the event. The unrest forced the transfer of the contest to London.

Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that religion has continued to take for granted an unpredictable presence in Nigerian politics such that national politics is almost being superseded by religious politics. The persisting violent relations between Muslims and Christians, particularly in northern Nigeria, have left the political unit in a very fragile state in which the "religious gunpowder" is waiting to blow up at the slightest irritation. The reciprocated misgivings and distrust caused by religious functionaries, coupled with the development of

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[96]Boer, J. H. (n.d.). *Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations. Christian: Why this Muslim Violence?* Volume 3. Belleville: Ontario Canada, p.7.

religious and cultural intolerance, encroaches on the whole security and wellbeing of Nigeria. Thus, religion became a fundamental factor in contemporary Nigerian politics against the background of religion-related unrest and interreligious conflicts and the attendant unjustifiable destruction of lives and property. Religious cleavages took a more noticeable role than ethnicity and class in the political scheming that has characterised military dictatorship in Nigeria.

In the light of above, Falola asserts that:

> The interplay of religion and politics in Nigeria is intricately linked with the virulent competition for the 'national cake'. Religion is becoming more and more a factor in both politics and policy-making, such that the consuming power of religion in Nigerian politics and society looms large[97].

One characteristic of this form of religious politics is that every government move or utterance (as well as the actions of religious groups) is watched, highlighted, and analysed. It is within this context that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) emerged as a political watchdog to checkmate the activities of Jama'atu Nasril Islamiyya (Society for the Victory of Islam), one of the most active Islamic organisations. In Olupona's view, "the subversion of religion for political ends, such as supporting and sustaining the hegemony of the status quo, has often resulted in religious violence and riots, reaching frightening proportions and leading to an intermittent but steady displacement of people"[98].

Religious affiliations are regarded as or often suspected of dictating the political and public actions of public officials. The suspicion that one religious group is accorded preferential treatment by the government in power often ignites agitation and counter collaboration by unfavoured religious groups as a measure to safeguard their interests and credibility in the Nigerian polity. The somewhat crude, extra-legal actions such as the "fire-brigade approach" of the government as well as reprisals by victims from an opposing religious group, often undertaken to resolve such anomalies, heighten insecurity and precipitate unwarranted displacement of people and mass emigration. Religious buildings (churches), private homes and businesses have become frequent targets of the forms of religious violence that erupt in northern Nigeria, and have sometimes met with reprisals in other parts of the country. As religiously inspired violence has become a recurring feature of Nigeria's religious landscape, its focus has

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[97]Falola, T. *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies.* Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998, p. 79.
[98]Olupona, J. K. *Religion and Peace in Multi-faith Nigeria.* Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1992, p. 12.

shifted from interreligious strife to interreligious disturbances. Public violence has often occurred in total defiance of section 10 of the 1979 Nigerian constitution, which states that, "the Federal Government or the State shall not adopt any religion as a State religion"[99]. According to Turaki:

> The implementation of a full *Sharia* legal system in Nigeria during the Fourth Republic, from 1999-2003, has raised and sharpened debates, caused socio-political and religious conflicts and raised many issues for the contemporary Nigerian society such as legal and constitutional matters, and questions of national citizenship, human and religious rights, and peaceful co-existence of all people groups in Nigeria[100].

Falola has also lamented that the heat of religious tensions was not lowered by the introduction of the *shari'a* in 1999 as the official legal system of Zamfara, a state in the north-west geopolitical zone. Since then, eleven other northern states have adopted the *shari'a* penal code, abandoning in effect the national tradition of limiting the Islamic legal system to family law. Although the introduction of the *shari'a* clearly violates section 10 of Nigeria's constitution, which forbids the adoption of an official religion by the state, the federal government for purely prudential and political reasons refused to rein in the rebels[101]. Many citizens are aware that the federal government is not ready to stand up for the rule of law by preventing, punishing or ending the violation of the country's secular constitution. This perception of lawlessness on the part of both the state and the national government has contributed to the rise in religious tensions. The ugly result can be seen in the Kaduna crises.

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[99]Palmer-Fernandez, *Encyclopedia of Religion and War*, p. 568. It has also been noted that the military rule of the Federal Republic of Nigeria began on 15 January 1966 under Aguiyi Ironsi, an Ibo Christian. Although he denied the claim, some believed that Ironsi undertook the coup to protect the rights of Christians. Religious prejudice became more pronounced under Yakubu Gowon between 1966 and 1975, as many Northern Muslims were suspicious of and uncomfortable with having a Christian at the controls of national affairs (Falola 1996:35). The existing gesture of religious violence and unrest in Nigeria took root in the late 1970s. The Maitatsine movement under Muhammadu Marwa struck with riots during the regime of Mohammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon, both Muslims. One significant characteristic of this period is the politics surrounding the Constituent Assembly of 1978 and the implantation of the *shari'a*. The 1980s witnessed the renaissance of the old and the rise of new Islamic fundamentalist groups typified by the Muslim Students' Society and the Yan Izala Movement, with their campaign to restore pristine Islam and the *shari'a* as a panacea to the societal ills of Nigeria. These groups targeted non-Muslims, but also other Islamic groups for their self-righteousness of faith.

[100]Turaki, Y. *Historical and Religious Experience of Islam in West Africa.* Jos: Challenge Press, 2003, p. 115.

[101]Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, pp. 170-178. Similarly, When the Kaduna state legislature attempted in 2000 to follow the Zamfara example by passing a *shari'a* bill, all hell broke loose. Ardent Muslim supporters of the bill clashed with Christian groups that vehemently opposed it. There was vast loss of life and property in the city of Kaduna (Kaduna state is named after the city, the former capital of the northern region during and after colonial rule). Unlike many other major cities in northern Nigeria, Kaduna does not have large religious enclaves. For the most part, people lived where they could afford to, irrespective of religion. The violence changed all that.

The fact is that there is now the demarcation of residential areas (e.g. in Kaduna, Jos, Kano, Sokoto) based on residents' religious profession, with Christians seeking accommodation among other Christians and Muslims seeking residence in locations with a heavy Muslim presence. The growing division between Christians and Muslims is indeed a disservice to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which describes Christians as "peace makers" (Matt. 5:9), since it moves towards alienation instead of the opportunity for peace making. Bridging the increasing gulf between these two groups in northern Nigeria is not only a necessity but the necessity of the Christian message.

Michael reports that:

> The heartless barbarity of the faithful from both sides of the zealots' divide, the reckless spilling of the blood of thousands of people including innocent Muslim and Christian children, the burning intolerance of believers that caused the carnage, are a bitter taste of Nigeria's emerging religious fundamentalism. The crisis displaced sixty-five thousand people, of whom an estimated 75 percent were children. While there is no official number of the dead, the general belief is that about five thousand Nigerians were killed in this war of religious zealotry. Today in Kaduna the clock has been turned back, and people now look for the safety of religious enclaves when deciding where to live[102].

The fact is that since 1980, major religious violence and crises have recurred which claimed the lives of thousands of Nigerians. Yakubu, Adegboye and Ubah have attempted to summarise the situation as follows:

1980: Kaduna Christian-Muslim conflict following the controversies over *shari'a* law.

1981-1982:

    i.   The Maitatsine sect riot in Borno, Bauchi, Kano and other Northern areas, led by Mohammed Marwa

    ii.   The Kaduna Polytechnic Muslim-Christian skirmishes

1981-1985: The Cross vs. the Crescent conflict at the University of Ibadan.

1982:

    i.   Bulumkutu Christian-Muslim riots.

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[102]Michael, M. "The Bible, Peace and Violence" Unpublished Paper Presented at the JETS Faculty Lectures on 28-29th February 2008, pp. 6-7.

ii.   The Usman Danfodio University (Sokoto) disturbance over perceived obscene use of the name of Danfodio's daughter, Nana Asama'u, at a student Union Carnival.

1984: The Kafanchan College of Education Muslim-Christian riots caused by the placing of a banner "Jesus Campus" at the College entrance by some persons

1985: Nationwide Christian protests (mostly pronounced in the South) over an alleged attempt by the General Ibrahim Babangida administration to drag Nigeria to an Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) confab.

1986: Protests over debates on the planned introduction of the *shari'a* law nationwide

1987ff: The Zangon-Kataf ethno-religious impasse starting with reciprocal allegations of marginalization

1987: Hot nationwide protests and resistance over alleged plans by the Abacha administration to introduce the *shari'a* law nationwide formally.

1999:
i.   More persistent threats by several northern leaders to begin the practice of *shari'a* laws formally between July and November with attendant protests by Christians
ii.   Beginning of ethnic clashes in Ibadan, Sagamu, Kano, Lagos and Osogbo

2000: Orchestrated introduction of the *shari'a* law in several northern states with Zamfara in the north-west zone setting the pace. Riots, maiming and killings followed in Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano, Niger, Imo and Akwa Ibom states, resulting from actions and counteractions over the *shari'a* law.

2002: The Miss World pageant episode that was sparked by a newspaper article which made allusions that inflamed religious sentiments and which were used as another excuse to terrorise innocent citizens in Kaduna during the Muslims' sacred month of Ramadan[103].

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[103]Yakubu, A. M., Adegboye R. T., Ubah C. A. and Dogo, B. *Crisis and Conflict Management in Nigeria since 1980* Nigeria Defence Academy Book Series No 1. NDA Publisher Kaduna, 2005, p. 469.

Actually, ethno-religious violence appears to be the most common form of violence in post-military Nigeria, although less so in the southern part. The reoccurrence of ethno-religious violence in the northern region has led to extensive killings and the destruction of material goods. The outbreak of violence is strongly linked to the growth of the *shari'a* criminal code/movement, which swept through the northern region immediately after the return to democratic rule in 1999 and which has led to clashes in the northern part of Nigeria[104].

Lately, Nigeria was in the local and international news again for another unpopular reason. While Nigerians were just recovering from the shame that was brought on the entire nation by a 23-year-old -Nigerian based in Yemen, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to bomb a Northwest bound United States Airlines Flight 253 on December 24, 2009 on religious grounds, another religious crisis erupted in Jos (north-central zone), claiming several lives and property. Until recently, it is not an overstatement to say that Jos was one of the most peaceful cities in Nigeria. What made this peaceful city lose its glory? The situation in Jos is fast becoming typical of most cities in Nigeria. What can Nigeria do to prevent these ugly situations that keep soiling the good name of Nigeria in the international community? In particular, what can Nigeria do to stop the incessant bloodshed in the nation in the name of religion? These are some of the questions that come to mind as one considers the lost peace in the lovely country from a Christian and evangelical perspective. First, however, it would be in order to acknowledge that some socio-political as well as religious factors might be responsible for the problem.

As already noted, apart from corruption, one of the major problems facing Nigeria is the Christian–Muslim religious unrest. It is not uncommon to hear about violence involving Christians and Muslims anytime in any part of the country. Initially, the problem was prevalent in the northern part of the country but over time, the crisis has spread to virtually every part of the country. It is ironical that both Christianity and Islam claim to be religions of peace. The reverse has always been the case in Nigeria. In the last four decades, as seen above, hardly a year

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[104]Ebo, A. "Small Arms and Criminality in Nigeria: Focus on Kaduna State". Background Paper, Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2003, pp. 11, 26-34. The crises include clashes in Jos between the native Christian Boroms/Anaguta/Izere and the Muslim Hausa/Fulani in September 2001, clashes in Kano over the American war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (October 2001), and the clashes over the aborted Miss World Beauty contest (November 2002). There has also been the emergence of a Nigerian Taliban movement which has engaged in violent activities in Yobe and Borno states. Some of these factors include political instability, unstable economic fortune, poverty, bad governance, military dictatorship, violation of fundamental human rights, lack of love and value for human life.

went by without religious unrest. These riots have claimed lives and property. Clearly, several factors are responsible for the incessant crises.

On a daily basis, millions of Christians and Muslims rub elbows with each other during a variety of encounters. Martinson says that closeness and distance simultaneously characterise the inner relationship between the Christian and Islamic faiths in Nigeria[105]. The door to healthy dialogue on spiritual matters is always open, but seldom entered; yet an average Muslim in Nigeria lives in suspicion of his Christian brother, and vice versa. Several factors are responsible for the suspicion. One is what Kukah calls "historical differences and misinterpretations aided by colonial histories"[106]. Furthermore:

> Christian-Muslim relations, even at the best of times, have always been disturbingly marred by suspicions, accusations and counteraccusations over interpretations of history and experiences. This is a historical reality that has been further confounded by the very complex nature of colonial histories on the continent of Africa, where the destruction of the existing civilisations, empires and emperors provided the foundation stones for the establishment of the colonial states that later emerged. The passage of many years after the end of colonial rule has not changed the prejudices[107].

While Kukah's statement is generally true of Sub-Saharan Africa, it is specifically true of Nigeria where religious issues have been completely politicised. Since Nigeria attained independence, regional, ethnic and religious tensions have marred its progress. Although the adherents of Islam and Christianity form the dominant majorities in Nigeria, neither religion has been able to overcome the obstacles laid by the political class, which continues to manipulate religious sentiments, setting one group against the other. This is one of the reasons why bad governance, corruption, ethno-political and religious riots have become rampart in Nigeria. The fundamental religious teaching of love, peace and respect for human life has been neglected. According to Hincks, "the higher religious values that emphasise the dignity of human persons as created by God, irrespective of his or her beliefs and station in life have been deemphasized"[108]. It is hardly surprising that the government of Nigeria has not been able to do

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[105]Martinson, P. V. *Islam: An Introduction for Christians.* Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2004, p. 210.
[106]Kukah, M. H. "Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Sahara Africa*:* Problems and Prospects". *Journal of Religion, Peace and Politics in Northern Nigeria,* 2007, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 155-164.
[107]Kukah, *Christian-Muslim Relationship*, pp. 155-164.
[108]Hincks, C. W. *Quest for Peace: An Ecumenical of the Church in Lesotho.* Marija Museum: Archives Lesotho. 2009, pp. 160-164.

anything tangible about the incessant spate of Christian-Muslim unrest. Political leaders are using and manipulating religious sentiments for their personal interests. Therefore, the tense religious atmosphere in Nigeria is readily visible in that the contest for power within the political arena has entered cathedrals and mosques[109]. With the kind of atmosphere described above, Christian-Muslim violence is naturally almost inevitable. Besides the aforementioned factors, there is the big issue of poverty. On 20th February 2003, the BBC reports that:

> Nigeria is a poor country that mirrors many of the problems of countless other African countries in terms of destabilization by violence… the country mirrors the complexities of many African countries with over 70% of the population living below the $1 per day threshold, despite huge revenues from oil and gas exploration[110].

However, poverty is like a vicious circle, and corruption and poverty are almost inseparable. While many political and religious leaders in Nigeria are enriching themselves with public funds, the poor majority suffers the consequences. That is why people will do anything to get money including engaging in religious violence. In a way, it may not be an overstatement to say that most Muslim-Christian crises in Nigeria have little or nothing to do with the religions; rather they are the consequences of corruption and poverty. Kunhiyop is right to argue that the erosion of moral values, decreased social values, lack of transparency, disregard for the rule of law, lust of public trust, adoption of a utilitarian ethic, limited productivity and incompetence, ineffective development and administration, limited foreign and domestic investment and general underdevelopment that we experience in Africa are the consequences of corruption[111]. All these are true of Nigeria and serve as the background for Muslim-Christian unrest in the society.

Another factor which must be mentioned is ignorance. Many of the issues that led to Muslim-Christian violence in Nigeria can be traced to ignorance. Martinson affirms that most adherents of the two religions know little or nothing about each other's faith[112]. The defensive cultures of Christianity and Islam must have been responsible for this. Moucarry argues that, "although Christians and Muslims have been living together for hundreds of years, they always had a ghetto mentality, especially with regard to their faiths. Mutual ignorance, some would argue, was

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[109]Hoglund, K. *Peace Negotiation in the Shadow of Violence.* Netherland: Boston Martinus Nijhoff, 2008, pp. 124-125.
[110]BBC, 20th February 2003.
[111]Kunhiyop, S. W. *African Christian Ethics.* Nairobi: World Alive Publishers, 2008, pp. 166-168.
[112]Martinson, *Islam*, p. 17.

the price of trouble-free coexistence, and, for Christians, perhaps the price of survival"[113]. The ghetto mentality explains why it is easy for a Muslim to have a wrong attitude towards a Christian without a justified cause or vice versa (as the case may be). Where then is the place of the *imago Dei*? What happened to peace, love and respect for human life? Where is the Holy Spirit in this matter? These are some of the questions which pose a challenge for religious activism.

2.4.1 Intra-Religious Conflicts

When investigated, most conflicts that end up being classified as religious in the media are fundamentally linked to causes other than religion. The tendency to identify some ethnic groups with a particular religion easily gives credence to the use of religion for the manipulation of other differences. Though there have been conflicts described as religious in parts of Nigeria, there has been none on a national scale due to inherent centripetal forces in the country.

The problem is due to not only tensions between different religions but also tensions within the same religious groups. In the northwest zone, the struggle for supremacy between traditional and 'modern' or 'progressive' scholars is regarded as a serious problem. The role of religious fundamentalism and politicization of religion in increasing the intensity and magnitude of the violence recorded in this type of conflict cannot be ruled out. As the northwest report states:

> The respondents view the problem of increasing religious intolerance as a recent development. Substantial numbers of them did recall, not long ago, how they used to celebrate each other's religious festivals. This practice has disappeared with increasing intolerance and conflict between the Muslims and Christians. A factor that contributed to this development is the politicization of religion that occurred at both national and local levels'[114].

Examples of 'religious conflicts' include the Kano riot of 1984 occasioned by the coming of Rev. Reinhard Bonnke to hold a crusade in the city, and the 2000 Kaduna crisis which was fuelled by the introduction of the *shari'a* law. The agitation for (by the Muslims) and objection (by the non-Muslims) to the introduction of the *shari'a* legal system in Kaduna led to heavy casualties with attendant reprisal attacks in other parts of the state. The *shari'a* legal system is still a subject of debate in Nigeria, as those who oppose it demand a national position on the

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[113]Moucarry, C. *Faith to Faith: Christianity and Islam in Dialogue*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001, p. 15.
[114]Dretke, *A Christian Approach to Muslims*, p. 17.

issue. Meanwhile, in states such as Zamfara, Kano, Bauchi, Katsina and Sokoto, the *shari'a* law is already being implemented at the request of a section of the citizenry. The politicization of religion has profound effects as the North-West Report notes:

> There is a definite feeling, especially among Muslim clerics in Kano, that the Zone's identity is mainly religious, particularly Islamic, and that such identity should be protected at all costs. The options are for the acceptance of such identity or the division of the country'[115].

The prevalence of religious violence makes one to wonder about the role of religion as each of Nigeria's main religions claims to be a religion of peace. We need to acknowledge that the primary thought of Christianity or any other genuine ethics is how to avoid violence which actually fits in with the goals and aims of the DOV. It is not to justify violence or war; paradoxically, the aim of violence or war must be peace. However, the first task should be to aim for peace in order to avoid violence or war. Pacifists say that there is a Gospel command of nonviolence which must be applied to all our actions. Christ taught us that we must no longer think in terms of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth but rather in terms of "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

It sounds good to say that we will obey the commands of Christ and change the world by promoting the WCC initiative of overcoming violence. However, since we take sin seriously, and since the New Testament does not tell us that human goodness will triumph over evil throughout history, the Sermon on the Mount should not be seen as a political programme. It tells us that great preference is to be given to love, forgiveness and peace. It tells us to improve greatly our personal thoughts and actions. However, it does not tell us that governments or individuals should abandon the struggle for justice and peace. It is in the light of this that the WCC has a well-established approach to tackling conflict and political differences, which involve multilateral consultations and extensive dialogues, even when the positions held by different parties seem distant. Sen[116] comments that in a world in which different people, despite sharing a common interest in peace, security and justice, find themselves divided by mutual incomprehension and disbelief, and sometimes even suspicion, upholding the interests of all

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[115]Kilani, R. A. "Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in Niger Delta (Nigeria)". *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 2000, Vol. 20 (1), p.123.
[116]Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, p. 124.

parties with mutual respect could help to create a more positive climate of tolerance, support and collaboration.

There will be no world peace without religious peace. However, religious peace in the fullest sense is more than a dialogue between religions. Religious peace must become the peace of Christ, who converts our hearts and lives, and ultimately the nation[117]. We must admit that we are not naturally inclined to seek the welfare of others unless the Spirit of God rules over our sinful hearts and lives. The great hope is that God has made known to us the mystery of his will, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment to bring all things in heaven and earth together under one head, even Christ (Eph. 1:9-10).

There will be no world peace without peace between the religions. This is an idea put forward by Hans Küng in the second half of his book on global responsibility. His view is that religious leaders of all the world religions have a high responsibility to lead the nations towards peace. While there are contrary examples all over the world, there are also already examples of this kind of leadership. Küng says that we must not give up our religious identity or the search for truth but we need a peaceful and pluralist basis for this. All religions as well as political ideologies should begin from a universal ethic which recognises the criteria for what it means to be human ('humanism'). That way, dialogue and political agreements for conflict resolution would replace violence[118]. Religious leaders should desacralise war and violence and seek peaceful means for justice.

2.4.2 Ethnic and communal violence

Ethnic and communal violence in Nigeria is closely linked to resource competition and the contest for political power. In competing for political positions, ethnic differences are sometimes used for selfish interests, leading to heavy casualties among the masses who are not necessarily the beneficiaries of the economic gains of the coveted office. Some of these conflicts emanate from governmental policies, which do not seem to carry the populace along, but are tied to the interests of the elite, particularly the political class. Salvatti confirms:

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[117]Küng, H. 1991. *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethics*. Munich/New York: Projekt Weltethes, 1991, p. 154.
[118]Küng, *Global Responsibility*, p. 155.

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> The North-West report concludes that such conflict is often a manifestation of other problems. The respondents cited corruption, self-centred leadership, poor implementation of government policies like NAPEP, the glaring gap between the rich and the poor, and the arrogant display of stolen public fund by government officials etc as the underlying causes of public anger and frustration that needed religious and ethnic disagreements to erupt into violent conflict[119].

Population explosion has sometimes been identified as the root cause of some of these conflicts and Western sources may be more readily inclined to give this issue prominence. However, the real cause is more likely to be that one ethnic group's population is expanding in relation to the population of another group. Some of the ethnic groups have migrated in search of space for economic activities, thereby triggering the fear of domination by ethnic minority groups. A third set of conflicts related to ethnicity arose where disputes and changes in boundaries have caused severe tensions relating to political power and representation manifested along ethnic or communal lines.

2.4.2.1 Access to land

The contemporary Nigerian situation shows that the intensification of conflict between pastoralists and cultivators is becoming a matter of concern across the country. The issue seems to be particularly strong in the case of pastoralists from outside Nigeria, notably from Niger, Chad and Cameroun, and the issue may be compounded not by any new patterns of migration but by the presence of armed mercenaries from the same countries. Elsewhere, it has been suggested that seeing competition for farmland as a cause of conflict may have been an exaggeration. Tiv farmers, for example, claimed that the issue was not so much the lack of land as the perception of a different political and social status as "indigenes" versus "settlers", and that the significance of this difference lay in access to political power and land. However, as in other manifestations of conflict listed here, the primary issue is often the politicization of the problem. The Tiv have often been able to enlist the support of the Fulani against their enemies but:

> There is a strong feeling among the farmers across the Zone that the Fulani are able to encroach on farmland annually because the Fulani have the money to buy up government officials (police

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[119]Salvatti, *Building Positive Peace*, pp. 10-11.

and judiciary). Consequently the farmers take the law into their own hands by attacking the Fulani whenever there is an encroachment into their farmland[120].

The best way for peace to take root in the Nigerian context is to apply Keulen and Brinkman's suggestion that Tete Manis, the universal term of God among the *Moluccan* people could be used to promote the idea of human dignity as God sees it. The God who would hold His children but who would be angry if the children try to fight others would reconstruct harmony and reconcile the world to himself[121] (2 Cor. 5:19). This is because Christians do have a home and have the same father, a home where everyone can find his/her identity; a home built together and full of shared life. Tete Manis was the human form of God as theistically interpreted. He had the loving arms of a grandfather. He was God in human form and, in that way, a direct critic of every aggressor. This God wants to build love, peace, not violence as seen in Nigerian context.

2.5 Social Violence

What factors motivate social violence in Nigeria? How does social violence occur? Surely, there are no simple answers to these questions but an attempt would be made to provide some cautious explanation. Fox argues that social violence originates amidst such difficult sociological factors as the increase in population, increase of metropolitan societies, escalation of unemployment even among the educated, and growth of economic differentiation in society[122], among others. These variables are often combined into what is commonly called social change. The element of social change is often seen as a factor that causes stress in many societies. There are numerous sources of social violence (deprivation) in the Nigerian context a number of which occur when an individual cannot achieve a targeted aim. Fox presents the empirical analysis drawn from the UNSFIR database on social violence in Nigeria 1990-2008, which contains every incident of social violence reported by the National News Agency and National Daily and throws more light on the subject matter as follows[123]:

1. An unemployed individual's life compared to employed individual's life
2. Type of friends one socialises with compared to neighbour's circle of friends

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[120]Ebo, *Small Arms and Criminality in Nigeria*, p. 9.

[121]Keulen, D. and Brinkman, M. E (eds.). *Studies in Reformed Theology 10: Christian Faith and Violence*. Vol. 1. Uitgeverij Meinema: Zoetermeer 2005, pp. 1-5.

[122]Fox, J. "Lesson on religion and conflict resolution based on empirical studies of religion and conflict". *Religion Conflict,* 2002, pp. 9-16.

[123]Fox, *Lesson on Religion and Conflict Resolution*, p. 17.

3. One's profession compared to a neighbour's 'more prestigious' one

4. Type of car one drives compared to a colleague's 'latest model'

5. Type of residence and area of residence compared to a friend's 'posh' one

6. Type of school one's children go to compared to the neighbour's children

7. Spouse's career compared to that of neighbour's spouse

8. Types of hobby one can afford compared to those of one's friends

9. Places of recreation that one visits compared to those of one's friends

10. Types of attire that one can afford compared to one's expectations.

These are several of the causes of sentiment on social deprivation in the Nigerian context. A universal attribute in all of them is the individual's displeasure with what they possess, compared to what they should possess in an ideal world. Social deprivation in this logic is the aspiration to shift from the authenticity to the ultimate, which is habitually out of reach at that moment. According to the deprivation theory, "the feeling of dissatisfaction leads the individual to rationalise and justify his or her deprivation"[124]. For example, such excuse could be that at the point in time, the visualised ultimate is out of reach and justifiable resources of achieving it are usually unavailable, therefore, the only way forward is the use of illegal measures to achieve that ultimate. Broch-Due rightly observes that social violence refers to physical acts of destruction, killing, looting, attacks, burning, clashes, taking hostages[125], and so on. The fact is that illegal measures could be taken through violent or non-violent action. Kanyadago affirms that, "the nonviolence action takes such manners as prohibited business, corruption, forgery and bribery"[126]. It could also take the form of nonstandard behaviour such as drug trafficking, begging and prostitution. Violence action could appear in the form of criminal activities such as robbery, carjacking, bank raiding, house burglary, kidnapping and destructive acts as described by Fox above.

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[124]Glock, C. and Rodney, S. *Religion and Society in Tension,* Chicago: Rand McNally, 2004, p. 288.

[125]Broch-Due, V. *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post-colonial Africa.* London: Routledge 2005, p. 45.

[126]Kanyandago, P. "From violence to peace: Statements and outline of the problem". In J.K. Mugambi & Carroll Houle (eds.). *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology.* Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001, pp. 174-189.

It is in the course of such action that social deprivation is perceived to be the starting place of violence. Violence is carried out because many Nigerians have unfulfilled aspirations. Although many people know what they want to achieve, their predicament is that their genuine desire of and the means of attaining that ultimate goal are frequently distorted and their efforts become fruitless. Exercising violence is then viewed as an alternative, and due to extensive social deprivation, there is a growing indifference among many citizens especially young people, and they turn to unusual behaviour such as alcoholism, drug addiction and other structures of defiance, which are evident in the growing number of street-children.

Thus, the increase of violence in Nigeria is hinged on the ongoing dissatisfaction in the society. The needs of an escalating number of Nigerians are not met. Since the economy of the country is controlled by a few individuals, the majority does not have enough, and even those who have modest regular incomes are unable to afford basic needs. The consequence of such underperformance is frustration, caused by one's incapability to afford even fundamental necessities such as decent meals for one's household throughout the month.

Due to economic constraints or greed, individualism is rapidly replacing the extended family life as Nigerians who maintain strong feelings towards the extended family are increasingly becoming a minority. The development undermines peace and harmony among kith and kin. A growing number of Nigerians are being brought up away from the social structure of the extended family. Those who are raised in urban areas find themselves associating with people with whom they have no blood relation. Often, the result has been that individuals tend to focus on the immediate family only. Kanyandago notes:

> This situation is the cause of a new mode of life taking root in Nigeria, one that can be acknowledged as the "Concrete Wall Culture." A residence is no longer seen as complete without a concrete perimeter wall around it. The wall is the barrier between those outside and those inside. In the posh estates of Nigeria's urban centres, it is now customary to see a metal sign on a steel gate stating a warning such as, 'this property is protected by secured alarms'[127].

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[127]Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace*, 2001, p. 189. Based on the figures derived from the 2006 population census, population increase is one of the factors that have contributed to the present violent situation. There were about 30 million Nigerians at independence, but the present figure is estimated at over 150 million. This means that the common resources to be shared among all Nigerians are just not enough. The situation is made worse by the fact that the distribution of these meagre recourses is inequitable. Consequently, there is a rush to get what one can without regard to the legitimacy of the means of obtaining it. This inequitable resource distribution has created an

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When the poor begin to consider themselves as less privileged compared to their rich compatriots, the likely development is that the poor would seek to eliminate that economic difference. The social deprivation theory claims that at such times, teachings of social movements become appealing. A deprived individual will be attracted to a teaching which promises to propel him/her out of that perceived deprivation. According to Glock and Rodney, feelings of economic deprivation usually predispose an individual to either join a sect type movement or take to defiant (or devious?) behaviour[128]. This is because some of those sects teach that this present world of economic injustice is transient, unlike the next one which is just and eternal. In this way, religion functions as compensation because it removes this type of deprivation. The individual who resorts to defiant (or devious) behaviour does so because he/she reasons that using unjust means will alleviate the problem.

The provision of education has grown from seven small national universities at independence to more than 35 universities at present. The urgency to create jobs to cope with the number of graduates cannot be overstated but evidence shows that this is not being met. The constraint of unemployment adds to the number of deprived people. The intensity of deprivation originates from the realization that even after obtaining a university or higher education, commonly considered as adequate education and training, one is still unable to find a job offering the expected prestige, status and income. Glock and Rodney lament that:

> There are very many young Nigerians who are unemployed, the current educational policies offer little employment opportunities for the majority of secondary school leavers. This leaves a large number of youths idle; in addition to that, these unemployed youngsters are being joined by an increasing number of university graduates who cannot be absorbed by existing job market. This large number of unemployed and under-employed young people can be viewed as the engine-room of violence in the country. The mostly literate youngsters can look back into the past, present, and into the future with an eye on what is being denied them. They are able to analyze the social and economic injustice that they are being exposed to. This is the category of Nigerians which is over-represented in the occurrence of violent incidents such as carjacking, bank-raiding, house-burglary, kidnapping etc[129].

Occurrences of rape and attempted rape are another form of violence which could be classified along with other cases of violence because society frowns upon them. Recent work in women

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affluent minority and a destitute majority. Such imbalance is the recipe for social deprivation, whose consequence is the prevalence of violence.

[128]Glock and Rodney, *Religion and Society in Tension*, p. 246.

[129]Glock and Rodney, *Religion and Society in Tension*, pp. 246-247.

studies increasingly identifies patriarchy as a violent cultural practice. It is alleged that men who experience frustration outside the home transfer that frustration to their families in the form of assault, mental harassment or detachment from family obligation[130]. It can be inferred, therefore, that some cultural practices are inherent sources of violence. The custom of patriarchy is one of these.

A casual look through Nigerian newspapers shows many cases of violence inflicted from person to person, person to property, person to animals, person to nature, and so on (This Day, 28 March 2008). Perhaps violence is a phenomenon whose roots can be traced to the general fabric of society. The apparent shortage of food, limited access to healthcare and the inability to provide a decent education for one's children produce a general apathy in the society leading to violence, which manifests in theft, corruption, murder, rape, violence against animals and over-exploitation of natural resources.

 Many Nigerians become violent possibly because the circumstances in the nation compel them to resort to violence. There definitely is a yearning in many Nigerians to experience a sense of fulfilment; the inability to achieve this could create a strong motivation to resort to violence in order to ease that feeling of non-accomplishment. That yearning may drive some to imagine that any gain is excellent gain, even when obtained with unjust means. The strong aspiration to attain an anticipated ideal leads some Nigerians to take "shortcuts" in order to achieve their desires. The notion that "the end justifies the means" seems to be widely held (that noble Christian principle of "the means justifying the end" seems to be absent in much of Nigerian social thought). It seems Nigeria has become a land where the idea of cooperation is dead, leaving personal interests to prevail. One of the accepted conditions enabling this state of affairs is grabbing, in which the ablest personality takes all and often much more than one can possibly consume within a lifespan.

Many Nigerians quietly take note of the nationwide incidents of violent clashes; newspapers report violence to remove families from the ostensible 'destined house', corrupt business deals and begging in the street. Fox claims that the violence in society has led to the proliferation of

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[130]Dayton, B. W. and Kriesbery, L. *Conflict Transformation and Peace Building: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace.* London: Routledge. 2003, pp. 1-23.

the culture of "street children" in the country[131]. Most street children come from depressed families where peace is not a daily experience. They take to the street because of the actual violence at home or because parents are themselves victims of violence.

Another consequence of the increase in violence in Nigeria at large is the rise in all forms of criminality especially in armed robbery cases in residential neighbourhoods and along motorways both during the day and night. The failure of the police service, in spite of a series of highly publicised police actions ('Operation-Fire-For Fire', for instance), force expansion, and the subsequent rise in self-help security measures by the citizenry through vigilante groups, is an acknowledgement of the escalating rise in violence (armed criminality). Over the past five years, armed criminality has been transformed into organised banditry, piracy, bunkering and hostage taking in the oil rich Niger-Delta region. Further, there has been a rise in gangsterism evidenced by the proliferation of "secret cults" in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria[132].

To tackle these acts of social violence, the Nigerian government and Christians may need to adopt a proactive approach. The DOV programme of the WCC, with its background and considerable success in using simultaneous means, could serve as a major influence in pressing for that important proactive approach. Indeed, a focus on peace building is the basic acknowledgement of the dignity of all people. This has been the DOV's classic mode of operation and Nigeria could take a cue from this.

2.6 Socio-economic Violence

Violence is the most recognizable form of disrespect, a very public indicator that respect and understanding have broken down. Economic violence is particularly explosive where such issues combine with a sense of injustice and perceived marginalization in the distribution of resources such as land, economic power, and employment prospects, and so on. This is purely based on the uneven distribution of society's wealth, class struggle between the rich and the poor. In most cases, the origin may lie in a sense of "relative" deprivation where groups in less advantageous positions than others in terms education or work opportunities, status, wealth, political influence and so on, wish to change the situation in their favour. According to Bloomfield and Reilly, it

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[131]Fox, *Lesson on Religion and Conflict Resolution*, 2002, pp. 134-137.
[132]Mani, R. *Beyond Retribution: Seeking Justice in the Shadows of War*. Malden: Polity Press, 2002, p. 64-72.

concerns the distribution of economic resources within a society, where perceived imbalance in distribution fuels deep rooted conflicts[133]. Otite and Albert describe it thus:

> In conceptual terms, violence arises from the pursuit of divergent interest, goods and aspirations by individuals and, or groups in a defined social and physical environment. In traditional terms, conflict is a struggle over values and claims to share status, power and resources in which the aim of the opponent are to neutralize or eliminate their rivals. In this sense, conflict may be conceptualized as a way of settling problems originating from is opposing interest and form the continuity of society[134].

Karl Marx and Max Weber are well known theorists on the sociology of conflict. Karl Marx sees conflict as emanating from imbalance of power on the parts of those who contribute to the economy which who are classified into two - those who own the means of production and those who sell their labour and are exploited by the owners of these means of production. Conflict is perceived to be inherent in the reactions between these two classes[135].

The Marxist conceptualization of conflict does fit the Nigerian situation in a general sense and explains the dimension and network of conflict in the society. For example, conflict in the Benue Valley is about land and labour relations, which are economic issues, and the interaction of antagonistic class relations. On the whole, Marx acknowledged the vital role that contradictions play in conflict. Max Weber, on the other hand, has devoted his attention to the theory of action and social conditions and the consequences of economic behaviour. He is not only concerned with group formation on the basis of material interests, but also with economic associations based on market and business interests. He defines social class in the context of material interests[136]. These matters, particularly those dealing with competition for political and economic power and resources, have an important bearing on conflict studies in countries such as Nigeria,

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[133]Bloomfield, D. and Reilly, B. *Characteristics of Deep-rooted Conflict.* Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Bor-Ilon University, 1998, pp. 9-28.

[134]Otite, O. and Albert, I. *Community Conflict in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation.* Ibadan: Spectrum, 1999, p. 564.

[135]Marx, K. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. Volume 1. New York: Vintage Books, 1970, p. 67.

[136]Weber, M. *Theory on Conflict.* Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1992, pp. 4-5. The definition of violence by Weber (1992:5) also takes into account the conflicting interest of all social groups in competition for their material livelihood and existence. These social groups include businessmen, market associations, labour unions, workers, farmers, etc. The wide variety of violence in the Nigerian society can be viewed from this perspective. For instance, in Plateau State, violence has been a result of the competition between Hausa businessmen who seek to dominate the economy of the state and indigenous ethnic groups who are basically petty traders and peasant farmers (see also Yakubu, Adegboye, Ubah and Dogo 1980:545-9). In the Tiv-Jukun crises, the conflict is between the Tiv population which depends upon land and labour for its existence and the Jukuns who are not comfortable with the Tiv's numerical dominance and its implication for the political process.

which are defined by pluralism. It is important to note that conflict is a normal process of interaction especially in a pluralistic and multi-ethnic society. Conflict can hardly be discussed outside the concept of pluralism, as Sonoha points out, "both pluralism and conflict are related in complex ways"[137]. In addition, the existence of conflict does not imply in any way the absence of inter-group coexistence, mutual dependency and harmony. Conflict itself is an aspect of relationship and inter-group existence, and the Nigerian society has experienced several economic (violent) conflicts and crises based on the abovementioned issues.

The dominant interpretation of the religious and other acts of communal violence of the 1980s and 1990s is that they are the product of the economic crisis being witnessed in the country since the end of the 1970s. The consequence of this economic downturn was the general increase in the level of poverty and unemployment among the citizenry. Tabiu comments that:

> As the economic crisis deepened, the population of the unemployed and the poor in the major towns and cities in the country increased. This category of people, who were largely youth and children, roamed about the streets and became willing mercenaries in any given arena of confrontation, demonstration, riot and other forms of violence witnessed in the country especially in the Northern states in the decades of "1980s", "1990s" and "2000s"[138].

2.6.1 Economic manifestation of violence

Government economic policies have not sufficiently addressed poverty, underdevelopment and unemployment, which are a procreation ground for grievances. Greed has manifested in the various strata of the Nigerian society, paving the way for unhealthy economic rivalry and wealth accumulation at the expense of the nation. This interaction of "grievance" and "greed" is the background against which specific issues such as poverty and inequality play out in Nigerian communities.

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[137]Sonoha, S. *Pluralism and Conflicts; A theoretical Exploration in Plural Societies* 2003, Vol. 6 (3), pp. 69-89.
[138]Tabiu, M. "An Overview of *Sharia* Law and Practice in Nigeria", In Uthman, D. Memo Submitted to the Panel of Investigation of Kano Disturbances, 2003, pp. 14-27.

Poverty and Inequality: Nigeria is going through a difficult economic and political transition after 30 years of economic mismanagement and corruption under military rule. According to the UNDP's Human Development Index[139]:

> Nigeria ranks in the low human development category - 151st out of 174 countries for which UNDP has data, and 22nd out of 45 African countries. The proportion of the population which lives on less than a dollar a day is at least 50% and may be as high as 70% the fundamental cause of poverty in Nigeria is the economic stagnation that the country has experienced for almost two decades. Persistent low productivity in agriculture has meant that most of the rural population has had limited opportunities to increase income. In addition, stagnation in the non-agricultural economy has meant no growth in formal employment and limited demand for informal activity.

In the late 1980s, the World Bank supported a structural adjustment programme (SAP) that proved controversial. Reports suggest that the SAP led to increased growth in population and reduction of poverty, particularly in the rural areas. In the six years prior to the SAP (1980-1986), the GDP declined by 2%, while in the five years after the SAP was instituted (1986-1991), the GDP grew by 5% per annum. However, implementation problems together with erosion of urban incomes largely caused by erosion of fiscal discipline made the SAP highly unpopular. These problems also damaged the reputations of the World Bank and IMF, whose policies were seen by ordinary Nigerians as causing unemployment and labour unrest, thus, increasing conflict. In the years since the SAP reforms, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has increased steeply. Urban poverty has increased faster than rural poverty due to massive migration from rural to urban areas, with the incidence of urban poverty now matching that of rural poverty (www.idpproject.org).

Another factor that equally supports the socio-economic interpretation of the unrest revolves around the general impact of the rising prices of consumer goods and low wages and incomes in the period under study. The general inflationary trend in the last few decades has gone from bad to worse since the imposition of SAP in 1986. It has been documented that from 1986-1999, the prices of food, clothing, medicines and transport have multiplied between 500 to 3000 times with

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[139]UNDP. "Deepening democracy in a fragmented world". *Human Development Report 2002.* Denmark: UNDP, 2002.

serious consequences on the social conditions of the citizenry[140] and the situation is even worse in the present decade (the 2000s).

2.6.2 Resource competition

The allocation of Nigeria's massive income from oil has a deeply pervasive effect on the political system. As stated earlier, many Nigerians see politics as a competition for resources derived mainly from oil. A political appointment or election marks the beginning of all manner of felicitation and celebration. The often unspoken sentiment is "our time has come" (it is now the turn of the elected or appointed to benefit maximally from oil revenues alongside his kith and kin, associates and friends). Oil has had a profound economic effect arising from its dominance of the economy. The effect has been observed in many similar situations and oil has been given the name "Dutch Disease". Internally, oil draws economic activity towards itself, sterilizing other sectors of the economy, while the effect is further increased by oil exports leading to an artificially appreciated national currency that undermines other possibilities for export.

By attempting to spread resources evenly, Nigeria has created deep resentments in the oil-producing areas and government's attempts to raise the issue have too often been dismissed as separatism and suppressed with violence. The problem manifests not only as an ideological issue but also in terms of employment. The Imo and Anambra State governments have cited the reduction of their share of the federal oil income from 13% to 3% as a reason for their inability to pay their workers[141]. One case recorded in the South-South reports shows that the issue quickly transformed into an "ethnic" issue:

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[140]UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. World Youth Report, New York, 2003. At the root of the galloping inflation of the period was the increase in the prices of petroleum products and the introduction of the foreign exchange market. In the pre-SAP period, for example, the pump price of petrol was 30k per liter, but with the introduction of SAP, the price began to be adjusted upwards: 70k per liter (1986), #1.40k per liter (1988), #3.25k per liter (1990), currently #110.00k per liter (2010) and the is always consequently followed by a prolonged period of scarcity of the commodity. This resulted in the unprecedented increase in prices of goods and services in the country.

[141]"The process of enacting a law that will remove the dichotomy between on and off shore oil, and revenues derivable to communities where these are sited is in progress. This may well soothe frayed nerves for now. At the local level, people experience constant uncertainty about the benefits of the oil industry. Sudden changes in oil price, the production policy of companies or decisions about the labour force can drastically affect them. Although such matters are supposed to be regulated through open Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the government and the companies, the practice there is widespread suspicion about these 'MOUs'" (Vanguard, Lagos, 16th June 2006).

The Okrikans believe that the refinery was employing less of their community than they were entitled to, and as a result youth groups demonstrated violently and set up roadblocks to prevent the public (including Elemes) from getting to the refinery. The Elemes reacted to the demonstration and the situation quickly turned into violent conflict with properties destroyed, as well as a number of people killed[142].

2.6.3 Unequal development

Research has showed that strong grievances have arisen around the perception that a particular State or ethnic group has been unfairly treated, resulting in great differences in the standard of living. For example, many southern respondents took exception to the claim that, when it held sway under the military government of General Sani Abacha, the Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) tarred more roads and provided more infrastructural amenities for the northern part of Nigeria than for the south although the petroleum revenues from which it derived its funds are in the south[143]. The origins of this conflict have manifested in two ways namely the role of greed followed by the retaliation of grievance. The role of the oil companies and all other stakeholders in the oil industry in the Niger Delta region has contributed greatly to the conflict; some may even go as far as saying that the oil companies and stakeholders are the cause of the famous "blood oil" conflict.

The international oil companies such as Shell, which have been operating in the delta area for some decades, have recently found themselves in a predicament. They are now being targeted by environmental movements challenging them to renew their infrastructure, which is threatening the already endangered eco-systems that are found in the area, as their old piping is spilling waste materials into the waters of the swamp and the marshland.

The spillage is also a health issue to the inhabitants of this area, as the water is being infected with poisonous gases and oils. Local inhabitants of the delta and local movements fighting for the rights of the locals, say argue that they should have full ownership of their minerals and be

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[142]Ibrahim, J. "The Transformation of Ethno-Regional Identities" In A. Jega (ed). *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria.* Kano: Clear-impression Ltd., 2003, pp. 162-167.

[143]Nkoro, E. (2005:32) "Conflict in the Niger Delta: The way forward". Accessed 14, June 2010 online from: http://searchwarp.com/swa20447.htm. Historically, the Niger Delta has been politically and extremely fragmented, and subject to frequent and at times violent disputes over land and fishing rights, as well as over traditional leaders' political jurisdictions which were to some degree fuelled by the federal political system that is being used in Nigeria (Ikelegbe 2005:10). These all lead to cycles of "revenge violence", namely grievance. As more powerful weapons became available in the Delta in the mid and late1990s, disputes became more violent. Youth gangs became more powerful and were subsequently willing and able to protect their villages and elders.

part of the stakeholders which benefit from the hard work of the locals and the minerals of their motherland[144]. Thus, there is clearly an element of greed coming to the surface. The oil companies have been capitalizing on minerals that do not belong to them, making billions of dollars each fiscal year[145]. One would assume that the part of the country which is generating so much wealth would be one of the most well developed areas in Nigeria. On the contrary, poverty, diseases and an alarming unemployment rate prevail in the region which plays host to so many industrial oil companies. Furthermore, because the oil companies have not been monitoring their infrastructure closely, the result of their irresponsibility is affecting their host communities, as the leakage from old oil pipes poisons the water and farmland.

To some degree, the grievances that the communities and the people of Nigeria have against the companies are understandable. In the view of the locals, these companies occupy their land, take bread out of their mouths (by taking their oil and not creating employment), endanger their lives (through unattended leakages and economic crisis) and leave them with no money, be it directly through employment or indirectly through redistribution in the form of better living conditions by providing services such as pipe-borne water, housing and sanitation. Thus, greed on the part of the oil companies subsequently cultivated grievances in the communities.

There is a massive disruption of socio-economic activities across parts of Nigeria. Firstly, in 2002, internal displacement was estimated by Nigeria's Vice-President to be 750,000 and it currently is assumed to be over 800,000. Most displaced people lose their businesses due to looting and their homes are often destroyed[146]. They become dependent on assistance and many sink into poverty.

Secondly, the recurring increase in armed violence that is now a feature of life in different parts of Nigeria engenders an atmosphere of insecurity that discourages formal and informal economic activities. This insecurity derives from both the threat and the actual unleashing of violence. The government estimated that Nigeria has lost at least US$2 billion to the bunkering activities of sea pirates in the Delta region (*Vanguard*, 9th March 2005)

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[144]Nkoro, *Conflict in the Niger Delta*, pp. 32-67.
[145]Ikelegbe, A. "The economy of the conflict in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria", *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2005, Vol. 14 (2), pp. 208-234.
[146]Bako, T. F. *World Economic Recession and the Growth of Religion Intolerance in Nigeria.* Ile-Ife: Ibadan 2001, pp. 170-178.

The disorder in economic activities at the micro level has had negative impacts on savings, investments and earnings. This reality may not be reflected in the national statistics because the national economy is structured and anchored on the big business investments in the oil, gas, and telecommunication sectors. Nonetheless, massive displacement and the destruction of lives and properties limit the ability of the masses to save, invest, or even earn a living. This has knock-on implications for local government authorities responsible for providing social services from local taxation and other means. A further consequence of violence has been reduced government capacity to deliver social services that were sub-standard prior to the intensification of the possession and usage of arms in 1999. Government services including schools, health units, and government offices and officials, have been targets of violence[147]. In addition, government resources have been directed towards security rather than social provision, as economic violence increased.

2.7 The Quest for Peace Initiative

The social movements that emerge due to the various problems are poised to answer to feelings of deprivation that Nigerians are experiencing. Indeed, this is what would appear to be the trend among many Nigerians. Currently, little hope can be seen but it is not yet too late, as a peaceful future could yet be cultivated. There is the potential to cultivate a peaceful non-violent society, where there is no physical, mental or moral pain - a society where torture, mental suffering, poverty, oppression of the poor, injustice and inequality are absent. Obasi points out that, "A peaceful society is one where all forms of deprivation are unknown"[148]. The direction in which the Nigerian society should be moving is from social deprivation to social satisfaction.

Without doubt, all Nigerians would love to live in a peaceful society. However, for peace to become a reality in a society like Nigeria, it would need a political, social, economic and religious overhaul. Those Nigerians with the opportunity to make that kind of move do not seem to be capable of initiating such a specialised undertaking. For peace to be realised in the country, all Nigerians would need to have their "fair share" of and "fair access" to the common national resources now patronised by a few.

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[147]Moser, C. "Urban violence and insecurity: An introductory roadmap". *Environment and Urbanization*, 2004, Vol. 16 (2), p. 24.

[148]Obasi, N. K. *Small Arms Proliferation and Disarmament in West Africa: Progress and Prospects of the ECOWAS Moratorium* Abuja: Apophyl Productions, 2002, p. 17.

A more equitable method of income distribution ought to be put in place to replace the current one which promotes gross inequalities. For peace to be the catchword in Nigeria, it is imperative to re-educate Nigerians to work harder, to take their responsibilities seriously, and to take the interests of fellow Nigerians into consideration. For peace to prevail in the nation, it is imperative for Nigerians to learn to be forgiving, tolerant of the shortcomings of others, and accommodating the wealth of talents present in the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious land.

For peace to be a deeply rooted norm in the nation, it is imperative for Nigerians to espouse the value of human life, moral integrity and honest gain. For peace to reign in the society, its pursuit must be given top priority. The provision of education and training on how to cultivate a culture of peace must be a national goal. Governmental and non-governmental organisations should be allowed to lobby freely for peaceful means of solving serious social issues. Above all, for peace to be maintained, it must be the responsibility of all Nigerians to take on the burden of consoling and nursing victims of violence[149].

However, if the present trend is not reversed, it is predictable that Nigerians cannot look forward to a future of peace and tranquillity. There are all the indications that the Nigerian society of the future is going to be an even much more violent one than the present. All factors being equal, it does not seem plausible that the available resources can stretch in order to satisfy the need of a nation such as Nigeria. Be that as it may, the consummation of a peaceful and harmonious society should remain a hope for all Nigerians.

2.8 Conclusion

The combination of political, economic, social, ethnic, and religious violence is a deadly mix, given the numerous outbreaks of violence since 1980. Because both religion and politics seek to pursue and promote peace, unity, and stability, violence should not be the means of achieving that end. No country prides itself or flaunts its accomplishment through violence. Those who use political, economic, social, ethnic and religious issues to foment trouble are doing a great disservice to their nation. Nigeria, once referred to as the "Giant of Africa", faces the challenge

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[149]Dayton, B. and Kriesbery, L. (eds.). *Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace.* London: Routledge, 2003, p. 122

of establishing a workable and effective mechanism to forestall violence at all levels and to institute strong strategies for sustainable peace and unity. The success of non-violence in modern Nigeria will depend on the measures the government adopts to combat the outbreak of sectarian conflicts.

Nigeria's constitution is clear that the country is a secular state, and political leaders are supposed to be conscious of the need to maintain national integration as a major factor of unity and peace. Since the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) did not succeed in dividing Nigeria, the present forms and causes of violence should not be permitted to cause further unnecessary division and disunity in the nation. Nigeria should strongly uphold the principle of "unity in diversity" and allow nonviolence to be an anchor for unity rather than violence to be an instrument of division and disunity. Nigeria's national anthem ends with the phrase, "peace and unity". This theme captures the dreams of the founding fathers of Nigeria and should therefore, not be made invalid.

CHAPTER THREE

THE NATURE AND GOALS OF THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examines the reality of violence and the quest for peace in the contemporary history of Nigeria by considering in the light of the goals and objectives of the DOV the political, social, ethnic, economic, and religious violence which has denied the nation the peace that God intended humans to have. The present chapter will review literature on the theological and ecclesiological aims, content, processes and programmes of the DOV. However, the main source of this analysis will be "the September 1999 official declaration by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking reconciliation and peace". The chapter is based on the assumption that the DOV programme of the WCC could be adopted to promote peace and provide possible ways to overcome violence in Nigeria.

A look at the WCC background shows that the WCC has had a concern for peacemaking since its inception in 1948. At the 1998 Eighth Assembly in Harare, the WCC decided to initiate and declare the decade beginning 2001 as a Decade to Overcome Violence, and this declaration was contemporarily affirmed by churches around the world[150]. Raiser remarks that:

> We have been called to witness that the ending of violence is a central part of our mission. We are invited to work to end violence against women in our homes; to end the violence of war; to end the culture of violence found in movies, music, videos and computer games; and to end violence in whatever form it appears in our own communities"[151].

As mentioned above "overcoming violence" is not a new preoccupation. Since its inception, the ecumenical movement, in particular the WCC has been deeply engaged in ways to "overcome violence". In recent decades, the concern has been mostly, but not exclusively, focused on the

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[150]Manchala, D. *Introducing the Decade to Overcome Violence*. New York: Harper & Row. 2003, pp. 4-20.
[151]This statement is from the general comments concerning the future shape of the WCC by Raiser in the report of the general secretary to the meeting of the WCC Central Committee, *Welcoming and Remarks from WCC*. Geneva: WCC Risk, 2001, p. 241.

structural or systematic violence in political, economic, religious, social and gender relationships[152].

Thus, the DOV theme officially adopted by the WCC in 1999 is a natural outgrowth and expression of a long and continuing tradition. The "Decade" runs from 2001 through 2010. Manchala reiterates that after two years of elaborate discussions and intense preparations, the DOV (2001-2010) was formally launched in Berlin, Germany, on 4 February 2001, during the meeting of the central committee of the WCC[153]. Dickinson also notes that the WCC is committed to learning from the experiences of the victims of violence and the oppressed as well as from the experiences of churches and other groups struggling against violence and oppression in their own contexts. While theoretical analyses are important throughout the process, it is also crucial to learn from the actual experiences of people suffering from and struggling against violence[154]. The DOV is an initiative of the WCC that calls churches, ecumenical organisations, and all people of goodwill to pursue non-violence. In its message to the churches, the central committee announced that, "At this critical juncture in history, we launch the Decade to overcome violence as an urgent call to churches and ecumenical organisations" to[155]:

- Work together for peace, justice, and reconciliation at all levels – local, regional, and global.

- Embrace creative approaches to peace building which are consonant with the spirit of the gospel.

- Interact and collaborate with local communities, secular movements, and people of other living faiths towards cultivating a culture of peace.

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[152]The WCC Central Committee, *Welcoming and Remarks from WCC*. Geneva: WCC Risk. 2001, p. 241. For example, WCC declarations, "The WCC strives to bring together a community based on the values of solidarity and mutual concern that challenges all forms of violence. Committed to raise awareness… provide a safe space free from intimidation for all participants… Christians are called to be present for one another, especially for those who struggle for their safety, dignity and rights. God calls us into right relations with one another — to show care and respect for each human being."

[153]Manchala, D. *Introducing the Decade to Overcome Violence*. New York: Harper & Row, 2003, p. 131.

[154]The immediate predecessor efforts to DOV within the ecumenical family were the Programme to Combat Racism, initiated in 1971, the continuing invaluable initiatives of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, the Decade in Solidarity with Women, the 1994-1998 Programme to Overcome Violence, and the mid-1990 Peace to the City pre-Harare assembly programme (Dickinson 1997, pp. 192-208).

[155]Overcoming Violence: WCC Statement and Actions (1994-2000), WCC, 2000, pp. 54-55. See also DOV Reference Group. Unpublished Report of Meeting in Accra, Ghana, May 2001, p. 2.

- Empower people who are systematically oppressed by violence, and act in solidarity with all those who struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

- Repent together for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence.

The launching of the Decade was a huge event. A prayer vigil, remembering children who died violently in different parts of the world, preceded a colourful worship service at Kaiser Wilhelm Gedachtniskirche (a church which was bombed during the war) in Berlin. Confessions of complicity in situations of violence and sharing of hopes for the DOV by some members of the central committee were the major features of this worship, which was televised live all over Europe. The public event in the Berlin House of Cultures brought together over 1000 people. Thirty peace movements and organisations in Germany and Europe presented their work during the festival that preceded the formal launching ceremony[156]. Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos Horta, Rita Süssmuth, a member of the German parliament and His Holiness Aram I, the moderator of the Central Committee, shared their visions for the Decade.

The celebrations culminated in a candlelight procession to the famous Brandenburg Gate, a symbol of both violence and reconciliation. Those who marched gathered to form the DOV logo with their lit candles; then, Konrad Raiser, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches remembered the martyrs for peace and called on everyone to carry on the struggle for peace. Kerber reports that, on the previous day in Potsdam, the members of the central committee, at a special plenary session on the DOV, identified some important issues for further reflection and action at various levels. The issues included theological reflection on violence and non-violence, the ecclesiological implications of overcoming violence, the dilemma of violence as a last resort, structural forms of violence, violence against women, the production and sale of small arms, the consequences of war, and interfaith approaches to peace-building[157]. They also deliberated upon their own role in the DOV process and made personal commitments to it. All these actions portray hope. The WCC realised that the power of active nonviolence can in fact

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[156]Manchala, *Introducing the Decade*, pp. 1-12.

[157]Kerber, G. is the programme executive for impunity, truth and reconciliation in the International Affairs, Peace and Human Security team of the WCC. 2002, pp. 197-199. See also *Welcome and Remarks from WCC*. Geneva: WCC.

change the whole world, against all expectations. However, it is important to understand the forms of violence that the DOV is concerned with at this point.

3.2 Forms of Violence Addressed by the DOV

Enns, Holland and Riggs acknowledge that, "We live in a world pervaded by the culture of violence expressed and experienced in different ways by all people in every part of the world"[158]. Therefore, the Decade addresses all forms of violence. Moreover, violence is a complex social phenomenon. It is not only physical and visible when death and destruction take place, but is also structural when people are forced into poverty, subjugated, and denied basic human rights on account of unjust social, political, religious and economic structures (as is the case in Nigeria). The WCC Faith and Order Team stressed that, today, violence cannot be seen merely as an expression of enmity or hatred or as a retaliatory act, but also as a means of becoming and remaining wealthy and powerful. Culture, tradition and religion play a role in either aiding or abetting violence in one form or the other. Wars, civil wars, armed conflicts, communal clashes and terrorist attacks on the one hand, and violence within homes and against women, children and young people, racially oppressed groups and ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, and against nature, on the other hand, overwhelm human life in the world today[159]. Furthermore, the world also allows itself to be entertained with violence through TV and movies which teach violence to children. Besides, the profits from the weapons' industries keep the economies of some countries strong[160]. This should not be the case if we truly wish to overcome all forms of violence.

According to Manchala, "Nurturing Peace: Overcoming Violence" observed that, the overwhelming reality of violence in all its manifestations presents a fundamental challenge to our ways of being church. As the world is broken and divided by poverty, oppression and the structures of domination and exclusion (e.g. patriarchy and globalisation), so also is the human situation in the churches. Most people in our world are denied basic justice and rights. They are

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[158]Enns, Holland, Riggs, *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, pp. 97-132.

[159]WCC Faith and Order Team, Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence: In the Way of Christ for the Sake of the World. 1999, pp. 1-11. An Invitation to a Process of Theological Study and Reflection on Peace, Justice and Reconciliation during the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Peace and Reconciliation 2001-2010.

[160]The Boston consultation was held under the framework of the Programme to Overcome Violence and organised jointly with the Faith and Order Commission. See also Kässmann, M. *Overcoming Violence: The Challenge to the Churches in All Places.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998, pp. 9-16.

silenced spectators of their own stories[161]. The fullness of life promised by God has been diminished and destroyed. The frightening consequences of brokenness bear most heavily on women, children and groups so often marginalised or excluded by the churches that one would have to ask, "Whose church is it?" For example, Yusuf[162] observes the role religious leaders played in the *shari'a* riots in Kaduna, where both Muslim and Christian religious leaders called for peace, reminding adherents of both faiths that their religions prohibited the use of violence in settling disputes that could be settled by dialogue and peaceful means. However, some analysts view these as belated moves, pointing out that religious leaders had, through their provocative utterances and actions, incited the people to adopt violence.

In spite of this reality, churches are encouraged and challenged by the WCC to embark on an urgent process of self-critique and recovery of their peace-making ministry. Christians believe that they are called by the gospel of Christ to build communities characterised by honest, just and transparent relationships with God, one another and with the whole of creation. The presence of Christians in human society in all its messy complexities entails that they keep company with those who struggle to overcome injustice and violence[163]. The incarnate God is encountered in these hard places, and in communities (within and beyond the boundaries of institutional religion) which seek to integrate all the spiritual and material dimensions of God's creation[164].

Therefore, one would argue that the voices of victims and survivors of violence affirm that sanctuary, hospitality, accompaniment, and boldness in naming and confronting the roots and causes of violence are the marks of a faithful church. How then shall churches or Christians seek to transform (in our specific contexts and in partnership with others) the structures, systems and attitudes, which obstruct their faithfulness to God's vision of shalom for all humankind and creation, as revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Furthermore, how shall the church be disturbed by love and anger, and energised with the life-giving Holy Spirit, to engage truly with the call to overcome violence? This question is a disturbing reminder for churches to face their

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[161]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace,* pp.8-36.
[162]Yusuf, B. "Managing Muslim-Christian conflicts in Northern Nigeria: A case study of Kaduna State". *Journal of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations,* 2007, Vol. 18 (2), pp. 237-256.
[163]Sheerattan-Bisnauth, P. and Peacock, P. V. *Created in God's Image: From Hegemony to Partnership. A Church Manual on Men as Partners: Promoting Positive Masculinities.* Geneva: World Communion of Reform Churches/ WCC, 2010. Accessed from 5th June 2009(http://www.wcrc.ch/node/474).
[164]Raiser, K. *For a Culture of Life: Transforming Globalisation and Violence.* Geneva: WCC Publication, 2002, pp. 78-154.

complicity in violence rather than prefer to focus on the violent ways of the world. It also challenges churches to repent and be accountable to those harmed both within and beyond the churches[165]. It should be acknowledged that the Harare Assembly called violence against women a sin[166]. "Being Church" means Christians must address seriously this sin of complicity in the new ecumenism of local spaces and fellowships.

Enns, Holland and Riggs notably observe that for Christians, the dream of a world of justice and peace is translated into the language of the kingdom of God. In it is founded their deepest hope that violence can actually be overcome, because this hope is part of the reality which came into our violent world with Jesus Christ[167]. This view changes the way Central Committee of the DOV programme looks at the world. The altered perspective creates the motivation to overcome violence and to take courageous steps against all apparent odds; it opens the way for them to reinterpret their own experiences. The knowledge that it is given to them to be part of this kingdom of God can be a source of comfort and strength that will keep them from flagging in their efforts to break the cycle of violence and to join in building communities of peace.

The WCC sees the Decade as a time the churches of the ecumenical community can look back, remember and evaluate themselves self-critically. Enns, Holland and Riggs say, "None of us was so naïve as to believe that we would overcome violence within ten years"[168] but the delegates at the Eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare/Zimbabwe in 1998 felt the strong calling to face violence in all its different forms, in different contexts. For them (WCC), this was a prophetic step, reading the signs of the times carefully and committing themselves as churches to try to live up to the biblical challenge, *"Be not overcome of evil…"* (Rom. 12:12).

One understands that Apostle Paul's point was not to say, "You will overcome all evil!" His demand was based on the faith that in Christ, the reign of God has come to the earth. In Jesus' life, death and resurrection, the powers of evil are overcome even if they are still present. Therefore, as churches, believers and followers of that Gospel message, we have been freed to live "the good" against all "evil" by the transforming grace of God. The WCC does not believe

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[165]Celam S. *Peace: Fruit of Reconciliation*. Nairobi: Pauline 2001, p.19.
[166]Enn, *Draft of DOV's Final Report*, 22nd March 2011.
[167]Enns, F. Holland, S. Riggs, A. *Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation*, pp. 97-132.
[168]Enns, *Draft of DOV's Final Report*, 22nd March 2011.

any longer that there is a redemptive power in violence since it understands that a different reality will be accomplished in the *eschaton*, not by self-efforts, but by the completing love of the God of all creation. This eschatological vision empowers the WCC to follow that call to become ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5) and the past Decade has been a tool in its hands to try to live by it[169].

3.3 The Decade to Overcome Violence

In this section, the discussion will focus on the goal and the character of the Decade to Overcome Violence.

3.3.1 Goal of the DOV

 The Decade to Overcome Violence was timed to coincide with the United Nation's Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010. On the last frenetic day of the Harare Assembly, when Fernando Enns of the German Mennonite Church stood up to propose that 2001-2010 be a Decade to Overcome Violence, the Assembly summarily approved the motion. From this action sprung the September 1999 official declaration by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches of the Decade to Overcome Violence – "Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace"[170]. Consistent with the common understanding and vision, that:

> We are convinced: the churches are called to provide to the world a clear witness to peace, reconciliation and nonviolence, grounded in justice... But we are also aware that Christians and churches have added, through word and actions, to growing violence and injustice in a world of oppression and graceless competition... As we engage in constructive efforts to build a culture of peace, we know that we are required to embark upon a deep process of change, beginning with repentance and a renewed commitment to the very sources of our faith...[171]

In order to move peace building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church and to build stronger alliances and understanding among churches, networks and movements which are working towards a culture of peace came out with the five basic goals of

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[169]Manchala, D. "Decade to Overcome Violence - Message, Letter, Basic Framework". *WCC Central Committee's Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting*. Geneva, Switzerland, 26 August-3 September 1999, pp. 185-195.
[170]Raiser, K. *To Be the Church: Challenges and Hopes for a New Millenium.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, pp. 43-44.
[171]Marilyn J. "The Decade to Overcome Violence", In Manchala, D. *Introducing the Decade to overcome violence.* Geneva: WCC Risk 2003, p. 43.

DOV, as endorsed by the September 1999 Central Committee. The goals are predicated on the conviction that peace making must be at the core of the life and witness of the churches[172]:

1. "Addressing holistically the wide varieties of violence, both direct and structural... and learning from local and regional analyses";

2. "Challenging the churches to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, to relinquish any theological justification of violence, and to affirm anew the spirituality of reconciliation and active nonviolence";

3. "Creating a new understanding of security in terms of cooperation and community, instead of in terms of domination and competition";

4. "Learning from the spirituality and resources for peace building of other faiths, to work with communities of other faiths in the pursuit of peace";

5. "Challenging the growing militarisation of the world, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons".

In the light of these goals, it was obvious from the start that the Decade would need to follow a self-critical approach, given the compliance of churches in violence as well as their traditional ways of legitimising it. At the same time, the WCC wanted to draw on the rich theological, liturgical and practical resources of the church traditions in peace building and healing as well as their critical potential to confront the powers of violence. The WCC could not do much more than offer the "ecumenical space" to pursue these goals together; provide a forum to meet, discuss, reflect and develop together the state of the churches in their respective communities and contexts and how they can become credible ambassadors of reconciliation; allow its members to be challenged and questioned as individual churches and together as an ecumenical family. Regional and local councils of churches have provided spaces for that as well. In the end, the churches will have to answer the question, which goals have we achieved? It is not so much

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[172]Raiser, *Welcome Remark from WCC*, pp. 54-55.

about converting the other, but rather a question of allowing oneself to be part of that programme[173].

It is a fact that in its recent deliberations on the DOV, the Justice, Peace and Creation Advisory Group named violence as one of the most destructive forms of the misuse of power, and one which accompanies other forms of oppression such as racism and sexism. While focusing all its attention on the need and initiatives to overcome violence, this Decade to Overcome Violence will place a special emphasis on structural and systemic forms of violence. It will also give a special expression to the voices, concerns and visions of marginalised communities such as women, youth, indigenous peoples, and racially and those who are ethnically discriminated against, for example, the Dalits in India. This approach recognises that reconciliation requires a process of reparation, restitution and reconstitution which is accompanied by the reconciling of memories and communities across deeply entrenched differences.

As the churches deal with common human issues of "violence" and join the creative stream of those who are already trying to overcome violence, it is necessary to examine what is distinct about their response as a community that claims its origin and inspiration in the power of the prophetic voice. In overcoming violence, the Nigerian churches need to seek peace and reconciliation not as governments and NGOs, but precisely as churches. They are not to be satisfied with mere peacemaking or peacekeeping. As the faces of the perpetrators of violence are exposed, the churches need to talk about violence not only as a psychological trait but also as an instrument of power.

It is important to mention that the approach by the DOV aims to provide a platform to share stories and experiences, develop relationships and learn from the positive experiences of the churches and groups working to overcome violence. Part of the contribution of building cultures of peace involves listening to the stories of the primary victims of violence, especially the poor, women, youths and children, persons living with disabilities and indigenous peoples, and

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[173]Raiser, *Welcome Remark from WCC*. See also, 2001 WCC Activity Report - this account largely reproduces a text on the WCC International Affairs, Peace and Human Security - Peacebuilding and Disarmament, website http://bit.ly/ghjTaS. It also draws on material posted on the now dormant Peace to the City website: http://bit.ly/dZMrgJ. Accessed on 27th June 2010.

learning from them about the kinds of skills and creativity that are necessary for survival and resistance of violence.

The DOV is now a Council-wide programme involving all the units of the WCC. As mentioned above, it was launched by the Central Committee on 4th February 2001. The prospect of a global impact depends on the active participation of all units. Setting up an international network of churches and related peace organisations to sustain and promote the agenda of the Decade, and ensuring that the Decade continues to draw its strength and support from the initiatives of local groups will require planning, coordination, mid-Decade visits based on the model of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, and follow-up. As cited above that, in a recent Justice, Peace and Creation Advisory Group, the purpose of the DOV was discussed from the perspective of violence as a symptom of the prevalence of unequal and unjust relationships[174]. The WCC Central Committee also specified that DOV's activities would be informed by and built on the insights gained and lessons learned from the Council's earlier programmes of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women and the Peace to the City Campaign.

In addition, Hoglund affirms that the DOV is the result of the WCC's long history of involvement in the issues of peace and justice[175]. In fact, the WCC took its shape in response to the context of a world deeply divided – politically and economically – by two successive world wars. Churches also gave a divided witness – on the one side identifying with different nations in conflict and on the other continuing to take different stances on the question of the legitimacy of violence. As the churches began to engage in reflection and action towards greater expressions of unity, they were confronted with the realities of increasing economic polarization, militarisation, the inhuman practice of racism, large-scale poverty, and so on, compelling the task of seeking unity within to culminate in the vision of the unity of humankind. The unity within was

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[174]Raiser, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 54-55. Raiser points out that, "the purpose of the DOV is not to do away with violence once and for all, although this programme clearly states that violence, although prevalent, is unacceptable and has to be overcome. To view violence this way is our purpose, and to deny violence any claim to total control and space. Many instances of human tragedy and beauty and, above all, the cross of Christ, suggest that one may be a victim of violence and still overcome it—by not giving violence the last word. Overcoming violence happens by not buying into the spirit and logic of violence even when succumbing to it. Viewed in this way, the Decade to overcome violence is at its heart a decade to overcome the spirit and logic of violence. The often-forgotten subtitle of the DOV is "Churches Seeking Peace and Reconciliation". If we overcome the spirit and logic of violence, what do we overcome it with, and what is going to fill the void? It is crucial to keep peace and reconciliation in perspective, lest the struggle to overcome violence be one of shifting symptoms of the same illness, so that the hurt appears in different forms elsewhere."
[175]Hoglund, *Peace Negotiation in the Shadow of Violence*, pp. 56-67.

understood as a sign of witness to faith in God who reconciles the whole world. The WCC began to pursue the ideal of *oikoumene* as an alternative to a disintegrating world. Such a journey of faith in purity of life has resulted in several innovative events and initiatives during the past 50 years of the WCC's life[176].

Manchala shows that the DOV stems from the WCC's passionate engagement with issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, even as it continues to explore the goal and purpose of Christian unity in a broken world. It is a call of the churches to work together to overcome violence, both within and without. It is an idea that is expected to take shape through the sensitivity, creative responses and committed involvement of churches, organisations, movements, and all people of good will, as they deal with their own experiences of violence in their own areas[177]. Manchala further remarks that the DOV is being seen as a new ecumenical rallying point, as churches seek unity in witness and partnership with one another and with all – including people of other faiths – to make a difference in a world pervaded by the culture of violence. This worldwide ecumenical initiative offers several creative opportunities to churches to discover the meaning of being church in a violent world – to build peace based on justice, to enter into a creative and critical engagement with the world, and to overcome violence within that world[178].

Newman and Richmond state that the main objective of the Decade is "to build a culture of peace by striving to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence[179]. As a matter of fact, Dickinson highlights that the WCC understands its role as facilitator of this process by analysing,

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[176]Ecumenical Consideration for Dialogue and Relation with People of Other Religions 2003. See also, WCC, 2001 (http://www.eclof.org). After the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa, during the 1994 meeting of the Central Committee of the WCC in Johannesburg, church leaders from the region challenged the WCC to move from the "Programme to Combat Racism" which worked closely with the churches in South Africa to a "Programme to Combat Violence". This spawned the WCC's "Programme to Overcome Violence" (POV), of which the "Peace to the City" Campaign was a primary component. The POV ended in 1998 at the Eighth Assembly of the WCC in Harare, giving way to a decade-long engagement with the initiative to overcome violence. The "Decade to Overcome Violence" was affirmed as a call to and commitment by the member churches to work together with other Christians, churches and ecumenical bodies, and all people of goodwill to overcome violence through justice and peace. In the Decade, the churches find the possibility of discovering the meaning of shared humanity as they work with people of other living faiths and movements for the sake of a better world. The new ecumenical charter document "Toward a common understanding and vision" and the recommendation which was adopted in response to the pre-Assembly festival closed the 1988-1998 decade.
[177]Manchala, *Introducing the Decade*, 2003, pp. 1-12.
[178]Manchala, *Introducing the Decade*, pp. 7-10.
[179]Newman, E. and Richmond, O. *Challenges to Peace-building: Managing Spoilers during Conflict Resolution*. Tokyo: New York Press, 2006, pp. 1-21.

interpreting, challenging and assisting various responses to violence[180]. During the first three years, the WCC's work was guided by four thematic foci namely anthropological presuppositions which legitimise violence; the use, abuse and misuse of power; the various aspects of justice involved in the task of peace building; and exploring the possibility of peace building through creative interfaith approaches. Dafne Plou claims that, in this process, the WCC also initiates and encourages[181]: (1) studies on the structures and cultures of violence; (2) campaigns and movements; (3) production of peace education material; (4) innovative theological and liturgical initiatives; and (5) sharing experiences of overcoming violence.

3.3.2 Character of the Decade to Overcome Violence

The WCC understands violence broadly—from domestic abuse to international warfare; violence rooted in hatred of "the other" as in racism, sexism, homophobia and religious intolerance; violence rooted in power asymmetry (as in abuse of prisoners) and structural violence; whether political, social, economic or cultural. Churches are invited to study the spirit and logic of violence; the use, abuse and misuse of power; issues of justice and the redress of injustice; and issues of religious identity and pluralism with a view to replacing cultures of violence with cultures of peace. These will be discussed further. The DOV was envisioned by the WCC as an effort to stimulate a grassroots movement by directing international attention both to the challenges of overcoming violence and of building cultures of peace and to initiatives being taken in this regard by the churches. One way of accomplishing the latter is to recognise and publicise events that celebrate peace witness in the churches. One way of accomplishing the former is through a call for theological reflections in the form of short essays, poems, and so on, on the theme, "the power and promise of peace."

However, the churches also have a unique role to play in other areas. Many times, they are hesitant to get involved in what they see as purely juridical or political issues, and only a few church leaders have played important roles in peace and healing processes. There are notable

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[180]R. D. Dickinson retired in 1997 from the presidency of Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, USA. Earlier in his career, he served on the WCC's commission on the Churches' participation in development. Among his books is *To Set at Liberty the Oppressed and Poor, Yet Making Many Rich.*

[181]Plou, D. *Peace in Troubled Cities: Creative Models of Building Community amidst Violence.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998, pp. 35-39.

exceptions such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa or Bishop Matthew Kukah of Nigeria. It is not only the ecclesiastical hierarchy that should be involved; the church as a community can commit itself to this important task of building reconciliation, offering spaces for symbolic reparation, and accompanying victims and perpetrators in their search for reconciliation with justice. Boraine[182] relates that both in Peru and Sierra Leone, church communities are tackling these difficult matters that relate to violence and reconciliation, and they are developing strategies to achieve lasting peace. For example, in January 2000, Nigerian Christian and Muslim leaders together with traditional chiefs searched for symbolic ways of reconciliation and reparation, according to the cultural heritages. The involvement of churches in these processes may contribute to a holistic approach to overcoming violent conflicts and to building reconciliation with justice, while stressing the spiritual dimension of the conflicts and of the reconciliation processes themselves.

3.3.3 The basic framework of the DOV

In the framework proposed by the DOV, the Central Committee highlighted the crucial urgency of the Decade and raised questions for reflection and action by the churches and the ecumenical movement. These will be outlined in Phases 1-5 below.

3.3.3.1 Phases of the Decade to Overcome Violence

The five phases of the DOV's basic framework proposed by the Central Committee are as follow:

Phase I (1999-2000) - Preparation for the Decade and Launch
The WCC Central Committee invited member churches and ecumenical partners to join the Decade to Overcome Violence, and asked regional and ecumenical gatherings to outline their specific priorities and projects. By so doing, they would contribute to the development of the architecture; formulation of the main message; creation of an appropriate organisational framework and budget for coordination and planning; development and implementation of communication strategies; and preparation for the launch.

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[182]Boraine, A. *A Country Unmasked*. Cape Town: OUP, 2000, p. 157. A more comprehensive study that includes Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) among other issues dealing with political transitions is Neil J. Kritz (ed.). *Transitional Justice*. Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1995.

Phase II (2001-2004) - Launch Decade to Overcome Violence Actions

In January 2001, simultaneous launches were being organised around the world, involving *local congregations and groups as well as highly visible international events.* Different issues and appropriate methodologies were being used in the Decade to Overcome Violence process, which were coordinated with regard to planning, communication, joint events, and common goals.

Phase III (2004) - Synthesis through Cross-Contextual Analysis and Experience

As some issues and actions continued, the WCC facilitated exchanges between creative models of peacemaking addressed in the first three years with the aim of strengthening networks and building new alliances.

Phase IV (2005) - Analysis/Evaluation/Preparation for the Assembly and the Subsequent Five Years

Analysis and evaluation of the first stage of the Decade to Overcome Violence would reflect on the process and ask the following questions: What are the lessons learned so far? What are the challenges to the churches? What are the churches doing? What remains to be done? Strategic exchanges and visits would help participants in the DOV project to listen to and learn from one another. These evaluations and exchanges would contribute to the Assembly's preparation and build new impetus for the Decade's second stage.

Phase V (2005-2010) - WCC Ninth Assembly

Lessons and challenges from the first part of the Decade would be shared. The focus and plan of action for 2006-2010 would be finalised and adopted.

3.3.3.2 Approaches and methodologies of the DOV

The main approaches and methodologies that are used by the DOV are outlined in the "Basic Framework for the DOV Working Document Adopted by the Central Committee of the WCC on 26 August-3 September 1999"[183]:

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[183]WCC, Central Committee. *A Basic Framework for the Decade to Overcome Violence*, Working Document Adopted by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches 26 August-3 September 1999, pp. 5-6.

Study processes - These entail continuing and expanding the theological reflections on violence and nonviolence from the perspectives of the dignity and rights of human beings and of the community; an ongoing and accessible biblical study process (contextual, cross-contextual, and cross-cultural); as well as the study and analysis of the work of truth and reconciliation commissions. Other aspects include engaging churches and regional networks in reflection on violence and peace building in the midst of structural challenges such as racism, globalisation, violence against women, violence among youths, violence against children, etc.

Campaigns - Campaigns have to do with providing practical support and solidarity to churches and groups in their efforts to mobilise campaigns on specific issues with defined goals to prevent, transform and overcome violence in their own contexts as well as encouraging churches and organisations to network for specific international campaigns.

Education - Education involves collecting, compiling, and sharing a peace education curriculum for children, youths, and adults, by building on existing models, particularly from a Christian perspective; networking educators and resource people, as well as theological institutions, who are engaged in conflict resolution, transformation, and mediation. It also aims to challenge present educational systems and media which perpetuate competition, aggressive individualism and violence, especially among children.

Worship and Spirituality - The approach concerns the idea of sharing resources and practices that have to do with worship and prayer across traditions and cultures in order to focus on the common efforts of peace making and reconciliation. The concept of *metanoia* is particularly important as the churches take responsibility for their part in violent actions in the past and at present. *Metanoia* incorporates confession, repentance, renewal, and celebration of faith, and it is therefore the foundation of a culture of peace.

Telling the Story - Decade "Open Space" Sharing stories of violence, initiatives to overcome violence, and sustaining cultures of peace, churches, communities, groups, and individuals will create 'open space' through the World Wide Web, print, video, events and personal exchanges. These stories will connect people and efforts, provide support and solidarity, share resource and ideas, and provide constant input into the process and focus of the Decade, particularly for the second stage, 2006-2010.

3.3.4 Theological framework

A central aspect of the DOV is to enable the insights gained from biblical and experiential theological reflections on violence to influence the process and content of the DOV. According to Gross and Rempel two consultations have already taken place - one in Boston in 1998, and a second follow-up consultation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, one of the seven cities in the WCC Peace to the City Campaign[184]. Five theological themes were identified for further reflection in the context of churches involved in the DOV programme namely: Identity, Unity and Diversity; Forgiveness and Reconciliation- A Healing Process towards Shalom; Texts and Contexts - "Reading" Together for Shalom; Theological Language, Symbols, Rituals and Images; and Becoming Sanctuaries of Courage[185]. All participating churches are encouraged to focus on one or more of these themes with the aim of overcoming violence in the church and in the world.

However, the basic theological premises and working framework were identified and adopted by the DOV reference group meeting in Accra in May 2001 as follow:

a) Spirit and logic of violence
b) Use, misuse and abuse of power
c) Issues of justice
d) Religious identity and plurality.

This aspect of the DOV programme has two basic purposes. Firstly, it is a modest effort to stimulate and open up a theological discussion about churches (the WCC) as peacemakers, and to point in the direction of some basic issues which need further debate and elaboration. Secondly, and more importantly, it is an invitation but also an urgent appeal by the WCC for churches at all levels and Christians, to join hearts and hands in active peace-making, forged in the particulars of each place and time. It is an invitation for Christians and churches to "give an account of the faith which is in them"[186]. Therefore, as a theological programme, the overall contribution of DOV is to raise awareness, deepen theological and spiritual insights to enable

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[184]Gross, J. and Rempel J. (eds.). *The Fragmentation of the Church and its Unity in Peace-making*. London: Oxford University Press 2001, p.21.
[185]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 14-18.
[186]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence,* p. 23.

churches to participate in the global ecumenical movement as they engage on this themes which strives for consensus about peace .

3.3.4.1 The spirit and logic of violence

"Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, devastation and destruction within your borders" (Isa.60:18)*.*

> More and more we are becoming aware that the existing economic order is in fact continually exerting violence on many people, in open and subtle forms, if we do nothing about it. We share in the exertion of violence; violence is the destructive imposition of power[187].

"The spirit and logic of violence"[188] is the first of four lead themes of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). The pertinence of its language is easily recognised, although the theme is perhaps more elusive than the other three. It points to the underlying assumptions and motivations in the prevailing culture that provide the grounds to accept or even enjoy violence. According to Wim van Binsbergen[189], the theme widens over the fields of anthropology, sociology, theology and philosophy, and invites us to question the culture of violence. It also leads us into the spiritual realm, the dimensions of spirituality and of human's relationship with the other transcendent being. This is not only a matter of faith but also of the lived experience of the human as part of creation and in relation to its Creator and Sustainer.

According to Kässmann, the wording of the theme suggests that we are living in a culture where the spirit and logic of violence are persistent, if not dominant.[190] Recognising and overcoming this is a necessary requirement to overcoming violence itself. A case in point is that in situations of violent conflict, resolution of the conflict often does not automatically lead to the elimination of violence; violence at the grassroots level actually increases. The experience in Northern Nigeria, for example, shows that when disputes are being settled centrally, violence tends to spread further on the community level. The same observation was made in South Africa. What, then, is the spirit and logic of violence? Specialists in the fields of philosophy, sociology and

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[187]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence,* pp. 98-103.
[188]Van-Binsbergen, W. "Violence in Anthropology: Theoretical and Personal Remarks". Homepage 1996, Accessed from 15th July 2009 http://www.shikanda.net/ethnicity/violence.htm.
[189]Van-Binsbergen, *Violence in Anthropology*, p. 279.
[190]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 280.

anthropology apparently differ on the hermeneutics of violence which became an issue in anthropology only in the 1960s[191].

Actually, no better description of the haunting, unresolved question of how Christians should act to overcome violence is found in the ecumenical literature than that described in the 1973 statement, "Violence, Nonviolence, and the Struggle for Justice"[192]. This document reflects very closely the discussion of violence and war by the Second World War Amsterdam Assembly. In the discussion, some of the world's most prominent theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Kenneth Grubb, J. H. Oldham and Emil Brunner reflected on the nature of power and the prospects for peace.[193] It is a discussion worth revisiting. That thoughtful statement, commended by the central committee to the churches for appropriate reflection and action, indicated three main positions which Christians take in understanding and overcoming violence:

a) According to Dickinson, "Some believe that nonviolent action is the only possibility consistent with obedience to Jesus Christ. They recognise that this discipline is hard and will often be unsuccessful. They object to justifying nonviolence only by its success as a strategy for solving social problems. Nonviolent action is for them a witness to the transcendent power of God in Jesus Christ, a way of faith which will be justified by him and his power alone"[194]. In short, non-violent action, not passivity, is the faith conviction that God will use these non-violent acts of obedience and faith to achieve his ultimate purpose.

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[191]Hobbes relates that, "in the 17th century, violence was at the heart of society. There is uncertainty as to how violence was contained in pre-modern societies and exactly why it has been getting out of hand since the beginning of the 20th century. If violence was at the heart of society, it was so as a regulating element, keeping itself and violent conflict within limits. It was thus a constituting and preserving force of community. It was a tool for demarcation of good and evil, weak and strong, right and wrong. It was, above all, a safeguard for the established order. Of course, it was unjust and unfair. It had no regard for its victims. But it appears to have followed certain rules. It was identified with an order which we easily dismiss as mistaken from where we sit today. Violence is still used today to maintain a certain order or status, but it involves less in the way of particular rules and conventions, and if it demanded these, who would pay attention? Nor does anyone have a monopoly on violence, users of violence; from teenage gangs to world super-powers do not seem to have much consideration for roles beyond the ones they invoke out of their own self-interest."

[192]World Council of Churches. "Violence, non-violence and the struggle for social justice". *The Ecumenical Review*, 1973, Vol. 25 (4), p.15ff.

[193]World Council of Churches, "Violence, non-violence and the struggle", pp. 15-16. These three positions are basically those described in Section IV of the Report of the Amsterdam Assembly, *The Church and the International Disorder*, Vol. 4, p. 222ff.

[194]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 194.

b) Dickinson furthermore says, "Some are prepared to accept the necessity of violent resistance as a Christian duty in extreme circumstances, but they would apply to it criteria similar to those governing a just war"[195]. Violence will then be understood only as a final recourse. "It is the act of freedom which can only be undertaken, with the guilt it brings, confident in the final judgment of God"[196]. Clearly, there are new significant questions about even the traditional conditions for a "just war". For example, the classical notion depended heavily on existing political powers to declare and prosecute a war, while today one of the most plaguing questions is whether there is a "just revolution" against existing authorities. Further, weapons of mass destruction, inevitably involving huge numbers of non-combatants (calculated today as approximately 90% of those killed or maimed) may never meet the traditional argument that a war must be "proportionate". Grubb wonders whether, in view of modern weapons, wars "'might cure the disease but create an epidemic"[197]. How legitimate are wars of intervention fought at least ostensibly to avoid a greater evil such as terrorism?

c) According to Dickinson, Some find themselves already in situations of violence in which they cannot help but participate. Nonviolence does not present itself as an option unless they would withdraw totally from the struggle for justice[198]. In this situation, the problem becomes to reduce the sum total of violence. Some form of relatively just order must first be created before violence can cease. The problem of Christian responsibility, then, is to humanise the means of conflict and to build structures of peace.

The report further indicates that there are at least three important areas of agreement. First, some forms of violence (e.g. torture, holding innocent hostages, and conquest of one people by another, killing innocent civilians) are never acceptable. Second, churches and Christians have spent far too little energy on the "methods and techniques of nonviolence." Non-violent actions by churches and individuals are comparatively "unexplored territory".

Third, they reject the "facile assumption" that non-violent tactics are power neutral, that they do not apply pressure, even coercion in some cases. "Nonviolent action may be extremely

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[195]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 194-195.
[196]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 195.
[197]Grubb, G. *Distributions and Operators*. New York NY: Springer, 2009, p. 210.
[198]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p.196.

controversial. It is not free of the compromise and ambiguities which accompany any attempt to embody a love-based ethic in a world of power and counter-power... A nonviolent movement may produce peripheral violence and have the problem of controlling it"[199].

In recent decades, the endemic pervasiveness of violence has become ever more visible. Voices of the victims, voices from the "Third World", have given discussions about violence more nuance and urgency, while adding complexity and perhaps confusion to them. The voices of the victims will not allow us to hide behind arguments of good intentions alone, but force us to ask about the evil consequences of even good intentions. The issue is not only "morality" or whether one is doing "right", but whether individuals and institutions are acting "ethically", promoting the "good" as experienced by the poor. The distinction is important as we ponder how best to make peace. Being an ecumenical church has opened our eyes (we still "*see through a glass darkly*"), enabled us, indeed forced us, to see issues of violence differently – beyond narrow parochial perspectives of nation, ethnicity, and so on, without pretending that these perceptions are completely new. Several readings of violence have become more a part of our consciousness. *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 5:9,10) At this point, five prominent instances would be mentioned, while issues such as "economic globalisation" which is a powerful expression of structural violence will be addressed later in the section on justice.

3.3.4.2 Violence against girls and women

A rapidly growing and important body of literature today shows that socio-economic development would be much more effective if only the immeasurable resources of women were brought more fully into the process. However, people are less concerned about the deplorable and almost universal violence against women and the violation of their human rights. The violation of the human rights of girls and women is perhaps most graphic and pervasive under the Taliban regime.

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[199]World Council of Churches, *Violence, Non-violence and the Struggle*, p. 16. Although there remain many different understandings of the origins and nature of violence, a number of common key affirmations of the ecumenical churches can be gleaned from the conversations on violence during the last half-century.

According to Elisabeth Adler and Jonah Katoneene,[200] statistics may "lie" sometimes, but not in this case! The number of female births compared with male births in itself indicates a strong bias against females because of the abortion of female foetuses (e.g. in China), especially in some poorer countries. In 2000 in China, for example, the UN estimates[201] that there are now 120 male births per 100 female whereas the "normal" worldwide pattern is 105 female births to every 100 males. The mortality rate within the first five years after birth is higher for females than for males. Unfortunately, in poorer countries, enrolment in primary school for females is less than 45% and for secondary school, the percentage is even less than 45%. The United Nations contends that of the 125 million children of school age but not in school, two-thirds are female. In sub-Saharan Africa, of the 15-24 year olds newly contracting HIV/AIDS, the incidence for females is about double that of males[202].

Domestic violence figures are stunning. For example, in Nigeria, "on average each year women experience over 572,000 violent victimizations committed by intimate family members or friends compared to approximately 49,000 incidents committed against men"[203].

Similarly, women experience challenges regarding job opportunities or employment when compared to men. Even the percentage of women in high-level decision-making positions in business, government sectors and churches is significantly lower than that of men in the same positions. In short, violence against women across the world is gradually increasing, according to the "Gender Empowerment Measures" developed by the UN and reported in its 2009 Human Development Report. The report concludes "that in no society do women fare as well as men", and "the starkest reflection of the low status accorded to women is the discrimination against them in the law"[204].

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[200]Adler, E. and Katoneene, J. *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement.* Second Edition. Geneva: WCC/ Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, pp. 556-664.

[201]Elshtain, J. B. "Reflection on War and Political Discourse: Realism, Just War and Feminism in Nuclear Age". *Political Theory*, Vol.13 (1), pp. 39-57.

[202]Adler and Katoneene, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, pp. 658-664.

[203]These figures are from "The National Crime Victimization Survey" in the USA. "Violence Between Intimates: Domestic Violence", p. 2. Accessed from 17 March 2011 http://www.silcom.com/~paladin/madv/stats.html.

[204]United Nations UNDP Human Development Report, 1995, p. 3. Accessed from 19 March 2011 http://www.undp.org/hdr/1995/hdr95en1.htm.

The World Council's Decade in Solidarity with Women, which is an ongoing concern, has been a very significant voice in mobilizing consciousness and conscience on the violence against women in both rich and poor countries. That programme has also helped to shape people's understanding of systemic violence against other vulnerable groups[205]. The direct and systemic violence hinted at here is only the tip of the iceberg of the pervasive violence which exists.

3.3.4.3 Global connectedness

In the past, much of the church's thinking was conditioned by the reality of nation-states. It is no accident that much of the "just war" theory assumes and is directed towards the actions of nation-states. While nation-states, especially the dominant ones, remain significant actors on the global scene, many of the issues of violence stem from other sources such as religion, multinational corporations, mass media, international institutions, environmental realities, people's movements (e.g. the women's movement), and so on. Thus, while peace-making churches cannot ignore or belittle the sources of violence stemming from national policies, growth in effectiveness may require that the churches strive to play a greater role in influencing decisions and policies by these other significant actors on the world scene. Indeed, one major contribution which peace-making churches might make would be to help transform national, chauvinistic and jingoistic mentalities into a greater consciousness of the family of persons not defined primarily by lines on our maps[206].

3.3.4.4 Cultural violence

Samuel Huntington, a Harvard historian, argues[207] that the frictions and wars of today and tomorrow will not be, primarily, between nations, but between five different cultural poles in the world namely Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, Western, and African. This analysis points out cultural values and practices which wash across national boundaries, and which are sometimes more

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[205]Waruta, D.W. and Kinoti, H.W. *Pastoral Care in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2000, pp. 11-34. Hinga discusses violence against women from the wider perspective of the society and the church. She draws her illustrations from biblical and African traditional cultures, both of which are formative influences on Christianity in Africa and fundamentally patriarchal. She suggests that the church needs to remove the mote in its own eye before it can help liberate women from contexts of terror in the society. She challenges the church to show appropriate pastoral response to violence against women by appreciating women's plight and by participating in processes to raise social consciousness on this issue. See also Gnanadason, Aruna *et al*. *Women, Violence and Non-violent Change*. WCC, 1996.

[206]Huber, Wolfgang. *Violence: The Unrelenting Assault on Human Dignity*. Augsburg: Fortress. 1996, pp. 13-34.

[207]Huntington, S. P. *The Clash of Civilizations*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, pp. 13-27.

influential than those of national boundaries (e.g. tribal loyalties in many African countries which have different configurations than the lines drawn by the treaty of Berlin, and so on,). Cultural cracks are prominent within as well as between nations. Some examples are the evident tensions between Muslims and Christians in Sudan and Nigeria, Muslims and Hindus in India, and Catholics versus Protestants in Ireland.

Surely, there is cross-cultural violence – the imposition of or attrition by dominant cultural practices and attitudes by centres of power, like the media power of Europe and the United States through news broadcasts (CNN and FOX), films, music, clothing fashions, consumerism, and so on. There are others kinds of cross-cultural forces as well, many of which are meant for good. For example, challenges to a social order which predetermines for 150 million Dalits (untouchables) in India what kinds of freedoms and benefits they would have, which are often the occasion for overt violence, can be good. Challenges to the widespread practice of "female genital mutilation" to which two million young women are subjected each year, with perhaps 110 million women suffering serious injury throughout their lives[208] while said to be undermining traditional cultures, cannot but be for the good. Challenges to the traditional notion that all people within a nation should have the same basic religious and/or cultural allegiance, instead of the pluralism which increasingly characterises nations today, are painful but positive. Challenges to the exploitation of children through sex trafficking, though tolerated more in some cultures than in others, are a positive and much needed advance.

There is a growing recognition within states and broad cultural groups that there is considerable tension, and not just between broad cultures but on the edges between broad cultures. Dickinson makes a key observation on the question of intercultural tensions: "I believe [these conflicts] are more between modernity and traditionalism, between a secular political order and a religious one, between fundamentalism and pluralism, and between ecumenism and 'identity-bound' or narrowly construed religiosity"[209]. Such conflicts are not so much between cultures, but are pervasive and produce friction, if not overt violence, in every society and culture.

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[208]Huntington, *The Clash of Civilization*, pp. 13-27.
[209]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 197.

3.3.4.5 Environmental violence

It is more and more obvious that the combination of burgeoning population pressures on the environment, on the one hand, and the flagrant consumerist spirit and practice in the guise of "quality of life", on the other, is putting huge and unsustainable demands on our ecosystem. Only in recent decades have we become alert to the enormous pressures put upon non-human life and the planet as a whole. The sustaining power of the environment is seriously compromised on practically every level – water supplies and sinking water tables (UN estimates 2 million deaths annually from polluted water), deforestation (a loss of 1.8% of tropical forests per year), desertification (currently 30 million square kilometres and an additional 200,000 square kilometres annually), and ozone depletion (perhaps 300,000 additional cases of skin cancer a year and 1.7 million cases of cataracts), and so on[210].

Certainly, these facts suggest a massive violation of nature, even though some sceptics insist, wrongly, as the Union of Concerned Scientists in the USA claims[211] that much of the stress on the environment, like ozone depletion, is due to "natural causes" such as solar radiation. In a holistic view of creation, one cannot dismiss the adverse impact of human activity on the non-human world; it is in some fundamental respects, "violent" (reminding us of the Pauline view that "*the whole creation has been groaning in travail"* and when humanity becomes free from sin "*creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay*"). There is too much anthropocentrism in much of the discussion on environmental degradation but violence is not only an act of humans against other human beings.

Environmental degradation does adversely impact the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. The cost of pollution and diminishing resources fall most heavily on the already poor – women who have to walk miles every day for water; girls who walk further and further to get firewood, all the while denuding forests and making them more susceptible to erosion, floods and desertification; children who die of dysentery because of polluted water; the poor in sub-Saharan Africa, tropical Latin America, south-eastern Asia and Pacific Islands who, as experts

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[210]Adapted from a 1992 World Bank report by UNRISD, "Environmental degradation and social integration", p. 3. Accessed from 2 October 2009 http://www.unrisd.org/engindex/publ/list/bp/bp3/bp/bp/bp03-02.htm.
[211]Union of Concerned Scientists, USA. Responding to Global Warming Skeptics: Fact vs. Fiction, p. 1-3. Accessed from: 20 January 2010 http://www.ucsusa.org/environment/skeptics.html.

contend, will be most seriously affected by reduced agricultural production[212]. The degradation of the environment is a survival issue for all living things but it is also an issue of violence, both to non-human nature and to the vast numbers of vulnerable and poor people, especially in the Third World. This is a dimension of violence which deserves far more attention in Christian peacemaking than it has so far received.

3.3.4.6 Proliferation of small arms

The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs met in Crans Montana, Switzerland in May 2001 to discuss the multiplying problem of the proliferation of "small arms and light weapons". It reflected on a growing alarm (not sufficiently publicised in the media) about the violence unleashed on the world, especially on the poor, through the ready availability of such weapons. Indeed, while there has been some reduction in the number of interstate wars (leaving aside the technical question of whether terrorism and the response to terrorism is a "war"), recent years have seen what one UN expert calls an "explosion"[213] of intrastate conflicts, in part a reflection of the ready availability of cheap arms. Notwithstanding the continuing threat of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological, chemical), the spread of conflicts based on small arms is appalling, taking a deadly toll every day.

Such conflicts intensify existing personal and group hostilities such as ethnic, religious, racial and economic cleavages at a time when such concealed or unconcealed cleavages are more and more evident in almost every country across the world. The ready availability of relatively cheap small arms is a curse on all people but, as Crans has noted, the 10,000 people who lose their lives each week through small arms are mostly the poor and teenagers[214]. He observes that, "It has facilitated one of the most abusive elements of contemporary armed conflict, notably the engagement of children as armed combatants"[215].

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[212]Union of Concerned Scientists, USA. Impacts of Global Warming, p. 1-3. Accessed from: 14 May 2009 http://www.ucsusa.org/environment/gw.impacts.html. p

[213]Canadian Security Intelligence Service. "Conflict between and within States". Report No. 2000/06, p. 2ff. Accessed from 81June 2010 http://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/eng/misedocs/200006_e.html.

[214]Policy Framework and Guidelines on Small Arms and Light Weapons. WCC/CCIA Crans Report, p. 1ff.

[215]Policy Framework and Guidelines on Small Arms and Light Weapons. WCC/CCIA Crans Report, p. 1ff.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) notes that from 1990 through 1995, a total of 5.5 million people died in 93 conflicts involving 70 states around the world[216]. Actual deaths do not include the many more people maimed or crippled for life because of such incidents as land mines. Further, these deaths contribute to a pervasive "culture of violence" whose long-term destructive consequences are hardly measurable. Such conflicts often inflict significant collateral damage, as exemplified by the fighting in the Sudan which detracts from efforts to overcome the Guinea worm disease which afflicts 65,000 Africans[217]. The large majority of "small arms" deaths result far more from conflict within states than between them. Moreover,

> At the beginning of the 20th century 85-90% of war deaths were military. At the end of the 20th century about three-quarters of the deaths are civilian. Civilians are no longer just victims of war today; they are regarded as instruments of war. Starving, terrorizing, murdering, and raping civilians are seen as legitimate[218].

Small arms and light weapons are popular because "they are widely obtainable, relatively cheap ($15 for an AK-47 assault rifle), deadly, easy to use and easy to transport"[219]. While governments purchase big-ticket items such as tanks, fighter jets, etc., the population as a whole has easy access to small weapons, frequently as disruptive and destructive as the bigger and more costly ones. Since such small arms are relatively easy to acquire, use and transport, it has become easier to use children as soldiers. An automatic and assault rifle can fire hundreds of rounds in a minute. It is estimated that legal sales in the small arms industry alone range from $7 to $10 billion annually, with perhaps an additional $3 billion traded through the black market[220].

In summing up their study, Boutwell and Klare write:

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[216] "Conflict between and within States". UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, July 2001, p. 2.

[217] Lacey, M. "Sudan's war bars care for disease eradication". *New York Times*, 10th March 2002, p. 12.

[218] "Conflict between and within States", p. 2, UN Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, 9-20 July 2001, p.1 (http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/CAB/smallarms/brochure.ht). Similarly, in preparation for its July 2001 conference on "Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons", the United Nations calculated that "more than 500 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation around the world – one for every 12 people. They were the weapons of choice in 46 out of 49 major conflicts since 1990, causing four million deaths – about 90% of them civilians, and 80% women and children. Two million children have been killed in the last ten years in conflicts where small arms [primarily] have been used; five million have been disabled, and twelve million left homeless."

[219] Boutwell, J. and Klare, M. "A Scourge of Small Arms". *Scientific American*, June 2000, p. 2 Accessed from September 2011http://www.sciam.com/2000/0600issue/0600boutwell.html.

[220] Commission on Faith and Order. *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.* Faith and Order Paper No.111.Geneva: WCC, 1983.

> Although the figure of $10 billion spent on small arms and light weapons each year may seem insignificant when compared to the roughly $850 billion spent annually on military forces around the world, the money for light weapons has had a hugely disproportionate impact on global security[221].

Further, tragic as the numbers of deaths caused by civil conflicts and small arms are, the broader social costs are staggering (wounded populations, destroyed infrastructure, burgeoning number of refugees, imprisonment in a culture of violence, opportunity costs, and so on,). Sudan and Nigeria are a horrifying example of this fact.

The Rio conference of the CCIA noted that, at least in Latin America, "The problem of armed violence and the diffusion of small arms cannot be effectively addressed without the involvement of the churches in the region"[222]. In short, violence takes many forms. It is practically universal, endemic, systematic and destructive. Only a few of its many major manifestations have been reviewed here.

3.3.5 Abuse of power

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

> Truth, justice and peace together represent values basic to granting human rights, inclusion and reconciliation. When these values are ignored, trust is replaced by fear and human power no longer serves the gilt of life and the sanctity and dignity of all in creation. The Council should work strategically with the churches on these issues to create a culture of non-violence (Harare 1998)[223].

When power is abused and misused, justice, peace, human right and trust are replaced by fear and human power no longer serves or works for the dignity of all. Consequently, the DOV, in this regard, challenges churches to consider how power is being abused, misused and sometimes how it contributes to or fuels violence. The term power is not used here to refer to what is known as "powers of the universe," natural forces or forces of the cosmos. These phenomena constitute forces or energies, and they only gain the quality of power when people grant them that in a sort of mythological way. Johan Galtung speaks of three types of power – ideological power,

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[221]Commission on Faith and Order. *The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement.* Faith and Order Paper, 2005, No. 198, paragraphs 34f, Geneva: WCC.
[222]Overcoming Violence. "Small arms: Big impact". Final Report of the Programme to Overcome Violence, Rio de Janeiro, 1998, pp.72ff.
[223]Aikali, *Democracy and Politics in Nigeria*, pp. 98.

remunerative power, and punitive power[224]. "Ideological power is the power of ideas; remunerative power is the power of the economy; and punitive power is the power to destroy, the power of force or the power of violence". A society can be structured in such a way that either one or all of these types of power are dominant. On a less negative note, others speak of power simply as the ability to achieve purpose[225]. Boesak offers a good definition of power as the concentration of ability[226]. It is seen as a purposeful, deliberate concentration, and ability such as the ability to rule, to control, and to continue to control. It is the ability to create.

Galtung argues that, for some Christians, "power" is a negative word. They believe that Christians should not use power because it is antithetical to love[227]. Furthermore, they understand Jesus' cross as an expression of powerlessness which should be followed as much as possible[228]. While space does not permit a review of the long and complex discussion of the relationship of love to justice, or of the taxonomy of differing kinds of "power", the present discussion rests on the conviction that such a view of power is too simple and it will briefly focus on the "relational" power in human affairs. It assumes that, often, power is a positive and necessary factor in human being relationships. The concern here, however, is to reflect on power as a negative, disruptive factor in human relationships. Four observations on power are enumerated in what follows.

3.3.5.1 Power as natural and necessary

"Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever" (Isaiah 32:16, 17).

We are focusing here on "relational" power or the expressions of power in human relationships or communities. Some exercise of power is a positive force in human relationships such as the power of ideas, of art, of example, of empowerment, and so on. As a social being, human need one another and the mutual strengthening which results from organic coherence in social groups. *We are persons only in the context of other persons*. According to Brunner, all groups have some

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[224]Galtung, J. *The European Community: A Super Power in the Making.* London: Allen & Unwin, 2004, p. 33.

[225]Luther, M. K. (Jr.). *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1998, p. 37.

[226]Boesak, A. A. Black Theology Black Power. London & Oxford: Mowbrays, 1978, p.46.

[227]Galtung, *The European Community*, p. 34.

[228]Galtung, *The European Community*, p. 34.

power structure, which may have positive as well as negative attributes and consequences[229]. This is true of families, churches, civil society organisations, and businesses and of states. Moreover, differentiation in status and/or function is often beneficial to all members of such societies, no matter their position in society.

The Swiss theologian Brunner argues cogently that the first stage of a society (a state in this case) is the imposition of some "order" to preclude or overcome anarchy. Only after some order has been established can a state evolve to the next three stages – law, just law, and distributed power[230]. The first characteristic of power therefore is that some form of power is necessary and positive in the social life of human beings.

3.3.5.2 Power not neutral

Often it is argued that power is neutral – that it simply depends on the attitudes and motivations of those who use power whether or not it will be benign or destructive. This is similar to the argument of the National Rifle Association in the USA that "guns don't kill, people do"[231]. The same logic would apply to those who say that the internet is neither inherently good nor bad. It depends on whether the internet is used for education, medical research, efficiency of law enforcement or military purposes, on one side, or whether it is used for law evasion, terrorism, medical purposes (stem cell research), and concentration of corporate power, and so on, on the other.

 However, history shows that power is not neutral. Power in human hands, heart and spirit is never neutral. There is something strange about the alchemy of even good power in the hands of human beings[232]. It is not as if the problem of power is a quantitative thing – that power is good up to a certain point or level and evil after that. The more fundamental problem with power is that the destructive sides of power seem to grow with the exercise of power right from the very

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[229]Brunner, E. *Justice and the Social Order*. New York: Harper, 2000, p. 17.

[230]Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, p.18.

[231]Thatcher, M. "Advice to a Superpower", *New York Times*, 11 Feb. 2002, p. A29.

[232]Thatcher, M. *Advice to a Superpower*, pp. 29-32. She argues that, "It is not just the Robert Mugabes and Milosevics of this world in whom power initially exercised for the good of others, or the nation, is transmuted into self-deception, self-interest and self-aggrandizement. That seems to be a universal human condition – even in religious people (or especially religious people). This is easier to describe as a universal reality than to explain it, though theories of the origins of the drive for power abound ("will to power", existential anxiety, need to control, an innate striving for completion and perfection, instinct for survival, etc.)".

beginning. Like a parasite that depends on the health of the host organism, the negative grows along with the positive from the very beginning. Burke observes that:

> Those who have been intoxicated with power, and have derived any kind of emolument from it, even though but for one year, never can willingly abandon it. They may be distressed in the midst of all their power; but they will never look to anything but power for their relief[233].

Lord Acton's assertion is also cited universally with approval, "Power corrupts, and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely". It is the fear that power tends to become absolute which makes totalitarian claims of the state possible and most alarming. According to Burke, the mutual reinforcement of economic, political, communications and ideological power is anathema in the persisting view of ecumenical literature, right from the first assembly of the WCC. The fear of this increasing concentration of power gives such credibility to the dangers of globalisation and an unleashed World Trade Organisation, and it is this tendency towards totalitarian claims which so alarms people, even in the USA, where there is but a single, dominant military and cultural power[234]. For many people, this fear of a single "world government with military capabilities" applies also to a body like the League of Nations or the United Nations – unless there is a system of checks and balances to ensure that power will not be abused[235]. Niebuhr describes the ambiguities and inherent ambivalences in the use of power[236]. He is quick to note that self-deception and pretence to righteousness are not the monopoly of those wielding coercive and destructive power over others, but even peacemakers and moralists are subject to the same temptations to use coercive power in the name of their highest convictions.[237] The corrupting character of power, even power thought to be exercised for the good, seems ineradicable. It constitutes one of the greatest challenges to peace-making because it is so deeply rooted in the human psyche, so constant, so pervasive, and has such dire consequences for all of society, and it is this kind of negative power that the WCC's DOV programme aims to overcome.

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[233]Burke, E. *A Vindication of Natural Society.* London: G. Bell, 2003, p. 9.

[234]Burke, *A Vindication of Natural Society*, pp. 9-12.

[235]Ogletree, Thomas W. *A Constructive Essay: The Use of the Bible in Christian Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983, pp. 47-86.

[236]See for example, chapter 8 of Niebuhr, R. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. New York: Scribners, 2007, *passim*.

[237]Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man,* p. 14.

3.3.5.3 Reducing violence and enhancing accountability (power and authority)

An elementary distinction in political science is that between power and authority. Burke argues that authority is legitimised power. In different societies, of course, authority is legitimised in different ways – for instance, in the divine right of kings, aristocracy, selective suffrage, universal suffrage, and so on. To an increasing degree, the consent of the governed is a criterion of legitimate authority[238]. Power cannot be eradicated completely, nor should it be. However, power needs to be exercised in ways which make it accountable to those most directly and deeply affected by that power. "Accountability" is the implicit notion behind Brunner's observation that ordering power is to be tamed and directed by law, then at an even higher level, "just law", and finally, "participation"[239].

The idea of accountability was enunciated clearly in the WCC's early articulation of a "responsible society", which became the core political/economic concept for ecumenical social ethics in the 1950s. According to the Evanston assembly:

> [A] Responsible society is a society where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and to people whose welfare is affected by it[240].

The emphasis on accountability (and transparency) has become even more prominent in ecumenical conversations, and in particular, the accountability of those wielding power is to address most clearly the needs of the weakest and most vulnerable segments of society. This emphasis on measuring the legitimacy of power by the effectiveness of that power to enhance the wellbeing of the poorest and most oppressed segments of society, the most vulnerable, is a major contribution of ecumenical social ethics in the past decades. Too often, legitimacy has been defined too casually as benefiting "society as a whole", which often led to preserving the status quo and favouring those with greatest power and prominence. The Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) has made major contributions to this emphasis on empowering the vulnerable.

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[238]Burke, *A Vindication of Natural Society*, p. 21.
[239]Brunner, *Justice and the Social Order*, p. 20.
[240]World Council of Churches. *Evanston Report*. London: SCM Press, 1999b, p.113.

3.3.5.4 Civil society

At least two forces suggest the importance of many centres of power in a stable and healthy society. One of these has been discussed already – the significance of countervailing power to check the excesses of dominant power. The other, more positive, reason is that the availability of many voluntary, non-governmental organisations provides for the fundamental need of all people to achieve wholeness, to have space to exercise their own generative freedom and to contribute to the lives of others. Where people have few or no channels to express their legitimate need for power—to have their lives make a difference—they may be less than whole and may become alienated and anti-social in overt ways. For their own fulfilment, individuals and groups need avenues for self-expression and influencing others.

A crucial key to reducing social tensions is the cultivation of an active "civil society"[241]. A civil society is one in which non-obligatory and non-governmental communities of people come together to achieve limited objectives deemed worthwhile for the health of people at the local level. Usually, a civil society is understood as not including family and economic social groups, but that distinction is not germane to the basic point. According to Niebuhr, within a civil society, individuals can exercise their freedom and power to affect change, can shape their own identity and can experience needed status and power[242]. It has been argued cogently that churches and religious communities are the best examples of civil society. Without contending that every society is at the same stage in fostering civil society, there is a "chicken-egg" relationship between relatively stable and healthy societies and the presence of a vigorous civil society. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The idea of "People's participation has become a cardinal principle in ecumenical social thought. A high level of people's participation is the mark of a just society Participation is not just a political watchword; it is an inherent human right. Participation may come through formal power, as in voting and the opportunity to change government"[243]. In greater measure, however,

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[241]See the special issue of *The Ecumenical Review* on civil society, January 1994, Vol. 46, p. 24.

[242]Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man,* p. 23.

[243]See, for example, the Pius XI encyclical "Restoring the social order", quoted in Husslein, Joseph (ed). *Social Wellsprings*. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1949, p. 207ff. "Akin to the notion of people's power and participation through civil society is the Roman Catholic teaching about "subsidiary". In his 1931 encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, Pope Pius XI strongly supports this doctrine of subsidiary, in part because he thinks that too little stands between the overarching state and the individual. The state is too busily involved in decisions which ought to be made at "lower"

"people's participation comes through involvement in a wide variety of civil society groups. I have asked myself time and again whether this is simply my Anglo-Saxon heritage showing through. Perhaps, yet one believes that the importance of space for self-fulfilment through a vital civil society is a universal good".

3.3.6 Issues of Justice

"What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God?" (Micah 6:8). *"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends"* (John 15: 12, 13).

> True justice is dynamic and its forms must vary to meet changing needs... We stand against submission to, or engulfment by, or appeasement of, totalitarian tyranny or aggression. We also stand against the exploitation of any people by economic monopoly or political imperialism (Evanston 1954)[244].

"No justice – no peace" Perhaps no popular slogan middle of the stream. Libraries are full of learned discussions about "justice", but Aristotle spoke rightly of justice as "giving man *(sic)* his due"[245]. That definition, although requires some amplification, captures better the relationship of justice to peace, the dependence of peace upon justice. In a sense, therefore, discussing "violence" and "power" before justice is to jump into the, remains valid. From a Christian point of view, what is a person's due, as an individual or a member of the community? Haselden's writing rightly points out an elementary understanding of what is involved in justice or what it means to give people what is due to them. He argues that what people want, especially oppressed people, is to "have, to belong and to be"[246], which, in fact, are some of the basic aspirations of all people, but most notably among people who have been denied these aspirations. When these aspirations are subdued, resentment and eventual explosion are the likely result. Suppressed aspirations are a root cause of much violence (conflicts) within and between nations. Peacemaking, therefore, requires active attention to these legitimate aspirations – not just ambulance operations after hostilities have erupted; and this is what the DOV initiative is slow to overcome.

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levels of society. This creates not only an inefficiency of state action, but deprives individuals and smaller organic groups in society their legitimate responsibilities and freedoms. "It is wrong to take away from individuals what by their own ability and effort they can accomplish and commit it to the community."

[244]World Council of Churches Evanston Report, p. 113.

[245]Atkinson, D. J. and Field, D. H. (eds.). *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1995, pp. 471-479.

[246]Haselden, K. *The Race Problem in Christian Perspective*. New York: Harper, 2001, p. 45.

3.3.6.1 "To have"

What does "to have" mean? On one level, the answer is quite simple. In a world where 24,000 people die daily because of hunger and malnutrition, and where that malnutrition could be overcome, one understands the urgent desire to have sustenance for oneself, one's family, and friends – for everyone. Millions die annually and millions more suffer long-term misery because they lack basic healthcare and medicines such as Vitamin A or anti-malaria medicine, and unpolluted water. In a world where millions die annually as a result of violence[247], the meaning of the aspiration "to have" is clear, that is, in a world where, despite official proclamations on the importance of education in many countries, fewer than 75% of the eligible primary school students actually attend classes, and the percentage of girls attending is often significantly lower[248].

To have access to the basic necessities of life for oneself and one's loved ones is a fundamental criterion for justice. It would be more complicated were there insufficient resources to provide these basic necessities, but that is not the case. The injustice is particularly galling to the oppressed when they see that there are huge inequities in the consumption of basic resources in the world, and these inequities are exacerbated by the unwillingness of the rich, the "haves", to share their resources generously. It is even more galling to have the rich, with their inordinate consumption, preach about caring for the environment.

3.3.6.2 "To belong"

In short, the overall picture is bleak for the prospect of the world's poor to achieve even the "having" dimension of their aspirations for justice. What about the "belonging" part? "Belonging" means to be actors in shaping one's own future, as the familiar saying goes, "to be subjects of history rather than simply the objects of others' history"[249]. The idea that participation is important was already present in the WCC's articulation of a "responsible society", which

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[247]World Health Organization. *"Main Findings" - Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment*, 2001, p. 1-5. Accessed from 28 may 2010 http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/gl.

[248]Speth, J. "Economic growth and equitable human development". Paper Presented at the Launching of the UNDP 1996 *Human Development Report*, 16th July 1996, pp. 3-4. Accessed from: 10 July 2010 http://www.undp.org/news/hdr96spl.htm.

[249]Niebuhr, R. *Christian and Power Politics*. New York: Scribner's Sons. 2000, p.29.

asserted that those who exercise political and economic power are accountable to the people whose welfare is most affected by their decisions[250].

In the late 1970s, the WCC, largely under the leadership of its development commission, put forward the concept of a Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society. This was not a blueprint for society, but a specification of the elements which must be present in any society. Unfortunately, the formula was replaced in the mid-1980s with a new one, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Without faulting the inclusion of "peace" and "creation" as crucial elements in an acceptable society, the notion of "participation" was subsumed under "justice", and it became either marginal or invisible except to the people involved directly in the discussions[251].

There is considerable evidence that "participation" has become more widespread in the past decade and a half, although throughout the world there remain highly centralised, often authoritarian, governments. Democracy has been enlarged – a reason for satisfaction – but even formal democracy has not always significantly increased the participation of the total populace, especially of the poor, in real decision-making, nor can the richer countries that pride themselves in the democratic process be sanguine about the degree to which there is genuine participation. Nonetheless, the point is that one key element in any adequate notion of justice is that people should have the opportunity to help shape the societal conditions under which they and their children live.

3.3.6.3 "To be"

What is the significance of the claim "to be"? The essential question here is one of human dignity – dignity as an individual and dignity as a community. Perhaps even more important in the long run than either "having" or "belonging" (though of course not completely separable from them), is the idea of having dignity, which is at the heart of identity. Whether as an individual or a member of a community, being the object of disdain or contempt poisons the self. It does more than sour relationships with those who express that contempt, or those who arrogantly assume their superiority and righteousness. It also threatens to undermine self-respect and self-worth. Since an attack on one's dignity comes so close to one's heart, to one's core or being, people will

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[250]Niebuhr, R. *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. New York: Scribners, 2002, p.1ff.
[251]CEC/CCEE, *Charta Oecumenica: Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe* Geneva: CEC/St. Gallen: CCEE, 2001, p. 4.

go to extreme measures to protect and affirm that core. Surely, the feeling of being dismissed, or even attacked for one's religion and values, is one of the major triggers of the current wave of terrorism. As Juergensmeyer's recorded interviews show, this feeling of being powerless and insignificant is a common trait among many terrorists[252].

Today, a widespread violent rhetoric degrades the dignity of the poor, who are not at the centres of power. The rich would use their power to "save civilisation" as if some of the peoples from whom civilisation will be saved are not among the richest and most nuanced cultures. The world is divided into good and evil, and it seems that the strong nations are willing to use their massive military power unilaterally if they do not succumb to how the powerful think. How offensive to almost everyone, but especially to the poor! The medium is the message; the message denies dignity to the poor; it is violent. What we need is a vision of human development which takes into account the having, belonging and being (the equity, the participation and the dignity), the yearnings of all people.

If the peacemaking effort of the churches is to be more than an ambulance service (ambulance services are sometimes necessary and the only apt thing to do), picking up the victims of oppressive systems, there must be a willingness to engage in the disciplined work of analyzing why certain systems are dysfunctional for the poor, and how to participate knowledgeably and effectively in the modification or replacement of such institutions. In this respect, we believe that the churches including the WCC have made significant contributions to the current debates that focus on such institutions as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the Multilateral Agreement on Investments. However, they will need not only to make trenchant critiques of organisational shortcomings such as these, they need also to keep aloft the vision of what genuine holistic human development will entail. To a certain extent, Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation capture aspects of that vision. Put into practice, however, that general vision needs concrete exegesis and concerted action.

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[252]Juergensmeyer, M. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 50-52.

3.3.7 Religious identity and plurality

"I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts" (Jer. 31:31).

> An ecumenical spirituality should be incarnational, here and now, life-giving, rooted in the scriptures and nourished by prayer; it should be communitarian and celebrating, centred on the Eucharist. Its source and guide is the action of the Holy Spirit (Canberra 1991).

 According to Augustine Shutte:

> One thing is clear, both from the quantum physics world and from the social world in which we are immersed: Our religious identity cannot be understood in isolation of those forces that surround and impact us. The quantum world is a "field" of relationships; there is no singular and isolated reality. It is the same for human beings. We are who we are in the context of others, humans and non-humans. We can be said to be "persons" only in the context of other "persons" and forces. We are a "field" reality. Our humanness is "relational", with others, with the natural world and the cosmos, with the Divine[253].

That is not to claim, of course, that the unique qualities of each person do not significantly shape that person's religious identity. Furthermore, Hauerwas argues that every stage of history, thus, every phase of people's religious identity, results in a large measure from the confluence of forces at a particular moment. What are some of the major forces as we move into the twenty-first century, which shape that identity? As with quantum physics[254], these forces may be perceived, but not controlled, defined, but not fully measured. They reshape individual identity and that of groups. One powerful force is that lives and cultures are intersecting more frequently and intimately than ever before. We live in a "smaller" world, a more pluralistic world. Such is the pervasiveness and power of the media that it is practically impossible to escape, as both its overt and covert messages can have a major disruptive, if sometimes not realised, effect upon how we see ourselves. Besides, the mobility of people as tourists, refugees or guest workers makes intersection and probable engagement unavoidable.

For Shutte[255], religious identity is also deeply influenced by the changing understanding of "the human" which emerges from the social and physical sciences. Psychologists (e.g. Freud, Jung, Maslow) and sociologists (e.g. Sumner, Cooley), with their various theories, contribute to an

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[253]Shutte, A. *Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication, 2001, pp. 1-11.
[254]Hauerwas, S. and Williman, W. H. *Resident Aliens (Life in the Christian Colony): A Provocative Christian Assessment of Culture and Ministry for People Who Know that Something Is Wrong*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998, p. 34.
[255]Shutte, *Ubuntu*, pp. 34-39.

often unsettling or provocative view of the human enterprise. According to Shutte,[256] the physical sciences also raise, or at least force us to raise questions about what constitute the human being and community is cloning permissible, when does life begin, when does life actually end, is stem cell research legitimate, is genetic engineering permissible? What are some of the cutting-edge experiences and questions challenging Christian identity today? We endorse these six questions presented in new and demanding ways in which the pursuit of our religious identity will be shaped not only in the Decade to Overcome Violence but in the decades which follow.

3.3.7.1 Pluralism opportunity

Shutte[257] displays some sensitivity by asking, "Isn't there a strange paradox in the human spirit?" On one hand, there is a fear of the "other" and comfort with "one's own". On the other, there seems to be a fascination with the other, the curious, and the exotic. In some circle, there is a tendency, even an insistence, to think that in religion, "one size fits all" and ours is the right, perhaps only, legitimate size. In others, there is a sense of complementarity among religious claims. Some are convinced that their religious perceptions are final, irrevocable and complete. For example, the Quran teaches that Muslims are superior to others[258]. Others, more eclectic and percussive, stress a capacity for humans to learn and grow in faith and understanding. It often appears that these are not two camps, but ambivalent views within every camp. The fact of religious pluralism in the world, an inescapable reality today, will confront every religious community with these profoundly important questions especially those whose claims are universal and timeless.

In the context of the WCC, the discussion under Dialogue among People of Living Faiths and Ideologies has been hugely valuable. Its value for the future, when many fissures within human community are defined rightly or wrongly as conflicts of religion, is of inestimable importance. Naturally, issues of "syncretism", "relativism", and "loss of distinctive identity" remain but the Dialogue programme has shown how such conversations often lead to deepened religious identity, as well as contribute to socially fruitful ways to keep open lines of communication between often-estranged groups. Further, the programme has developed a series of assumptions

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[256]Shutte, *Ubuntu*, pp. 61-69.
[257]Shutte, *Ubuntu,* pp. 37-41.
[258]Hammond, P. *Faith under Fire in Sudan.* Newland, South Africa: Frontline Fellowship, 1996, p. 13. "Ye (Muslims) are the best of peoples evolved for mankind…" Surah 3:110.

necessary to make such dialogue among religions productive. The testimonies of individuals, Christian and other, in those dialogues are sound evidence of the importance of continuing dialogue. The ecumenical ventures of the past century have pointed us in the direction of the limitations, potentialities and joys, which religious and cultural pluralism can bring. It has been an exchange which challenges the faith claims of every participant, but at the same time, it has in most cases enlarged and deepened – not subtracted from – the faith of those who have taken the pluralistic ecumenical dream seriously.

3.3.7.2 Religious identity and political authority

Placher claims that, related to the question of pluralism are issues of religious liberty and the role of political authority in assuring and guaranteeing religious correctness. It is still widely held that political stability requires religious and/or cultural homogeneity[259]. This proposition is increasingly difficult to maintain, although practical pressures sometimes make it seem inevitable. Christians still live a tortured practical uncertainty on this point; it is today an explosive issue. Almost every nation today includes adherents to many different religions and cultures. The difficulty of distinguishing between religious values and general cultural values intensifies this matter. Whether one accepts this conclusion or not:

> It is clear that every nation, every society, needs a coherent system of values, but can these values be articulated and agreed upon without formal reference to metaphysical arguments? Could nations build up a corpus of ethical agreements, perhaps like a dynamic and evolving international declaration of human rights, which could serve as the glue for not only a nation, but also as a basis for agreements between nations? Can't nations leave aside the question of how individuals and groups within that society affirm their ultimate religious identity? Aren't there core ethical affirmations which could provide a tenuous but real social coherence, which could be the basis of political authority? Without wanting to de-emphasize the faith claims and foundations of human life in individuals and groups, could not the state affirm that these particularities of religious identity were not its responsibility? At present, it appears too many that true faithfulness and a truly good society require that the political authority supports, perhaps even enforces, one true religion. That proposition is being tested even more seriously today than in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

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[259]Placher, W. C. *Jesus the Saviour: The Meaning of Jesus Christ for Christian Faith.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox 2001, pp. 87-102.

3.3.7.3 "Security"

According to Wallis[260], People always need security for wholesome living, and providing security is one of the major responsibilities of the state. Further, to a certain degree, every person and society has a right to protect itself against terrorism, that is, violence as an end in itself, or at least massive and continuing violence against the innocent. However, there is great danger in "security" becoming the watchword, the defining principle of life, either individually or in society. Certainly, it would be hard to justify "security" as a central teaching of the Bible, where we are told that one should lose one's life for Jesus' sake that one might find true life. At a very basic level, the gospel is about self-giving rather than self-preservation. That is clear in Jesus' teachings, life and death.

It is clear, in addition, that "security" as a dominant definer of state strategy raises not only moral questions of congruity with the gospel. It also raises serious questions of strategic adequacy, both in internal and external relationships. The desire for security seems insatiable. More and more compromises of human rights and freedom are made. More and more unilateral actions, often intervening in the life, politics and values of other societies, appear justified when national security or the protection of a nation's "way of life" is the primary consideration. Furthermore, Wallis states that:

> "Security" defined by a powerful nation, especially a nation possessing unparalleled economic and military power, almost automatically leads to the arrogance of power, hybris, with all its attendant abuses. To appeal to "security", divorced from the context of other values which are equally important, is untenable as a guiding star for public policy[261].

Therefore, the Christians or churches have an obligation to challenge a unilateral and unbalanced view of "security". Were it not for the fact that this is becoming a dominant ideology radiating from important canters of power, it probably would not be put on the same level as other challenges to religious identity, as indicated above.

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[260]Wallis, J. "Fundamentalism and the Modern World". *Sojourners Magazine,* March-April 2002, p. 26.
[261]Wallis, J. *Fundamentalism and the Modern World*, p. 26.

3.3.7.4 Deepening one's own faithfulness

Garba notes that not all the challenges to religious identity come from these "external" social forces[262]. An insistent and persistent challenge comes from our own struggles to become more faithful – the "greater jihad" of discerning and affirming our identity as Christians. That struggle is not only about the incomplete understanding of our faith, but also about our inadequate, sometimes faithless and untrusting responses to the faith we affirm. It is a struggle of the mind, the heart and the will.

According to Manchala[263], the world wants to attest perhaps to what it can learn from other communities of Christians. That is one of the most enriching experiences of the ecumenical engagement of the DOV. In particular, the people would like to say how much the WCC witness has come to mean to them, and how much it beckons towards a fuller, community generating and nurturing, liturgically centred faith. The WCC understands in depth the integral relationship between church and world. In a primarily individualistic culture, the world needs the nurturing power—the redemptive power—of such communities of faith. Once again, it can learn much from the WCC. The WCC has found ways to celebrate life as it has been given and is being given anew every day, and not only for what life is becoming or may become. The Eucharist is a foretaste and partial expression of the kingdom of God, but the eschatological dimension remains. In the Eucharist, God breaks into human hearts and history, but the "not yet" does not eclipse the "now". Thus, the WCC, centred in and nurtured through the Eucharist, has been able to endure, persevere and make a strong faith witness in the midst of an environment that is often traumatizing. That may speak volumes for the tumultuous times in which we live.

3.4 Challenges to the WCC'S Decade to Overcome Violence

The WCC Central Committee should admit the fact that the programme also faces some challenges which cannot be overlooked at this point, as there are important difficulties immediately posed by this new decade. First, the sub-title of the Decade is frequently ignored or forgotten. The entire title is "Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation

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[262]Garba, T. "Traditional Approach to Social Security: A Historical Perspective." *Trust Fund Newsletter,* 1999, Vol. 2 (5), pp. 4-5.

[263]Manchala, *Introducing the Decade*, pp. 131-132.

and Peace"[264]. However, because the second part of the title is often overlooked, the title seems grandiose, utopian – naive about the perhaps ineradicable and ingrained character of violence in the human psyche and in universal history. That is true whether the timeline is a decade or one hundred years.

Second, it may sound triumphalistic or even hypocritical for churches, with their embarrassing history of participation in, or even promoting, violence, to claim to champion nonviolence. The first step must be confession. Indeed, although the discussion of violence and nonviolence has deep roots in ecumenical conversations and position papers, there remains an unresolved tension within the ecumenical family on the nature of violence and legitimate Christian responses to it.

Third, the definition of violence itself is ambiguous. What is the relation between violence and power? Are actions which are intended to help others violent? Is violence taken up to achieve a greater good, or to avoid a greater evil, really violent? Is structural violence, as in economic and political policies, properly understood as violence? Is indifference or intentional ignorance a form of violence? The dictionary definition of violence: "an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power" does not really resolve such questions[265]. More precision on the meaning of "violence" is one of the tasks ahead.

A fourth limitation of the "overcoming violence" phrase is that it is basically negative rather than positive. A close parallel might be the World Health Organisation's discussions in the late 1970s and early 1980s about a definition of "health". Those protracted discussions, in which staff members of the World Council's Christian Medical Commission were engaged, led to the conclusion that "health" is not merely the absence of disease. Recognising that diseases are always latent and emerging, health is the capacity of an organism to resist such diseases and to sustain holistic functioning[266]. Similarly, a goal for Christians should be about holistic peace-making more than avoiding or overcoming the latent conflict and violence endemic in human societies. Peacemaking is a holistic and positive goal, aimed at enhancing the capacity to sustain healthy individual integrity and social relationships.

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[264]Enns, Holland and Riggs, *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, pp. 97-132.
[265]Best, T. F and Robra, M. (eds.). *Ecclesiology and Ethics: Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, pp. 409-578.
[266]World Health Organization, ""Main Findings". Global Water Supply", pp. 1-5.

A frustrating aspect of many discussions of violence and nonviolence is that the conversation, very soon becomes an inconclusive, sometimes sterile, speculation about what one would do in an extreme case, such as when one's child is threatened with rape, or one's son with death. Such discussions are, of course, legitimate. However, they too often deflect energies from the realistic and ever-present opportunities for vigorous peacemaking. The theoretical issues too often paralyze, whereas the practical realities give ample opportunity and challenges to become effective peacemakers. These are fundamental issues with which the churches and the World Council of Churches are wrestling, therefore, the first phase of the Decade to Overcome Violence is committed to exploring in greater depth and precision four core areas, primarily, through the eyes of victims of violence.

3.5 The Possibility to Overcome Violence Completely by the Decade

There is a lingering question about this DOV, is it possible to overcome violence completely? Actually, the initiative does not claim that it will overcome all forms of violence. At the end of the Decade, we may still have violence, but the churches as they participate in this global movement for peace hope to become sensitive to situations of violence and to participate in the task of healing the brokenness within and around them. What the DOV does is to call the churches to contribute towards cultivating a culture of peace in a world pervaded by a culture of violence. It attempts to do so by giving visibility to people-based, non-violent ways of resolving conflicts and dealing with differences with the hope that these inspire similar initiatives elsewhere.

An important motivation for this commitment is the determination to stand alongside certain groups of people who always seem to be the victims of most forms of violence on account of the unjust values that dominate structures of human relationships in our world today. Therefore, even if violence is not completely rooted out, it is a matter of human responsibility as well as a biblical imperative to see that the innocent and the powerless are not its victims. The only way we can confront increasingly widespread violence is if we once again become aware of our responsibility in terms of the dignity shared by all human beings. Huber remarks that, for Christians, the confession of the dignity and value of human beings is anchored in the insight

that all human beings are created in the image of God[267]. Therefore, the indifference to human dignity and the rights of others must be overcome in families, in churches, in the media, in schools, in science and in medicine. All who wish to safeguard their own dignity and peace in the long run must do so in ways that account for the dignity and peace of others. It is high time for DOV to learn once again the relationship between one's own dignity and that of others.

3.6. Building a Consensus for Peace

Considering the past effort of the WCC, it becomes clear, according to Paton, that justice and peace have been ecumenical concerns for more than 100 years[268]. The WCC has spoken out for and intervened in the interest of justice and peace continuously since its foundation in 1948. Under the theme, "War is contrary to the will of God", the Amsterdam Assembly affirmed that, "War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ." The part which violence and war plays in our present societies is a sin against God and a degradation of humankind. Therefore, peace is not just the absence of war. Peace cannot be built on foundations of injustice. Peace requires a new international order based on justice for and within all nations, and respect for the God-given humanity and dignity of every person. Peace is, as the prophet Isaiah has taught us, "the effect of righteousness". The Assembly further declared that:

> We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapon are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological ground…

It is in the light of this declaration that the Central Committee in 1999 relayed a message to the churches thus:

> We offer with the DOV a truly ecumenical space for encounter, mutual recognition, and common action. We will strive together to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. We will work together to be agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and societies as well in the political and social and economic structures at global level. We will cooperation to build a culture of peace that is based on just and sustainable communities.

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[267]Huber, W. *Violence the Unrelenting Assault on Human Dignity*. pp. 8-11.
[268]Paton, D. M. (ed.). "Breaking the Barriers. Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Nurturing peace, Overcoming Violence: In the way of Christ for the sake of the World." *The Ecumenical Review,* 2001, Vol. 53(2), pp. 227-241.

Actually, the gospel vision of peace is a source of hope for change and a new beginning. Therefore, Christians should not betray what is promised. People around the world wait eagerly that Christians become who they are – children of God embodying the message of justice and peace because peace is possible and peace is practical. That is why Christians are called to make peace at all cost, knowing that they are truly peacemakers. The Decade has brought to light the ramifications and the depth of the culture of violence which has been dramatised by the recent acts of international terrorism and the responses to it. Violence has multiple and complex causes and the churches have reason to acknowledge and repent of their won complicity and to affirm that the world is approaching a critical moment – an analysis that has already motivated the earlier ecumenical statement on economic threats to peace, threat to survival and the yawning gap between rich and the poor.

What makes this a critical time is the interconnectedness and convergence of all the deadly threats around. The experiences of the DOV and the growing awareness of the critical convergence of destabilizing forces in our world have brought the churches to a new place as they consider how to carry out the ministry given to them by Christ to be servant and ambassadors of God's peace and reconciliation. The DOV can no longer now be considered simply as a counterweight to a "Just War". What justice and what peace entail take on more comprehensive meanings in the face of all these interconnected and destabilizing forces, on the one hand, and the need for an all-encompassing and seamless vision of God's peace with and for creation, on the other.

Having arrived at the projected end of the DOV and building on the evaluation of learning and insights that emerged in the "Ecumenical Call to Just Peace", some issues for serious consideration by its member churches would be presented for final confirmation at the Busan Assembly in 2013. The declaration is an attempt to proclaim the vision of just peace at this critical time of converging and contending forces, and to spell out where their discipleship calls Christian and churches to commit themselves in the coming years. The declaration responds to the challenge of going beyond the attitudes of rejection and resistance to violence, since they remain caught all too often in the logic of struggle for power which opposes friend and enemy, and invite the churches to commit themselves to the way of just peace and active peacemaking. What is required is a critical re-appropriation of the age-old wisdom, if you want peace, prepare

for peace (not for war). The concept of just peace stands for a fundamental shift. The work of just peace is shaped by a different framework for analysis and guided by new criteria for action.

From the ongoing discussion therefore, the contents and strategies of DOV will be incorporated in the Christological framework of Hans Küng in Chapter 6 to create awareness and enable the churches and Nigerian Christians in particular to participate in the programme to overcome violence within and outside the church. The aim is also urge them to promote the culture of peace and active nonviolent action.

3.7 Conclusion

The Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence is meant to capture the excitement and expectations of churches, ecumenical organisations, groups and movements around the world for the positive, practical, and unique contributions of the churches in building a culture of peace. The design and methodology of the DOV should be focused and yet open to allow creativity and to utilise the dynamic energy of the churches and different groups in society. The architecture for the DOV will depend on the suggestions, plans, and leadership of the WCC's member churches and ecumenical partners who will define the issues and the processes that will lead the DOV forward.

The document serves as a framework for preparatory steps in the Decade to Overcome Violence. Throughout the Decade, the Executive and Programme Committees monitor the process and sharpen the goals and methodologies. [2000 World Council of Churches - http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/dov/index-e.html]. Moreover, the vision of a new world order, based on the value of justice, is one that gives a sense of direction and purpose to the Christian vocation of peace-building. Violence as an expression of the irresponsible assertion of power over the powerless denies and abuses life. The churches are compelled to be in solidarity with its victims in judgment and in hope of a new order, which ensures life for all - free from fear and aggression. Jesus also proclaimed, *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give you"* (Jn. 14:27). Jesus described the nature of his peace even as he assured his disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit. As a community that claims its origin in the coming of the Spirit, the Church's motivation for peace comes from the biblical faith tradition – a tradition of God's option for the victims of power, the prophetic denunciation of injustice, Jesus' rejection of power

that corrupts, and the witness of the early Christian communities as ones guided by alternative values and goals. By taking up the task of overcoming violence, churches and Christians make a common affirmation of their faith, share a common hope, and commit themselves to overcome actively all causes and forms of violence.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECUMENICAL ATTITUDES AND RESPONSES TO THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a framework that represented the nature and goals of the WCC's theme, *Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace*. The DOV programme ran from 2001 through 2010 and it was formally launched as a commitment of the WCC to learn from the experiences of the victims of violence and the oppressed as well as from the experiences of churches and other groups struggling against violence in their own contexts. The WCC called churches, ecumenical organisations, and all people of goodwill to pursue non-violence, justice and peace in an increasingly complex world marked by the many different expressions of the phenomenon of violence.

Although the Decade built on previous efforts of the WCC such as the Ecumenical Decade in Solidarity with Women and the Programme to Overcome Violence and its Peace to the City campaign, it was intended as a new kind of effort, set in the context of the WCC as a fellowship of churches which support and challenge each other. The WCC's role was seen in terms of facilitating exchanges, highlighting experiences and inspiring renewed commitment through the promotion of theological and ethical reflections. The real driving force of the DOV was to outline the role the churches should play in overcoming violence at regional, national and local levels.

Thus, the present chapter seeks to evaluate and identify the efforts, opportunities and resources contributed as well as the challenges faced by the ecumenical movement as it responds to the call to overcome violence within the Decade. The introduction to the chapter offers the background to the DOV and its outcome - Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace from 2001-2010, which presents itself as a timely ecumenical opportunity.

In addition, the chapter will also explore some existing scholarly document on the ecumenical response to DOV, the achievements of the DOV within the Decade, and the challenges ahead.

The deep reflection focuses on digging to the very roots of violence and cultivating creative approaches for transforming not only Christians and Christian churches but also our world.

4.1.1 Background to the DOV

Besides the visible and the striking, the phenomenon of violence itself has become increasingly complex, with challenges of a new kind. Some of the challenges include the ever-widening gap between the powerful and the powerless, and between the rich and the poor, coupled with the legitimisation of implicit and explicit forms of violence against the innocent, the poor and the powerless, which indeed is a shameful feature of our world and generation[269]. The churches are still called to proclaim the gospel of peace, the good news, with confidence and joy even in a context of violence and despair. Therefore, one wrests with questions such as, "How is it possible to speak of peace today in a world faced with global terrorism and the bitter chaos the churches witness every day? How do we live out our faith in an increasingly unjust, violent and broken world? Can the churches recover the ability to discern and proclaim the good news of peace and non-violence in a world of violence, despair and evil?"

The WCC, as part of its attempts to respond to the Decade by encouraging and assisting churches, has been drawing attention to a variety of issues in international politics such as economic injustice, violence against women and children, forgiveness and reconciliation in post-conflict situations, uprooted people, and solidarity with peoples' movement, eco-justice, interfaith dialogue, and peace education. Through all these, it offers the rationale for the ecumenical movement's relentless search for unity[270]. Overcoming violence is thus a multi-dimensional task as well as a collaborative undertaking.

In its persistent efforts to foster Christian unity, faith and order, the WCC has been working not only on issues that keep the churches apart, but also on those that bring them together for greater expressions of visible unity[271]. It recognises that the issues of violence and peace are deeply theological and are relevant as well as necessary for the credibility of their witness to the gospel of peace and life in this violent world.

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[269]Raiser, K. "The Responsibility to Protect". Contribution to a Public Seminar in the Context of an International Affairs and Advocacy Week Organised by the WCC in New York, 13 November 2003, pp. 75-78.

[270]Rivera-Pagan, L. N. (ed).*God, in Your Grace*… Official Report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches Geneva: WCC, 2000, p. 236.

[271]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, p. 5.

4.1.2 The result of the DOV

In an attempt to stimulate reflection and action on the DOV project, the WCC has identified four major root causes of violence which are outlined in Kässmann's book *Overcoming Violence: The Challenge to the Churches*[272] (See Appendix A on p. 277 below). This is not to deny that the DOV programme has made significant achievements.

1. The DOV has moved the concern for peace, reconciliation and justice closer to the heart of the churches; it has not moved peace into the centre of the church life, but it has revealed how much marginal peace remains.

2. The DOV has helped to raise the profile of many longstanding peace initiatives and to help build them into networks. It has contributed to the awareness of peace work and the motivation to take it up. In this regard, the DOV annual foci were instrumental, as the living letters.

3. During the Decade, the complexity of issues around violence has become much clearer and the discourse more differentiated. The DOV has helped to spread lessons learned through the World Health Organisation's work on violence and thus contributed to more approaches to violence prevention.

4. Nonviolence has until now hardly been part of the theological vocabulary or of church liturgies. The DOV has helped to reintroduce this challenging notion and has revealed a tremendous ignorance of active non-violence among churches.

5. Finally, the DOV has facilitated the development of some new directions in interreligious encounters and cooperation for peace through seminars during the first half of the Decade and interreligious initiatives during its final years.

According to Paton,[273] the ecumenical statement/declaration, *Decade to Overcome Violence,* did not appear out of the blue. It developed organically from lines of thinking within the WCC over the fifty years of its existence as the council tried to respond to concerns and ideas of, and

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[272]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 188. Kässmann's outline derived from the Minutes of the Central Committee is an analytical summary of the ecumenical debate on violence.
[273]Paton, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 219.

questions from its member churches in their different contexts on the issue of violence. Paton points out that the twentieth century ecumenical movement took shape against the backdrop of war and violence[274].

However, the responsibility of building peace in a violent world has frequently failed to be perceived as a significant step in the pursuit of Christian unity. Churches have constantly stood divided and remained so on issues of war, violence and peace, revealing the complexity of reflections among churches in such situations[275]. This is intensified by diverse ways in which churches are associated with 'the state' or 'political powers' which vary from obvious support to total indifference as well as critical commitment[276]. Relationships based on such attitudes continue to determine the role of the churches in witnessing peace in situations of war and violence. Although the churches themselves faced the challenge of the divisive violence that prevailed in and between their different contexts, the churches' are guilt of complicity in several situations of violence and the search for ways of reconciliation are constantly discussed.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of violence has become increasingly complex in the twenty-first century. This presents fresh challenges as well as new opportunities for the churches to work together towards peace. According to Kessler, some of the challenges include "the ever-widening gap between the powerful and the powerless, the rich and the poor…" etc[277]. If upholding the inviolability of life is innermost to the affirmation of the Christian faith, could this global movement of unconcealed and numerous assaults on life and their legitimization be a ground for churches to consider the vocation of peace as a faith imperative? Is it possible to view peace as a new rallying point for the ecumenical movement in the 21st century? In fact, several of "the WCC's statements and affirmations on the theological significance of justice and peace right from its formation point towards the vocation of peace as an inevitable task of the ecumenical movement"[278]. The Faith and Order Commission of the DOV also highlighted the challenge of a

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[274]Paton, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 231.
[275]Hug, J. *Tracing the Spirit, Communities, Social Action and Theological Reflection*. New York: Paulist Press 1998, p. 232.
[276]Paton, *Breaking Barriers*, p. 231.
[277]Kessler, D. "Together on the Way". Official Report of the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, LWF Documentation on Peace, 1999, No 24, pp. 12-13.
[278]The WCC Central Committee Report, in response to the call by the Eighth Assembly of the WCC, (1999b:12-13), states that, "we embark on a Decade to overcome violence in the years 2001-2010 and invite churches, ecumenical groups, individual Christians and people of goodwill to contribute to it".

common confession of peace through "The Churches Peace Witness" (1994) and "The Fragmentation of the Church and its Unity in Peace-making" (2001)[279].

4.1.3 The DOV - a timely ecumenical opportunity

During its Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe in 1998, the WCC called upon its member churches to work together during the decade set aside to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence. Recognising the influence of a variety of historical and existential factors on the churches' mixed response in situations of violence, the DOV's declaration called for repentance from complicity in violence and a creative engagement with the world to find alternatives. The Decade, therefore, is primarily an exploration in faith of a vocation of peace. However, according to Manchala, churches have always stood divided and remained so on several issues which threaten peace and justice. Serious theological and historical hesitations inhibit churches from taking a firm stand for peace. In fact, it is often said that churches have committed themselves to the Decade not because they have a solution, but rather because they realise that they have been a part of the problem and that they have to face it. During the Decade, the churches were called to reflect on their positions, attitudes and approaches to violence and peace, both positive and negative, and to discover new theological bases for the pursuit of peace, justice and reconciliation, drawing from the wellspring of Scripture, tradition and the experience of a creative, critical engagement with the world[280].

The subsequent statements by the WCC Central Committee mark a significant movement from an analysis of violence to an active pursuit of the resources for and possibilities of peace with justice. This is no longer a matter of passive pacifism versus active social responsibility which legitimises violence as the last resort. One should inquire about the role of churches as well as the fellowship of churches regarding the causes of violence and in the area of peacemaking.

4.2 Harvest from an Ecumenical Journey

In 1998, when delegates to the Harare Assembly of the WCC called for a Decade to Overcome Violence[281], they focused on issues in the heart of many Christians. Already a number of

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[279]Kessler, *Together on the Way*, p. 13.

[280]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 14, 15.

[281]See Held, D., McGrew, A., Goldblatt, D. and Perraton, J. *Global Transformations: Political, Economic, and Cultural*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999. This study recalls some of the ecumenical heritage on

churches and ecumenical institutions had initiated or reinvigorated their own programmes to address violence, linking them to the DOV. By launching the Decade, Harare delegates also placed renewed and creative emphasis on issues that have a long, rich and sometimes complex ecumenical legacy. The DOV offers an opportunity to build on this legacy and to break new grounds in the Christian understanding of and action on issues of justice and peace. By so doing, the DOV also aims to provide fresh avenues for pursuing the call to Christian unity.

However, at the issue at hand is an ongoing ecumenical debate; for example, the WCC has raised the question of violence in different contexts and in relation to different ecumenical issues. In the early years, the discussion focused on the "just war"[282] theory (a war fought for a righteous cause, by controlled means, with reasonable expectation of success, as commanded and directed by Yahweh in the Old Testament), then on Christian participation in warfare. According to John Stott, Christians do not fully agree on the problems associated with war. Nevertheless, it is important not to exaggerate our differences or to understate our substantial areas of agreement. Christians affirm that the character of the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace. They believe that the conduct of Jesus is a perfect example of the ideals of the kingdom proclaimed; hunger for righteousness, pursuit of peace to overcome violence, loving enemies. All these mean that, as Christians, we are committed, above all else, to peace and righteousness. The quest for peace and justice is much more costly than appeasement[283].

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matters of justice and peace, and pinpoints some tensions inherent in the work. It refers affectionately to some of the insights gained in each period as the "genius" of that particular generation of ecumenists. The hope is that this partial and selective examination of our history will help provide a foundation for urgent and important action and reflection still to come. It concentrates primarily on some events in the formation and life of the World Council of Churches, the "space" where Orthodox churches and those often characterised as churches of the Reformation meet and work together. It is hoped that those more familiar with the heritage of the Roman Catholic Church will offer their own analyses in this volume and elsewhere of the ecumenical contributions that this great church has made.

[282]See, a book in the WCC Risk Book Series titled, *Overcoming Violence: A Challenge to the Churches in All places* by M. Kässmann, which explores the opportunities and difficulties linked with the vocation of non-violence. Throughout this millennium, churches have adopted different positions on war and violence. The Crusades at the beginning of the second millennium used theology to legitimize their actions. The "just war" theory was subsequently developed in an attempt to control war by identifying specific criteria under which the war itself may be justified (*jus ad bellum*) and certain conditions that are to apply in the midst of war (*jus in bello*). Through the centuries, Christians of different traditions have adopted theories arising out of their own contexts and realities. Some churches identified closely with the state and blessed its military actions. Others asserted the right to resist unjust rulers. Others still condemned the use of violence under any circumstances. Whatever their position, churches have often found themselves divided by violence and war, and lined up with different sides of a conflict. Even in times of relative peace, different attitudes towards war and violence have also been divisive.

[283]Stott, J. *Issues Facing Christians Today*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2006, p. 105.

At the world conference on "Church and Society" in 1961, the issue of revolutionary violence against oppressive social systems came to the forefront of the ecumenical debate. Churches were divided on the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR). Some churches which consider the ecumenical movement as a peace movement would not support groups and movements using force in the fight against racism. The Fourth Assembly (Uppsala 1968) asked the WCC Central Committee to explore means by which the WCC could promote studies on non-violent methods of achieving social changes[284]. In view of the controversy provoked by the PCR special fund, the WCC's Central Committee in 1971 decided to initiate a new process of reflection on the issue of violence/non-violence. The report of the consultation "Violence/Non-violence and Struggle for Social Justice"[285] is the most comprehensive and careful analysis of the issue yet made by the WCC. It reaffirms non-violence action and refers to a set of criteria that should be applied before resorting to violence in extreme circumstances. Significantly, it does not categorically condemn those liberation groups that feel obliged to use force.

Late in the 1970s, a new outburst of terrorism further complicated the discussion on violence. Militarism and the arms race added a new dimension to the debate[286]. In 1979, the Central Committee reminded the churches to pay serious attention to the issue of violence/non-violence by promoting models of peaceful resolution of conflicts[287]. Four years later, in view of the forthcoming Sixth Assembly, a small consultation[288] was held to review and reassess the continuing discussion on violence/non-violence in the new world context. Almost a decade later, the delegates of the World Convocation of the WCC, looking into the issues of "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation"[289], took the matters beyond the violence/non-violence dichotomy and

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[284]Raiser, K., Best, T. F. and Cambitsis, J. "The quarterly of the World Council of Churches", *The Ecumenical Review*, 2001, Vol. 53 (2), p. 232. See also the response of the Fourth Assembly (Uppsala 1968) to the example of the non-violent struggle for social change by Martin Luther King who had been assassinated shortly before the Assembly. The Assembly called for a study process on "Violence and non-violence in the Struggle for Social Justice". The study report was received by the Central Committee in 1973. It could do little more than to restate the basic ethical dilemma, which has accompanied the wider ecumenical discussion on war and peace since the Oxford Conference in 1937.

[285]Raiser, J. *Some Thoughts on the Programme to Overcome Violence and Pleace to the City Campaign*, WCC document 50-72. 1994, pp. 17-9.

[286]Tinyiko, S. M. "Black and African Theologies in the New World Order: A time to drink from our own well". *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 1996.What is meant here by militarism and the arms race refers to the arms race between the West and the Soviet Union.

[287]Tinyiko, *Black and African Theologies in the New World Order*, p. 29.

[288]Ginty, R. M. and Richmond, O. (eds.). *The Liberal Peace and Post-war Reconstruction: Myth or Reality?* Routledge: MPG Books, 2009, pp. 89-102.

[289]Ginty and Richmod, *The Liberal Peace,* pp. 100-103,

added an ecological dimension to it. It called for "a culture of active non-violence" by seeking "every possible means of establishing justice, achieving peace and settling conflicts by active non-violence"[290]. In 1994, the WCC's Central Committee decided to establish the Programme to Overcome Violence (POV) "with the purpose of challenging and transforming the global culture of violence in the direction of a culture of just peace"[291]. The POV became known as the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) debate - peace and justice are inseparably related, war can no longer be regarded as a legitimate means of conflict resolution, active non-violence is the way to establishing justice, achieving peace and solving conflicts. The Peace to the City Campaign, launched by the Central Committee in 1996 within the context of POV, gave a sharper focus to the Council's commitment to overcome violence.

This brief overview of the ecumenical debates[292] certainly does not provide us with a full picture of the long and hard discussions of such a complex and critical matter. It is important, however, to note some of the aspects of this current debate as identified by the Central Committee of the WCC which met at Potsdam in 2001:

1. Coming from different contexts and backgrounds the churches have articulated different perspectives on violence/non-violence. Some have considered the teachings of Jesus Christ about non-violence as the right path to follow; others have looked at it as "impractical idealism'. There are also others who have maintained the imperative of resistance against violence. Thus, ambiguity, unclarity and polarization have dominated the discussion and the council has not yet reached a common understanding on this burning issue.

2. The Bible has been used both to justify violence and to advocate non-violence. The churches have frequently found themselves in a dilemma. The Gulf war and the Kosovo crisis are relatively recent examples.

3. The Council's debate on violence has dealt with racism and more specifically with apartheid. Other forms of racism and different types of violence have attracted little attention. JPIC has broadened both the perspective and scope of the discussion; its holistic vision, however, has fallen short in the implementation process.

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[290]World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. *Now is the Time: Final Document and Other Texts of the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*. Geneva: WCC Publication, 1990, p. 27.
[291] Minutes of the Central Committee, p. 113.
[292]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence* which is an analytical summary of the ecumenical debate on violence, p. 188.

4. Two models of responding to violence have emerged in the ecumenical debate; revolutionary conflict and non-violent resistance. Commitment to justice, peace and reconciliation through non-violent action has been a common and permanent trend throughout the council's discussion. It is important to note that the PCR has opened an entry point to the concept of "violence as a last resort"[293].

In addition to this ecumenical movement, through the Programme to Overcome Violence, the WCC engaged in a global peace campaign called Peace to the City! (1996-1998). The campaign was launched in 1997 in Johannesburg, with seven cities around the world doing creative work in peace-building. Rather than seeking to resolve the long-standing debates on non-violence or trying to specify the relative justice of particular wars or specific issues of violence, the Peace to the City Campaign focused on the building or strengthening of 'Jubilee Communities' of justice. The goals were to make these visible, to recognise the value of their approaches and methodologies, to stimulate sharing and networking, and to give others hope that they could act as stimuli to similar projects in other contexts[294].

The campaign process was very intensive and highlighted different peace building efforts around the world. The WCC developed new partnerships and strategies as well as a set of new priorities based on concrete needs. The WCC served as a "switchboard" connecting the communities and it acted as a "spotlight" by identifying more and more grassroots partners and initiatives. Most importantly, the campaign demonstrated an emerging new people's movement, working towards social transformation and shaping a culture of peace for the twenty-first century.

The WCC also developed a dynamic, global peace network that provided the space for exploring ideas and share resources as well as a comprehensive communication strategy. This included a "Peace to the City" website and e-mail list-server, individual city homepages, all connected to each other, a Peace to the City newsletter giving updates about each city's peace building efforts and experiences, and informative articles about other initiatives, upcoming events and resources. Campaign materials like T-shirts, stickers, posters and a song were also developed. In addition, the campaign developed resources for study and action[295]. One of the most valuable opportunities

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[293]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence,* p, 188.

[294]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 189, 201.

[295]Vischer, L. "A growing fellowship of mutual intercession". LWF Documentation on Peace, 1998, Vol. 24. (2), p. 511. These included a video series titled, "Peace to the Cities: Stories of Hope", with locally produced segments as

afforded by this global ecumenical peace network was the unique opportunity it affords to see the causal links, and the commonalities between diverse contexts.

This point above is a background detail that shares information for continuing work in shaping the ecumenical decade to overcome violence. It raises questions that may allow for interim assessment and points to the course that might be followed during the period under study in order to carry the effort of overcoming violence beyond the decade.

4.3 An Ecumenical Strategy

Once again and this time more forcefully, violence will come to the fore in the ecumenical discussions in the present and the future. The churches and the ecumenical movement are strongly challenged to respond to this most acute and urgent problem. Paton notes that, "We carry with us bitter experience from our respective histories. Our theology of pacifism and our theology of just war are in conflict"[296]. Furthermore, not only do the churches have no clear and unanimous voice on how to respond to violence; in some cases, they are even part of the problem, as they stand divided on issues such as "theology of pacifism and Just War".

In 1999, the WCC Central Committee stated that, "We must give up being spectators of violence: lamenting it and must act to overcome violence"[297]. Paton claims, in addition, that, "There are three ways of responding to violence: passivity, violent opposition and militant non-violence"[298]. The critical question is, fight or flight? The Christian response cannot but be to fight to transform violence. It is not a question of mere strategy or methodology. This vision and commitment stem from the very essence of being a new human and a new community in Christ. Paton opines that:

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well as a 26 minute compilation, describing the campaign as a whole and each city's imaginative efforts to build bridges between and reconcile communities in conflict.
[296]Paton, *Breaking the Barriers*, pp. 232-237. On structures of injustice, see also "Living with our differences", a pilot workshop on active nonviolence organised by the Programme to Overcome Violence (POV) and held at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland in August 1999. The Board of the Churches Commission for International Affairs (CCIA) meeting in Kitwe, Zambia developed basic working principles and assumption for the programme; a directory of church-relation peace groups was published in late 1999.
[297]Minutes of the WCC Central Committee, p. 188.
[298]Vischer, *A Growing Fellowship*, p. 512.

> Passivity is submission, withdrawal and surrender. The Christian must combat violence not by reactive resistance, but by a non-violence active resistance that generates new vision and hope. For some, however, revolutionary violence offers the only hope for justice and liberation[299].

However, it seems to us that active non-violent action, adopted in 2001-2010 by the WCC's Central Committee should remain a clear ecumenical option in any attempt to overcome all forms of violence. This could be achieved by addressing holistically the wide variety of violence, both direct and structural, in homes, communities and international arenas, and learning from the local and regional analyses of violence and ways to overcome violence by nurturing peace; overcoming violence the way of Christ for the sake of the world. In this regard Kässmann, the Moderator of the Central Committee, offers four points to explain "what active non-violent action is"[300], which could be summarised as follows:

First, non-violence is not a compromise, a blind and uncritical attitude; non-violence is the courage of faith to say no to violence, no to injustice. Non-violence is a quality of life that implies patience and vision; a form of combat that refuses to collaborate with injustice and that challenges violence through non-violence.[301] It is the choice to fight with psychological, social, economic and political weapons. Such a choice includes protest and non-cooperation. Non-violence action is an expression of one's integrity, identity and independence. Modern history is full of examples of non-violent struggle from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King (Jr.), from the fall of the Berlin Wall (1990) to Yugoslavia (2000). Violence generates violence, while non-violence uncovers the powerlessness of the powerful and the efficiency and validity of non-violence.

Second, overcoming violence through non-violent struggle calls churches to avoid identifying themselves with power structures. The church must become a powerless community, a community whose power is the powerlessness of Jesus Christ. It is through his powerlessness, the Cross, that Christ conquered the powerful, the evil. The church has often sided with the powers of the world and has often practiced violence even for the sake of the spreading of the good news. The blind association of churches with the pride of the nations and with the policies

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[299] Paton, *Breaking the Barriers*, pp. 232.

[300] See Kässmann's book *Overcoming Violence*, which is an analytical summary of the ecumenical debate on violence, p. 208.

[301] Paton, *Breaking the Barriers*, p. 235.

of their governments greatly jeopardises their prophetic role. Often churches are called to choose between the interests of their nations and the gospel message. In fact, the mixed reactions of the churches to the conflict in Iraq, in the Middle East or in Kosovo – to give a few examples from contemporary history – clearly indicate the concrete repercussions of church-nation-state relations. This critical area calls for serious and comprehensive discussion.

Thirdly, non-violent action means being on the side of the victims; this is the only way to be faithful to the gospel. Christ identified himself with the victims of violence because they are the real victors, the inheritors of the Kingdom. According to Reuver, Solms, and Huizer:

> We have clear evidence that Jesus of Nazareth did not use violence on behalf of the weak, the poor, and the suffering against the powerful even though he identified himself with them… the record rather shows that he himself suffered the unjust violence of the powerful to the point of dying on the cross[302].

The non-violent action of the Church should be aimed at promoting justice and peace in order to overcome violence. In other words, "non-violence" should not become an aim in itself, but only a means of achieving justice and restoring peace. This responsibility of the church cannot be questioned under any circumstances; the binding-up of human wounds (social *diakonia*) must be followed by non-violent struggle for the elimination of the root causes of violence (political *diakonia*)[303].

Fourth, churches have not been entirely consistent in their response to situations of violence. Attitudes of fear, patience and prudence have often prevailed over the prophetic ministry of the church at such critical moments. What is the meaning of the Cross for the life and witness of the church in the world today? Facile compromise is not the Christian way. Violence is the powerlessness of the powerful; the Cross is the powerful non-violent response to violence. In God, we trust. God is our shelter, our protector, our weapon against evil. "If God is with us who can be against us" (Romans 8: 31)? The Harare Assembly challenged Christians and Christian churches to overcome "the spirit, logic and practice" of violence. Therefore, overcoming violence must become a clear ecumenical strategy and the focus of the decade.

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[302]Reuver, M., Solms, F. and Huizer, G. *The Ecumenical Movement Tomorrow: Suggestions for Approaches and Alternatives*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001, p. 340.
[303]Paton, *Breaking the Barriers*, p. 235.

However, facile assumptions about non-violence which have been evident throughout the ecumenical debate are to be challenged in the same manner. There are indeed vast possibilities for preventing violence and bloodshed as well as for mitigating violent conflicts already in progress such as overcoming the spirit, logic and practice of violence[304]. In this regard, non-violent action remains a relatively unexplored field. Therefore, the WCC statement has rightly emphasised the importance of non-violence action. Admitting that far too little attention has been given to the methods and techniques of non-violence, it nevertheless cautions that because non-violence may be ineffective in a given situation, or precisely because it is effective, it may have a more violent long-term impact than some of its advocates recognise. Non-violent actions, the statement reaffirms, are highly political and may be extremely controversial. Such an action may not be free of compromising ambiguities which accompany "any attempt to embody a love-based ethic in a world of power and counter power, and it is not necessarily bloodless"[305].

Karkkainer, also point out that most struggles for freedom and, as a matter of fact, "almost all government performances are mixtures of violent and non-violent actions"[306]. A non-violent struggle may also have violent dimensions, such as attempts to persuade, win over, or pressure the adversary, and the DOV can only succeed to the degree that member churches give it priority in their own programmes.

According to Reuver, Solms, and Huizer, the DOV is an opportunity, a reminder, a call and a challenge for churches not to claim that they will destroy violence but rather to firmly commit themselves to overcoming violence through education, prevention, community building and peacemaking[307]. It has been noted that, "Faith and hope remain the ultimate power to overcoming violence, through being called to witness courageously and responsibly to the gospel as its source not losing this ecumenical *kairos*"[308].

It is encouraging that the impulse of the Decade has been taken up in an ever-growing number of churches and regions. The annual thematic and geographic efforts on the challenges facing the

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[304]Paton, *Breaking the Barriers*, p. 237.
[305]Solms, *Violence, Non-violence and the Struggle*, p. 45.
[306]Karkkainer, V. *Christology: A Global Introduction*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, p. 46.
[307]Reuver, Solmsand and Huizer, *The Ecumenical Movement Tomorrow,* p. 346.
[308]Barrett, D. M. "A. D. 2000: 350 Million Christians in Africa." *International Review of Mission*, 1998, pp. 38-50.

churches in certain conflict areas and in their witness for peace have helped to kiln bonds of ecumenical solidarity in the search for reconciliation and peace. In an attempt to stimulate reflection and action around the DOV, the WCC has identified four themes which focus on its own contribution to the first four years of the Decade[309].

During the first half of the Decade, the task was to develop these efforts in the direction of stable alliances and more effective links across churches, networks and movements. The ecumenical space that is being offered by the Decade needs to be shaped and filled by mutual visits, by identifying more exemplary initiatives, and by a deliberate focus on the basic elements of the Christian witness for peace, in order to strengthen the unity and the common voice of the churches. Only in this way can the overall goal of the Decade be reached, i.e. moving the search for reconciliation and peace "from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church"[310].

With the Decade, the churches in the fellowship of the WCC have entered a course which requires persistence and endurance. The goals of overcoming violence and building a culture of peace imply spiritual, theological and practical challenges for the churches which touch the heart of what it means to be church in an increasingly complex and violent world. For this, we shall consider the DOV and its efforts to help the ecumenical movement to explore further how churches responded to the first five years of the Decade.

4.4 Evaluation of the First Five Years of the Decade

Looking back at the first five years of the Decade, what can one say in terms of an interim assessment? It is encouraging that many congregations, initiatives and Christian peace services have begun to develop during the first half of the Decade various grassroots projects in order to address the different forms of violence that people experience today in families, in schools, on the streets and in civil conflicts including structural violence. In view of the very diversity of the projects, it is necessary, however, to identify places and persons in the churches who accept the responsibility for the coordination of, advice on and improvement of such efforts and for stimulating the sharing of experiences and networking. Barret observes that, "In a fair number of

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[309]Goosen, G. *Ecumenical Considerations for Dialogue and Relations with People of Other Religions*. Geneva: WCC, 2003, No. 29, p.12.
[310]Goosen, *Ecumenical Considerations*, pp. 12-20.

churches encouraging steps have been taken in this direction"[311]. Perhaps, such efforts are all the more important since only in this way can the different projects of non-violent action achieve relevance in society.

The DOV runs parallel to the UN's Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. In the context of an analysis of violence worldwide, conducted by the World Health Organisation, "violence prevention is declared as a public health priority"[312]. The Violence Prevention Alliance offers the churches both opportunities and challenges to act as responsive and responsible actors of civil society, in conjunction with governments and non-governmental partners. These collaborations need further strengthening.

Meanwhile on a related front, some national NGO coalitions for promoting the UN Decade were established in several countries including Austria, France, Italy and the Netherlands as of 2001[313]. In June 2003, these national coalitions along with international organisations set up an International Coalition for the Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World to coordinate the actions of its members by gathering resources and information, and sharing experiences and dialogue particularly about education about peace and non-violence. It was also intended that the International Coalition represents its member coalitions on the international level and coordinates international campaigns or actions on themes of the UN's Decade[314].

> The WCC/DOV and the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace joined the International Coalition in 2003 in an observer and advisory capacity. The coalition brought together 15 national coordinating groups and 19 international organisations working for the goals of the International Decade. They lobbied for UN adoption of an International Declaration on the Right of Children for an Education without Violence and for Nonviolence and Peace[315].

At the same time, it should be noted that there are churches which so far have made little room in their life and practice for non-violent ways of thinking and acting. In these cases, little has been

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[311]Barrett, *Million Christians*, pp. 38-50.
[312]World Health Assembly Resolution on Birth Defects (Report). *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal* 2011, Vol. 17(9), pp. 691-705.
[313]WHA, *Report,* pp. 691-705.
[314]Alkmaar, M. *Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.* A Mid-term Report from the International Fellowship of Reconciliation *(IFOR)*, Alkmaar 17 March 2005. Accessed 12th December 2010 from http://bit.ly/gd4CCx.
[315]Alkmaar, *Decade for a Culture of Peace.*

done to provide resources and structures for activities within the framework of the Decade, and most often there is no responsible accompaniment and coordination of such activities. As a consequence, the Decade is hardly known in some regions, especially by other social forces which are themselves engaged in efforts to prevent violence, and the Decade's social and political impact is very limited. Since the Decade is an ecumenical initiative of the community of churches worldwide, members of communities engaged in processes of reconciliation will need to share their convictions and their energy with those who have not yet reacted to the strong and clear call that peace building in non-violent ways is a Christian core virtue and imperative of the gospel message itself.

According to Wainwright, in his book the *Ecumenical Movement: Crisis and Opportunity for the Church:*

> The debate about the whole spectrum of violence has started. Much critical attention has of course been focused on analysing the different experiences of violence. It has to be noted that individual and interpersonal violence are prevalent, constituting eighty percent of the world's casualties in terms of physical violence. During the first half of the Decade emphasis should now be placed more deliberately on the search for concrete and realistic ways of "overcoming the spirit, logic and practice of violence"[316].

It should be acknowledged, however, that the first half of the Decade was overshadowed by brutal acts of international terrorism and the reactions to it, especially in the form of military interventions in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Seldom in the past had the spirit, logic and practice of violence manifested so openly[317]. The challenge to the churches to relinquish any theological and ethical justification of violence calls for discernment that draws its strength from a spirituality and discipleship of active non-violence[318]. On this point, the churches are in need of mutual support and encouragement. The efforts of the churches in the context of the Decade should be marked even more decisively by profound common ethical-theological reflection and advocacy for non-violent conflict prevention, for civilian forms of conflict-management and peace consolidation, as well as for a "just peace".

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[316]Wainwright, G. *The Ecumenical Moment: Crisis and Opportunity for the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, p. 135.
[317]Wainwright, *The Ecumenical Moment,* p.135.
[318]Brewer, J. D. *Peace Processes: A Sociological Approach*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, pp. 29- 32.

Wainwright furthermore states that, "the concern for security has become the dominant motif for individual as well as social and political decisions"[319]. More and more, traditional approaches based on the notion of national security and its defence by military means seem to be gaining the upper hand once again and tend to supplant the insight that the main objective should be security for people and not only for the state. Human security is the fruit of just relationships in a community and of respect for human rights. In light of the notion that human security implies being safe at home and in the community, the idea deserves more attention and education.

At the same time, security is increasingly being threatened today by the effects of economic globalisation. Globalisation is a violent system, imposed on the people and maintained by means of violence. As trade is elevated above human needs, the insatiable appetite of global markets for resources is met by unleashing new wars over resources[320]. For example, the war over diamonds in Sierra Leone and over oil in Nigeria has claimed the lives of thousands of women and children. Therefore, the search for an "Alternative Globalisation Addressing Peoples and Earth"[321] has to be understood as a decisive contribution to the continuation of the Decade. Even though the WCC acknowledges that the process of transformation requires that we as churches make ourselves accountable to the victims of projects of economic globalisation, the voices and experiences of those victims must determine how we analyse and judge this project, in keeping with the gospel[322]. This implies that churches from different regions must make themselves accountable to each other, and that those of them closer to the centres of power live out their first loyalty to their sisters and brothers who experience the negative impacts of global economic injustice every day.

According to the WCC Central Committee, all religious communities and traditions are being challenged to point to the way of peace in overcoming violence. Often religious loyalties connected with ethnic identity are being used for purposes of legitimising and mobilising situations of violent power conflicts[323]. For this very reason, inter-religious dialogue on the hidden connections between religion and violence has become one of the foci of the Decade.

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[319]Wainwright, *The Ecumenical Moment,* pp. 135-136.
[320]Brewer, *Peace Processes,* p. 30.
[321]Skuse, J. "The councils serving the Church in their mission of justice, peace and service to the world". *Second Consultation of National Council of Churches*. Geneva, 2005, p. 78.
[322]World Council of Churches, *Central Committee Rreport*, 2011, p. 153.
[323]World Council of Churches, *Central Committee Report*, 2011, p. 154.

This is true in particular of dialogue between Christians and Muslims in the Nigerian context which has not yet yielded much positive result. To be sure, "by its very nature, inter-religious dialogue is not an instrument to resolve problems instantly in emergency situations"[324]. However, the trust that has been built through patient dialogue and practical cooperation for the common good "may in times of conflict prevent religion from being used as a weapon"[325].

The massive efforts at strengthening security in the context of the so-called "fight against terrorism" have led to noticeable arms proliferation and a growth in the general militarisation of the world, following a period of actual disarmament in all categories of weapons, from anti-personal mines to nuclear arms after the end of the Cold War. In their activities during the second half of the Decade, the churches were encouraged to pay more attention to the challenges arising from those situations. While churches are beginning to discern in more depth the ethical demand of the responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves, they are pointing out in particular that international terrorism is not being overcome by military means, i.e. by war; rather, it is being encouraged and strengthened by it[326]. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that an increasing number of people become victims of violence in civil and local conflicts which are being fought with light and small weapons. This remains a strong challenge to all churches.

On the long run, the Decade to Overcome Violence will be judged by whether it led to a change in consciousness and deepened insights into the theological, ethical and spiritual foundations of Christian action for peace. During the first half of the Decade, the struggle with the question of the use of violence received priority attention. For the remaining five years, the search for reconciliation and building a culture of peace was expected to be the main focus, that is, in conjunction with a critical re-reception and further development of the discussion on the ethics of peace in the ecumenical movement.

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[324]Skuse, *The Council Serving the Church*, p. 78.
[325]Mottier, S. "Overcome conflict in Africa: Impact on World peace". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2009, Vol. 9(17), pp. 18-25.
[326]Kiras, J. D. "Terrorism and globalisation", in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.). *The Globalisation of Word Politics.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 479-497.

In recent times, the notion of a "just peace"[327] has appeared more and more frequently in the ecumenical discussion, especially in contrast to that of a "just war"[328]. However, no convincing foundation or action-oriented practical implementation has so far been developed. According to Mananzan, Oduyoye, Russell and Tamez, "the insight of biblical wisdom that peace and justice are linked inseparably (Ps. 85) has always been part of basic ecumenical convictions." Therefore, it is now necessary that "interest should… be directed to the question of how to overcome the structures of injustice which continue to provoke new violent conflicts"[329].

What are the minimal requirements that must be fulfilled with regard to human security and the respect for the rights and dignity of people in order to be able to speak of peace? Respect for human dignity and the active promotion of the common good are imperatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ, i.e. persons, men and women, are created in the image of God and justified by grace (Genesis 1:27). Human rights and dignity should therefore be emphasised as basic elements in preventing violence and shaping a just peace. In addition, the effort to build and develop an obligatory rule of law on national as well as international levels is one of the conditions for a just peace. However, there is also the need to review critically the understanding of justice and to develop it in the direction of "restorative" or "transformative" justice with the aim of establishing viable and just relationships in community.

Gutman and Rieff argue that the active struggle against the "spirit, logic and practice of violence" should be directed first at developing and appropriating concrete ways and means for the peaceful and non-violent resolution of conflicts[330]. Those who are engaged in this search in the context of the Decade should realise that at its core is also a moral and spiritual struggle in

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[327]Skuse, J. D. pp. 105-107. Skuse defines "Just Peace" as the act of people working for a society that will no longer find war necessary and who are assured that "every human being has the right to be free from terror or a collective and dynamic yet grounded process of freeing human beings from fear and want of overcoming enmity, discrimination and oppression and of establishing conditions for just relationships that privilege the experience of the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation".

[328]Gutman, R. & Rieff, D. *Crime of War: What the Public Should Know*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999. "Just War" theory is a doctrine of military ethics of Roman philosophical and Catholic origin studied by moral theologians, ethicist and international policy makers which holds that a conflict can and ought to meet the criteria of philosophical, religious or political justice, provided it follows (1) the damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain; (2) All other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective; (3) There must be serious prospects of success; (4) The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated".

[329]Mananazan, M., Oduyoye, M., Russell, L. and Tamez E. "The Spirit is troubling the water. Statement on the ecumenical decade: Churches in solidarity with women". *The Ecumenical Review,* 1999, Vol. 32 (1), p. 224.

[330]Gutman and Rieff, *Crime of War*, p.22.

which the religious communities have to take the lead. They have to begin with a critical reassessment of their own contribution to the emergence of a culture of violence and to strengthen the spiritual resources that can help transform the destructive energy of violence into a constructive force of promoting life. Gutman and Rieff further stress that the praxis of non-violence must be rooted in a spirituality that acknowledges one's own vulnerability and at the same time, is able to resist being caught in the mentality of perpetrator and victim; that empowers and encourages the powerless to face up to those who misuse their power; that trusts the active presence of the power of God in human conflicts and therefore, is able to transcend the seeming lack of alternatives in situations of violence[331].

In the context of the many commissions, attention has been drawn to the intimate relationship that exists between reconciliation and the uncovering of truth regarding the processes and structures of violence. The efforts in Nigeria to come to terms with its long history of violence due to conflicts arising from the foundations of the Nigerian state and federation, structural imbalances in the federation, differential spread in Western education and resource distribution have shown that there is no direct way or natural progression from uncovering the truth to peace building and establishing the unity of a nation[332]. The gospel is a message of unconditional love, while reconciliation is a process bearing the fruits of love, as Jesus Christ demonstrated. Nevertheless, advocacy for truth and resistance against its distortion have to be considered as important responses to given situations of violence. Most violent conflicts are fuelled by distorted mutual perceptions. These conflicts feed on the projection of enemy images behind which the actual people and their life situations disappear, but no resolution of conflict or even a process of reconciliation is possible without the participation of the people concerned. Of all the institutions in a society, churches are most intimately aware of the true-life situations of the people, because their interpretation of reality in the light of the gospel transcends all political, ethnic and national interests and thus opens the way for a community reconciled in justice. The Decade should strengthen the readiness and courage of churches "to live in the truth" and open ways of reconciliation, even where this places them in opposition to the prevailing political power interests.

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[331]Gutman and Rieff, *Crime of War*, p.22.
[332]Biermann, W. *Social Research on Africa: African Crisis Response Initiative - The New U.S. Africa Policy.* Hambury: Transaction Publishers, 1999, pp. 93-97.

Such convictions as noted above needed to translate into action during the second half of the Decade. Churches are encouraged continuously to open themselves even more deliberately in their witness and service to become "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5). This also means that they should offer responsible support for those projects initiated by the Decade that touch people at the grassroots level. This includes providing - wherever necessary - coordination, advice, and possibilities of improvement and the exchange of experiences, as well as financial and material support in the struggle for true peace. The report by the WCC's Central Committee entitled *Nairobi to Vancouver* rightly observes that:

> All programmes should be conceived and implemented in a way that expresses the basic Christian imperative to participate in the struggle for human dignity, peace and justice and, at the same time, maintains the integrity of action and engagement by the churches as rooted in the biblical faith. They should enable the churches to become communities generating hope, reconciliation, liberation, and justice. The Christian community living in Christ cannot but embody the groaning of creation. The programmes therefore will have to acknowledge that in struggling for true humanity we are confronted with the power of sin and evil manifested in human injustice and oppression[333].

In addition, the churches should be prepared, more than ever before, to affirm publicly and forcefully the concerns and goals of non-violent projects in the framework of the Decade, and to engage in actions that serve these concerns and goals. In particular, they should actively support all efforts aimed at building structures, instruments, programmes and communities of non-violent, civilian conflict management[334]. In their programmes of education and public information, churches should promote a civilian and non-violent understanding of security; in their exercise of public responsibility and in dialogue with political partners, they should condemn the growing militarisation of international politics and the proliferation of small arms. Every attempt to use violence and fear as legitimate tools in politics needs to be rejected.

Since its earliest beginnings, the ecumenical movement has been a movement for peace and reconciliation. According to the WCC's Central Committee, the ecumenical fellowship of churches strongly manifests the conviction that the communion of all saints, which is a gift from God and rooted in God's Triune life, can overcome the culture of enmity and exclusion which

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[333]WCC Central Committee, Meeting Report. "Nairobi-Vancouver". Nairobi: Ecumenical Centre, 26 August-2 September 2009, p. 22.
[334]Brecher, M. *Crises in World Politics: Theory and Reality*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993, pp. 326-328.

continuously leads to the vicious circles of violence[335]. It has become in itself an image of the possibilities of the reconciled living together while recognising continuing diversities. If this community becomes an advocate for all victims of violence in all places, and shows the way for active and non-violent forms of resolving conflict, it could indeed become a credible witness to the hope within us, the hope of establishing a culture of peace and reconciliation for all of creation[336].

4.5 Evaluation of the Second Half of the Decade

It is encouraging that the programme of the DOV has been taken up by an ever-rising number of churches in different localities (see Appendix B on p. 280 below for an overview of the report by the DOV Central Committee). Words of ecumenical solidarity in the search for reconciliation and peace have been spoken and strengthened. A new initiative (of the DOV) has been launched around the world, and new alliances in peace building have emerged, (the alliance for peace building is a coalition of diverse organisations and professionals working together to build sustainable peace and security worldwide). Moreover, a new theological reflection is being undertaken and a growing number of Christians are re-discovering a spirituality of non-violence.

4.5.1 Need for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation

Inter-religious dialogue on the hidden connections between religion and violence has become one of the foci of the Decade. According to the Central Committee, the WCC is making concerted efforts to promote Christian unity and inter-religious harmony through DOV[337]. This is true in particular of dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The trust that has been built through patient dialogue and practical cooperation for the common good may prevent religion from being used as a weapon.

One of the priorities of the WCC is to promote and engage in inter-religious dialogue and cooperation but Christians are by no means the only ones who recognise this urgent imperative at the beginning of the 21st century. Everywhere, on regional and local levels, churches and religious people from all walks of faith recognise the imperative of interfaith action in response

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[335]WCC Central Committee Meeting, 16th-22nd February 2011.
[336]Pobee, J. S. *The Jubilee of the World Council of Churches: Christian Council of Ghana Contribution to the WCC Assembly.* Accra: Asempa Ghana, 1998, p.11.
[337]The WCC's Central Committee's discussion on World Christianity's Changing Context, 2nd April 2010.

to the pressing needs and concerns of the societies in which they live. More and more people see inter-faith action as an integral part of the ecumenical task. The vision of churches today is that God's *oikoumene* includes not just Christians, but people of all living faiths.

Today, inter-religious dialogue, more than ever before, is accepted within the *oikoumene* as a necessary way of relating to each other. We have become increasingly aware that no religion is an island. In the area of dialogue with people of other faiths, there have been significant developments among Christians – a change from the past when such dialogue was regarded at best as an academic commitment and zeal[338].

There are high expectations that dialogue could be used as an instrument in conflict resolution. In a world where many conflicts seem to be framed by religious language or to have religious overtones, dialogue could be employed to assist in resolving conflicts. However, this may be expecting too much out of dialogue. Dialogue is not and can never serve as an ambulance in a sudden crisis or conflict. It is more like a prophylactic medicine, which, when often and regularly used, will sustain health even in difficult situations. Contacts and precious relations between people of different faiths built quietly by patient dialogue during times of peace may prevent religion from being used as a weapon in times of conflict. In times of communal tension or at the peak of a crisis[339], contacts across the communal divide may prove to be the most precious tool in the construction of peace.

It is important to reflect on the role religion plays in situations of tension leading to violence – how religion is used or allows itself to be used to fuel conflict. Religion concerns some of the deepest feelings and sensitivities of individuals and communities; it carries profound historical memories and often appeals to undiscerning loyalties[340]. We must identify where religions are part of the problem, because they are often just that, and much less frequently are seen as part of the solution. The DOV has and will have its roots in difficult religious assumptions, and in the marginalization of the other. Major strands in Judaism, Christianity and Islam claim in different ways an exclusive relationship to God. This is a problem, for it is accompanied by a conviction

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[338]Gros and Rempal, *The Fragmentation of the Church*, p. 281.
[339]Finkelstein, N. G. *"This Time We Went Too Far": Truth and Consequences of the Gaza Invasion.* New York: OR Book LLC, 2010, p. 83.
[340]Gros and Rempal, The *Fragmentation of the Church*, pp. 41-49.

of being superior to the other[341]. All these make the call for inter-religious dialogue both relevant and imperative to the ecumenical movement.

4.5.2 The promotion of human rights and human dignity

The respect for human dignity, the concern for the wellbeing of the neighbour and the active promotion of the common good are imperatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Men and women are created equally in the image of God and justified by grace (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, the recognition of this dignity and rights is central to our understanding of peace. The WCC's Central Committee affirms that universal human rights are the indispensable international legal instrument for protecting human dignity[342]. Needless to say, different states are responsible for ensuring the rule of law and guaranteeing civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights. However, the WCC observed that abuse of human rights is rampant in many societies, in war and in peace, and that those who should be held accountable benefit from impunity[343]. In response, the ecumenical movement must reach out in friendship and cooperation to all partners in the civil society including people of other religions, who seek to defend human rights and strengthen the international rule of law[344]. Enforcing human rights is the basic element of preventing violence at all levels – individual, inter-personal, and collective, especially violence against women and children. This must include the effort to build and develop the rule of law everywhere for the protection of human dignity and rights. The WCC's Central Committee further pursues the understanding of "restorative" or "transformative" justice with the aim of establishing viable and just relationships in communities.

4.5.3 The need for a spirituality and discipleship of active non-violence

According to Finkelstein, to relinquish any theological and ethical justification of violence calls for discernment that draws its strength from a spirituality and discipleship of active non-violence.[345] The WCC has committed Christian and Christian churches to a profound common ethical-theological reflection and advocacy for non-violent conflict prevention, civilian conflict

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[341]Finkelstein, *This Time We Went Too Far,* pp. 83-87.
[342]The WCC's Central Committee's Discussion on World Christianity's Changing Context, 2nd April 2010.
[343]WCC, Faith and Order Team *Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence: In the Way of Christ for the Sake of the World.* Geneva: WCC/Faith and Order, September 2003. Accessed from 15 November 2009 http://bit.ly/fTGJev.
[344]*"Affirming Human Dignity Rights of People and the Integrity of Creation"*, Theological Consultation, 4-9th December 2004, WCC/Faith and Order, Kigali, Rwanda, 19th June 2009. Accessed from http://bit.14/cG9TB.
[345]Finkelstein, *This Time We Went Too Far,* p. 89.

management and peace consolidation. The practice of non-violence must be rooted in a spirituality that acknowledges one's own vulnerability; that empowers and encourages the powerless to be able to face up to those who misuse their power; that trusts the active presence of the power of God in human conflicts and that is therefore able to transcend the seeming lack of alternatives in situations of violence:

> During the second half of the decade, the WCC will increase her efforts to work towards firmer alliances and more effective links between churches, networks and movements. And will support and coordinate common projects, which are aimed at building up structures, instruments and communities of non-violent, civilian conflict management. The "ecumenical space" offered by the Decade needs to be shaped through mutual encounters, including governmental and non-governmental organisations[346].

The Decade's goal remains the search for reconciliation and peace "from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church"[347]. Peace building in non-violent ways is a Christian core virtue and an imperative of the gospel message itself. As previously mentioned, the WCC member churches are determined to become what they are called to be – "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5). This is the mission of healing, as well as of responsible assistance to those who are voiceless and of speaking truth to those in power. The WCC rejects every attempt to use violence and fear as tools of politics.

As already indicated in chapter three above, the goal of the DOV is not to eradicate violence, but to overcome the spirit, logic and the practice of violence by actively seeking reconciliation and peace. This is an eminently ecumenical task, and it is ecumenical in the widest sense of the word, because preventing violence cannot be accomplished by any one particular group and its programme, or by any single movement. Preventing and overcoming violence must be done collaboratively by churches and jointly in cooperation with governmental and public institutions and peoples' grassroots initiatives, which actively involves the great task of the DOV programme[348].

However, Christians must join these efforts in their own right, as followers of Christ and as sisters and brothers, in spite of their differences and divisions. They join the struggle as partners

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[346]McCorquodale, R. "Contemporary human right and Christianity". A Paper Delivered at the *Shaping the Christian Mind Conference*, Sydney, Australia, in July 2010. pp. 12-13.
[347]McCorquodale, *Contemporary Human Right*, p. 13.
[348]Francisco, A. *Coming Ecological Restoration: A Global Challenge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 3-10.

and members of the public society, and as close friends and allies with one another - as sisters and brothers indeed. Just as violence does not recognise differences in nationalities, ethnicities and cultures, so also does violence not recognise differences between Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox or Pentecostal adherents. Violence is our common plague, and non-violent love, peace, justice and reconciliation is our common calling.

4.5.4 Signposts on the way toward peace and overcoming violence

According to Daphne Sabanes Plou, peace and transforming conflicts are an essential part of peace making. The process of transformation begins with unmasking violence and uncovering hidden conflicts in order to make their consequences visible to victims and communities[349]. Conflict transformation aims at challenging opponents to redirect their conflicting interests towards the common good. It may have to interrupt an artificial peace, expose structural violence or find ways to restore relationships without retribution. The inclination of churches and religious communities is to go along with the victims of violence and be their advocates. It also includes strengthening civil mechanisms for managing conflicts and holding public authorities and other perpetrators accountable - even perpetrators from within church communities[350].

4.5.4.1 Building cultures of peace

The WCC's Central Committee state that Christians are committed to building cultures of peace in cooperation with people of other religious traditions, convictions and worldviews. In this commitment, they seek to respond to the gospel imperatives of loving their neighbours, rejecting violence and seeking justice for the poor, the disinherited and the oppressed (Matt. 5:1-12; Luke 4:18)[351]. The collective effort relies on the gifts of men and women, the young and the old, leaders and workers. They acknowledge and value women's gifts for building peace. They also recognise the unique role of religious leaders, their influence in society and the potentially liberating power of religious wisdom and insight in promoting peace and human dignity[352]. At

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[349]Plou, D. S. *Peace in Troubled Cities, Global Communication: Is There a Place for Human Dignity?* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1996, pp. 37-42.

[350]Raiser, K. *Some Thoughts on the Programme to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the City Campaign.* WCC Central Committee, Johannesburg Background Document, January 1994, Accessed on 29th March 2010 from http://bit.ly/hzpD6V.

[351]WCC Central Committee. "Recommendations Regarding the Programme to Overcome Violence". South Africa, January 1994, Accessed from 28 March 2010 http://bit.ly/hmJ0lT.

[352]WCC Central Committee's Report, p. 29.

the same time, the WCC laments the cases in which religious leaders have abused their power for selfish ends or cultural religious patterns have contributed to violence and oppression. They are concerned about hostile pomposity and teachings propagated under the pretext of religion and amplified by the power of the media. While acknowledging with deep humility Christian complicity - past and present - in the manifestation of prejudice and other attitudes that fuel hatred, they commit themselves to build communities of reconciliation, acceptance and love[353].

4.5.4.2 Education for peace

According to Jacques, G. education inspired by the vision of peace is more than instruction in the strategies for peace work. It is a profoundly spiritual formation of character that involves family, church and society. Peace education teaches us to nurture the spirit of peace, instil respect for human rights, and imagine and adopt alternatives to violence. Peace education promotes active non-violence as an unequalled power for change that is practised and valued in different traditions and cultures. Education of character and conscience equips people to seek peace and pursue it[354], and this becomes the great task of the WCC's Decade as it embarks on peace building for overcoming violence in communities.

The contribution of the church to this great call of the Decade to Overcome Violence cannot be overemphasised, as it is significant also to consider the abuse of power and the church's responsibility for her continuing effort to have a world of peace. A number of issues should be put into account as shown in the following section.

4.6 The Church and the Decade to Overcome Violence

Along with overwhelming enthusiasm, the DOV has also been greeted with some critical questions, which need to be taken seriously: Why this "political" agenda? Is it not an ambitious task to overcome violence in a situation vitiated by interplay of identities and the struggle for power and justice on the one hand, and political expediency that uses religious loyalties as instruments of power, on the other? What can churches, which exist as minority communities in pluralistic and often hostile environments do? What credentials do the churches have to preach

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[353]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 30-36.
[354]Jacques, G. *Beyond Impunity: An Ecumenical Approach to Truth, Justice and Reconciliation.* Geneva: WCC, 2000, pp. 15-17.

non-violence when their own histories and theologies are soaked in violence? Why are the churches raising alarm about the religious violence of others when they themselves have used violence in the past? Who are the churches trying to help by preaching pacifism in a world where violence has become an instrument for seizing and wielding power? What does non-violence mean to one who is thoroughly, systematically and constantly abused and dehumanised?

Hard questions indeed! However, they have much to offer to enrich the meaning and purpose of the Decade. The churches which met in Harare, Zimbabwe for the Eighth Assembly of the WCC in 1998—overwhelmed by stories of violence from different parts of the world, and conscious of the role they have played and continue to play in supporting structures and cultures that perpetuate different forms of violence—committed themselves to a journey of peace through the DOV. The accompanying title, "Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace" (WCC 1999:120) attempts to clarify that the churches do not claim to have the credentials to overcome violence in the world, and expresses the readiness to go through a process of overcoming violence, both within and outside the Church, to build a culture of peace. It implies an honest search in faith – a spiritual exploration for a world without fear, hatred, enmity and violence in any form. The Central Committee meetings after Harare, that is, in Geneva (1999) and Potsdam (2001), have reiterated the ecclesiological significance of the DOV. They stated that the Decade is a time for the churches to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, to repent together for their complicity in violence, and to become communities of peace founded on truth[355].

These affirmations imply that the churches in Nigeria will need to subject themselves to correction and go through a process of inner transformation in order to rediscover the full implications of being churches in a violent world. Accepting the DOV programme would imply that they are announcing their decision to give up all ambiguous positions on questions around the use of violence for any purpose, and are firmly committing themselves to a vocation of peace building and non-violence. Indeed, for many reasons, the DOV marks a watershed in the history of the churches.

If they are taken seriously, these affirmations are bound to effect major changes in our notions of church and consequently in the character of the ecumenical movement itself. It is easy to agree

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[355]WCC, *A Basic Framework*, p. 12.

with Kässmann[356] attempt to throw light on three major areas where these processes of change will help the churches not only to overcome violence but also to discover credible and authentic forms of peaceable ecclesial existence in Nigeria and the world at large. These are overcoming violence within, overcoming silence and neutrality, and overcoming isolation and exclusivism.

4.6.1 Overcoming violence within

Brown points out that the church, in its physical reality, is a community of people in concrete situations of time and space. At the same time, it is a community formed around and led by the memory of Jesus. The way this memory—of Jesus' divinity and humanity, his message and work—is understood and affirmed within the collective experience of the community in each historical situation, influences ecclesial notions and expressions[357]. This collective experience includes the prevailing socio-cultural, political and economic conditions, as well as the values, structures and cultures that govern social relationships. Since the empirical church is a social unit, the effects of social structures and social processes on its beliefs, goals, forms and functions must not be oversimplified. Moreover, since power plays a decisive role in all social relationships, those who wield power have a greater role in shaping all social institutions. The organisational structures of the church are also vulnerable to this dynamics of power. The shapes, functions and priorities of the churches are largely dependent on the power interests of those who manage them.

It is in the light of these facts that Best and Robra observe that it is perhaps a hasty generalization to hold that all churches in all places are guilty of perpetrating and supporting violence in their midst[358]. However, implied in this assertion of the determination to overcome violence is the realization that violence is only a symptom; it is the result of the use, abuse and misuse of power or a response in retaliation for such exercise of power. The WCC's 1969 consultation on racism at Notting Hill, England stated that the key issue was "not simply that of violence versus non-violence, but the use of power for the powerful and the need of power for the powerless". As an attitude guided by the logic of domination by force, violence is used to exclude, subjugate, dehumanise (as well as to seek redress for grievances arising from such exclusion and

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[356]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 30-39.
[357]Brown, R.M. *Religion and Violence*. Second Edition. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987, p. 7.
[358]Best, T. F. and Robra, M. (eds.). *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, *Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997, pp. 7-8.

subjugation). As Niebuhr and William, succinctly state, "it is one will establishing complete dominion over other wills and reducing them to acquiescence"[359].

Therefore, the issue of power remains the fundamental problem, and the issue of violence or non-violence recedes to a secondary status. There are various forms of power - economic, military, political, physical, media, cultural, intellectual, technological, ritual, and so on. As instruments in the hands of the privileged, these forms of power unleash various forms of violence. There are covert and overt forms of violence operating both at the personal and institutionalised levels. This analysis can be developed by noting that the term "violence" has its roots in the Latin word *violare*, which means to violate. Brown explains what violation means:

> Whatever "violates" another, in the sense of infringing upon or disregarding or abusing or denying that other, whether physical harm is done or not, can be understood as an act of violence. The basic overall definition of violence would then become violation of personhood. While such a denial or violation can involve the physical destruction of personhood in ways that are obvious, personhood can also be violated or denied in subtle ways that are not obvious at all, except to the victim. There can be violation of personhood quite apart from the doing of physical harm[360].

For that reason, violence is not only a physical demonstration of anger and hatred but also a mechanism of control by power, a way of becoming and remaining wealthy and powerful. The churches are not innocent of acts of violence; in fact, they hold and wield combinations of several of the above forms of power. Therefore, the adage *ecclesia simper reformanda* (that is, the church itself is always in need of reformation) stands relevant for all times. The expressions of readiness to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, and to repent for complicity in violence, arise from the realization of this fundamental sociological vulnerability of the empirical Church[361].

We often hear a great deal of rhetoric on issues such as social justice, human rights, ecology, economics, and so on, at all levels, in our ecumenical circles. This is about violence, or to put it mildly, the abuses and misuse of power "out there". What we do not hear are calls for the inner transformation of the churches. The churches have always found it convenient to deal with the problem and tactfully avoided the need to deal with their own internal contradictions. This amounts to nothing but deception, both of the self and the other.

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[359]Niebuhr, R. and Williams, F. *Christianity and Power Politics*. New York: Charles Scribner, 2000, p. 16.
[360]Brown, *Religion and Violence*, p. 77.
[361]Brown, *Religion and Violence*, p. 78.

However, Best and Robra add that one of the most important questions is: Is it possible, as power structures, with norms and values that legitimise domination, to pursue the path of peace and justice? In many situations, because the churches exist as institutions, they have sided with those in power in order to protect their own interests. The concerns of justice and truth are often pushed aside as they seek social acceptance by adapting themselves to the norms and values of the dominant culture. In fact, discrimination of the excluded continues within our churches as it does elsewhere. Some 1200 women, meeting in Harare in November 1998 for a celebration to mark the formal end of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, shared stories of violence against women within the church, which included tales of discrimination, exclusion, denial of opportunities, and sexual harassment and abuse[362].

Crosby rightly notes that, the majority of the people in Nigeria and the world today are victims of power in one form or another. The question is whether the churches can afford to be power structures led by theologies of power and glory[363]. Some biblical passages are used to justify violence while certain anthropological presuppositions are also used to legitimise the exploitation of people, and the subjugation of women and other excluded groups. The Decade calls for inductive ways of doing theology and understanding the meaning and implications of the biblical faith in the light of people's experiences and the concerns of life and the world.

The call of the "Decade to Overcome Violence" by the WCC, therefore, involves a process of inner transformation that touches the churches' self-understanding, structures, theologies, liturgies, and attitudes towards the world in the light of the challenges to the affirmation of faith in the God of life[364].

On the other hand, the churches are called to be communities of peace. Implied in this affirmation is the conviction that the institutional existence of the church is a basic contradiction in terms, as the churches pursue the path of peace. Therefore, the communal dimension of the church is sometimes reiterated because communities are different in nature from structures. However, the problem with this image is that communities can also be narrow and oppressive

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[362]Best and Robra, *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, pp. 89, 90.
[363]Crosby, M. H. *Praying to Our Father as Subversive Activity*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1977, pp. 110-111.
[364]Bonino, J. M "Theology of peace in Latin America", in Theodore Runyon (ed.). *Theology, Politics and Peace*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989, pp. 43-44.

because they also have hierarchies, silence dissent, subjugate the voiceless, and are led by the interests of the powerful. Often, such community formations are behind many of the manifestations of violence in the world today[365]. Consequently, the DOV calls for a rethinking of the nature of the church, exploring new ways of being church, and re-imaging the church as a community radically different from all oppressive social formations. Crosby asserts that, "Reconciliation with God in history means reconciliation with history's gods. Whoever takes up the cross is following a man who was crucified by history's gods and idols... In not being reconciled with these idols, we discover the freedom of the resurrection"[366].

The challenge to the churches, therefore, is to find alternative ways of being church and of understanding and exercising power. The study of ecclesiology and ethics and the ongoing study by women on being church are helpful attempts in this direction[367].

4.6.2 Overcoming silence and neutrality

"Be good and seek justice." Is not building peace based on justice an important biblical imperative? Unfortunately, the issue of justice is often ignored because of its demands for internal authenticity and confrontation with all unjust powers[368]. Therefore, the traditional Christian response has been one of serving the victims of violence, whether physical or structural, rather than dealing with those conditions that victimize the powerless. It is important, viable and realistic to respond to specific situations of conflict, but it must also be kept in mind that the ethical transformation of the world is an inevitable evangelical vocation of the churches. *Diakonia* is not a charitable service but a transforming action. There is nothing especially missional about running ambulance services for the victims of violence on the part of churches – many other organisations render such services these days[369].

As a visible expression of a theological idea, the church, although a social institution, should be guided by the faith that brought it into being. Jesus describes the nature of his peace even as he assures his disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27). As a community that claims its

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[365]Bonino, *Theology and Peace*, p. 172.
[366]Crosby, *Praying to Our Father*, pp. 110-111.
[367]Best and Robra, *Ecclesiology and Ethics*, p. 129.
[368]Bonino, *Theology and Peace*, p. 172.
[369]Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, p. 165.

origin in the coming of the Spirit, the church's motivation for peace comes from the biblical faith tradition - a tradition of God's option for the victims of power, the prophetic denunciation of injustice, Jesus' rejection of power and the witness of the early Christian communities as those guided by alternative values and goals. Thus, the churches are the inheritors of this faith tradition of resistance, non-conformism and alternative ways of being human.

As the churches deal with a common human issue, violence, and join the creative stream of those who are already trying to overcome violence, it is necessary to examine what is distinct about their response as a community that claims its origin and inspiration in the power of the Holy Spirit. The churches need to seek peace and reconciliation, not as governments and NGOs, but precisely as churches. They are not to be satisfied with mere peacemaking or peacekeeping. As the larger faces of the perpetrators of violence are exposed, churches need to talk about violence not only as a psychological trait but also as an instrument of power.

As noted above, the roots of various forms of violence lie in the social, political and economic interests of the dominant powers. The struggles for power and dominance, and the consequent havoc they wreak, especially for the vulnerable, need to be brought to light, particularly in Nigeria, where any outbreak of violence results in hundreds being dead and destitute. The violence against its social and economic structures leaves millions hungry and homeless. The churches in Africa claim that the major cause of violence in the continent is the multinational business of oil, minerals, diamonds, and small arms and light weapons. The prolonged wars result in enormous human suffering and deprivation, famine, disease, lack of education and healthcare, and diminished sources of employment as well as broken relationships and wounded memories[370].

Therefore, preaching peace is not enough; active global advocacy against these forces is the challenge. The preoccupation, arising out of a limited experience of violence, with trivial forms of violence, and with a longing for absolute safety and security, must not be allowed to prevent the churches from discovering what they can do to build peace in the lives of the millions who are victimised in the battles for power and wealth. Schreiter argues that:

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[370]Schreiter, R. J. *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. Maryknoll: Orbis & Boston Theological Institute, 1992, pp. 23-25.

> If the sources of conflict are named, examined, and taken away, reconciliation will not come about. What we will have is truce, not peace. This is the fact that those who have perpetrated violence or have been witting or unwitting accessories to the violence find difficult to accept. Churches fall easy prey to this, since they are rarely the direct violators. It is often their silence, not their words, that makes them participants in the violation of those who suffer. The voices of those who suffer then become a very unwelcome sound to their ears because they are made uncomfortable[371].

Some of the wider issues that need to be addressed by the churches include the endless wars in the Middle East, Sri Lanka, Sudan and many other parts of Africa (in particular Nigeria), Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the large-scale impoverishment of people because of economic globalisation, the continuing degradation of the environment resulting in frequent natural calamities, the endless violence against women, the rising tide of racial intolerance, the production and trade of arms and weapons of mass destruction, the harmful role of the entertainment industry, drug trafficking, and so on. As Schreiter points out, "Reconciliation is not only a matter of healing memories and receiving forgiveness, it is also about changing the structures in society that provoked, promoted and sustained violence"[372]. It should be asserted that that kind of peace does not come through affirmations but through struggle, through acts of resistance and solidarity with those who are struggling for justice. Wink suggests that the best the church could do is to delegitimise an unjust system and to create a spiritual counter-climate[373].

The churches have committed themselves to build a culture of peace during the Decade. The Nigerian churches prefer the expression, "cultivating" peace. Nevertheless, we can neither build nor cultivate peace without preparing the ground and creating the conditions for it to sustain itself. The challenge, therefore, is to build a peace based on justice, which ensures life for all, a peace that neither silences the voiceless nor tramples the rights of the powerless[374].

This political dimension of the Christian vocation needs to be affirmed. Non-violence is an ideal that evokes a great deal of respect and raises many expectations. However, the churches must ensure that their stance on non-violence does not strengthen the hands of the perpetrators of violence. Attempts should be made to identify successful, people-based models of non-violent action. Niebuhr insists that "a pacifism which really springs from the Christian faith, without

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[371]Schreiter, *Reconciliation,* p. 26.
[372]Schreiter, *Reconciliation*, p. 1.
[373]Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, p. 165.
[374]Sandol, D. J. D. and Hugo, V. M. *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice: Integration and Application*. Manchester University Press, 1999, p. 28.

secular accretions and corruptions ... possesses an alternative for the conflicts and tensions from which and through which the world must rescue a precarious justice"[375].

4.6.3 Overcoming isolation and exclusivism

The ecumenical movement and one of its organisational expressions, the WCC, have been trying to bring the churches together on doctrinal issues in an effort to foster Christian unity. In this process, the WCC has tried to understand the meaning of Christian unity in relation to the unity of humankind and to the integrity of creation. As a logical development of this process, which has now become an ethical and life issue, the effort to overcome violence becomes a new ecumenical rallying point. In this regard, Kässmann shares a dream:

> What great possibilities the ecumenical movement has truly to become a peace movement, to contribute to a world longing for peace and for the non-violence that nurtures life! Christians live in all countries of the world. They are taught that the other is their brother or sister... If Christians would live according to that knowledge, if churches would proclaim that reality, they would give a convincing example[376].

The DOV therefore has the ability to facilitate two new processes of discovery. The first is to discover the meaning and implications of Christian unity in a violent world. If violence is a manifestation of hatred, division, suspicion, and struggle for power and dominance, then the denominational witness of the church is hardly a fitting response in our world today. In the call to overcome violence, an ethical issue becomes a test of our efforts towards Christian unity as well as the credibility of our affirmation of faith in the God who liberates and reconciles. Jurgen Moltmann challenges the church, as he affirms that, "Every statement about the church will be a statement about Christ. Every statement about Christ also implies a statement about the church"[377].

The second process of discovery is to discern the meaning of sharing as churches give up their claims of uniqueness and instead become partners with others. Moltmann laments that, "The church's exclusive absolutism has made Christianity invulnerable, inalterable and aggressive"[378]. The Decade, therefore, provides an opportunity for the churches to go through this inner transformation so they can see themselves as people "chosen" to realise the vision of God's reign

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[375]Niebuhr and Williams, *Christianity and Power Politics*, p. 32.
[376]Kässmann, *Overcoming Violence*, p. 35.
[377]Moltmann, J. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977, p. 7.
[378]Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 153.

of justice and peace. Both repentance and humility, though hard, are liberative and creative processes, in which the churches are sure to discover afresh what it means to be a church in a violent world. Thomas asserts that:

> ... [T]he need for Christians to be in dialogical partnership with others in the witness to the kingdom to come calls for a redefinition of the different levels and forms of *koinonia*-in-Christ in history and the relation between them in Christian living and the Christian mission of humanisation and salvation[379].

Therefore, the DOV has much more to offer the churches in Nigeria and the world at large than simply a programme for their action in the world. It can enable the churches to find themselves afresh as instruments of God's transforming action, and as symbols of the coming reign of God. By going through this process of overcoming violence and developing theologies of peace, the churches can re-pattern themselves in ways that assist them towards creative and meaningful life and witness.

4.7 The Manipulation of Power and the Church's Responsibility

Manchala stresses that power, an essential factor in all dynamics of human interaction, is increasingly sought after and exercised today in ways that seem to pose serious challenges to the ethical integrity of our generation, with implications for the present and the future, the personal and the communal, and the local and the global. The DOV, launched in a spirit of repentance from complicity in violence and of determination to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, has helped churches recognise that the roots of violence lie in the way power is understood, exercised, feared, coveted and glorified by the perpetrators, victims and even spectators of violence[380]. As part of the world, churches have been guided by the dynamics of power, cherishing and living with these orientations as well as ambiguities within and outside their realm. In spite of "the consciousness of the biblical models for a responsible use of power"[381], instances of manipulation and misuse of power in the church both in the past as well as in the present are manifold.

Furthermore, Manchala notes that while this is so, the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century took its shape in a context of dominating yet changing power constellations. Its search

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[379]Thomas, *Risking Christ for Christ Seek*, p. 114.
[380]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 37-45.
[381]Raiser, K. "Rationale for a new ecumenical discourse on power". *Cret-Berard Report.* Geneva: WCC, p. 27.

for the unity of the church and of humankind has both echoed and challenged the dynamics of political and societal transformation. The author outlines three major phases[382]. The first was the period from the Oxford 1937 Conference on Church, Community and State to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, during which the ecumenical discussion focused on the understanding of the state and the concern for the legitimacy or the limitation of its power in view of the emergence of totalitarian rule. This resulted in the first Assembly proposing a clarified concept of power through the definition of the responsible society.

Duncan argues that during the second phase, ethical discussions were marked by the effort to interpret rapid social change. This implied a gradual shift of attention from the power of the state and government to the new forms of power related to technological development and their capacity to orient and implement decisions. It also acknowledged the emergence of people's power as a new reality. The third phase is in the context of the discussion on a just, participatory and sustainable society which upheld that the struggle for justice requires a new understanding and practice of the political order and the use of power[383]. This implied an exploration of options which Christians and churches must use in their political witness and the biblical and theological bases for the use of power. This phase culminated in the world convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Seoul in 1990, which issued ten affirmations, the first of which was that "all exercise of power is accountable to God"[384]. It should be noted in addition that the ecumenical movement, whether as a mediator or a prophetic voice, is "sometimes exposed to attempts of misuse by others and not sufficiently self-critical"[385], "acted as a bridge between the powers that waged the Cold War"[386].

Today, the ecumenical movement is confronted with the necessity to explore the means of bringing about a just, participatory and sustainable society in a globalised world with a new dialectic of power centres. Economic, military and political powers have each taken new shapes, necessitating the need for fresh analysis and theological reflection. The violence resulting from

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[382]Raiser, *Rationale for a New Ecumenical Discourse*, pp. 37-39.
[383]Duncan, F. B. *Truthful Action: Explanations in Practical Theology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000, pp. 62-81.
[384]Raiser, *Rationale for a New Ecumenical Discourse*, pp. 37-41.
[385]See "WCC General Secretary calls for a critical reassessment of the Cold-War period". Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1999c. See also "WCC acknowledges inaction during Cold War: German Bishop Commemorates Coup" *Christian Post*, San Francisco, 23rd July 2004.
[386]Duncan, *Truthful Action,* p. 81.

present global power constellations is evident in the injustice in the global market, the control of resources, knowledge and technology, which in turn are challenged by acts of terrorism, the privatization of power, the proliferation of weapons and means of destruction, and the weakening of effective state structures, even international ones such as the United Nations[387]. It truly is a challenge and concern for the ecumenical movement.

The ecumenical movement does not stand outside these developments and is not exempt from the danger of perpetuating them, sometimes through the unconscious mirroring and sustaining of power structures in our world today[388]. Nonetheless, its members are called to be signs and instruments of God's reign of peace and justice and of a concept and practice of power which fosters the life and communion of all creatures. It is therefore necessary for churches to interrogate power in order to nurture a culture of peace. Although this points towards the need to redefine power and to reconstruct the images of God in ways that affirm the finer and life enhancing attributes of God and God's purposes for the created order, the reflection on power is presented in a way that opens possibilities for more liberating interpretations and consequently more responsible forms of power.

4.7.1 The ambivalent relation between power and violence

The role of power is fundamental to the understanding of any system of violence[389]. Violence, after all, is an exercise of power over the powerless or retaliation against such power. The exercise of violence by the powerful and, to some extent, by the powerless may, in fact, indicate a lack of power and an awareness that power might be exercised in quite different ways which may, in turn, reflect the superficiality of value systems which allow and justify such heartless and violent acts. Illogically, this is as true of the powerful as of the powerless and indeed, a manifestation of a lack of power, a lack of legitimization and a lack of capacity to explore and exercise measures and possibilities that do not violate or weaken life:

> When we unleash dubious forces in the pursuit of worldly power, we ourselves become its victims. In the pursuit of wealth, military strength and other images of power, we actually become

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[387]World Council of Churches. "Terrorism, Human Rights and Counter Terrorism". Discussion Paper for Members of the CCIA Commission, Presented at the 47th Meeting of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, Chavannes-de-Bogis, Switzerland, 14-19th June 2005, p. 3.

[388]Duncan, *Truthful Action*, pp. 81-85.

[389]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace* document, p. 6.

> dependent on these images and lose our capacity to imagine and pursue more healthy alternatives. And when our limited images of power fail us - when, despite our wealth, we confront a host of seemingly irresolvable social problems and humanitarian crises and when, despite our military strength, we find ourselves in unwinnable wars- we are reminded that our images of power are often, in fact, illusions[390].

Moreover, to communicate and encourage critical discourse with the powers of today may be more crucial than ever before, since contemporary structures of power are often experienced as violent in themselves. In view of the growing concentration of power into fewer hands at all levels - local, national and international- and of the phenomenon of struggles for horizontal power, the question of who controls these powers or who has access to them is ever more pressing. Ken Booth observes that, "the drivers of the global economy (the principles of capitalism) and of the state's system (the principles of political realism) represent the common sense of their structures because they embody the interests of the powerful, by the powerful, and for the powerful"[391]. He stresses that the instrumentality of power must be interrogated. When power is understood instrumentally, it is desired, sought and amassed for what it can do. The paradoxical nature of power must be understood; it is both an opportunity and a threat to its holders and to others[392].

Furthermore, power sustains itself by dominating, possessing, manipulating and controlling people's lives and systems[393]. One of the causes of this is the fear or awe that power induces. The sheer scope of this power decimates resistance even in the face of blatant victimization. Those who, therefore, feel powerless and remain passive tend to deny their own capacity to resist, and their own innate ability to be innovative, and so are unable to hold the powers accountable. The church needs not only encourage people to live up to the dignity and power that it affirms, but also to be wary of false claims of powerlessness. Instead, as the younger theologians from the south said, the church must look for ways to use its power in accordance with the gospel for the

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[390]"Reflection on the International Use of Power by the US Government: A US Christian Contribution to the WCC's DOV", Washington DC, 14th September 2005. Accessed on 9th February 2009 from http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/us-respose-nurturingpeace.html.

[391]Booth K. "Reason of Power and the Power of Reason: Some Reflections from International Politics". *Cret-Berard Consultation,* Geneva, 14 September 2005, p.78.

[392]Booth, *Reason of Power*, p.78-79.

[393]Booth, *Reason of Power*, p. 78-79.

empowerment and full participation of people, enabling them to claim their rightful subjecthood[394]. This is the true way of peace.

In the world context, the church has the moral responsibility to explore and propose models of power that open alternatives to the use of violence. Constructive and sustainable change in the world has most often been brought about through non-violent rather than violent means. Non-violent struggle shows that power, even when concentrated and focused, does not have to engage in violence to achieve its goals. Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha* brought an awareness that there are other sources of power than the objectified and internalised structures of power, and that the person who is in contact with the spiritual source in its cause for justice and freedom cannot be overpowered. The churches need to strengthen their witness to the life and proclamation of Jesus, whose awareness of the already present as well as the coming reign of God was a feature of his challenging, non-violent ethics (Matt. 5-7). However, even with non-violence as the preferential option, some would argue that there might be situations where violence is unavoidable and where responsibility for the life of people requires the use of force. In such situations, "restricting the use of force to non- fatal measures and refraining from killing might still allow the possibility for shaping a situation"[395].

4.7.2 Between structure and community - the dilemma of the Church

Power, as in the world and in all human relationships, is also a complex factor in the life of the churches. Although aware of the biblical models of responsible use of power (e.g. Mark 10:45)[396], the church, both as an institution and as a people, is often found wanting in responsible and life-enhancing models of power. Unfortunately, a significant trend in the adaptation of certain traditions and practices in the Bible where the misapplication of power is endorsed has also been observed[397].

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[394]Sanchez, E. "Power that Empowers, Power that Destroys" Unpublished Material, p. 2.

[395]Heys, S. B. *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: Harper, 1996, p. 89.

[396]See "Interrogating and redefining power: Aide memoire of a theological consultation organised by the Faith and Order Team of the WCC in Cret-Berard, Puidoux, Switzerland, 10-13 December 2004.

[397]This raises another theological concern which should not be glossed over, and which requires further work, that is, the effect of the images of a violent God in the biblical tradition, including the violent imagery of the apocalyptic writings. For a helpful engagement with this issue, see the essay by John Mansfield. "The conqueror and the crucified: Reading the book of Joshua in an age of terrorism". In Michael A. Kelly CSSR and Mark A. O'Brien OP (eds). *Wisdom for Life*. Adelaide, Australia: ATF Press, 2005, pp. 57-75.

Sanchez illustrates this point by means of an analysis of the confrontations of different notions of power in the book of Judges[398]. Although a woman, Deborah occupied an important leadership position that benefited the people during the period of Othniel. During the period of Jephthah to Samson, women became victims of the misuse of power and violence (Judges 11-16). The people of God are often seen taking sides with violence; indeed, violence escalates as the Judges story develops. Likewise, certain conceptions of God, biblical images, ecclesiastical institutions, theologies and liturgies have been drawn from hierarchical notions of ordering and, therefore, have become the dominant expressions of the church. The result is that the church is often oblivious to the dangers of absolute power.

Talking about the relation between power and pastoral care, Duncan Forrest says that the primary agent of pastoral care is the church, the community of faith[399]. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to resist the misuse of power that exercises itself over others. The church is required to share power with others and called to speak and promote peace, love and forgiveness in a world that is riddled with violence and conflict. In other words, the church needs to offer alternatives to violent and life-diminishing ways of exercising power.

According to Sanchez, the church can act in a credible manner only if it addresses and repents of its complicity in the violence of political, economic, social, military and imperial powers. For Sanchez, repentance is required not only for the crusades, slave trade and colonial conquests of the past, but also for its present collusion with unjust economic, political and military power[400]. The church is called to be a community of peace that gives people hope and life; a community that fosters unity, upholds truth, and strives for justice and fairness in all structures of human relationships. There is a long biblical tradition of wariness and critique against "self-sustaining structures of power, beginning with the critique of the kingship in Israel"[401]. This affirms that all exercise of power is accountable to God. Therefore, it also affirms that all forms of human power and authority are subject to God and accountable to people. This means the right of people to full participation. In Christ, God decisively revealed the meaning of power as compassionate love

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[398]Sanchez, *Power that Empowers*, pp. 5-12.
[399]Duncan, *Truthful Action*, p. 74.
[400]Palu, V. "Participation in God's mission of reconciliation". *An International Review of Mission,* Vol. 83 (331), p. 563.
[401]Sanchez, *Power that Empowers*, pp. 1-5.

that prevails over the force of death[402]. The members of the Central Committee of the WCC, in their message to the churches during the launch of the DOV in 2001, said, "The real strength of the church remains in the seeming powerlessness of love and faith. Churches must seek every day to rediscover and experience this power. Overcoming violence calls and challenges them to live out their Christian commitment in the spirit of honesty, humility and self-sacrifice". Moreover,

> The church as an inclusive relational, dynamic, interdependent community is meant to be a working model of God's dealing with the world and humankind, manifesting to the world God's intentions. Whatever polity it takes, it should be communal, personal and collegial. The church, as a human institution, has some of the most powerful and some of the most powerless. Therefore, it is called to exercise power as God exercises power, through servanthood. The church in the hospitality of its worship must reflect this open fellowship in Jesus[403].

To sum up, the church must also be a well of empowerment, similar to the well in Genesis 21.

4.7.3 Empowering to overcome violence

The DOV and the recent WCC documents addressing issues of violence and power[404] in their overlaps and aggravations, oblige the ecumenical community to empower people and churches for a responsible use of power that enables a just and equal distribution of means, resources, space and products. The WCC is not alone in this calling; similar voices to empower the weak and the vulnerable can be heard in many societies and cultures, from various people[405], with different intentions[406]. Overwhelmed by structures and cultures that dominate and discriminate,

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[402]Palu, *Participation in God's Mission*, p. 572.

[403]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, p. 110.

[404]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*. See also, Raiser, K. "Theological and ethical consideration on the uses of power in the Ecumenical Movement today". CCIA 44th Meeting, Crans-Montana, Switzerland, 14-18 May 2001. "Interrogating and redefining power Aide Memoire, theologian consultation organised in partnership with CCIA and JPIC (2003). Interrogating and Redefining Power, Consultation of Younger Theologians from the South, 2004. Bulletin of the programme area on faith, mission and unity (theological concerns): A special issue in observance of the Decade to Overcome Violence. *Christian Conference of Asia*, Vol. 20, No. 3. Chiang Mai, Thailand, December 2004.

[405]In biblical times, for instance, exilic prophets sought to empower people to survive their persecution and displacement. Brueggemann speaks of two moments of the prophetic imagination: the critical voice that identified and the voice that provides alternatives and hopes. The latter is an example of the call to empower. Brueggemann, Walter. *The Prophetic Imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978, pp. 657-683. Other figures have done the same in their various communities, such as Medha Patkar and Mahatama Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X among African-Americans in the USA, Wasgari Mathai in Kenya, Te Whiti and Whina Cooper in Aotearoa-New Zealand, and many others at local levels.

[406]Paulo F. *Naming the Power. Unmasking the Power. Engaging the Powers*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992. pp. 70-73.

the world today is deprived of many of the opportunities that life offers. Access to opportunities is necessary for human fulfilment, as these provide possibilities for exerting power to resist and to seek safety. In fact, most victims of any form of violence, including that of nature, are the poor, the weak and those who have been systemically disempowered by social, political and economic structures. Empowerment of the weak and the vulnerable, therefore, is an essential step towards overcoming violence. However, the call to empower also has paternalistic undertones and hence needs to be viewed and effected with care. Traditionally, disempowered communities do need wider solidarity which can help prevent them from falling victim to the vicissitudes of the times and social dynamics. Calling for empowerment rings loud in contemporary contexts.

Manchala argues that, consequently, the WCC must define the targets of empowerment that it encourages. This is necessary because, through the ages, structures and cultures have empowered some people to destroy other peoples and identities, to terrorise and occupy their lands, to extend their own ideologies, to enforce social divisions and to create hierarchies in society, and so on[407]. The WCC does not endorse moves towards empowerment that lead to the misapplication and manipulation of power. What the WCC calls for is the empowerment of people and churches towards affirming life, accountability and mutuality, interdependence and peace (*shalom*).

Of course, it is one thing to talk about empowerment and another to walk in its way; and one thing to empower and another to empower towards particular goals. In other words, the WCC calls for the empowerment of people and churches to build fires, not for (self) destruction but for warmth, light, feasting, sharing and creating a space where peace is forthcoming. Empowerment must make people innovative and responsible. Empowerment is a double-faced concept, one of complexity and ambivalence at the same time. With the consciousness of these limitations, the purposes of empowerment may be understood in the ways outlined below[408].

4.7.3.1 Empowerment to survive

The popular saying that, "a hungry person cannot be satisfied or fed by sermons/words," stresses the urgency of the call to empower people, especially the disempowered and the excluded, to survive. This is the call to action beyond mere the affirmation to overcome the violence with

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[407]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace,* p. 34.
[408]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace,* p. 35.

which the DOV is wrestling. In the face of the acceleration of violence and abuse of power, the first call by the DOV Central Committee, is for empowering people to survive. Empowering to survive is to safeguard life from abuse and destruction. It needs to be the primary vocation of the church, which confesses its faith in the God of life who came to earth to grant life in all its abundance, to all people. In other words, the church should have the courage to leave aside its theological, institutional and cultural hesitation and justification for inaction for the sake of the survival of the exhausted victims on the underside of history. The church should not let its own survival be more important than that of those who are denied life. The call to empower to survive testifies that ethics should always be foremost[409]. The call to empower to survive is a call to embrace, cuddle, nurse and protect life.

In addition, there is a subverting quality to the call to empower to survive. It is an instance of resistance, for in empowering to survive, the churches frustrate the power of oppression and they declare that oppressors do not have power over the lives of the people. Victims, like Job, shall rise from the ashes of history[410]. Accordingly, the call to empower to survive is a call to hope. When this call is given a body, it becomes a call to hope. In other words, the call to empower to survive and embody survival is apocalyptic in the biblical sense of the term. It is transformative both in the present and for the future.

4.7.3.2 Empowerment to live in solidarity and interdependence

One of the consequences of the obsession with the self-characteristic of the enlightenment and presuppositions in the concerns discussed above is the reassertion of the spirit of individualism in many spheres of life today. This happens at personal and public levels. Such public-level individualism is seen all too often in the parochialism which sets up barriers to keep differences at bay. On an international level, it gives rise to ethnocentrism and justifies colonization. A man looks out for himself alone; the family becomes nuclear; city-dwellers are ignorant of what it means to live in the countryside; a church cares only for its own members and emphasises the imaginary and unhelpful divide between the sacred and the secular; a nation provides only for its own interests; and so forth. These forms of individualism store and spread the seeds of violence and terrorism because they thrive on detrimental notions of the other.

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[409]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 35, 112.
[410]Maya, A. *And Still I Rise*. New York: Random House, 1978, p. 14.

Peace, therefore, is possible when people are in solidarity with one another and affirm their mutuality and interdependence. This is the ecumenical vision of power (as opposed to "power over") which the DOV advocates[411]. The vision calls for greater awareness of the relationality of life, the realization of justice and the redistribution of power in all structures of human relationships[412]. This means that the church needs to be more public and engaged with the world, ready to form partnerships with all those who yearn and work for justice for all[413].

The attempt to empower people to live in solidarity and interdependence is not limited to marginalised people. It needs to go as far as requiring the privileged to face the disturbing presence of the marginalised and enable them to be in solidarity with them. This is necessary because if solidarity and interdependence were directed only at the victims and the underprivileged, then it might imply the continued individualization and fragmentation of human communities.

4.7.3.3 Empowerment to exercise power responsibly

Given the leaning of humanity towards what Martin Luther saw as a fallen state from which we cannot escape during this life, it is necessary to name and empower those forms and expressions of responsible use of power. Every person has some form of power, but not every person uses that power responsibly. Irresponsible use of power has produced violence in families, communities, nations and the world. The preamble to the constitution of UNESCO states that, "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed"[414]. Since violence is produced in human minds, both intentionally and unintentionally, peace can also be nurtured and spread through human intentions and actions. It is our responsibility to one another to use our powers responsibly, and it is the responsibility of the church to empower us to exercise power responsibly.

Herein lies a critical response of the church. It must repent of its participation and complicity in irresponsible uses of power –from the concentration camps of Europe to the genocide church-

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[411]Maya, *And Still I Rise*, pp. 14-15.

[412]Aye, N. "Empowerment as Constructive Power for Gender Equality" *CTC Bulletin*, 20 (3), 2004, pp. 82-87. Temple, Arnold. "Empowering for fullness of life". *CTC Bulletin* 20 (3), 2004, pp. 127-130. Forrester, *Truthful Action*, p. 81.

[413]Raiser, *Theological and Ethical Consideration*, p. 2.

[414]Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Adopted in London on 16 November 1945, p. 7.

sites in Africa and the atomic weapons testing holes dug in the Pacific. This call for repentance and responsibility comes loudest from the so-called mission fields where the church arrived under the protection of colonialism. The Church and the state arrived as a couple, hand in hand, cutting and digging to establish themselves at the expense of local and native peoples and cultures. It is therefore necessary for the church to admit its moral responsibility for its past and present irresponsible uses of power.

Therefore, empowering people to exercise power responsibly must start at home, from within. This is the pastoral role of the church[415] which must develop its caring presence throughout a world where religious bodies share in the shame of fuelling violence[416].

4.8 The Faces of Violence

During the Decade to Overcome Violence, the Christian community has become aware of the reality of violence and compelled to admit its complicity in maintaining the culture of silence regarding the presence of violence, even in its own life. Genevieve Jacques claims that the voice of the victims of violence has begun to be heard, but all too often violence is still hidden and entrenched in structures of injustice, and those responsible escape accountability[417]. Furthermore, the commitment to follow the way of peace and non-violence requires the courage to reveal the dynamic of violence and its destructive result in human communities[418]. Therefore, it means making visible the misuse of power to the victims and the perpetrators to enable them acknowledge that their conditions are a consequence of violence.

However, the different faces and manifestations of violence and their complex interrelationships challenge any candid 'definition' or analysis. The task is further complicated by the fact that violence, power and force are very often used interchangeably. A purely descriptive or phenomenological account misses the hidden skin tone. The Decade programme has offered interpretations of the nature and root causes of violence as mentioned above.

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[415]Duncan, *Truthful Action*, pp.73-89.

[416]Ellens, J. H. *The Destructive Power of Religion: Violence in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.* Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004, pp. 60-69.

[417]Jacques, G. "Confronting the Challenge of Exclusion (Ecumenical Diakonia: New Challenges, New Responses)". *The Ecumenical Review*, 1994, Vol. 46 (3), pp. 328-334.

[418]Jacques, *Confronting the Challenge*, pp. 334-335.

The ecumenical movement has struggled with the reality of violence for many decades, focusing especially on the question of violence in the context of the struggles of justice and non-violence. In its response to the 1998 report on "Violence, non-violence and the struggle for social justice", the Central Committee of the WCC stated as follows:

> In recent years we have learnt that violence has many faces. It is not merely a matter of physical harm intentionally inflicted upon an individual in an obvious, dramatic way. The ecumenical encounter, especially since the World Conference on Church and Society (Geneva 1966), has sharpened our awareness of the violence which is built into many of the world's existing social, political and economic structures. There is no easy way of defining precisely this enlarged concept of violence and the terminological problem becomes infinitely more difficult when moving from one language, culture or distinctive political situation to another[419].

The WCC's Central Committee, therefore, called for continued work of conceptual and semantic clarification. However, even the subsequent efforts, especially in the context of the Decade, have not removed the ambiguities surrounding the concept of violence.

In this present context of biblical-theological reflections on the vision of non-violence and peace, it is appropriate to start from the understanding of violence in the biblical tradition. According to Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, violence as the opposite of peace is a manifestation of evil which not only threatens the life of another human person but destroys the life-sustaining relationships within the community. Violence is associated with human action and a result of sinful failure to be responsive to the demands of living in community with God[420]. The dynamic of violence has deeper roots in the perversities of the human heart; it begins with the emotions of anger, with deliberate insults or acts undermining the dignity of another person (Matt. 5:21ff). The laws given by God in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:1-17) were meant to protect not only individual persons but the community and included not only the prohibition to kill another person but to formulate basic life in community without the threat of violence[421]. Beyond the purpose of the need of protection, the commandments indirectly point to social and political conditions in the form of basic social institutions that are meant to prevent the advancement of violence into a community of peace.

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[419]World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. *Now Is The Time: Final Document and Other Texts of the World Convocation on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation.* Geneva: WCC, 1990, p. 17.
[420]Kittredge, C. B. (ed). *The Bible in the Public Squares: Reading the Signs of the Time.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008, p. 11.
[421]Kittredge, *The Bible in the Public Squares*, p. 12.

The fact is that violence manifests itself more indirectly and is often hidden in economic, social and political structures that limit or deny the basic guarantees for life, whether at the personal, societal or national level as seen in the Nigerian context.

The effects of structural violence have been aggravated by the impact of globalisation on the social fabric and the economic and political structures of many countries, in particular, developing countries[422]. The consequences of adjustment policies imposed by the international financial institutions and the pressures to enter into inequitable trade agreements have furthered the accumulation of debts and have destabilised governments which lose the capacity to provide for the 'human security' of their citizens. The victims of this form of indirect, structural violence include farmers who commit suicide because of unmanageable debts, indigenous people deprived of their ancestral land through policies of land-grabbing, economic and environmental migrants suffering discrimination and exclusion. The most vulnerable among all these groups are women and children[423].

Above all, in his work, *Development and Ecology,* Rongsen highlights that violence also expresses itself in the irresponsible disregard for and intrusion into the ecological balances in the natural world through reckless exploitation of common goods such as drinking water and fossil fuels, the felling of forests, the over fishing of the seas and oceans, and the extinction of species[424]. Some of these forms of violence have become, as it were, "habitual". This refers to abuses of human power which have become tacitly accepted such as a thoughtless consumerist lifestyle, taking the gifts of nature for granted or treating human beings as "resource material" and "objects" of desire. Habitual violence is also reflected in the attitude that accepts wars as "natural" or in the belief of many victims, especially women, that those abuses toward them are unavoidable[425]. This expression of violence has been hidden for too long and is only gradually being acknowledged as manifestation of the destructive consequences of human action, e.g. the dramatic implications of climate change.

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[422]Cormie, L. "Genesis of a new world: Globalisation from above vs. globalisation from below", in Gregory Baum (ed.). *The Twentieth Century: A Theological Overview*. Marknoll: Orbis Books, 1999, p. 119.
[423]Cormie, *Genesis of a New World*, p. 200.
[424]Rongsen, M. *Development and Ecology*. Delhi: ISPCK, 1999, p. 80.
[425]Rongsen, *Development and Ecology*, pp. 80-85.

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4.9 Church as Instrument of Peace Building and Non-violence

From the Scriptures and a long, rich history of the WCC, a general orientation toward non-violence and overcoming violence action becomes clear. The WCC believes that means must be consistent with ends[426]. Whether we perceive actions as means or ends, they must be compatible with Christ's teachings and God's will. Means that are at odds with their intended consequences have unintended results. The gospel warnings against employing evil for good purposes are realistic and wise (e.g. Matt. 5:38-48; Rom. 3:8; 12:14-18; 1 Thess. 5:15-22).

The many forms of violence such as injury—physical, psychological, spiritual, and individual or collective—when committed intentionally are un-Christ like[427]. Although we recognise the inevitability of our daily complicity in the estrangement that characterises the human condition, the WCC's Central Committee has called churches to persist with humility in striving to overcome or reduce all forms of violence. In other words, the churches must seek to love rather than to injure other people. Any action that intentionally injures or kills other persons is violence that denies the teachings of Christ and usurps the role of God as judge and arbiter (Luke 6:37; Rom. 2:1-5; Jas. 4:11-12). Such violence distorts beyond recognition the intent to love others as God loves us (Rom. 13:8-10). It is incompatible with the Christian gospel.

Our individual and collective histories testify to the travails of humankind that have come from attempting to use violence to correct injustice[428]. Churches acknowledge that we may not always discern non-violent actions that would adequately resolve every crisis. However, the WCC seeks their discovery and pursuit. Sometimes, there may be no way—violent or non-violent—to save a house or a person already on fire. Therefore, the WCC commits churches as disciples of Jesus Christ to work at prevention rather than to make futile gestures at uncontrollable infernos.

The Decade call to reject violence does not assume that contending parties in a conflict are equally right. The WCC called churches to reconciliation where possible, but they must recognise that one party in a conflict may struggle to end injustice and oppression while the other

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[426]WCC, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. *Human Right: A Global Ecumenical Agenda.* Geneva: World Council of Churches, June 1993, pp. 23-40.

[427]Brown, *Religion and Violence,* p. 7.

[428]Sebarenzi, J. and Mullane, L A. *God Sleeps in Rwanda: A Journey of Transformation.* Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd, 2009, p. 27.

struggles to maintain injustice and privilege. As Christians, we are called to "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 1:21), not to seek compromise between evil and good. We must refrain from participating in dehumanising processes of violence in all its forms. Our challenge as Christians is to recognise the connections that bind us all (see Acts 17:22-31) and the humanness of the "enemy"[429].

Our non-violent Christianity is not anarchist. On the contrary, we seek an orderly, legal, just, and peaceful global community. We light the path that leads away from military combat and the cycles of violence that follow in its wake. We approve of local, state, national, and international actions based on cooperation for the enhancement of life, as long as they are remedial and life preserving[430].

The churches are called by the WCC to relate to the state without approving injurious coercion as an acceptable means for either church or state. If it is necessary for the state to impose restraint, the church calls upon the state to use means that are non-violence. Christians do renounce the use of force in every situation; that is, the use of violent force—intentional injury or killing of people—in all situations. However, they recognise that not all physical force is violent and that the appropriate role of law enforcement is to prevent further injury without committing violence.

In rejecting violence, but acknowledging the necessity for non-violent initiatives and physical restraint in a fallen world, the churches must urge alternatives to military action, including mediation, negotiation, and non-violent tactics. Genuinely non-lethal instruments that restrain but neither kill nor permanently injure might also be used with compassion. Restraint must allow for redemptive possibilities. Killing, which is unalterable, irreversible, and absolute, must not be accepted. Christians recognise that disavowing of killing demands rethinking the role of government, but this requirement issues from the heart of the gospel itself.

Our Christian witness against the use of force by aggressors gains strength and credibility when Christians renounce the use of violence. Church vision may seem flawed to some critics, but they cannot see Jesus stealthily or openly, craftily and secretly leading a violent conflict team into

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[429]Grey, M. "The Integrity of Creation in the Context of the Spirit, Logic and Practice of Violence". Paper Presented at the Kigali Consultation, 12-17th July 2002, pp. 2, 13.
[430]Williams, R. *Open to Judgment: Sermons and Addresses*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1994, p.69.

position to kill what God has created, nor can they see Jesus firing a machine gun or targeting a missile to destroy those for whom he died. For example, Ghaddafi claimed to have brought the revolution to Libya to liberate the people, but he was busy destroying the same people he was liberating. Jesus is heartbroken in such contexts; he works urgently to insist on a ceasefire and to bind up people's wounds whether physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual. The churches humbly aspire to align their role to Jesus' as they respond to this great call to overcome all forms of violence. In the light of this attempt to stimulate reflection and action around the DOV, the ecumenical movement strived to identify and accomplish its goals as it responds to the great call to overcome violence.

4.10 Conclusion

The theme, *The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace 2001- 2010*, was built on long-standing WCC policies and programmes on peace and justice as well as the Christian response to violence. In some countries, these activities continued and made significant contributions to the DOV. In others places, foundational work and learning were not carried forward[431]. The Decade was also inspired solidarity with the victims of violence; it began with the broad aim to "move peace building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church, and to build stronger alliances among churches, networks and movements which are working toward a culture of peace"[432]. To reach this goal, churches were demanded to address holistically wide varieties of violence, both direct and structural – in homes, communities and international arenas – and to strive to overcome the spirit, logic, and practice of violence.

The challenge of growing militarisation and the proliferation of weapons was not overlooked by the Decade. Manchala points out that the DOV was intended as an opportunity for churches, ecumenical organisations, groups and movements around the world to make a positive, practical and unique contribution towards building a culture of peace[433]. The Decade followed several high-profile ecumenical projects that called for continued efforts and follow-ups of the conciliatory processes around justice, peace, a culture of non-violence, the use of power and the

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[431]Raiser, *Some Thoughts on the Programme to Overcome Violence*, p. 22.
[432]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 16-18.
[433]Manchala, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 17-18.

integrity of creation, a process that never actually ended but gradually assumed a lower profile during the Decade. Plou provides a summary of the DOV's achievements and the challenges ahead as follows[434]:

1. Non-violence and peace, the healing of memories and reconciliation at the very centre of the life of the churches must be vigorously pursued beyond the Decade and at all levels of church life. Appeals and statements made over the Decade need to be actually applied. For that to happen, there is a need for new partnerships that generate joint practical commitments.

2. The threat to the human family of direct and indirect violence against nature was not taken into consideration sufficiently by the DOV, especially at the beginning. The subject has been brought to the table in the latter part of the Decade, as its urgency increased drastically and calls for immediate action multiplied.

3. There is still much theological and educational work to do on the DOV objective to "relinquish any theological justification of violence". Such work is imperatively ecumenical and interdisciplinary. It requires deep reassessments of common assumptions on atonement and redemption.

4. Non-violence as a way of life and an approach to conflict must be pursued as a beautiful, spiritual and practical value. Non-violence is far more than notion of not using force. Non-violence needs to be rehabilitated in church and society as realistic, risky and faithful to the human calling, regardless of religion or creed. Conflict does not break communities and oppress people; violence does so, in many forms. The real alternative is non-violence, which means respect and love or lovingkindness. Is that not how God is revealed in Christ?

5. The senseless and scandalous increase in world military spending, warlords, terrorism and mass production of weapons go largely unchallenged among the churches. At the end of the Decade, world hunger could be eliminated with one week of the world's military spending. The DOV has not managed to mobilise churches in that regard.

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[434]Plou, *Peace in Troubled Cities,* p.11.

It is difficult to measure the Decade's achievements in programmatic terms. However, the endeavours of so many individuals and organisations over a period of ten years have contributed to an essential shift in ways that will last. The DOV increased the churches' awareness that peace is a gift of God and offered more differentiated analyses of peace than many churches had known previously (that peace is a much needed component of life in the world. Peace is not simply an absence of war and violence, but absence of fear, tension and mutual mistrust. Peace is everything that makes life livable. In fact, it can be described as life itself, which, according to the Bible, is the gift of God). The DOV was a beginning. However, it is popularly believed that, besides the visible and the striking, the phenomenon of violence has become increasingly complex, with challenges of a new kind. Since the ten years are over and violence is not overcome, a significant question which cannot be overemphasised is: What sustains this violence that the Decade aimed at overcoming? This question will be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GLOBAL DIMENSION OF VIOLENCE AND ITS EFFECTS ON NIGERIA

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have considered some existing scholarly documents on the ecumenical response to the DOV by evaluating the DOV's achievement within the period and the challenges on the road ahead. However, this chapter will focus on the persistence of violence, by looking at what keeps violence alive in Nigeria, that is, what perpetuates violence despite the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence. The issue of ongoing violence comes at a crucial and delicate moment since violence is prevalent in many parts of the world, especially in Nigeria as earlier mentioned in chapter two. Paradoxically but providentially, the WCC declared 2001-2010 as the DOV. The ten years of the DOV is over but one is left to wonder about the escalation of violence in the world and in Nigeria in particular. Thus, this chapter speaks to the present time by looking at the global dimension of violence and its effects on Nigeria, and by considering the root factors that sustain violence.

In order to realise the objectives of the Decade in Nigeria, it is necessary, in the first place, to identify clearly certain root factors that sustain violence in the region. There are many programmes similar to the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence and the United Nations' Decade of Culture of Peace and Non-violence[435], but unfortunately, the global prevalence of violence which has the ability to escalate to the extent that it becomes a threat to the future existence of humankind is a stark reality. War is no longer restricted to an engagement between armies. On the one hand, nation states have steadily developed weapons of mass destruction which have the capacity to eradicate whole societies and indeed destroy human civilisation[436].

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[435]Raiser, in *Some Thoughts on the Programme to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the Cities Campaign,* cites the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). Originally, the Culture of Peace Programme (CPP) was created in 1994 for the promotion of standards which would encourage and enhance peaceful co-existence. The successful programme blossomed into the year for the Culture of Peace (2000). With the popularity of the principles of the year, and the perseverance of peace and non-violence advocates, the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World was established by UN General Assembly resolution 53/25 Accessed from 7th May 2011(www.un.org/Depts/dh/resfiles/a53r025.pdf).

[436]Stott, *Issues Facing Christians*, pp. 98-99. According to Stott, "now we also have the power to destroy the total legacy of past civilizations, the present delicate ecological balance of the biosphere and, through radiation, and the

On the other hand, we are witnessing the increase in the number of terrorist groups[437], committing powerful acts of violence before the eyes of a watching world. The fact is that we are apprehensive because of the weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, biological or chemical, which fall into the hands of terrorists or "rogue states" that will use them to further their own cause with horrific results.

It is trite to note that in the course of recorded history, we have lived in a violent world and in violent countries. Thus, violence and its manifestations are an important topic of inquiry; violence still flourishes after the thousands of years of human history, and even since the time of the prophets of Israel and the life and ministry of Jesus. Military conflicts, atrocities, the excessive or corrupt exercise of power, the withholding of justice, and infringements upon personal dignity are some of the many forms of violence resulting from the ways peoples, nations and institutions have organised themselves and have operated. Therefore, this chapter directs our attention to some of the problems of the systemic or structural justification of violence[438], the violence often hidden in the usual and customary institutions and practices.

However, the question that arises is, if the world is filled with abuse, violence, and suffering, what then is sustaining it? If we believe that there exists organised structural violence that keeps violence alive, then we imply that the source of violence in our world is political, social, economic, ethnic and religious. The phenomenon of violence raises several questions such as,

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genetic potential of the future, the very survival of the human race and our planet is at stake. The Christian mind cannot operate in a vacuum. However strongly we hold fast to God's once-for-all revelation of himself in Christ and Scripture, we have to struggle to relate this to the harsh facts of the present situation. Thus revelation and reality belong together as we seek to discern God's will."

[437]Stott, *Issues Facing Christian*, p.111 - "There is no universally agreed, legally binding, criminal law definition of terrorism. Common definitions of terrorism refer only to those violent acts which are intended to create fear (terror), are perpetrated for a religious political or ideological goal, deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians), and are committed by non-government agencies; some definitions also include acts of unlawful violence and war". However, the definition of how the word "terrorism" should be understood in this study follows below in paragraph 5.2.6.

[438]Structural violence is a term first used in the 1960s commonly ascribed to Johan Galtung. It refers to a form of violence based on the systemic ways in which a given social structure or social institution harms people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. Institutionalised elitism, ethnocentrism, classism, racism, sexism, adultism, nationalism, heterosexism and ageism are some examples of structural violence. Structural violence and direct violence are highly interdependent. Structural violence inevitably produces conflict and often, direct violence, including family violence, racial violence, hate crimes, terrorism, genocide, and war. Galtung, J. *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making.* London: Allen & Unwin, 1981. In his book, *Violence: Reflections on a National Epidemic,* James Gilligan defines structural violence as "the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted with the relatively lower death rates experienced by those who are above them".

what is the nature of violence and what are its consequences? Does it affect human dignity? Below, we shall examine some root factors that keeps violence alive in the post-Cold War context.

5.2 A Reflection on Post-Cold War as Violence Sustainability

This section offers a reflection on the Post-Cold War contribution to the current predicament in Nigeria (Africa). It will identify the role of Post-Cold War foreign policies toward Nigeria as well as during and after the cold war as the main cause of the relative durability of dictatorship across the continent which contributed to keeping violence alive. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War has produced conflicting effects on the security of Nigeria and Africa as a whole, as shown below.

5.2.1 Violence in a Post-Cold War context

According to Aristotelian philosophy, "the history of man is the history of war"[439]. However, humans remain unsatisfied with their history. The human and material cost of war, the transient nature of victory over another in the eternal quest to conquer fellowmen and domesticate one's physical environment is so fraught with impermanence, humankind's "wants" remain insatiable and the means of satisfying them limited[440]. People compete for food, shelter, clothing etc., employing subtle or overt devices of negotiation, intrigues, blackmail or brute force to achieve their wants (the Hobbesian state)[441]. When common interests are identified, people organise themselves into families, groups or wage expedites, large-scale conflagrations, for economic and or territorial expansionist interests. On the other hand, war begins from the heart of man. A cursory study of anterior events to all wars ever fought, suggests individual personalities are prime motivators for many large-scale conflagrations ever recorded in the history of man's civilisation. War making originates from intrapersonal opposing forces for good and evil[442].

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[439]Aristotle, N. *Politics*. Suffolk: Penguin, 1998, pp. 248-310.

[440]Hobbes, T. *The Politics of Modernization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, p. 271. According to Hobbes, a philosopher and political theorist, and one of the first modern thinkers to provide secular justification for the political state and basis of social order, humankind is directed by reason. However, the ways and means of providing to satisfaction of the passions of humankind is limited. Were the passions of human beings allowed free reign, they would use any means at their disposal, including force and fraud to satisfy them. The net result would be "the war of all against all".

[441]Hobbes, *Philosopher and Political Theorist*, pp. 234-349.

[442]Angus, I. L. "Place and Locality in Heidegger's Late Thought". *Journal of the Canadian Society for Hermeneutics and Postmodern Thought,* 2001, Vol. 5 (1), pp. 6-23.

Whereas at a certain point in time, the world might have been expected to become a safer place, a decade later, expectations of peace often prove to be illusory, as new conflicts arise. According to Stott, during the fifty years between 1945 and 1999 there were more than eighty wars in the world[443]. Furthermore, while only twenty-eight of these were "traditional" wars between the regular armies of nation states, forty-six were civil or guerrilla wars[444]. According to Elaigwu, between 29th May 1999 and November 2004, Nigeria experienced many conflicts leading to the loss of many lives and property[445] (see Appendix C on p.288 below for a list of selected causes of violent conflict in Nigeria). At no time in Nigeria's history, except during the Nigeria-Biafra Civil War (1967-1970), did the country experience as much bloodshed and wanton destruction of lives and property[446]. Collier claims that economic agendas appear to be central to the understanding of why civil wars start. Conflicts are far more likely caused by economic opportunities than by grievance. If economic agendas drive violent conflicts, then it is likely that some groups are benefiting from conflict and, therefore, have some interest in initiating and sustaining it[447].

Besides, factors contributing to the outbreak of violence and its perpetuation can also be identified against the background of the now famous views of Huntington. In his book, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order,* he develops the thesis that, whereas during the Cold War, global politics was "bipolar" (between the two superpowers), the post-Cold War period suggests that economic agendas are central to the understanding of why civil wars break out. Huntington sheds considerable light on factors that predispose countries to internal conflicts[448]. In line with Reno's argument with reference to the ongoing conflict in Nigeria, Huntington shows that on a global scale, warfare is better understood as an instrument of enterprise, and violence as a mode of accumulation. In such circumstances, the continuation of violence represents not so much the collapse of one system as the emergence of a new one; one that benefits certain groups – government officials, traders, combatants, and international actors

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[443]Stott, *Issues Facing Christian*, pp. 99-105.

[444]Stott, *Issues Facing Christian*, p. 100.

[445]Elaigwu, J. I. "The root causes of conflicts in contemporary Nigeria". A Paper Presented at the "National Conference on Peaceful Co-existence: Pluralism and Nation-Building" Organised by the Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, 15th December 2004, pp. 1-45.

[446]Elaigwu, *The Root Causes of Conflicts* pp. 1-45.

[447]Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. "On economic causes of civil war". *Oxford Economic Paper*, 1998, 50, p.45.

[448]Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, pp. 211-213.

who stand to gain from dealing with local actors, while further impoverishing other sections of the community[449]. For this reason, Huntington avers that, after the Cold War conflicts have become "multipolar and multi-civilisation"[450]. In particular, in "coping with identity crisis, what counts for people are blood and belief, faith and family. People rally to those with similar ancestry, religion, language, values and institutions and distance themselves from those with different ones"[451].

Thus, today the important distinctions between people are not so much ideological and political as cultural. Huntington points out that a global war, involving the core states of the world's major civilisations is highly improbable but not impossible. Besides, a "clash of civilisations is the greatest threat to world peace, and an international order based on civilisations is the surest safeguard against world war"[452]. However, one must be careful not to succumb to fatalism, as if such a clash were inevitable even if, since World War II, it is estimated that there have been more than 150 wars. Of these, relatively few have been large-scale conflicts between countries; most - about 80 percent - were civil wars in developing countries. Policy makers and scholars have studied these conflicts closely to try to understand why violence occurs and how future conflicts may be prevented, agreeing that the roots of conflicts are complex and that many political, economic, and historical factors together cause states to fail[453].

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[449]Reno, W. *War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime (1618-1789)*. London: Fontana Press, 2002, p. 48.

[450]Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, pp. 211-213.

[451]Schumacher, E. F. *Small Is Beautiful*. London: Abacus, 1994, p. 11-16. The vision of unlimited growth has been rightly criticised by Lesslie Newbigin in *Foolishness to the Greeks* (London: SPCK, 1996). "Growth… for the sake of growth", he writes, which "is not determined by an overarching social purpose", is "an exact account of the phenomenon which, when it occurs in the human body, is called cancer" (p. 114), Accessed on 11th April 2011 from www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/civilwar.

[452]Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, pp. 211-213.

[453]Hawkins, V. *Stealth Conflicts: How the World's Worst Violence Is Ignored*. Osaka*:* Osaka University, Japan, 2008, pp. 7-10, 23. In the section on "conflict trends", Hawkins examines some key trends in recent conflicts throughout the world, concentrating on both their scale and nature. In terms of scale, he looks at where large-scale conflict has been concentrated (geographically). In terms of nature, he looks at how conflict has changed since the end of the Cold War, while also addressing some popular misconceptions. It does not attempt to present an analysis of chronological trends in number of conflicts in the world or in the scale of conflict. Data (encompassing all conflict-related deaths) simply do not exist that can allow, to a reliable degree, annual analyses of how the level of conflict in the world, and that in each particular region, has changed. Studies presenting annual trends in scale can be highly misleading, and such an approach is not necessary for the purpose of this study. The purpose here is simply to identify and compare the overall aggregate scale of recent (Post-Cold War) era .It is important to look at some trends in how conflicts are being waged, because to a certain degree their nature affects external consciousness of conflict.

In the light of the changed world situation characterised by violence since the end of the Cold War, it is not surprising that Western defence specialists have completely revised their strategy. They are no longer preparing for a single large-scale war with the Soviet Union, but rather for multiple regional conflicts. Nevertheless, while weapons of mass destruction exist, so does the possibility of their use either in local conflicts or in acts of terrorism.

It is against this background that a number of conflicts are sustained in different parts of Nigeria for a variety of reasons. One of the more prominent ones is in the Niger Delta region. At issue here is a perceived lack of access to the benefits from oil production by the impoverished local community (as well as the limited access to land and environmental degradation caused by the extraction of oil). Attacks are increasingly targeted against the government (government institutions and agents) and the oil installations themselves. Another type of conflict is linked to ethnic and religious intercommoned identities. This kind of violence has been prevalent in various parts of Nigeria, most notably in the north. Attempts (as earlier mentioned in chapter two) to address the root causes that retain and stem the violence in both types of conflict have so far met with limited success. The Niger Delta conflict and the bomb blasts appear to be escalating and the combined death toll from these conflicts may be up to 50,000 or more[454].

5.2.3 Warlordism[455]

In terms of the perpetuation of violence, variations in global political and economic structures that accompanied the end of the Cold War have led to changes in how conflict is perpetuated in many parts of the world. While the formal state deteriorated in many cases, 'shadow states' appeared and took up a more prominent task in the political economy[456]. In such shadow states,

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[454]"Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Global Restrictions on Religion". Accessed online on 14th December 2009 from http//pewforum.org/docs/DocID=491.

[455]"A warlord is a person with power who has both military and civil control over a sub-national area due to armed forces loyal to the warlord and not to a central authority. The term can also mean one who espouses the ideal that war is necessary, and has the means and authority to engage in war… or a supreme military leader exercising civil power in a region especially one accountable to nobody when the central government is weak". Merriam-Webster: The free dictionary. Accessed 20th April 2011 from www.thefreedictionary.ccom/warlordism.

[456]Reno, W. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder: Lynn Rienner, 1999, p. 2. 'Political economy', in its initial usage, was the term applied to what we now call economics. Economics itself is the study of how individuals and societies choose to allocate scarce resources for the production and distribution of goods and services. Today the term 'political economy' is used in reference to any inquiry within the context of economics that is often interdisciplinary and generally interwoven with normative considerations. What then does violence have to do with economics or political economy? From a purely economic perspective the impact of expenditures designed to produce violence, including peacetime military expenditures, is a question of efficient resource allocations.

the key players are officially identified governments (whose behaviour in many ways may resemble that of warlords), local guerrilla groups and foreign firms (particularly in the fields of resource extraction and security). Other key players are international financial institutions, whose strategies are aimed at safeguarding the settlement of foreign debt and who ironically encourage shrinking state control[457]. This state of affairs could also have been instituted, to a certain extent, during the Cold War. The useful territorial and boundary manipulation in most states has always been absent in many weak states[458], but the end of the Cold War significantly accelerated the rise of such guerrilla politics. In many ways, such warlordism has become one of the significant characteristics of the majority of Post-Cold War conflicts, and has subjugated conflicts that we perceive in the Nigerian context and in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan, Colombia and Myanmar[459].

Warlords' violence[460] thrives because they are able to control, extract and market high-value resources, and the conflicts they produce also come to depend upon the exploitation of these resources. Numerous conflicts for example, the Biafra War (Nigerian civil war) whose continuation had been made possible by the financial and military support of the exploitation of specific resources came to end when this support ceased[461]. Most of its sustainability is often linked to the exploitation of resources in some forms. Even humanitarian aid has served as a source of funding and sustenance for armed movements and violence, most notably in eastern Zaire, Sudan, Somalia and Nigeria. The current conflict in the Niger Delta of Nigeria area arose in the early 1990s over tensions between the foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited. On the other hand, the control of oil production in Nigeria allowed the governments in this country to stave off rebellions.

Xu, Fiedler and Flaming rightly comment that the degree to which the presence of scarce and valuable resources serves as one of the prime causes of the outbreak of and continuance of

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Likewise, the costs of violence, in terms of destruction of resources or infrastructure as well as the loss of human life, are matters that fall under the domain of economic analysis.

[457]Dunn, K. C. *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory*, Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 50-62.

[458]Herbst, J. "African peacekeepers and states failure", in Robert Rotberg (ed.). *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 2000, pp. 17-22.

[459]Hawkins, *Stealth Conflicts*, pp. 17-33.

[460]Warlords' violence refers to "A military commander exercising civil power in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in fefiance of it…"

[461]Hawkins, *Stealth Conflict*, pp. 17-33.

conflict is open to debate. For example, Botswana is also rich in diamonds but it has enjoyed peace since independence[462]. However, it is clear that in some cases, conflict could not have been sustained to the degree that has been witnessed in many conflict areas without these resources. Young observes that with the ability to control resource exploitation achieved through violence and intimidation, guerrilla leaders (traditional insurgents) generally neither seek nor receive popular support, and a responsibility towards the civilian population usually accompanying such control of resource exploitation is seen as a "needless burden"[463]. The reason is because such popular support may not be needed or because the control of resource exploitation is unfair/to the benefit of the warlord and the warlord's following. Such control of resource exploitation, even within government's armed forces, may cause unpaid or underpaid soldiers in conflict zones to 'live off the land' typically, which effectively means looting and stealing from the civilian population.

In addition, a general culture of impunity allows rape and other human rights abuses to become rife. Civilians may also be coerced by warlords into providing labours for the extraction of resources. Others may kill because of suspected support or sympathy for a rival group. Unable to attract fighters from the adult population, who are unsympathetic to the objectives of the warlords, a preference for child soldiers may also emerge, since they are perceived to be easier to recruit and train to kill (often by way of terrorizing or brutalizing them or by supplying them with drugs that they become addicted to)[464]. They are also more energetic and brutal. On 29th August 2004 at Port-Harcourt in the Rivers State of Nigeria, a clash erupted between youth groups believed to be drug and cult groups operating along canals and waterways. No fewer than 500 lives were lost[465]. This kind of brutal environment is ideal for guerrilla violence to thrive, as a culture of fear cements the control of the warlords over resource-rich areas. Civilians not willing to cooperate or serve the needs of the warlords are killed or forced to flee the region[466]. Thus,

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[462]Xu, Y., Fiedler, M. L. and Flaming, K. H. "Discovering the Impact of Community Policing: The Broken Window a Thesis, Collective Efficacy, and Citizens' Judgment". *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency,* 2005, 42 (2): pp.147-186.

[463]Young, C. "Contextualising Congo conflicts: Order and disorder in postcolonial Africa", in John M. Clark (ed.). 2002, pp. 25-27.

[464]Honwana, A. "Children of War: Understanding War and War Cleansing in Mozambique and Angola", in Simon Chesterman (ed.). 2001, pp. 123-142.

[465]*Vanguard Newspaper*, 31st August 2004, pp. 1-2. See also. *Daily Sun*, 22nd September 2004, p. 2.

[466]Clark, J. F. *The African Stakes of the Congo War.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 72-78.

violence (including sexual violence), terror and the displacement of the civilian population are a by-product of conflict, and more a part of the very purpose of the conflict.

5.2.4 Access to weapons

Another factor that keeps violence alive is the increased access to weaponry, particularly small arms. During the Cold War, superpowers provided their patron states and insurgent groups with enormous quantities of heavy weaponry (including tanks, artillery and jets)[467]. However, since the Cold War ended, the focus of superpower patrons shifted from supplying high-tech military support (particularly to their clients in Africa) to discharging the huge numbers of small arms they had accumulated but no longer needed[468]. Thus, conflict zones were flooded with low-cost small arms that made it easy for armed groups to organise and perpetuate violence, violently challenge authorities and cast a shadow of violence over societies in some countries. Stanley Cavell states that the fact that such arms could often be traded directly for diamonds (so-called blood or conflict diamonds), timber, oil or other extractable resources is further evidence of the link between resources and armed conflict that perpetuates violence in many societies[469]. In Epebu, Bayelsa State in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, for example, a bloody clash occurred on 23rd March 2004 between oil communities in a coastal town over disagreements on the sharing of royalties from an oil company. At least fourteen lives were lost[470].

5.2.5 Identity

Identity based on ethnicity, religion, tribe, clan or other identity markers also plays a role in many conflicts but this role is frequently exaggerated and misinterpreted. Many conflicts are seen, for example, as the result of "ancient tribal hatred", "spontaneous ethnically-driven savagery" or "genocidal chaos" that cannot be understood by outsiders. For example, the recent genocide in Jos in Plateau State of Nigeria was commonly described in stereotypical terms as in the internet, yet there was very little that was "chaotic" about it. The very fact that as many as 1000 people were killed within a mere two days was the result of meticulous planning,

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[467]Accessed on 27th July 2011 from www.amnesty.org/en/jobs.
[468]Harbom, L. and Wallensteen, P. "Arms Conflict 1989-2006", *Journal of Peace Research,* 2007, 44(5), pp. 623-634.
[469]Cavell, S. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary.* London/Berkeley, Los Angeles: Veena Das/ University of California Press, 2007, pp. 79-93.
[470]Okoroafor, J. *Vanguard*, 31 March 2004, pp. 1- 2.

coordination and mastery of propaganda. Furthermore, the genocide was less the result of spontaneous tribal and religious hatred and more the manipulation of ethnic factors by politicians over access to power and resources[471].

According to Allen and Seaton, it is important to note that ethnicity, having no biological basis, is a socially constructed phenomenon[472]. The same can be said of the notion of "tribes", a term with racist overtones suggesting "primitive" or "uncivilised" societies. The various faces and ways in which ethnic inequality operates will be explored more extensively in the development of this chapter (see paragraph 5.4. below). In the case of Africa, this happened to a large extent during the colonial era, as colonial powers sought to categorise their subjects into groups (based on perceived similarities that, in many cases, had been until then largely irrelevant) for the sake of more efficient administrative rule. The eruption of so-called ethnic conflicts is typically reliant on a combination of the work of "ethnic activists" and political entrepreneurs (who manipulate ethnic identity and social divisions for their own political power)[473]. The exploitation of ethnic identities and conflicts to consolidate power and influence is a tactic that has been used throughout history by elites including colonial powers, superpowers and local leaders[474]. For instance, exploitation through colonialism involved few colonists, typically interested in extracting resources to export to the metropole. This category includes trading posts, but it applies more to larger colonies where the colonists would provide much of the administration and own much of the land and other capital, but rely on indigenous people for labour[475]. Of course, by the time conflict erupts, the notion of identity has become very real for the perpetrators and victims of what becomes a cycle of violence that serves to reinforce these so-called identities. On the whole however, most cases that inflame ethnic passions are not the

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[471]"Nigeria: Another Rwanda. Mass burial Jos Killing" March 2010, www.nigerianfolks.com/...Jos.../mass_burial_Jos_killings. "In September 2001, violence led to the death of 1000 people after what seemed to be a relatively minor incident, Accessed from 11th March 2010 www.elombah.com/index.php?opyion...jos-killing.

[472]Allen, T. and Seaton, J. (eds). *The Media of Conflict*: *War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*. London: Zed Books, p. 3. Allen, T. 1999. "Perceiving contemporary Wars", in Tim Allen and Joe Seaton (eds). *The Media of Conflict*: *War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence*. London: Zed Books.

[473]Wolff, S. *Ethnic Conflict Oxford*: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 82-84.

[474]Hobsbawm, E. *On History*. New York: The New Press, 1997, pp. 124-128.

[475]Bornstein, R. "The Complex Relationship between Dependency and Domestic Violence", *American Psychologist*, 2006, Vol. 61. pp. 595-606.

cause of political conflict, but its consequence[476]. Emphasis on the role of ethnic or other forms of identity in observing conflict results in the marginalization of the political and economic factors which are usually much more significant[477]:

> To suggest that people kill each other in Bosnia because Muslims are Muslim, Serbs are Serbs and Croats are Croats is no more insightful than to suggest that the Iran-Iraq war was fought because the Iranians were Iranians and Iraqis were Iraqis. The challenge is to explain why various forms of ethnicity become so significant at certain times and in certain places[478].

In short, the factors behind so-called "ethnic conflicts" can be seen in the light of the struggle for power and resources in an environment in which the power of the state is in decline resulting in an apparent blurring between state and guerrilla groupings, end and means, conflict and peace, and conflict and crime. According to Bill Berkeley[479], ethnic conflict in Africa is a form of organised crime. The culture driving Africa's conflict is akin to that of the Sicilian Mafia or of the Crips and Bloods in Los Angeles. Africa's warring factions are best understood not as tribes but as racketeering enterprises.

5.2.6 Terrorism

The issue of terrorism, together with the so-called war on terror, constitutes another element in the instigation and sustainability of violence. Notwithstanding the fact that terrorism has become a prominent concern and an object of political fascination in the West, it should be put into perspective when examining conflict. Talbot and Chanda rightly observe that, "there appear to be widely held assumptions that the incidence of terrorism has risen considerably; many even go as far as to make the alarming claim that the world has entered an age of terror"[480]. John Stott, therefore, argues that, "over the last ten years the growth of terrorism has reached epic proportions. Many countries, including USA, Kenya, Nigeria, Spain, Peru, Indonesia, Israel, Palestine, Northern Ireland and Britain have seen horrific violence perpetrated by terrorists from one background or another"[481]. Human Security Brief 2006 suggests, however, that although the

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[476]Berkeley, B. *The Graves Are not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa*. New York: Basic Books, 2001, p.15.

[477]Berkeley, *The Graves Are not Yet Full*, p. 17.

[478]Allen and Seaton, *The Media of Conflict*, p. 29.

[479]Berkeley, *The Graves Are not Yet Full*, p.15.

[480]Talbot, S. and Chanda, N. (eds.). *The Age of Terror*: *America and the World after September 11.* New York: Basic Books, 2000, p. 28. See also Gray, C. *War, Peace, and International Relations*: *An Introduction to Strategic History*. London: Routledge, 2007.

[481]Stott, *Issues Facing Christians,* p. 122.

number of episodes of international terrorism has risen since the late 1999s, it is still lower than the number of such episodes in the 1980s[482]. Furthermore, the study shows that this perceived intensification in international terrorism is motivated almost completely by incidents in the Middle East, South Vietnam and Africa, the bulk of them occurring in Iraq. International terrorist incidents in the rest of the world have decreased significantly since the end of the Cold War.

However, according to Snow, the service provided to the public of segregating international from domestic terrorism is questionable. How does one, for example, ascertain whether a particular suicide bombing in Iraq is international in origin and is this worse (or more important) than a case of a suicide bombing that is an act of domestic terrorism[483]? It may be useful to clarify what is meant by terrorism. From the perspective of those who claim to be waging war against terror, terrorism seems to refer to the apparently random use of violence (particularly the use of explosives) by those perceived as Islamic extremists, directed primarily against Western civilian targets or interests[484]. If this is the case, on a global scale, the level of violence and death tolls due to terrorist activities are quite low when compared to that of most major conflicts in the world, although reference (in doomsday scenarios) is frequently made to the potential level of damage that such attacks might cause.

Under such a definition, (random use of violence, particularly of explosives by those perceived as Islamic extremists), terrorism would most certainly apply to militia and soldiers entering villages and towns to kill, mutilate and/or rape civilians in a bid to terrorise them into complying with their demands or leave the area. This kind of situation would apply, probably without exception, to all warlord-dominated conflict zones throughout the world. It would also apply to the use of bombing campaigns that include civilian targets such as in cases of besieging a city[485]. In short, it would apply to acts by participants of virtually every conflict in the world. With this interpretation of terrorism, there really is no logical difference in the application of such a terminology to a series of bomb attacks on civilian villages in Nigeria; both are clearly violent

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[482]Stott, *Issues Facing Christian*, pp. 122-123.

[483]Snow, D. M. *Distant Thunder: Patterns of Conflict in the Developing World.* Second Edition. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2004, pp. 73-79.

[484]Stott, *Issues Facing Christian*, pp. 122-123. However, in the Nigerian context, the recent wave of terror is caused by the Boko Haram*,* meaning*,* "Western education and culture are evil…" see more on Boko Haram on page 12 above.

[485]Ginty, R. M. and Richmond, O. (eds.). *The Liliberal Peace and Post-war Reconstruction: Myth or Reality?* London: Routledge, 2009, p.81.

methods that use terror to achieve certain political objectives. As such, the idea of focusing intently on the issue of terrorism as a method, and isolating it from the broader implications of conflicts (of which terrorism is usually a part), appears questionable. In any case, both terrorism and the so-called war on terror require careful scrutiny and certainly need to be kept in perspective as a highly probable root cause of the perpetuation of the violence we witness today in the world and particularly in Nigeria.

Terrorism has several roots that lead to violence. Ted Honderich identifies three in particular[486]. Firstly, the West sees modernization and the spread of democracy as not only inevitable but desirable. However, others may see the spread of Western secular materialism as a threat to their own cultural identity, particularly in northern Nigeria where it is called Boko Haram[487]. Smaller groups may feel swamped by the impact of globalisation on their local culture and in the extreme, resort to violent means in order to preserve their own culture. Secondly, economic explanations have been offered as a root cause of violence. As globalisation increases expectations of higher standards of living, those who see a widening gap between such possibilities and their own poverty may react with violence against "the system" because they can see that those expectations will not be realised in their own lives.

In this case, then, it could be said that terrorist violence is an attack on the inequalities of the global system. Those who take this view would point out that the two terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in 1993 and 2001 could be interpreted as attacks on a capitalist icon. Ironically, the power and efficiency of global financial systems are frequently used by terrorist groups in planning and funding their campaigns. Thirdly, what is sometimes called the "new terrorism" is religious in origin. This has also been called "post-modern terrorism". It is difficult to use force to defeat this kind of terrorism, for how can one come with force against a person who regards dying for a cause as leading to the rewards of martyrdom which exist beyond death? It would seem that the language of religion and acts associated with religion are part of the mix of terrorism being used to achieve other political objectives[488].

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[486]Honderich, T. *Terrorism for Humanity: Inquiries in Political Philosophy.* London: Pluto, 2003, pp. 543-549.
[487]Kukah, M. *Religion, Politics and Power*, p. 5. Enwerem, I. M. *A Dangerous Awakening: The Politicization of Religion in Nigeria.* Ibadan: IFRA, 1995.
[488]Kepel, G. 2002. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 81-88. On the definition and overview of religious violence, Kepel claims that, "the topics of religion, violence, and non-

Violent religious groups grew in the last decades of the twentieth century. According to Juergensmeyer, the US State Department's list of international terrorist groups contained scarcely a single religious organisation in 1980[489]. However, when the US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright listed thirty of the world's most dangerous groups in 1998, more than half were religious[490]. Other analysts have added to those figures, causing former US Secretary of State Warren Christopher to comment that terrorist acts in the name of religion and ethnic identity have become "one of the biggest security challenges we face in the wake of the Cold War"[491]. This clearly shows a growing perception that globally religious sentiments are becoming one of the major causes of the instigation and perpetuation of violence.

5.2.7 Religion

Despite the recognition of religion as a cause of violence, it is vital that religions should not be demonised because of the violent acts of terrorists who claim to be inspired by their religions or to have a mandate for violence derived from their religion. According to Stott, Islamophobia is not an option for Christians, as it sets up stereotypes of Islam which are distorted and which can only serve to damage good relations between Christians and Muslims[492]. However, as Ramachandra points out in his book, *Faiths in Conflict Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World,* the challenge not to demonise is mutual. Religions and cultures may demonise one

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violence are complex and many-sided, in part, because religion never exists as an autonomous entity apart from politics, economics, sexuality, and the other fundamental springs of human action. Violence is easy enough to recognize when and where it occurs, and yet the same is not always true of religion. For this reason, informed observers may disagree on the appropriate application of the phrase 'religious violence'. An act of interpretation is involved: how is one to determine which acts of violence are 'religious' and which are not? If a political leader such as Adolf Hitler or Pol Pot invokes the name of God as a sanction for killing, then does this imply that the violence in question is religious in character? What if the violence is supported by religious leaders as well as political leaders? What if it is opposed by religious leaders and/or laypersons? What if there is disagreement on violence between different religious groups in a given society? The subtlety of the notion of 'religious violence' becomes readily apparent".

[489]Juergensmeyer, M. *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religion Violence.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, p. 5.

[490]Albright, M. 2005. "Terrorism and globalisation", in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.). *The Globalisation of World Politics. Oxford*: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 479-497.

[491]Christopher, W. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation.* Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000, p. 123.

[492]Stott, *Issues Facing Christians*, pp. 97-135.

another and become defensive and fearful of the impact the other has on them[493]. Many cultures in the Middle East are highly critical of Western values, including what they see as the imposition of Western values cloaked in the language of human rights. Thus, Muslims have been enjoined to avoid a militant "Westo-phobia" or what has been called "Christo-phobia", which is a distorted stereotyping of Christians and the Christian faith:

> "Islamophobia", "Westo-phobia", "Christo-phobia" – these are ugly words but they draw our attention, however unsatisfactorily, to ugly realities. All phobias are the result of ignorance and the inability to look critically at oneself and one's own community. Good relations can be established between Christians and Muslims in the West only if Christians are forthright in exposing and condemning all expressions of anti-Muslim bigotry in the West, and if Muslim leaders condemn, with equal fervour, similar bigotry and discrimination by their own ranks both in the West and in what they regard as the *dar-ul-Islam*[494].

It should be kept in mind that religiously inspired violence has appeared in all the world's religions, including the violence exhibited between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. Whether it is Hindu extremists or Jewish fundamentalists, violence is not confined to one religion.

The growth of religiously inspired violence is also one of the signs that religion is increasing its influence in the present era. Nothing could be further from the truth than the perception that religion no longer constitutes an important player on the world's political scene. Religious identity is increasingly becoming the fault-line between people in conflict. In Nigeria, religion is as important as ethnicity or any political allegiance in determining the nature of conflict.

One of the things that enable terrorism to take root in the imagination is the belief that the world is already violent and one is, in a sense, in a state of war[495]. This is necessary if someone is to see his or her own perpetration of an act of violence as justified. The existence of a violent world gives the terrorist a moral justification for engaging in violence[496]. Moreover, if the state is seen as weak or compromised and unable to right wrongs, then violence may fill the void. It is sometimes the case that when Christians mistakenly cite their religion as a reason for terrorist acts, they see the end results of their actions as more just or righteous than if the *status quo* were allowed to continue. This was the case in the bombing of abortion clinics in the US on 5th June

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[493]Ramachandra, V. *Faiths in Conflict, Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World.* Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1999, p. 44. Dar-ul-Islam literally means "household of Islam", and there is a myth associated with it, that is, within the household of Islam, there is both unity and equality of all Muslims.
[494]Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict*, pp. 44-49.
[495]Stott, *Issues Facing Christians*, pp. 123-127.
[496]Hawkins, *Stealth Conflict,* p.11.

2009. The perpetrators declared that they wanted to bring about a Christian society by ridding the world of its evils[497]. Instead, they not only perpetrated acts of violence but also brought shame and dishonour on the very faith that they purported to espouse.

Many of these acts do not seem to be carried out to achieve specific goals, but to make a symbolic statement. In the words of Juergensmeyer, "by calling acts of religious terrorism 'symbolic', I mean that they are intended to illustrate or refer to something beyond their immediate target: a grander conquest, for instance, or a struggle more awesome than meets the eye"[498].

It is important to be cautious about the use of religiously inspired violence, because it may be the case that it is being used by those in authority to serve their own political ends, whereas those who are committed enough to be "martyrs" see it as an end in itself. Such a political goal might be the desire of some to bring about an Islamist state; yet it is also the case that religious violence probably carries an important symbolism which should be taken into account.

There is an even deeper and grander context in which religiously inspired violence could be situated. In many cases, religious violence is perpetrated in a perceived context of a divine struggle, a "cosmic" war, raging invisibly around one. This means that religious violence could be perceived as being part of a much deeper spiritual confrontation. Bostrom argues, therefore, that one of the potent symbols of this perception is the belief by Islamic suicide bombers that killing the enemies of Islam will guarantee them a place in paradise, and a greater reward because of their acts[499]. As already stated, it is difficult enough to defeat suicide bombers because of the strategies they employ, but it is much harder to engage with the imagination of a suicide bomber who believes that by committing such an atrocity he or she would be received into paradise. In the minds of these bombers, their belief seems to justify any action they plan to take, whether it be in a packed restaurant or on a crowded bus, where even children may be present. Such a distorted view of the nature of religion hinders opportunities for peace making in the Nigerian context. For example, on 28th February 2000, Kaduna city exploded in violence as

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[497]"Anti-Abortion Violence Movement" Office of International Criminal Justice of the University of Illinois in Chicago. Accessed on 5th June 2009 from http://www.acsp.uic.edu/.
[498]Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp. 5-6.
[499]Bostrom A. G. *The Legacy of Jihad: Islamic Holy War and Fate of Non-Muslims*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005, pp. 18-19.

Muslim and Christian extremists and other hoodlums clashed over the proposal to introduce Shari'a law in the state[500]. The uproar claimed several lives and damaged properties and places of worship.

5.2.8 The memory of violence

Another factor that retains violence which cannot be over-emphasised is memories of the pain and suffering caused by violence. Memories haunt and disturb people, but they also have a restoring function. Therefore, how one remembers one's past is vital to how one deal with one's present, particularly after experiences of violence, conflicts and gross human rights violations. These painful memories need to be dealt with before a more peaceful and reconciled community can be built. According to Stier and Landres, two kinds of memories are fraught with conflict and "contest-first" – memories of violent confrontations and commemorative acts through which minority groups struggle to reclaim their past, by which advocates for the overlooked and unsung dead establish their lineages[501]. Even when the work of memorialisation echoes the dominant political narrative, conflict persists in the struggles over appropriate memorial forms.

Similarly, Chesterman notes that pain and memories of violence and suffering destroy one physically, emotionally and spiritually. Across the world, many people live in contexts where they experience episodes of ethnic and religious cleansing, for example. Given the rather dreadful and horrific situations that many people have experienced[502], however, some questions need our attention. How does one relate to those who have been the perpetrators of pain, suffering, grief and loss? How does one look at a group of people who has wiped out whole families and neighbourhoods for no reason other than that they were of a different faith, colour or ethnic origin? Can one forgive a group or community that has hurt one so badly and taken away all of one's possessions and treasures such as houses, children, parents and livestock, and not wish the same on the group? Can one ever live at peace again with those who have instilled in one chilling fear? Can one face those who have threatened one's existence and the very core of one's faiths, stand side by side with them or share bread with them again in friendship and peace? These are some of the questions which are very difficult to respond to at present, however

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[500]Oyerinde A. *Newswatch*, 6th March 2000, p. 8.
[501]Stier, O. B. and Landres, J. S. *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place.* Indiana: University Press, 2006, pp. 1-7.
[502]Chesterman, C. (ed.). *Civilians in War Boulder.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp. 38-39.

(as will be shown later in Chapter six), peace builders and those who work for reconciliation claim that it is hard work, but it is possible to move on[503].

There is another kind of memory, destructive memory, which fuels conflict from one generation to another. It is created and perpetuated where elders teach the young to hate, by telling the stories they remember in a way that connects venom to the memory. For example, the Nigerian Civil War (6th July 1967 – 15th January 1970) was a political conflict, the result of economic, ethnic, cultural and religious tensions among the various peoples of Nigeria. The memories of that war still cause bad feelings and mistrust among Nigerians. Such memories need healing.

History, grievance and conflict are other issues which keep violence alive in contemporary Nigeria. According to Sen[504], history and grievance are often intertwined, and remembered injustices play an important role in justifying and sustaining many conflicts. Feelings of grievance around a sense of historical injustice need to be understood, not in the sense of what actually happened, but in terms of what they mean today. No matter how long ago events occurred, it is their interpretation in the light of current circumstances that gives them relevance, and this forms a backdrop against which more immediate grievances become significant. For example, certain remembered processes, most obvious being colonialism, slavery and the Holocaust, and in the Nigerian context, the Nigerian Civil War, leave a backlog of potentially flammable grievances in history. These various examples of historic, retained grievances shape the way potential conflicts can be kept alive. The recent situation in Nigeria marked by massive deprivation, hardship and bomb blasts in the northern states have led to deep-seated feelings of anger and disrespect that could continue to live on in the minds of later generations.

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[503]Dallaire, R. *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda.* London: Arrow Books, 2003, p. 49. Dallaire investigates the healing of memories caused by the pain and suffering borne by violence. Five case studies from Guatemala, South Africa, Cambodia, Germany and Northern Ireland were presented by compatriots with a deep understanding and a first-hand experience of the conflicts in those areas, and the reconciliation and healing processes that have been taking place there. The terrible experience of gross human rights violations and conflicts in these areas has pointed to a great need to heal memories that were fractured and tortured once these conflicts were over. Some memories stemmed from experiences of evil done, others from evil which people had been forced to suffer. All have been hurt or have hurt others in the process of relationships.
[504]Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, pp. 77-82.

5.2.9. Competition for scarce resources

According to Collier and Hoeffler, since the mid-1990s, there has been a growing body of research on what instigate violence and civil wars globally, and what sustain them. One of the most important findings is that natural resources not only play a key role in financing these conflicts but that the competition for these resources often triggers and prolongs them. Natural resources that most often serve as the sustainers of the problems are oil and hard rock minerals[505]. In most conflicts, multiple resources play a role. Resource-related conflicts do pose special problems for the states of Africa. In the 1990s, two thirds of Africa's intrastate violent conflicts were civil wars. Michael Ross notes that Africa had seven civil wars in the 1970s, eight in the 1980s, and fourteen in the 1990s[506], one of which gave birth to the violent struggles in the Niger Delta region stirred by the unequal sharing of oil profits in the last five decades.

Ross, additionally, makes two other important observations regarding conflicts related to natural resources[507]. First, natural resources are seldom the only source of ongoing violent conflicts. Most conflicts are brought about by a complex set of events; often poverty, ethnic or religious grievances (as we shall see in the course of this discussion) and unstable governments also play major roles. However, even after these factors have been taken into account, studies consistently find that the competition for scarce natural resources heightens the danger that a civil war may break out and, once it does, the conflict becomes more difficult to resolve. Secondly, natural resource dependence makes conflict inevitable. Resource wealth heightens the danger of violent conflicts and civil wars, but for every resource-rich country that has suffered from violent conflicts, only two or three have avoided falling into full-blown civil wars. Better government policies may help to reduce the likelihood that scarce resources will generate conflict and the profits gained from them may be directed, for example, towards education, health, and poverty reduction programmes, to the benefit of all. Recent research findings by Ross, Collier and Hoeffler and others identify two main pathways through which resources lead to armed conflict.

1. Resource dependence in general

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[505]Collier and Hoeffler, *On Economic Causes of Civil War*, pp. 563-573. See also Collier, P. and Hoeffler, A. *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. World Bank, Washington, D.C. October 21 Procession, 2001, p.48.

[506]Ross, M. 2002. *How Does Natural Resource Wealth Influence Civil War?* Los Angeles: Department of Political, Science, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 19.

[507]Ross, *How Does Natural Resource Wealth Influence Civil War?,* pp. 20-24.

Resource dependence[508] tends to make countries more susceptible to violence and civil war in a two-fold way namely by reducing economic growth and by increasing poverty. The factor of poverty will be discussed in greater detail in 5.2.10 below.

It may seem paradoxical that a "gift" from nature of abundant gemstones or oil tends to cause and sustain economic distress; yet, resource-dependent economies grow more slowly than resource-poor economies, according to a recent World Bank report[509]. This is a catastrophic record on economic grounds alone but it also has implications for the susceptibility of these states to violent conflict. Recent scholarship shows that when a country's growth rate turns negative, violence and civil war are more likely to break out[510].

2. Non-diversification of the economy – over-dependence on oil

While poverty in Nigeria has been attributed to various causes, the non-diversification of its economy can be seen as a major factor. Before 1970, the Nigerian economy was driven by the agricultural sector. The oil sector, which only constituted 1% of the country's export revenue in 1958, rose to 97% by 1984 and since then has not gone below 90%. In 2008, the oil and gas sector constituted about 97.5% of the export revenues, 81% of government revenues and about 17% of the GDP[511].

In Nigeria, those in power have practically ignored and refused to develop other sources of income, and today, the country depends heavily on oil export. The dependency on natural resources often becomes a problem, as natural resources make a country less competitive.

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[508]"Resource dependence" is the study of how the external resource of organizations affects the behaviour of the organisation.

[509]World Bank. "World Development Indicators 2001" CD-ROM. Washington D.C.: World Bank Group, 2001. See also World Bank. *Treasure or Trouble Mining in Developing Countries*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 2002. A recent report by the World Bank, for example, looks at the economic performance of countries that have large mining sectors in the 1990s (World Bank 2002). It finds that in countries with medium-size mining sectors (between 6 and 15 percent of all exports), gross domestic product (GDP) per capita fell at an average rate of 0.7 percent a year over the course of the decade. In countries with large mining sectors (between 15 and 50 percent of exports), GDP per capita dropped an average of 1.1 percent a year, while in countries with very large mining sectors (over 50 percent of exports) GDP per capita dropped a remarkable 2.3 percent a year. Collectively, these mining states saw their GDP per capita fall 1.15 percent a year, a drop over the course of the decade of almost 11 percent (World Bank 2002; see also Ross 2002).

[510]Collier and Hoeffler, *Greed and Grievance*, p. 639.

[511]The relatively low contribution of the oil and gas sectors to the GDP has been attributed to the ongoing security crisis in the Niger region. According to Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics Accessed 10th April 2011 (http://www.nigeranstat.gov.ng/index.php/pages/sectorStatistics), the share of the oil and gas sector in the GDP has typically been between 25 to 30 percent in most of the recent years.

Excluding the people working in the oil sector, the majority of the population have been impoverished as their products have become irrelevant. The agricultural sector, which was the major means of income before the discovery of oil, is now considered almost useless. Besides, Nigeria's abundance of natural oil resources has led to what is known as a "resource course", which is reflected in the Niger Delta crisis (i.e. in the region of the country where most of the oil is obtained). The people in the Niger Delta region are fighting for resource control, as they claim that the government does not fulfil its promise of allocating them a large portion of the oil revenues. Unfortunately, their dissatisfaction has become the key trigger of the unrest in the Nigerian society.

5.2.10 Poverty and unemployment

A country's reliance on non-fuel mineral exports—and possibly on oil exports—also tends to create a typically high poverty rate. One reason for this is that resource-rich governments often do a poor job of providing education and healthcare for their citizens. Ross finds a strong correlation between greater dependence on oil and mineral exports and higher child mortality rates – "for each 5% increase in dependence on minerals, child mortality rates rose by 12.7 per 1,000; for each 5% increase in oil dependence, the death rate of children less than five rose by 3.8 per 1,000"[512].

Again, this pattern is intrinsically worrisome, but it also has consequences for a state's susceptibility to violent conflict. The greater a country's poverty, the more likely it is to face violence and civil war. Some writers have argued that it is not surprising that people are more likely to rise up against their government when their economic predicament is bad and getting worse. Rebel groups find it easier to recruit new members when poverty and unemployment are widespread, since the prospect of combat and looting seems more attractive by comparison[513]. A glance at Nigeria's most oil-dependent state and most mineral-dependent state illustrates these patterns as discussed below.

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[512]Ross, *How Does Natural Resource Wealth Influence Civil War?* p. 49-62.
[513]Collier P.and Hoeffler, A. *Greed and Grievance*. Elbadawi, I. and Sambanis, N. 2002. "How much war will we see? Estimating the prevalence of civil war in 161 countries, 1960-1999". *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 46 (30), pp. 307-34. Frearon, J. D. and Laitin, D. D., *Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War*. Palo Alto, Calif.: Department of Political Science Stanford University, 2002.

According to historians and social scientists, the importance of economic factors and poverty to the understanding of any particular conflict will always be a matter of dispute. Yet, the need to incorporate, at some level and in some form, the economic and poverty dimensions in order to better understand the causes and persistence of conflict is above dispute. The *World Development Report 2000/2001*[514] summarises the various dimensions of poverty as lack of opportunity, lack of empowerment and lack of security. When the window of opportunity remains closed to the poor masses in society, it leaves them practically inactive in the society. Their lack of empowerment limits their choices in almost everything and their lack of security makes them vulnerable to diseases, violence, and so on. According to the statement released by the United Nations in 1998:

> Poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation[515].

In Nigeria, widespread and severe poverty is a reality. Nigeria's economy is struggling to leverage the country's vast wealth in fossil fuels in order to displace the crushing poverty that affects about 57% of its population. Nigeria's exports of oil and natural gas at a time of peak prices have enabled the country to post merchandise trade and current account surpluses in recent years. Reportedly, 80% of Nigeria's energy revenues flows to the government, 16% cover operational costs, and the remaining 4% go to investors. However, the World Bank has estimated that because of corruption, 80% of energy revenues benefit only 1% of the population[516].

It is a reality that depicts a lack of food, clothing, education and other basic amenities. Severely poor people lack the most basic necessities of life to a degree that one wonders how they manage to survive. There is a relatively large literature, which address poverty in Nigeria as an element of sustaining violence.

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[514]See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2001.*

[515]United Nation Statement of June 1998, which was signed by all the UN Agencies. Accessed 20th March 2011 from http//www.helium.com/items/1587576-poor-service-delivery.

[516]World Bank 2001 and 2005.

According to Garcia *et al*[517], Nigeria's main challenges include reducing poverty, diversifying its economy from the oil and gas sector towards more labour intensive sectors, and improving health and education. The oil has increased economic volatility and inflation while those living in poverty are most vulnerable to volatility and inflation. To add to this, instability of government revenues and a crowding out of agriculture (which provides the only source of income to most of the poor) have only made the situation worse. The oil industry does not employ a sizeable number of unskilled workers; therefore, it contributes little to reducing poverty.

Ford[518] discusses the oil crisis in the oil-producing region of Nigeria that perpetuates violence. The masses cause social unrest because the wealth gotten from their territory does not get to them. In the Nigerian society, the best way to acquire wealth is to enter the political scene. Often political success is tied to criminal activities. Ford therefore proposes that the link between economic and political power must be broken for progress to be made.

Unemployment is a major factor contributing to poverty and unrest in Nigeria. When people are unemployed, their source of livelihood depletes over time. The cost of living becomes high and the standard of living goes down. Many people in Nigeria lack the opportunity to be employed,

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[517]Garcia, R.M., Kohl, R., Ruengsorn, A. and Zislin, J. *Nigeria: Economic Performance Assessment* (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development (UDAID), 2006, available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf docs/PNADF350.pdf. The authors note that, "the most common form of violence confronting people in politically stable nations is crime. Assault and murder take us beyond the realm of macro-violence to the more individualistic micro-violence. While economists recognise the social influences that come into play, they are quick to point out that most poor do not commit crimes in general, much less violent crimes. Additionally, low-income neighbourhoods in small towns have, as a rule, much lower crime rates than urban neighbourhoods with equally low incomes. As is generally the case in economics, crime, even violent crime, is viewed from a cost-benefit perspective. Individuals are assumed to be economically rational so that an action is undertaken when the benefit exceeds the cost. While the costs of committing a crime are often viewed in terms of time, costs to get to and from the location of the activity, or the costs associated with getting caught, costs can also include lack of standing within the family or community. Where family and community structures are weak, there are fewer moral barriers to engaging in criminal activity including violent behaviour. Whenever violent behaviour is viewed as a source of pride, community response switches from being a cost to being a benefit. The utility derived from enhanced social standing raise the likelihood that the benefit of a violent action outweighs the cost. The individual has a rational incentive to prey on others.

[518]Ford, N. 2007. "Nigeria: Pouring Oil on Delta's Trouble Waters?" *African Business*, Accessed 1st August 2007 from http://www.allbusiness.com/government/elections-politics-politics/8909190-1.html

as the formal unemployment rate in Nigeria estimated by the World Bank in 2007 was 4.9 % and Nigeria ranked 61st in unemployment rate of the world's countries[519].

As reported by Mekonnen Teshome, the then newly released *African Development Indicators* report of the World Bank showed that "education, once seen as the surest, undisputed gateway to employment, no longer looks so certain"[520]. This is very true in the case of Nigeria. The fact that you are an educated Nigerian is no guarantee that you will be employed. Furthermore, according to the World Bank report, unemployment in Africa is higher among those who have attained a higher education of some kind, and those in wealthy households because they depend solely on the wealth of their families and do not consider employment a priority.

Many graduates in Nigeria wander the streets without anything reasonable to do for a living. The government is capable but unwilling to provide job opportunities for them[521]. However, employment in Nigeria is usually not based on merit but on one's connection to those in power. This leaves many highly qualified people in poverty, as no one seems to care to know what they are capable of achieving. The employed therefore miss out on the income they would have gotten if they were employed[522]. The number of quality jobs in the economy is low and the bulk of government's resources is misallocated[523].

Unemployment-induced poverty tends to increase the crime rate and violence in the country. Most unemployed youths resort to crimes such as armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, internet fraud and other forms of fraudulent activities. The wage they get from these activities is typically barely enough to take care of their basic necessities. However, unemployment is not always the result of macro-economic structures and causes, but sometimes purely the result of laziness. Furthermore, there is some strong criticism against Nigerians and it cannot be made purely on perception; laziness is a common disease suffered by many Nigerians today especially those from wealthy households. Everyone wants to be comfortable but is not willing to work for it. This often leads to greed, as people would do whatever they could to keep the family wealth to

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[519]World Bank. 2008 May 29. "Nigeria at a glance". Washington, DC: The World Bank. Accessed 19th October 2011 from http://devdata.worldbank.org?AAG/ngaaag.pdf
[520]Teshome, M. Multi-sectoral Approach to Cope with Africa Youth Unemployment, WaltalNFO. Accessed 9th December 2008 from http://www.Waltainfo.com/index.php?option=comcontent&task=view&id=5407&ltemid=82.
[521]World Bank, *Nigeria at a Glance*, p. 51.
[522]World Bank, *Nigeria at a Glance*, p. 55.
[523]World Bank, *Nigeria at a Glance*, p. 56.

themselves**.** In many families, everyone depends on the breadwinner, who works so much to keep the family going; and when he dies, the family is likely to become poor because of mismanagement of funds. In many Nigerian families, as elsewhere, the death of the breadwinner means the end of the survival of the whole family because everyone depended on him/her to provide everything. In some situations where the breadwinner has died, family members frequently joined different insurgency groups for survival.

5.2.11 Corruption

Transparency International defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain"[524]. Corruption has become a common occurrence in Nigeria and has destabilised the political system drastically. Government funds are being misappropriated on a daily basis by the leaders, who only have the interests of their families and friends at heart while ignoring the masses. The corruption has eaten so deep into the government and economy that everyone seems to be blinded by it; "corruption has almost become an accepted way of life in Nigeria"[525]. A consequence of this is the severe violence witnessed in the country.

According to Foxcroft, in Nigeria, the government's income is generated mostly from natural resource revenues, which, instead of being used for developmental purposes, is circulated among the political office holders and their families, leaving the rest of the people in poverty. Political leaders practically ignore the affairs and wellbeing of their people who elected them into office. They mismanage and embezzle funds. However, several other issues are associated with bad governance in Nigeria such as the use of wrong policies, adaptation to wrong policies and implementation of those wrong policies[526]. In any case, it is clear that corruption has increased poverty and inequality, and contributed to high crime rates and violence, as it has forced many people to engage in violent acts, adding to its sustainability.

Oyekola, Oyekale and Adeoti rightly state that inequality implies a concentration of distribution, whether one is considering income, consumption or some other welfare indicators or attributes[527].

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[524]World Bank, *Nigeria at a Glance.* Accessed on 29th May 2008 http://www.transparency.org/newsroom/faq/corruptionfaq.
[525]World Bank, *Nigeria at a Glance*, p. 51
[526]Foxcroft, T. 2005. *Nigeria's oil Crisis*. Niger Delta: Amadino Press, 2005, p. 59.
[527]Oyekola, A., Oyekale, T. O. and Adeoti, I. A. "Regression-based Approach to Income Inequality Decomposition in Rural and Urban Nigeria". *International Journal of Economic Perspective*, 2007, Vol. 1 (2), pp. 45-54.

There was an increase in income disparity after the economic growth which Nigeria experienced between 1965 and 1975, and this income inequality has not only increased the dimension of poverty in the country but also the high rate of violence that has become very difficult to overcome[528]. To understand why many the residents of a country poor, it is not enough to know the country's per capita income. The number of poor people in a country and the average quality of life depend on how equally or unequally income is distributed across the population. In Nigeria and Ghana, for example, per capita income levels are quite comparable, but the incidence of poverty in Nigeria is much higher. In Ghana, the richest 20% of the population receive about four times more than the poorest 20%, whereas in Nigeria the richest 20% receive 40 times more than the poorest[529]. The income inequality between the people in rural and urban areas in Nigeria is remarkably high, as those who live in rural areas base all their income on agriculture, which today is no longer a thriving sector, as oil has taken over the economy. Many rural people do not invest their money in acquiring skills as people in the urban areas would and this makes them more vulnerable to poverty and to social and economic problems such as violence, corruption, and so on[530].

5.2.12 The role of media and communication

Media messages convey important influences[531]. According to Huber[532], whoever switches on the television, or looks at a movie or video and other media advertisements will quickly realise that we are confronted with a new "culture of violence" - violence, even in its most sadistic, dehumanising forms, is shown openly and used as a means of so-called entertainment. Many indicators suggest that the uninhibited presentation of violence in the media contributes remarkably to a preparedness to use violence in real life. For example, the Hausa section in both the VOA and BBC appears to have influenced one religious group against the other whenever violence occurs in Nigeria. Sen is right that, "media can also, in some cases, become an instrument for the dissemination of false and inflammatory messages and values that do not

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[528]Oluwatayo, I. B. "Explaining Inequality and Welfare Status of Households in Rural Nigeria: Evidence from Ekiti State". *Humanity & Social Science Journal*, 2008, Vol. 3 (1), pp. 70-80.

[529]Oluwatayo, *Explaining Inequality*, p. 60

[530]Oluwatayo, *Explaining Inequality*, p. 82.

[531]Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, pp. 95-99. Sen claims that, "mass media and other forms of communication technology have an influence in helping to shape public opinion and underlying sentiment. Newspapers, TV and radio are all important sources of basic information about other people and other places and this can itself help to engender understanding if presented in a fair, even-handed and non-inflammatory way".

[532]Huber, *Violence,* p. 15.

promote respect or well-tempered dialogue and discussion"[533]. The fact is that negative messages can divide communities, families or relationships, and can help perpetuate the stereotypes that nurture violence. However, Burke rightly observes that violence surrounds us every day in our families, in schoolyards, when using public transportation, and even on the highways; and every day we ourselves participate in this violence, at least, in those acts of violence that affect nature and the matrix of natural life. Nothing renders the search for sound ethical guidance more acute today than the outbreak of violence in its various forms[534].

The media could also be an important mechanism for accountability, as it could raises significant issues such as corruption, which might likely never be publicly debated or addressed. The media could also play a role in stimulating government to take action on social policy, by exposing problems that need to be addressed, for example, poor living conditions or lack of access to services. Unfortunately, that is hardly the case. The media often prefers to dwell on conflict, since conflict and drama sell newspapers and attract an audience. Inevitably, it means that the more extreme points of view get airtime rather than the feelings of the majority of citizens[535].

5.3 Poor Education System

One of the most striking consequences of the poor education system in Nigeria is the way in which it sustains violence; education plays a major role in reducing poverty and violence. According to the World Bank, education is central to development. It promotes economic growth, national productivity and innovation, as well as values of democracy and social cohesion. In this way, it promotes the creation of jobs, decreases unemployment and poverty, thereby, reducing the need for perpetrating acts of violence against others in order to survive. In Nigeria, the uneducated section of the population accounts for most of the poor. The Nigerian education system can be regarded as a failure compared to other countries in the world. Although its data has been questioned, the 2011 World University Ranking/Top 100 Universities in Africa, shows that, the best University in Nigeria emerged in the 30th position in Africa[536]. The United

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[533]Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, p. 95.
[534]Burke, *A Vindication of Natural Society,* pp. 42-33.
[535]Makarfi, A. *White paper on the Report of the Judical Commission of Inquiry into Kaduna State Religious Disturbance of February 2000*, Kaduna: Kaduna State Government 2001, p. 99.
[536]University Ranking in Africa. Accessed 2nd January 2011 from http://www.forum.newzimbabwe.com/index.php?/...university-ranking-in-africa

Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights[537] states that, "everyone has the right to an education"; unfortunately, this right to education has been denied to many Nigerians, causing most of them to engage in violent activities.

5.4. Global Socio-Economic Inequality and Ethnic Conflicts

Most of the historically important systems of socio-economic inequality were "harmonious" in the sense of effective traditional legitimation and wide social acceptance. However, change came through the impact of the notion of "natural equality of men", popularised by French philosophers in the eighteenth century Enlightenment movement. Since then, social equality has become the universal ideological aspiration of the lower classes and strata, and of minorities in all modern societies, as social conflicts came to be been seen as attempts to reduce privileges and redress social discrimination (cf. Karl Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Max Weber)[538]. Studies of inequalities claim that both diagnoses, especially the one that points to the continuation of violent trends in socio-economic inequalities, are the easiest to discern because these inequalities can be widely assessed and measured. Socio-economic inequality shows that income and wealth gaps are much wider in developing than in developed nations, that these gaps are much wider in the ownership of assets (wealth, land, capital) than in income differentials, and that returns on investments grow much faster than incomes. In the most developed societies, the picture is mixed but economic inequalities have increased significantly in Nigeria and other nations.

It is in the light of this observation that Woodward shows that "ethnic conflict is positively associated with global and domestic socio-economic inequalities"[539]. However, her extensive overview of theoretical and practical responses to this reality reveals a pervasive trend that builds on explanations of age-old ethnic hatreds, ethnic entrepreneurship, predatory rulers, criminal

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[537]World Bank. *World Development Report 2000/2001: Attacking Poverty.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 15-23.

[538]Bottero, W. *Stratification, Social Division and Inequality.* Routledge: London, 2005, pp. 20-27. Bottero formulates what may be taken as classical insights into the relationship between social inequality, antagonism, and conflict. At the heart of these insights lies a notion that social antagonisms are anchored in unequal distribution of material resources, especially property, social status, and political power. Those antagonisms erupt into conflicts when the key social assets and their distribution change.

[539]Woodward, in *The Inequality of Violence,* 2005, pp. 5-7, states her indebtedness to her graduate advisor Bronwyn Leebaw who inspired her "to think through the problems of socio-economic inequalities, violence, global development and a bottom up approach to understanding world politics".

rebels, and economic greed, not grievances[540]. Consequently, what belongs to the area of proper resistance struggles has become designated as a dangerous threat to international security, that is, "the result is an all familiar encounter of "us" with "them" who are poor, underdeveloped, armed, dangerous, and different"[541]. The produced reality is a repetitive distortion of human solidarity and richness, an all-pervasive alienation of human from human, neighbour from neighbour, and soul from soul.

According to Woodward's analysis of ethnic war, cultural diversity does not constitute a primary explanation for the former. In other words, the countries where conflict is absent are as ethnically heterogeneous as the countries where conflicts are prevalent. However, although ethnic diversity does not lead to conflict, ethnic *discrimination* does[542]. Ernest Gellner, who has long written on the mechanisms of nationalism, offers similar insights about ethnic or nationalist conflicts. He reflects on the historical dynamics behind national independence at the outset of modernization, and shows that nationalism is not only sustained by forces of modernization and industrialization which require the existence of a state neither is it mostly sustained by the imposition of a high culture on diverse ethnic groups[543].

In fact, sustaining nationalist loyalties and ensuring the obedience of the masses are fulfilled through education and socialization. The forces play an instrumental role in communicating a new culture and patriotism to the masses that indicate a practical necessity[544]. This understanding of the construction of national identity is based on acknowledging social responses associated with the consolidation of nation-states out of dispersed cultural and ethnic groups at the outset of the industrial revolution and modernization. Nationalist secessionist struggles, on the other hand, result from unequal economic development within a nation-state, coinciding with ethnic discrimination of disenfranchised groups[545]. Woodward points out that 52% of ethnic conflicts in

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[540]Woodward, S. 2005. "The inequality of violence: On the discovery of civil war as a threat to the North in the 1990s". *APSA Task Force Report on Inequality and Difference in the Developing World*, pp. 1-11.

[541]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, pp. 6-13.

[542]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 19.

[543]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 7.

[544]Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 65.

[545]Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 58.

Post-Cold War times are secessionist[546]. Ted Robert Gurr responds that ethnic perceptions of injustice require a coincidence between patterns of economic inequality and ethnic differences[547].

According to an analysis of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal by Murshed and Gates, the most intense violence occurred in the poorest areas of the country, and there is a serious overlapping of class, caste, ethnicity, and ideology in the insurgency. Thus, violence is most intense in parts of the country where the population belongs to the less privileged castes. Furthermore, they also belong to different ethnic groups as opposed to the economic and political elite. In contrast to the rest of the country and despite countrywide measures of economic growth, inequality for them has been worsening, not only in purchasing power parity, GDP per capital, land holdings, lack of alternative employment opportunities in the face of landlessness, but even more so in educational inequality[548].

The role of land as security and landlessness also figure prominently in accounts of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Senegal, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The lack of economic opportunity is the cause of the perpetuation of violence in Burundi as well. "Growing inequality in land ownership and, concomitantly, a growth in landlessness and poverty" is said to be a crucial factor in the violence in Rwanda in 1994[549].

Gerges focuses on exploring the causes of modern Jihadist movements. He begins by looking at a wider spectrum of violent confrontations in the Middle East and ends by exploring the specific complexity of insurgencies in Iraq. Gerges' account is abundant in detailed descriptions of social-economic and political conditions in the region, which in an important sense, make up a social environment susceptible to such movements as the Jihad, both locally and globally. This is an assessment which stands in opposition to a religious explanation of insurgencies. Gerges attributes the existence of conflict to a myriad of factors such as poverty, unemployment,

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[546]Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* p. 61.

[547]Gurr, T. R. "People against states: Ethnopolitical conflict and the changing world system". *International Studies Quarterly*, 2002, 38 (3), pp. 82-87.

[548]Murshed, S. M. and Gates, S. 2005. "Spatial-horizontal inequality and the Maoist insurgency in Nepal". *Review of Development Economics*, 2005, 9 (1), pp. 121-134.

[549]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, pp. 17-18.

disenfranchisement of large segments of population, political oppression, and colonial and imperialist interventions, all counterweighted by the alternatives of establishing Islamic states[550].

Obviously, some kinds of violence do not receive much public attention. There is a clear and robust correlation between income inequality and violent crime, which is presented in the mainstream literature as illegal and immoral, and attributed to individual responsibility rather than structural problems found in a given community. Highly unequal countries have very high rates of homicide, for instance, Brazil, Bolivia, Jamaica, Russia, Zimbabwe and Nigeria. "Voices of the Poor" recorded in the three-volume World Bank survey in developing countries in 1999-2000 reveal a world where existential physical insecurity is a greater concern of the poor than their poverty itself. "Their everyday lives are at threat from the unpredictable but increasingly present criminal violence in poor neighbourhoods and from the fact that not only do the police not protect them but that the risk is often most from *police violence* against them"[551].

It is popularly believed that the conventional assumptions about violence as being a matter for men lead to a gendered perception of ethnic conflicts as well. For instance, in Colombia, "female participation in both guerrillas – especially FARC – is very high"[552]. The same is true in Sierra Leone and the DRC, El Salvador, and Sri Lanka[553]. Some Nigerian guerrillas in mostly the southern part of Nigeria are also women "who have been raped by the Nigerian army or security forces"[554]. For example, the Vanguard newspaper of 7th May 2009 in a 40-page report identified "rape as an endemic problem in Nigeria"[555].

Woodward notes that in some cases, conflicts can be sustained as they arise out of certain groups wanting to protect their privileged position. For example, in Indonesia, the cases of separatist violence – Aceh, West Papua, Riau, and East Kalimantan – suggest a slightly different resistance

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[550]Gerges, F. *The Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 91. For a similar line of thought, see Gilles, K. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam.* Harvard University Press, 2002, in which he complements such analysis by bringing attention to the struggles of local and clerical elites to secure their social positions at the expense of disenfranchising regular people.

[551]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 23.

[552]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 16.

[553]Wood, E. J. "Civil Wars: What We Don't Know". *Global Government*, 2003, 9(2), pp. 247-261.

[554]Odil, N. "Nigeri: Self-styled Rebel Seek Independence for Oil-producing Niger-Delta", *New Nigeria*, Kaduna Nigeria. 2004, July 20, p. 24-26.

[555]Oyerinde A. *Vanguard*, 7th May 2009.

scenario. Although they are relatively wealthier regions[556], these cases are examples of protest against central policies of redistribution and an effort to control more of their local wealth, locally. Moellendorf states that, "As elsewhere, inequality may just as easily provoke a revolt of the rich as a revolt of the poor"[557]. Slovenia and Estonia in post-Soviet ethnic developments are other examples[558]. In other cases, the struggle "from above" is not as evident, but it is certainly salient. Wood's analysis of the civil wars in El Salvador and South Africa points to the role of oppressive labour regimes. He furthermore states that the goal of the FMLN and ANC was to end the use of the state's coercive powers to enforce oppressive labour relations benefiting the oligarchical coalition of state actors and wealthy landowners[559]. Clearly, the response from disenfranchised landless people came as a reaction to the oppressive strategies of the oligarchies.

It is striking that conventional categories of "greed", "resource predation", and "ethnic hatred" locate the cases that retain violence within countries in Africa. Woodward insists that, in many cases, poor countries are vulnerable to civil war because the export earnings for natural resources are so high that both rebels and politicians may seek war as a cover for their illicit gains. Ironically, few ask why the export profiles of these countries are like that or how their gain is realised, even though the very demand for such commodities, the market links, and the marketing firms all come from the North[560]. The implication of the whole of global socio-economic structure, i.e. global capitalism becoming a breeding ground for global and local inequalities and generating resistances, is vast[561].

Furthermore, as the specifics of individual cases indicate, social resistance actually takes place *in response* to something, as in the above examples in which oppressive labour and land policies are perpetuated by oligarchies in South Africa and El Salvador. What this suggests is that the

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[556]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 11.

[557]Moellendorf, D. *Global Ethics Series*. Series Edition: Global Inequality Matters, 2009, p. 111.

[558]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 11.

[559]Wood, E. J. 2000. *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 6-9.

[560]Woodward, *The Inequality of Violence*, p. 20.

[561]For a comprehensive argument that many recent examples of global turmoil can be traced to the international economic regime, see Cossudovky, Michael. *The Globalisation of Poverty*: *Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reform*. Penang, Malaysia: Third World Network, 1997. Additionally, throughout her study, Woodward interrogates the neoliberal policies of structural adjustment and insensitivity to the inequality of distribution which only supports socio-economic stratification. Her analysis draws on policy and conference reports of many analysts who find fundamental faults with neoliberal policies of global development.

struggle may emanate not only from the disenfranchised groups but also from groups who fear to lose their socio-economic position. In fact, what is not immediately evident in the preceding discussion is a missing side of the same coin. Understanding "ethnic" conflict requires situating the resisting group alongside the group against which the resistance takes place; understanding the unprivileged position of a person, a community or country requires situating it alongside a privileged person, community or country.

According to Richard Wyn Jones, to provide an analogy of a class struggle, the dynamics of class interactions cannot be fully understood except in terms of the pressures from below. What can be missed in a classical class analysis is that class pressures also come from the top, i.e. in the form of resistance of the privileged class in order to preserve its privileged social position. Insofar as the existence of one class is inseparable from the other and the construction of one cultural "self" is inseparable from the construction of the "other", the effects of socio-economic inequalities should be understood in terms of resistances of all sides. It would even make sense to conclude that resistance of *all* is not against "whom" but against and out of "what" – such resistances can only be resolved by transforming the conditions from which they arise. The reality of resistances also suggests that local and global resistance are interconnected, as are the positions of culturally and economically privileged persons/communities as well as impoverished and marginalised persons/communities[562].

Thus, the North-South insurgencies in Nigeria, for instance, must be understood as inseparable from the whole that is, from the global dynamics of cultural and economic life mentioned in chapter two. One way to address these resistances, i.e. emancipatory struggles, is by equalizing and harmonizing each other's position, and by revolutionizing and transforming the existing socio-economic and cultural structures. Charles Tilly outlines the basic processes by which groups create boundaries showing how failures to negotiate agreements across such boundaries lead to outcomes ranging from wars and ethnic conflicts to genocide or terrorism. At a time when ethnic conflict and terrorism seem to be escalating beyond our understanding or control[563],

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[562]Wyn J. R. "Introduction: Locating critical international relations theory", in R. Wyn Jones (ed.). *Critical Theory and World Politics*. Boulder: Lynn Rienner, 2001, pp. 17-18.
[563]Tilly, C. *The Politics of Collective Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 26-54.

it seems easy to conclude that most collective violence occurred as a by-product of negotiations that were not in themselves intrinsically violent[564].

5.5 Injustice as a Means of Sustaining Violence

Injustice could also be a form of violence when people are driven to use force to right wrongs committed against them. Injustice often encourages the growth and intensification of political, ethnic and radical violence, in spite of our horror at atrocities committed by those who seek their rightful place in the world. Nevertheless, right relationships can never be established in the end by unjust means[565].

In considering the relationship between justice and peace, it is helpful to think about the different ways in which we use the word peace. Ending physical violence in a particular situation brings a form of peace. However, complete peace will not be achieved until the other forms of violence, the injustices, are resolved and reconciliation becomes a reality. We must recognise also that the pursuit of certain forms of justice, e.g. the bringing of those responsible for crimes against humanity before a court, can produce violent responses. At this point, we can go on to consider briefly four of the many forms of injustice that are both a violation of people and the breeding grounds of violence, as articulated by Tschuy[566].

5.5.1 Economic injustice

Within nations and across nations there is an unequal distribution of wealth. A nation or region may be rich in natural resources but the majority of its population may be in poverty (as the Nigerian situation mentioned above shows). People's natural ability may be exploited so that they have no way to support themselves. Throughout history, there has been a development of wealthy classes in different societies at the expense of the majority. Economic globalisation compounds this injustice and escalates it to a global level. According to the World Centric for a Better World (Bio-compostable):

> Socially and economically, we have created great disparities of wealth. A minority of the world's population (17%) consume most of the world's resources (80%), leaving almost 5 billion people

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[564]Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, p. 26.
[565]Tschuy, T. 1998. *Ethnic Conflict and Religion: Challenge to the Churches.* Geneva: WCC Publication, 1998, p. 136.
[566]Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion*, pp. 136-139.

to live on the remaining 20%. As a result, billions of people are living without the very basic necessities of life - food, water, housing and sanitation[567].

Specifically, 1.2 billion (20%) of the world's population now live on less that $1/day, another 1.8 billion (30%) live on less than $2/day, 800 million go to bed hungry every day, and 30,000 - 60,000 die each day from hunger alone. The story is the same, when it comes to other necessities such as water, housing, education, etc. On the flip side, we have an increasing accumulation of wealth and power, where the world's 500 or so billionaires have assets of 1.9 trillion dollars, a sum greater than the income of the poorest 170 countries in the world[568]. Fashola identifies the factors responsible for economic injustice in Nigeria as inflation, unemployment, fraud and non-competitive organisations that undermine the economy as well as lack of consultation and participation of the common people in governance[569].

5.5.2 Political and social injustice

Many people have placed great faith in a particular form of representative democracy and in the ability of nation states to provide the right environment in which people can live. However, even among the strongest nations, some find that they can no longer control their own destinies, however much force they use. Within nations, we find the active denial of political and social rights, often with the excuse of promoting national security. In some places, such as Nigeria, citizens fail to participate responsibly in elections because they feel that local and national decision-making bodies are neither representative nor responsive. The processes of criminal and civil justice are heavily weighted on the side of those who have the resources to pursue actions or to defend themselves. Even in countries with a long tradition of respect for the rule of law, influence can be bought and political expediency may allow the powerful to escape the consequences of their activities.

The threat of imperialism and colonization to people's religious and cultural identities is continued by force and by the more subtle influence of the media. What is liberating, life affirming, communal and contextual in local cultures is being destroyed, and being replaced by a

[567]World Centric was founded in 2004 to raise awareness of large-scale humanitarian and environmental issues and to promote sustainable alternatives to every day consumption choices. In 2004, World Centric hosted award winning documentaries and speakers on environmental, social human rights and peace issues, offered courses on sustainability, simple living and globalisation, and worked on a conscious living guide.
[568]World Centric Environmental and Social Human Rights 2004.
[569]Fashola, S. *Government to Tackle Economic Injustice?* Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 2009, p. 2.

commercially oriented global culture. The way of life being promoted is one which emphasises individual self-fulfilment, economic success and the glorification of violence.

5.6 Sin and Injustice

According to Bartholomew Colley, who writes from a biblical perspective, all human conflicts stem from sin, from the fall of humankind (cf. Gen. 3)[570]. Thus, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain in Genesis 4 is the consequence of sin. Sin is the supposed root cause that keeps violence alive in the world (and in Nigeria as well), while envy and jealousy are the motivation behind the crime in the case of Cain and Abel. This Judeo-Christian understanding of the world's prevalent chaos is based on two presuppositions – one, the fall of humankind best explains the universality of sin and its consequences and two, the need for a saviour whose salvation will have universal impact and significance. According to the Christian understanding, Jesus of Nazareth has fulfilled this need; thus, the imperative and necessity of Christ is hard-won salvation for all[571].

Colley further states that another biblical-theological perspective on sin is to situate it in the lustful nature of humankind. Conflicts and disputes arise from our desires, our drive to covet, exploit and dominate – "*What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but you don't have, you kill and covet... you quarrel and fight..."* (Jam. 4). Colley's observation is illustrated by political and economic history, because over the centuries, people of the Third World, especially Africa, have been victimised. Their history is characterised by dehumanisation, exploitation, subjugation and oppression by the so-call 'advanced' and 'civilized' world. Africans were subjected to slavery for almost five centuries and colonised for almost eight and half decades, and they continue to live under political and economic neo-colonialism. Regarding economic neo-colonialism, it appears that globalisation is often advocated by the First World to perfect the process of subjugation and oppression[572].

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[570]Colley, B. B. "A Community Approach to Overcoming Violence: Peace and Justice through Reconciliation". *The Ecumenical Review*, May 2001, Vol. 52 (3), pp. 385-389.
[571]Colley, *A Community Approach*, pp. 385-389.
[572]Colley, *A Community Approach*, pp. 387-389.

Thus, Mugambi argues that the root sustenance of these conditions must be revealed, because from the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 to date[573], Africa remains partitioned by European powers. Colonial boundaries are reinforced by the client states' division into Anglophone Francophone, Lusophone and the Araphone alliances[574]. What is often forgotten when a 'doomed Africa' is portrayed through the mass media is the influence of foreign, powerful nations which deprive Africa of its ability and power of self-determination. Nevertheless, some are recounting the real trauma.

Similarly, Laurenti Magesa affirms that, "a significant step in the process of African liberation and salvation is to regain the ability and power of self-definition by individuals and societies in all spheres of life"[575]. Colley agrees that this is the exigent task to which the African and global church is called and to which it should be committed, that is, to re-humanise a race and continent long vilified and dehumanised. Any genuine efforts for peace and reconciliation must restore justice in the face of the long history of injustice and exploitation[576]. In the case of Africa, this will reverse the ugly portrayal of Africa and the black race as doomed and, therefore, helpless and subject to paternalistic "caregivers".

Colley admits that historically and theologically, the portrayal or dismissal of any group of human beings as unfortunate, doomed and disaster-prone is a hasty generalisation and myopic reductionism. The reality is that violent conflicts have engulfed the entire world, whether in the form of gangs and drugs, global violence or terrorist attacks in the USA, political conflicts in the former Soviet Union, the Cold War, or the senseless and destructive civil wars in Africa. Humanity is threatened and is under attack in many regions of the world, and the global church must devise an appropriate global response. Similarly, the immediate challenge in the face of

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[573]The Berlin Conference (German: *Kongokonferenz* or "Congo Conference") of 1884–1885 regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa during the New Imperialism period, and coincided with Germany's sudden emergence as an imperial power. Called for by Portugal and organised by Otto von Bismarck, the first Chancellor of Germany, its outcome, the General Act of the Berlin Conference, is often seen as the formalisation of the scramble for Africa. The conference ushered in a period of heightened colonial activity on the part of the European powers, while simultaneously eliminating most of the existing forms of African autonomy and self-governance.

[574]Mugambi, J. N. K. *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War.* Nairobi: East Africa Education Publishers, 1995, pp. 160-164.

[575]Magesa, L. *Africa's Struggle for Self-definition during a Time of Globalisation*. Tarime, Tanzania: Belcama Press, 1999, p. 1.

[576]Colley, *A Community Approach to Overcoming Violence*, p. 387.

globalisation is to restore global peace by instituting social justice as ways of overcoming the root sustenance of violence. We will all miss the point by a wide margin if all we do is to care for the victims without also confronting the victimisers[577].

Peter, quoting Backer, contends that the perpetuation of violence is rooted in humanity, that is, in contrast to the rest of nature. He calls us in effect to replace theodicy with anthropodicy, to identify evil with those forces that tend to inhibit or restrict human freedom, democracy and progress, and to make human beings rather than God the authors of the criteria for discerning good and evil. Peter, in line with Backer, initially asserts that evil is a product of the community's repression of individual freedom. He shows, scientifically, that society itself with its structures of dominance has functioned to repress human liberty and alienate individual persons. Furthermore, evil arises out of social institutions that encourage class-consciousness, envy, hatred, competition, and coercion[578]. All these go back to the issue of the way we understand anxiety in time and space which gives us insight into one of the most horrendous evils of the modern world.

In addition, one sure sign of anxiety is the fear of the loss of our future – "a future alone may seem like no future at all". Physical ailments become life-threatening emergencies, and finally death eases the pain. Anxiety leads to confusion regarding the relation between death and life; it can also lead to confusion regarding one's own death and the killing of others. What is it about violently killing others that makes us think we can quell the pangs of anxiety, overcome our frustrations, relieve our rage, regain a sense of self-worth, and thereby conquer death? Killing others seems to relieve our own fear of being killed, but does it?

Ted Peter rightly calls this kind of act a radical evil, but the question which he asks is, "What, then, is the source of evil?"

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter finds that rapacity encouraged by an abundance of natural resources tends to fuel violent conflict, which can spell catastrophe for both developed and under-developed countries. Economic inequality and injustice are always the root causes of   violence

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[577]Colley, B. B. *A Community Approach to Overcoming Violence*, pp. 387-389.
[578]Peter, T. *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: USA. 1994, pp. 47-50.

or of its persistence while poverty and inequality have always been central issues in discussions of international development. However, conflict often creates economic war, especially in the regions controlled by rebels or warlords and linked to international trade networks. Members of armed gangs can benefit from looting, and regimes can use violence to deflect opposition, reward supporters or maintain their access to resources. In these circumstances, ending violence becomes difficult. Winning may not be desirable; the point of war may be precisely the legitimacy it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes.

On the other hand, as an ecumenical body, the WCC seeks in many ways and through many struggles to overcome violence in this traumatised age. In this process, the African (in particular the Nigerian) contribution to a collective and holistic community approach becomes a necessity. Our suggested model lies in the biblical affirmation that *"truth and mercy have met together, justice and peace have kissed"* (Ps. 85:10). This model will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Again, we refuse to be discouraged by the ways Africa and Nigeria in particular have been misused and portrayed in the violence that confronts us. Rather we contend that Nigeria's fate is not in the hands and thoughts of mere human beings who control resources and see violence as economic empowerment for their own benefit. Her fate lies in the divine care of the Triune God, whose mission is to save and restore life. We believe also that, at the word of the Lord spoken by the prophets of the global church, the "dried bones" will live again and new life will spring forth. We do not know when this would happen, but God knows (Ezek. 37).

A sustainable reconciliation which will overcome violence and restore peace and justice must be holistic and include the spiritual, personal, social, economic and ecological dimensions of life[579]. It is hoped that the African (Nigerian) understanding of justice, economic equality, and restorative justice within communities will make its own just contribution to the search for peace in today's violent world.

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[579] Assefa, H. *Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: Philosophy of Peace and Its Implications on Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa*. Nairobi: ACTS, 2004, p. 16.

CHAPTER SIX

KÜNG'S CHRISTOLOGY OF PEACE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR OVERCOMING VIOLENCE

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter has offered a broad description of the persistence of violence by considering the global dimension of violence and its effects on Nigeria as well as the factors that perpetuate violence or keep violence alive. However, in recent decades the prevalent and extensive face of violence has become ever more visible. Voices of the victims of violence especially voices from those sections of the Nigerian society, where violence is more prevalent, have made the discussion of violence more urgent and will not allow people to hide behind political, social, economic and religious arguments of good intentions for using violence, but force them to ask about the evil consequences of violence. The issue is not only whether one is doing "right", but whether individuals and institutions are acting "ethically", promoting the "good" as experienced by the vulnerable or the victims of violence. That distinction is important as this research ponders how best to make peace in a nation marked with violence.

Grinnaell and Williams show that the biblical tradition points to the first time a voice was given to the victim of violence. God is seen standing with the victim[580]. With Cain, God becomes the protector of this guilty life. That is the spirit and logic of non-violence. Therefore, through ecumenical churches, the WCC's Central Committee has opened people's eyes, enabling them, indeed, forcing them, to see issues of violence differently - beyond the parochial perspectives of nationality, ethnicity, etc[581]. Without pretending that these perceptions are completely new, several readings of violence have become more a part of our consciousness.

However, this chapter proposes to look at Hans Küng's works in relation to a Christology of peace, which serves as an Christological framework of peace. Commenting on Küng, Patterson states that Küng identifies the three abiding norms as, "The will of God in all situations of life, the person of Christ as the concrete exemplification of God's will, and a life of active

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[580]Grinnaell, R. M. (Jr.) and Williams, M. *Research in Social Work*: *A Primer*. Ithaca: Peacock Publishers, 1990, p. 247.
[581]Dickinson, *Overcoming Violence*, pp. 192-201.

indifference"[582]. He also describes a lifestyle of indifference to the things of this world such as money and possessions, as well as non-participation in violence as one of active involvement in life's concerns, never for the purpose of power or control, but always for the sake of service to humanity on behalf of God in Christ.

For the DOV to overcome violence, it would be helpful to borrow a leaf from Küng's Christological framework of peace which calls all peoples to a commitment to the living Christ who is the source of the peace advocated by the DOV. Küng's approach and presupposition result in a blending of a host of voices, which could be regarded as a call to Nigerian churches to explore the Christology of peace – the historical Jesus as a model for peace. It seems that peace could be achieved through the four components or principles in Küng's framework of peace initiatives which is dearly needed in our complex world and particularly in those areas of the Nigerian society dominated by various forms of violence.

Küng's major objective in the study, *On Being a Christian*, is to highlight the relevance of the Christian faith in today's complex society; such a Christian stance requires a functional rather than the traditional ontological Christology[583]. For Küng, the Christ of history addresses the human situation in a more concrete way than the definitions of the eternal logos portray. He uses terms such as "advocate", "representative", or "delegate" for the functions of Jesus' ministry as the peace-builder even in contemporary societies.

However, Küng reiterates that he does not reject the classic formulations, but believes that functional terms bring Christ closer to the modern man. He claims, "For me Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God for the whole significance... lies in the fact that in Jesus... the God who loves men is himself present and active"[584]. Küng affirms that it is the task of theology and, subsequently, of the Church's proclamation of the gospel, to bring contemporary men and women, including scientists and scholars, into contact with God in such a way that it is not at the expense of people, or of their rationality, freedom or humanity, all of which serve as peace formation. He attempts to extol Christ's role in society and individual lives at the expense of the church, choosing in a

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[582]Patterson, B. E. *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: HansKüng, John Kiwit*. Waco: Word Book Publisher. 1985, pp. 103-124.
[583]Küng, H. *On Being a Christian*. London: Doubleday, 1977, p. 29.
[584]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 120.

Protestant manner to focus on the living mediator, Jesus Christ, rather than on the sacred mediator of the Roman Catholic Church. Later, Küng consciously opts for a *theology from below*[585] in contrast to Barth's theology that claims to be a *theology from above*.

Küng acknowledges two questions that guided his thought throughout the study[586]: (1) who is Christ? (2) What does it mean to be a Christian? He presents the person of Jesus Christ as the programme of the Christian faith. To him, Jesus was unique in that he identified with neither the left nor the right, with neither the rebels nor the establishment; rather, he called people to a commitment to the living Christ and not to a dedication to the institutional church. Küng's trilogy on the Christian life, the existence of God and on eternal life, is undergirded by Erikson's main thesis on the authentic religion, which claims that only a religion that promotes true humanity can be true and good. He is convinced that being a Christian fulfils the existential need of basic trust. In Christ, humankind feels secure in relation to society, his fellow human beings and, ultimately, the whole of creation. Küng rejects rationalistic beliefs as well as blind faith and opts instead for a rationally justifiable basic trust.

In summarising Küng's approach and presuppositions, it should be restated that his procedure results in a blending of a host of voices, which is also an area to be explored and developed. However, this chapter seeks to explore the Christology of peace, the historical Christ as a model for peace together with the four components (principles) of radical humanism, radical love, radical transcendence, and radical obedience. These four components stand as a framework of a Christology of peace that is dearly needed today in the world and particularly in the Nigerian society in order to achieve peace and overcome violence.

Küng has provided an interesting model that could be adapted to contribute possibly to nurturing a culture of peace among Nigerian churches and societies. The model will be refined and extended with the hope that the fruit of the endeavour would provide the Nigerian church and

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[585]Theology from above is the use of Scriptures in doing theology. Theologizing starts from the text of the Bible – the focus on God and his purpose, plans and ways of making humanity to know his will. The Scripture stands as the basis for studying all the activities of God and it is the only source of information about him. It is also the basis for Christian faith and practice. Theology from below is a manner of doing theology by using specific agenda and looking at the Scriptures for insight to address the issue. It is the recognition of human needs. It is making the Scriptures relevant and expounding the Scriptures in a way that appropriately meets those special needs.
[586]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 123.

society with significant and reconciliatory tools which would contribute to peaceful coexistence in Nigeria and the world at large.

6.2 Christology of Peace

What is the meaning of following Christ in a violent world? What are the problems and possibilities in the formulation of a new Christology of peace by Hans Küng, who attempts to guide Christians and even the DOV in this regard, and whose Christology is an alternative to the traditional western Christologies that have been intricately and extensively associated with Christian triumphalism and aggressive Christian expansion? What can be learnt from the life and ministry of Jesus Christ that can inform contemporary practice of peace? What kind of language is required when we talk about Christ as a path of peace, justice and reconciliation in a violence world? Is it possible to view the Jesus of history as a counter to the logic of violence? Different people may understand the Jesus of history differently. Some may be reminded of the theological debates of the early church leaders. Others may view the idea as a new way of talking about Christ as the living prophetic Word of God in action (the *dabar* of God), which is biblically connected with creation (Gen. 1). A call to follow this prophetic word, therefore, could be a call to work for transformation through peace and reconciliation[587] which correspond with the DOV's objectives and goals to promote ways to overcome all forms of violence in this complex world.

6.3 The Historical Christ as a Model for the Framework of a Christology of Peace

Küng points out that the classical Christian theology accords with the opening definition, in that it generally does not treat moral or pastoral questions in isolation from its exposition of the substance of the doctrine of Christianity[588]. According to him, "the most fundamental characteristic of Christianity is that it considers this Jesus as ultimately decisive, definitive, and archetypal for man in the various dimensions of life"[589]. Therefore, a genuine Christian should be a follower of the Jesus of history.

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[587]World Council of Churches, *Nurturing Peace*, pp. 1-17.
[588]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 521.
[589]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 125-126.

Küng proposes that a historical approach to faith and its proclamation also means assigning a secondary role to exclusively transcendental image of Christ. He further states that theologians should begin *from below,* from the historical Jesus, rather than *from above*, for contemporary humanity. On the other hand, the Greek concept of the two natures of Christ has lost its relevance, according to Küng[590].

For Küng, it is essential to focus on the historical Jesus because he has discovered striking sociological parallels between the story of Jesus and contemporary life situations. Jesus experienced conflicts similar to those of the twentieth-first century humanity. By way of contrast, Küng argues emphatically that, "The Jesus of history was not a member or a sympathiser of the liberal-conservative government party". Jesus was far from being a priest; he was neither ordained nor did he aspire to exercise institutional control. He was simply and foremost a teacher and peacemaker, to *"guide our feet into the way of peace"* (Luke 1:79), who, in the style of the prophets, taught about new life, love, joy and peace with God and with fellow human beings[591] in the world.

Küng believes that historical-critical research can give us confirmation that the Christ of faith is also the Jesus of history. It is easy to distort the image of Christ through superstitions. Theologians have the responsibility to take seriously the religious difficulties and doubts of contemporary men and women; it is their task to defend the Christian faith against "distortions and false conclusions on the part of the church." Thus, we have not just "a faith seeking historical understanding" but also "a historical understanding seeking faith"[592]. This means that our belief in Jesus must be historically rooted and verified. Küng insists that the findings of historical-critical exegesis cannot be ignored, evaded, or domesticated by Neo-scholastic conservatism.

Küng concludes that, "We cannot make Jesus a guerrilla fighter, a rebel, a political agitator and revolutionary or turn his message of God's kingdom into a programme of politico-social

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[590]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 100-102.

[591]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 517-521.

[592]Küng, H. *Theology for the Third Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), reviews favourably Edward Schillebeeckx's work, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology and Christ. The Experience of Jesus as Lord.* Schillebeeckx's writings reinforceKüng's own theological presuppositions in his *On Being a Christian* and *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*. He believes there is a "fundamental hermeneutical agreement" between him and Schillebeeckx. See *Theology for the Third Millennium*, pp. 108-110.

action…[593]" He calls Christians to take Jesus' exemplary life from and in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus challenged the crowds not to resist the evildoer, but to do good to those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, to pray for those who persecute us. Küng rightly observes that Che Guevara (the Argentinean guerrilla fighter) or Camillo Torress (the Columbian revolutionary priest) has less right than Gandhi or Martin Luther King to claim Jesus as their example[594]. Therefore, this exemplary life of Jesus was demonstrated on the Cross, and it becomes the key principle for Christians in overcoming violence.

One could also say that Küng has carefully developed a "quadrilateral" response to the Jesus of history. He locates each of these options in contemporary religion and especially in his own Roman Catholic Church. The Sadducees, representing the establishment, are the bishops in their various ranks; the zealots are the Catholic and Protestant liberation theologians; the ascetic Essenes represent the monastic movement and similar non-Catholic withdrawal movements; and finally, the Pharisees are the canon lawyers of the past and the present leaders of the common faithful to the life of legalistic observance[595]. He demonstrates the parallels between the institution in Jesus' day and the power struggle of the Catholic hierarchy in this century.

Küng then challenges us to identify with Jesus who stood far above those social options. Following Jesus in this context means an attitude that is critical of the ruling forces of traditional Christianity. It, therefore, means, as Christians, we should show the way of peace to the complex world marked with different forms of violence. We can surmise that Jesus was more revolutionary than the revolutionaries.

What exactly does this mean? To Jesus, it simply means "love of enemies instead of their destruction, unconditional forgiveness instead of retaliation, readiness to suffer instead of using force, and blessings for peacemakers instead of hymns of hate and revenge"[596]. Jesus, therefore, did not demand or set in motion a socio-political revolution. What he did set rolling was a decidedly non-violent revolution, emerging from human's innermost and secret nature, from the personal centre, from the heart of humanity into society. There was to be no continuing in the old

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[593]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 187.
[594]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 189.
[595]Patterson, *Maker of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 110-115.
[596]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 191.

ways, but a radical change in human's thinking and a conversion, away from all forms of selfishness toward God and his fellow men. Küng's Christology of peace must be considered as the basic ground on which the Christian (or the DOV) stands for the effective sustainable strength that will keep him/her from flagging in the efforts to break the cycles of violence and join in building communities of peace.

Therefore, the experience of Jesus was already interpreted in advance by the biblical authors; the message of salvation was given to us coloured by the experience of the synoptic gospel writers and of Paul and John. They came from a cultural milieu that is totally different from ours; thus, the same gospel message has to be "mediated afresh today"[597]. The criterion for the Christian faith is the "living Jesus of history" and not the "historical image of Jesus". Küng believes that a historical-critical approach to biblical study "can clarify for us how the concrete contents of early Christian faith were fulfilled through the Jesus of faith"[598]. If rooted in the gospel of peace taught and preached by Jesus as a means of reconciliation, peaceful coexistence in our society marked by different forms of violence may become possible.

As a matter of fact, violence is present in all its many forms as seen in the Nigeria case but to have communities of peace there is a need to have well established network of support involving the women, youth and child welfare offices, the police and the schools. The Nigerian churches have not until now been represented in this network advocated by the DOV. One must asked the inevitable question, what would the churches' involvement in this network genuinely offer? In joining the network, the church, above all, would bring with it a coherent vision. Enns[599] observes that, "the people engaged in this work are often worn out by their daily struggle with violence and sometimes frustrating search for ways to break the cycle."

Therefore, for Christians, the vision of the kingdom of God offers a possibility that needs to be spelled out afresh with regard to overcoming violence – the kingdom of God which has already dawned here among us and which awaits its perfection. The dream of a world of justice and peace is translated for Christians into the language of the kingdom of God. In it is founded their deepest hope that violence can actually be overcome because this hope is part of the reality

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[597]Küng, *Theology of the Third Millennium*, p. 110.
[598]Quoted in Küng, *Theology of the Third Millennium*, p. 111.
[599]Enns, *Breaking the Cycle of Violence*, pp. 180-189.

which comes into our violent world through Jesus Christ. This changes the way Christians look at the world as it is, and this rehabilitated perspective creates the enthusiasm to strive to overcome violence, to take bold steps against all apparent odds, and open the way for churches to reinterpret their own experiences which promote the dignity of all.

6.4 Radical Humanism[600]

Küng in *On Being a Christian* hits out at official representation of churches that lack genuine humanity and gives the impression that being a Christian cannot be an "authentically human possibility." He argues that the humanisation of the whole person ought to be complementary to being a Christian – "The Christian factor must be made not at the expense of the human, but for the benefit of the latter." Another important point he makes is that human nature is not static and immutable, but dynamic and constantly changing, and should be seen as a social reality. At the same time, he cautions that a person's freedom cannot be obtained solely by changing social conditions because the human being needs a basic spiritual bond and truth. In the light of this, Küng argues that if a person believes Jesus Christ to be the concrete guiding principle and model, he can live a different, more authentic human life[601].

Thus, through belief in Jesus Christ, human beings can develop new insights and tendencies – the disposition to commit oneself to one's fellow men and women, to identify with the handicapped, and to fight against unjust social and economic structures that cause mistrust and violence. Imitating Christ leads to new projects and actions, not only universal programmes to transform society, but "concrete signs, testimonies, and evidence of humanity and humanising both the individual and human society." The realisation of the Kingdom of God can come about only through the positive and negative aspects of human life as mirrored in the paschal mystery of Christ – his suffering, death and resurrection[602]. According to James E Will, the concept of humanism shows how peace with justice is evident in the life, message, death, and resurrection

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[600]Atkinson and Field, *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, pp. 466-469. Atkinson and Field say, "Humanism is a system of thought that considers that solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs. It emphasizes the fact that the basic nature of human is good."
[601]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 530-531.
[602]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 552-553.

of Jesus. The major illuminator of both personal and political peace explains the Christology of peace as major contribution to society[603].

Being a Christian is not an addition to one's humanity, Küng argues. Thus, being a Christian, one does not cease to be human and vice versa. The Christian feature is neither a "superstructure nor a substructure of the human." To be a Christian means other humanisms are transfigured and are affirmed as the human reality with all its positive and negative aspects. Christians see humanity, freedom, justice, peace, and so on, in the light of Jesus who is the Christ[604].

Therefore, Küng calls for a radical humanism that affirms not only the good and beautiful, but integrates and copes with what is not good, untrue, and inhuman. This means that true humanism embraces suffering and death. Only the crucified Christ can give meaning to suffering and death in the human existence, and even when reason breaks down, in pointless misery, Christians can still find meaning in life if they are sustained by God. Faith in Jesus brings peace but it does not get rid of our problems; it makes us truly human when we respond to the needs of our neighbour[605]. Hence, this poses a challenge within the Nigerian society that is confronted with different forms of violence.

According to Atkinson and Field, humanism can be defined as any view that recognises the value of the dignity of persons and wants the human condition to improve. Humanism emerged as an intellectual movement that developed alongside the Renaissance. At its heart was a basic confidence in the power of human intellectual and cultural achievements. Specifically, humanists advocated a new approach to education which was modelled on the form and content of the languages[606]. In the sixteenth century, an amalgam of evangelical piety and classical scholarship produced a Christian or biblical humanism. As such, the sources of wisdom were to be found in the world of Greek and Roman philosophers[607]. The Christian humanists sought the purest truth and the return to the source of the faith, the Scriptures which build and strengthen humanity to face the challenges of violence with confidence in Jesus who sustains us.

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[603]Will, J. E. *A Christology of Peace: How We Interpret and Apply What We Know about Jesus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989, p. 1.
[604]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 602.
[605]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 602.
[606]Atkinson and Field, *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, pp. 465-469.
[607]Ferguson, S. B. and Wright, D. F. (eds.). *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1988, p. 415.

In the light of the above, Küng does not seem to see any distinction between Christianity and humanism, as they merge in the name of Christ. He calls the humanisation of man/woman the condition of true service to God, and calls for a radical humanism, a humanitarian concern, which was exemplified by leaders such as Martin Luther King (Jr.), Pope John XXIII and John F. Kennedy. Küng declares that the historical Jesus demonstrated such humanitarian concern in the name of his Father in heaven. Jesus reflected this in his ministry because he introduced the ministry of peace and reconciliation. Küng agrees with contemporary theology, which has demonstrated that the church was established after the resurrection, and when Jesus called himself the "son of man", he did not claim any institutional position[608].

Küng calls Jesus the "advocate" of humanity. Jesus comes to the rescue of the common man/woman, of the outcast, and of the public offender[609]. By this attitude, Jesus shattered the foundations of the whole theology and ideology of hierarchy and by following this Jesus, the contemporary Christian should seek a humanitarian church which has incorporated a radical humanism within its structure. Only along these lines is there hope for the renewal of the Churches and the establishment of a culture of peace in a contemporary society like Nigeria. "No world peace without religious peace" is the conclusion Küng drew as early as 1982 in a series of dialogue lectures on Christianity and Islam at the University of Tubingen. He pleaded for a global change of consciousness which is vital for our survival saying, "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions"[610].

However, churches reacted against the freedom of religion and conscience. Thus, humanism called upon the often rather unchristian churches to translate into reality what were truly Christian values such as freedom, equality, fraternity, peace and human dignity. Küng argues that, "it was precisely by being religiously and ecclesiastically emancipated in modern autonomy that the human element could once again find a home in the domain of Christianity - before all

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[608]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 189- 202, 383-386.
[609]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 401-405.
[610]Küng, H. *Islam Past, Present and Future "A Magnificent Tour de Force by our Greatest Living Theologian"*. Banbury: Oneworld Publication, 2007, pp. 67, 69.

other religions"[611]. Thus, insofar as a religion serves the virtue of humanity, supports human beings in their dignity, and allows them to gain a meaningful and peaceful existence, it is a true and good religion. However, if religion spreads inhumanity and hinders human beings in their human identity and meaningfulness, it prevents them from achieving a meaningful and peaceful existence; it is a false and bad religion[612]. This means that the more humane Christianity is, the more it appears to the outside as a true religion and a turning point for peace in the world at large (and Nigeria in particular). It is striking that Küng argues that the Christian message must be translated into our world of experience; the word of God can only be meaningful when it is experienced as a liberating answer to the problems of life.

6.5 Radical Transcendence

The second principle of radical transcendence emerged in relation to the revolutionary Zealots of Jesus' days. Küng finds similar political movements in Latin America under the tutelage of liberation theologians[613] and the passive church is being confronted by its militant followers[614]. Küng rejects the one-sidedness of the church as well as of the social or political activist, or of the merely spiritual dimension over against the purely social approach to life. Even the Neo-Marxists have discovered their "one dimensionality" and are searching for "socialism with a human face"[615]. In this one-dimensional world of unfreedom, both the individual and the group, nations, races, classes are constantly forced to be distrustful, afraid of others and even of themselves, to hate, and to suffer endlessly. This is not just a better society, not justice for all, not freedom for the individual, not real love.

Küng's question is that, in view of this human situation, should one not conclude perhaps with a pious assurance of our horror of all metaphysics that the really other dimension cannot be found on the plane of the linear, the horizontal, the finite, the purely human? Does not genuine transcending presuppose genuine transcendence? Are we not now perhaps more open-minded about this question? Küng observes that progressive Marxists like Machovec demand from the Orthodox Marxist party morally inspiring ideals, models and standards of values. They also

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[611]Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium*, pp. 118-120.
[612]Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium*, p. 123.
[613]Similarly, Nigeria is confronted by the revolutionary Islamic fundamentalists known as the Boko Haram movement.
[614]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, p.115.
[615]Küng, H. *Does God Exist? An Answer for Today*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co, 1980, p. 114.

demand that the younger generation be the voice of consciousness of the "new generation", the liberals and radical revolutionaries whom Küng criticises as having certainly neglected the decisive factor in the solution to these problems and the greatest and most urgent requirement of our time[616].

Ferguson and Wright argue that if we consider God's relationship with the world, it can be said that God is both transcendent and immanent in his world. These nineteenth century words express the thought that, on the one hand, God is distinct from his world, does not need it, and exceeds any created intelligence that is in it (a truth sometimes expressed by speaking of the mystery and incomprehensibility of God). On the other hand, he permeates the world in sustaining creative power, shaping and steering it in a way that keeps it on the planned course[617].

Therefore, God is seen as a transcendent being, entity, or substance beyond this world. In contrast, the life giving activity, as the ontological foundation of Confucian love, is an activity in this world to transcend the world itself. To use the Heideggerian terms, "the Christian God is a being, even if it is the first, highest, and most fundamental being… being of being"[618]. It is true that, despite Heidegger's so-called ontological turn in philosophy, it is widely believed among Christian theologians that the idea of God as an absolute being and object of worship is superior to an idea of God as absolute activity in theology. Nevertheless, several perceptive contemporary Christian theologians have seen the problem with the traditional Christian conception of God and tried to provide a re-conception. For example, Kaufman argues that the traditional conception of a deified God as an entity is not only unintelligible to contemporary consciousness but also problematic politically, metaphysically, and theologically[619]. Therefore, Kaufman argues that a

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[616]Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium*, p. 120.
[617]Ferguson and Wright, 1998, pp. 551-552.
[618]Huang, Y. *Religious Goodness and Political Rightness: Beyond the Liberal-communitarian Debate.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001, p. 49.
[619]Kauffman, G. *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993, pp. 270-272. Politically, "the conception of all-powerful cosmic agent can easily become, for example, a notion of an essentially authoritarian tyrant, one who is arbitrary and unjust in the exercise of omnipotence". Metaphysically, "the world-picture generated in connection with it [the traditional notion of God] is fundamentally dualistic and is thus difficult to reconcile with major strands of contemporary thinking". Theologically, "it is not clear just what might count as a reason for speaking of the existence and nature of some being-a cosmic agent- who exists on the other side of a metaphysical divide as absolute as that supposed to obtain between the creator and creation" (Kaufman, pp. 270-272).

more appropriate understanding of the Christian God is that he is not creator but creativity, i.e. those evolutionary and historical processes creating, sustaining, and enhancing our humanity[620].

According to Küng[621], a new awareness of transcendence, needed in the midst of this technological world, is a liberating breakaway from present conditions through the choice of a new lifestyle – the development of new powers to control the technological machinery, of a new independence and personal responsibility, of sensitivity, of aesthetic sentiment, of the capacity for love, the possibility of new ways of living and working together. Reich, therefore, rightly demands a new definition of values and priorities and a new reflection on religion and ethics, so that a really new man and a new society become possible. He states that, "The power [of the new consciousness] is not the power of manipulating procedures or the power of politics or street fighting, but the power of new values and a new way of life"[622]. This concept by Küng stands as a way forward in overcoming violence in societies.

Küng discovers the answer for the Church and the social activist in the principle of "radical transcendence" as proclaimed by Jesus. The radical transcendence should be the synthesis of spirituality and social realism[623]. The concept of transcendence should in this context not be defined in the traditional sense of "God above us" nor in the pietistic sense of "God in us" but in the eschatological sense of God before us"[624]. The advent of God's Kingdom was for Christ and should be for us an imminent reality which is coming to us in spite of any human effort or revolution. What kind of transcendence is this? That there is a transcendent Source and Destiny of reality is a formal assumption that has no relevance on its own. What matters is the content of the concept of the transcendent, which provides the foundation of a system of meaning, however tentative and fluid it may be, without which human life becomes erratic and unstable[625]. A system of meaning defines one's individual and collective identity within the whole; it sets up

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[620]Kauffman, *In Face of Mystery*, pp. 330-331.

[621]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 57-61.

[622]Reich, C. *The Greening of America*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 223.

[623]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 113-116.

[624]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 224. Küng endorses the theology of hope by Jungern Moltmann, see p. 608, note 15.

[625]"In a "post-foundational" worldview, the concept of "foundation" raises eyebrows. But a foundation, a basis, a rootedness does not have to be static and inflexible. Due to the force of gravity, we are all nailed to an earth that flies around the sun at an incredible speed, yet we can stand or move around on this earth as if it were completely static. We can also make ourselves comfortable in the seat of an airliner that flies through thin air at a speed of 800 km an hour. Without some kind of stability, biological life and spiritual meaning would be impossible" Küng, pp. 72-80.

differentiated criteria of acceptability. It allocates differentiated authority in the form of status and roles. Christianity would add spiritual liberation, benevolent motivation and spiritual empowerment to these general prerequisites of human existence. Without such determination, it would appear that Christianity has ended up in the kind of spiritual entropy that we witness in post-modernity today.

Furthermore, Küng maintains that radical transcendence requires a radical conversion, a new way of thinking and acting[626], which could change the world's culture of violence into a culture of non-violence. It is in the context of social realism that Küng speaks about the personal decision for Christ, as a commitment to the realization of the Kingdom of God:

> What does this mean for man? That he cannot take existing things in this world and society as definitive. That for him neither the world nor he himself can be the first and the last. That the world and he himself simply as such are utterly relative, uncertain and unstable; that he is therefore living in a critical situation, however much he likes to close his eyes to it. He is pressed to make a final decision, to accept the offer to commit himself to the reality of God, which is ahead of him[627].

Certainly, no one today could hold the naïve opinion that the synoptic account of the end of the world is a scientific account of what will happen. What is announced, with the aid of imagery familiar at the time, is the eschatological definitive revelation of God's rule which is brought about solely by God's power and which, as we know better today, transcends all our ideas and imagery. What really matters today is whether Jesus' basic idea, the reality with which he was concerned in the proclamation of the future kingdom of God, still makes sense in the completely transformed horizon of experiences of men who in principle have come to terms with the fact that world history is continuing, at least for the time being[628].

Küng points out that this hope in God's future allows, even assigns, the Christian to interpret the world and its history and to criticise and transform society accordingly. Neither the maintenance of the status quo nor a revolutionary social change can be justified in the light of God's future Kingdom[629]. According to Küng, a transcendent view of the world will have its own transforming impact on society; a genuine hope for God's future will determine the present. Jesus rejected the

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[626]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 113-116.
[627]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 116-117.
[628]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 221.
[629]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, p. 222.

mere visionary apocalyptic as well as the militant Zealots, mentioned below. It is the synthesis of ecstasy and crusade, which creates the non-violent social transformation advocated by Jesus and in our generation by men like Gandhi and Martin Luther King (Jr.)[630].

God's absolute future throws man back on the present. The future cannot be isolated at the expense of the present.

> The Kingdom of God cannot be merely a consoling promise for the future, the satisfaction of pious curiosity about the future, the projection of unfulfilled promises and fears… it is precisely in the light of the future that men ought to be initiated into the present[631].

Therefore one subscribe to Küng that, it is in hope itself that the present world and society are not only to be interpreted but also changed. Jesus did not want to provide information about the end of time, but to issue a call for the present in view of the approaching end.

6.5.1 Immanent transcendence

According to Nurnberger[632], immanent transcendence means that humans are able to think, plan and act beyond the small sphere of reality that is accessible to their immediate experience, but staying within immanent reality as such. People go beyond what is experienced towards what is known, but not experienced; beyond what is known to the knowable unknown, that is, what could be known but is not (yet) known, and beyond the knowable to the unknowable, that is, to that part of immanent reality that cannot be known because humans lack the capacity to know it. The area of the knowable unknown is vast in its own right. The famous physicist and Nobel laureate Werner Heisenberg remarks that, "The existing scientific concepts cover always only a very limited part of reality and the other part that has not yet been understood is infinite"[633].

There are also more simple and self-evident forms of immanent transcendence. In terms of space, any place that one does not presently occupy is transcendent. In terms of power, any energy that is not available to man is transcendent. In terms of time, the past is transcendent because it is no

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[630]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, p. 223.
[631]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 290.
[632]Nurnberger, K. in Richard Dawkins' *God Delusion: A Repentant Refutation*. London: Xlibris, 2001, pp. 4-9.
[633]Heisenberg, W. *Physic and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*. Amherst NY: Prometheus. 1999, p. 201.

more and the future is transcendent because it is not yet[634]. In the present, the potentials that have not been realised are transcendent. The Other is transcendent in as far as it is not immediately experienced, whether we think of other persons, other languages, other systems of meaning, other mind-sets, other academic disciplines, other cultures, or the emotional experiences of others.

In a deeper sense, the self as another is transcendent. Here one can think of the instinctive and the subconscious levels of the mind. It always eludes us; it is never in our possession. One can also think of the intention to reach an improved, more emancipated, more self-controlled, more powerful, more wealthy, more efficient, more fulfilled, more enlightened, or more comprehensive self. In each of these cases, the experienced self is contrasted with a potential and desired self.

Moving into the field of ethics, one can think of what Platonic thought calls "essence", what existentialists call "authenticity", and what faith calls 'the will of God'. This is of particular interest to our topic because the scientific exploration of what reality has in fact become (or is in the process of becoming) does not lead to a vision of what reality ought to become. However, it should be clear that, in contrast to immanent transcendence, the radically transcendent as such is, by definition, not accessible to human observation, interpretation and manipulation; otherwise, it would not be the transcendent[635]. God can also not be confined to a metaphysical construct which would indeed be an idol.

What faith relates to, and what theology deals with, is a notion of the transcendent. Such a notion is part of immanent reality. It emerged and evolved in human history in response to changing human needs. It can be described, critiqued, transformed, replaced or abandoned. If that were not the case, theology would make no sense at all. However, faith assumes that in an extremely partial, provisional and problematic way, this notion is a reflection of the disclosure, within human revolutionary history, of a basic intentionality (not ontology) that underlies reality as a whole, thus, the intentionality of the transcendent Source and Destiny of reality (1 Cor. 13:9-13). It is like an Eastern Orthodox icon that refers the observer to something beyond, or a tiny,

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[634]Kauffman, G. *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason and Religion*: New York: Basic Books, 2008, p.231.
[635]Kauffman, *Reinventing the Sacred*, pp. 231-235.

smirched window through which the rays of the sun fall into a prison cell. The *reassurance* that the ultimate Source and Destiny of reality is for us and with us, and not against us is the foundation of the biblical faith. Scrap this assumption and you would have scrapped the biblical faith! Then the believer is alone with him/herself, thrown upon his/her own spiritual resourcefulness and moral achievement – precisely the existential situation that the New Testament message seeks to overcome[636].

6.5.2 The social context

If Jesus Christ himself is the distinctive feature of Christianity, and if the same Jesus Christ is also the programme of Christianity, the questions is, who is this Jesus? What did he want? For whoever he was and whatever he wanted, Christianity is bound to seem different in the light of what each of us understands of his person and attitude. The questions have been raised not only in a modern context, but also in Jesus' own time, and they become finally questions of life and death. Jesus did not belong to the ecclesiastical and social establishment.

Küng argues that Jesus was not concerned about the religious or political status quo, but his thinking was dominated wholly and entirely by the prospect of a better future for the world and for humanity. Jesus expected an imminent radical change in every situation, and a world of peace, that was why he criticised in word and deed the existing order and radically questioned the ecclesiastical establishment[637]. Küng claims that for Jesus, the temple liturgy and legalistic piety were not the supreme norm; he lived in a different world from that of the hierarchs and politicians, who were fascinated by Roman world power and Hellenistic civilisation. Jesus believed in the advent, the near future of God's rule over the world, which would bring with it the eschatological and final consummation of the world. Jesus was sustained therefore by an intense expectation of the end. The existing system was not final, history was moving toward its end and his generation would see it. Küng argues that Jesus shared the belief that God would soon, within his lifetime, end the course of the world; therefore, what was anti-God and Satanic would be destroyed. Hardship, suffering, death and violence would be abolished; salvation and

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[636]Swimme, B. *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos: Humanity and the New Story*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996, p. 2.
[637]Temple liturgy and legalistic piety were the two foundations of the Jewish religion and the national community since Israel's return from the Babylonian exile in the fifth century and the reform of the scribe Ezra. Swimme, *The Hidden Heart,* p. 3.

peace, as the prophets proclaimed, would be established. This becomes the greatest hope for the Nigerian society and church.

6.5.3 Non-violent revolution

Küng stresses that it is clear that Jesus' non-violent revolution was not an act typical of the Zealots, not an act of sheer violence and still less an open revolt. Jesus did not intend to expel all tradesmen, to take possession of the temple or to reorganise temple and priests, as the Zealots wanted to do. It was of course a deliberate provocation, a symbolic act, an individual prophetic sign in action, a demonstrative condemnation of these goings-on and of the hierarchs who profited by them[638]. This shows that Jesus did not belong to the establishment; undoubtedly, it was a flagrant challenge to the hierarchy.

However, for Küng, Jesus raised fundamental questions about the religious social system, the existing order of Jewish law and temple, and to this extent, his message had political consequences. At the same time, it must be noted that, for Jesus, political social revolution is just not the alternative to the system, the establishment, the existing order. Therefore, the churches in Nigeria have no right to be involved in the violence or to claim Jesus as their example. According to Küng, the Zealot revolutionaries wanted to act against the establishment's immobility and preoccupation with power; they wanted not only to give a theological clarification of reality but to change it politically, pursue their aspirations with ruthless logic, and seize things radically. In this radical spirit, they struggled for the ultimate realisation of the *eschaton*, of the kingdom of God, if necessary in God's name, by armed force.

Küng calls Christians' attention to the fact that Jesus approved neither the method nor the aims of the revolutionary radicalism of the Zealots, who regarded the overthrow of the anti-God Roman state as a divine obligation and who were seeking a restoration of the old order (a nationalistic re-establishment of the great kingdom of David). Jesus was different, provocative even in this respect. Jesus did not preach a revolution, either of the right or the left:

> There was no call to refuse payment of taxes: give Caesar what is Caesar's - but do not give him what is God's. No proclamation of war of national liberation... no propagation of class struggle:

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[638]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 189.

unlike so many militants of his time… no gloomy social-revolutionary abstemiousness… no abolition of the law for the sake of the revolution…[639]

Küng also remarks that Jesus' message did not culminate in an appeal to bring about a better future by force, rather he said that anyone who takes up the sword would fall by the sword; he appealed for enunciation of force. Jesus then did not demand, and even less set in motion, a political social revolution. What he did get going was a decidedly non-violent revolution – a revolution emerging from human's innermost and secret nature, from the personal centre, from the heart of humanity, into society which the first Christians followed at the time of the great Jewish rebellion[640]. When the war broke out, they did not assume a common cause with the Zealot revolutionaries but fled from Jerusalem to Pella on the other side of the Jordan. This is unlike the present actions of the Nigerian churches and society.

Accordingly, the Nigerian churches and society need a changed awareness, a new way of thinking, and a new scale of values. The evil or violence that has to be overcome lies not only in the system, in the structures, but also in human's inner freedom which has to be established and would lead to freedom from external powers that influence some groups and individuals. Society has to be transformed through the transformation of the individual. Küng rightly states that, "We do not arrive at peace through syncretism but through reform of ourselves; we arrive at renewal through harmony, and at self-criticism through toleration"[641]. Therefore, what is being advocated here is the theology and ethics of peace which seeks peace not by bracketing off the question of truth but by incorporating it and responding to it, and which, above all, discloses and helps to work out those conflicts and points of unrest in the world where the religions themselves are the cause.

6.6 Radical Love

Patterson notes that Küng's work postulates that modern man finds two principles delineated in the sociological context of the historical Jesus[642]. First is the principle of radical humanisation in tension with the authoritarian religious establishment, and second is the principle of radical

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[639]Küng, H. and Kuschal, K. *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.* New York: Continuum, 1993, pp. 34-41.

[640]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 190, 191.

[641]Küng, *Global Responsibility*, pp. 130-134.

[642]Patterson, *Making of the Modern Theological Mind*, p.116.

transcendence as a synthesis of utopian ecstasy and militant social activism. A third principle emerges in discussing the ascetic withdrawal practiced in Jesus' day by the Essenes and by the earlier Qumran community. Christian history also has similar movements, which reacted to the worldliness of religious people and withdrew into solitary places to establish a holy community. However, Küng discovers in the ministry of Jesus, a Hegelian[643] synthesis of two contrasting lifestyles, of worldliness and other worldliness, of attachment and detachment.

Küng states that apart from the formulation of the Ten Commandments, drawn from Scriptures, Jesus, in the synoptic gospels, used the words "love" and "loving" in the sense of love of neighbour, nevertheless, love of one's fellow human being is present everywhere in Jesus' proclamation. It is not talk but action, which makes clear the nature of love; practice is the criterion. What is love according to Jesus? Küng argues that, according to Jesus, love is essentially the love of both God and man. Jesus came to fulfil the law by making God's will prevail, and God's will aims at man's wellbeing which the commandments summed up in the dual commandment of love[644]. At the same time, he combines the love of God and the love of human being in an indissoluble unity.

Furthermore, Küng argues that Jesus is not interested in universal, theoretical or poetical love; love does not consist primarily in words or feelings but in great, courageous deeds. According to Jesus, love is not simply love of men but essentially loves of the neighbour. In Küng's view, "Christian love is also love, not of humanity in general, of someone remote, with whom we are not personally involved, but quite concretely of one's immediate neighbour"[645]. Loving God is proved in loving our neighbour and, in fact, the love of our neighbour is the exact yardstick of the love of God. The common denominator of the love of God and the love of our neighbour, therefore, is the abandonment of selfishness and the will to self-sacrifice[646].

It should be understood, as Küng has pointed out, that the love that Christians advocate is a universal love without distinction – with Jesus, every human being (as in the parable of the Good

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[643]Addison, T. and Brruck, T. *Making Peace Work: The Challenge of Social and Economic Reconstruction*. Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2009, p. 147.

[644]Küng, *On Being Christian,* pp. 255-262.

[645]Küng, H. "Confucianism: Ethical humanism as religion? A Christian response", in H. Küng and J. Ching (eds.). *Christianity and Chinese Religion*. New York: Doubleday, 1989, pp. 93-129.

[646]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 255-256.

Samaritan) can become my neighbour. Jesus wants to overcome the flesh and blood distinction between family and strangers, adherents to one's own religion and those of others, comrades and non-comrades[647]. Such a radical love has been vividly expressed in teachings of Jesus such as, "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you...*" (Luke 6:26).

It is in the light of this that Campbell[648] notes that Jesus of Nazareth identified with the people around him through his actions and teaching. His love for others was expressed in specific teachings about the nature of God and his relation to humanity. It was expressed in concern for particular individuals with a distinct bias for the poor and the disadvantaged, and it brought him into conflict with the religious and political authorities of the day. God's love, in a profound and mysterious way, has overcome evil. According to Kyle and Fedler, one of the most striking features of Jesus' life and ministry was his compassion for other people. Jesus did more than respect the many downtrodden and outcast peasants among whom he spent most of his life; he felt compassion for them. Jesus so identified with people that their suffering became his suffering. It is not simply on the Cross that Jesus took on the suffering of humanity, but throughout his entire life. For example, when Jesus met a widow whose only son had died, Luke tells us that the reason he resurrected the man was because Jesus had compassion on her (Luke 7:13). His compassion involved solidarity with other people toward the goal of transforming them by his love[649]. It means that Jesus saw in the least and the lowest members of society, children of God, made in the image of his Father.

6.6.1 Love of enemies

Küng explains that, for Jesus, love is not merely the love of a neighbour but essentially the love of enemies[650]. Only with Jesus do we find the requirement of loving our enemies set out as part of a programme for Christian duty. It is typical of Jesus not to recognise the ingrained frontier and estrangement between those of one's own group and those outside. Jesus showed openness which in fact burst through the immovable frontiers between members of different nations and

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[647]Küng, *Confucianism*, p. 125.

[648]Campbell, A. V. (ed.). *New Dictionary of Pastoral Care: A Dictionary of Pastoral Care*. Marylebone: Longdunn, 1990, p. 150.

[649]Fedler, K. D. *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006, p. 178.

[650]Küng, *On Being Christian*, p. 266.

religions. For him, it is not the fellow national or the co-religionist who counts, but the neighbour who can confront us in any human being – even in a political or religious opponent, rival, antagonist, and adversary, enemy. This is Jesus' concrete political universalism.

For Küng, it is an openness, not only for member of one's own social group, stock, nation, race, class, party, church, to the exclusion of others, but an unlimited openness and overcoming of demarcation lines wherever they are drawn. The openness results in the practical breaking down of existing frontiers between Jews and non-Jews or Christians and Muslims, those who are near and those who are far away. For example, Jews and Samaritans cursed each other publicly in religious services, and they would not accept assistance from one another.

However, Jesus had a different motive – the perfect imitation and reflection of God. God can be rightly understood only as the Father who makes no distinction between friend and foe, who lets the sun shine and the rain fall on the good and the bad, who bestows his love even on the unworthy. Through love, human beings are to prove themselves sons and daughters of this Father and become brothers and sisters after being enemies. Therefore, God's love of enemies is the reason for man's love of enemies.

The question is whether radical love without distinction is appropriate in an increasingly global and pluralistic society; the answer is in the affirmative. First, as we have seen, the Christian conception of love often conflicts with the idea of social justice[651]. For example, when we follow the Christian idea to love neighbours and enemies, do we do justice to both in the same way? A possible answer to this question might be that Christian love can function as a way to realise justice[652]. We love our enemies, the evil people, the vicious ones, not to approve what they have done but to conquer them by loving them so that they would cease to be evil. One believes indeed that love has such a function sometimes, but it is apparently not what Jesus meant by his radical love. Niebuhr explains it clearly thus:

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[651]Fletcher, J (n.d.). *Moral Responsibility: Situation Ethics at Work*. London: SCM Press, pp. 42-57. Of course, we might want to say that there is no conflict between Christian love and justice, as love can be seen as the foundation of justice. Joseph Fletcher, for example, argues that the Christian love is not a one to one relationship. When one follows the Christian commandment to love one's neighbours, one will realize that there is more than one neighbour to love. Thus, if justice is to mean to treat one's neighbours equally, it is not different from love. Justice is nothing but manifold love (Fletcher, pp. 42-57).

[652]Heyward, C. *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and Love of God*. New York: Harper and Row, 1998, p. 29.

> Jesus did not counsel his disciples to forgive seventy times seven in order that they might convert their enemies or make them more favourably disposed. He counselled it as an effort to approximate complete moral perfection, the perfection of God. He did not ask his followers to go the second mile in the hope that those who had pressed them into service would relent and give them freedom. He did not say that an enemy ought to be loved so that he would cease to be enemy. He did not dwell upon the social consequences of those moral actions, because he viewed them from an inner and a transcendent perspective[653].

Such Christian love, just as Kant's categorical imperative, is absolute. It is in this sense that Niebuhr believes that religious ideal in its purest form has nothing to do with the problem of social justice, since it submits to any demands however unjust, and yields to any claims, however inordinate[654]. Obviously, Christian love, as Niebuhr points out, is a love from the inner and transcendent perspective of the one who loves.

Küng argues that, radical love then is the synthesis of selective love and mystic love, of particularism and generalism, of exclusivism and inclusivism. "Radical love" is enunciated especially in the encounter with the separatistic ascetics[655]. Jesus associated with the masses as he healed, encouraged and forgave those who were rejected by society and by the religious leaders. Küng also notes that Jesus' ministry of humble service stood in sharp contrast to the principles of the Qumran community. For example, where the leaders said no blind or maimed man or lame or deaf person should enter into the community, Jesus testified, "the blind see and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear" (Luke 17:22). Whereas the Qumran people required hating one's enemies, Jesus upheld loving them as the highest axiom.

Therefore, for Küng, radical love means a life of forgiveness, service and renunciation. None of Jesus' instructions should be interpreted in a legalistic manner. For Jesus, radical love is a voluntary commitment aimed at concrete acts of unselfish service, for instance, going the second mile with the person who already has forced you to go one mile or presenting the left cheek to him who has already struck you on the right cheek. "Such examples indicate that Jesus did not see these admonitions as legalistic applications of the law. Rather, they were borderline cases illustrating what might be needed in some situation"[656]. Radical love exceeds the selective love of

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[653]Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp. 263-264.
[654]Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 263-264.
[655]Patterson, *Maker of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 116-117.
[656]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 255.

the Essenes and of later communal movements, because radical love expects each Christian in any situation to demonstrate the love of God.

Therefore, love is a notion which enables us to deepen our appreciation of the divine nature as we follow the historical Jesus. This is just how far love goes, particularly in ordinary life. Küng claims that it can be seen under three headings, which serve to define this radical love in a very concrete way, as it exists between individuals or between social groups, nations, races, classes, parties, and churches: (a) love means forgiving (b) love means service, and (c) love means renunciation[657]. From this standpoint, even the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament seem to fall within the threefold Hegelian view.

Love means forgiving – Reconciliation with one's brother comes before the worship of God. There is no reconciliation with God without prior reconciliation with one's brother. The parable of the magnanimous king and his unmerciful servant clearly explains that the forgiveness that man receives depends on his ability to forgive others. Therefore, it is typical of Jesus that readiness to forgive has no limits[658].

Love means service – humility, having the courage to serve, is the way to true greatness. This is the meaning of the parable of the wedding feast Abasement follows self-exaltation, the embarrassment of demotion and exaltation follows self-abasement, the honour of promotion. It was typical of Jesus to demand self-denying service, regardless of rank. Jesus' requirement of service is not to be understood as a law forbidding any subordination among his followers. It is, however, a decisive appeal for service even on the part of superiors toward subordinates, that is, for reciprocal service on the part of all.

Love means renunciation – there is a warning against the exploitation of the weak. A resolute renunciation of all that hinders readiness for God and neighbour is required. Expressed forcibly, it means even cutting off one's hand if it leads to temptation. However, Jesus expects renunciation not merely of the negative things of lust and sin but also of positive things of rights and power – for example, renunciation of rights in favour of another person (going two miles with someone who has forced you), renunciation of power at my own expense (giving my cloak

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[657]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 267.
[658]Shriver, D. *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness and Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995, p.191.

also to someone who has already taken my coat) and renunciation of counterforce (presenting the left cheek to someone who has struck me on the right).

Therefore, the biblically grounded philosophy of radical love and non-violence should show the way of peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian society, as the Bible provides the platform for a Christian philosophy of life. The principles of social justice, which it outlines, include a prescription for humanity to live in harmony with God, with fellow human beings, and with the environment. The Nigerian church and society must become cognisant of Jesus' teachings in which he laid an ethical foundation for his followers. Central to the teachings is the message of radical love, and the life of Jesus is a perfect example of the way of radical love. Jesus' command to *love one's enemies, to bless those that curse you...* is both the ideology of his life of radical love and a call to his followers to abide by. He modelled this way of love for his followers and, "In doing so he revealed the nature of God. Jesus demonstrated that God shows unending, non-coercive patience with humanity…"[659] The fact that God acts toward humanity in this way and Christ expects us to forgive as God has forgiven us, points to a non-violent way of life as normative for Christ's followers.

According to Küng, Jesus calls Christians to participate with him in the ministry of reconciliation and healing, and to practice a non-violent resistance that is active, not passive or creative, not choreographed. It seizes the moral initiative by exploring a creative alternative to violence. It asserts the dignity and humanity of all parties, as it seeks to break the cycle of dehumanisation. It makes people face the consequences of their action[660]. In proclaiming the love of one's enemies, it longs to transform the "us versus them" thinking. It works tirelessly for the mutual transformation of the oppressed and the oppressor. Remaining non-violent even in the face of severe provocation, intimidation, and threat, such resistance contributes to social transformation in a profound way. In contrast to the coercive and dominant power of violence, non-violent resistance can unleash the power of truth, love, compassion, justice, and creative collaboration to change lives and whole societies[661].

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[659]Rynne, T. *Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008, p. 158.
[660]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 268.
[661]Butigan, K. "The Spiritual Journey of Christian Non-violent Resistance." P. 3 Accessed on 2nd March 2009 from http//paceebene.org/nvns/nonviolence-news/spiritual-journey-christian-nonviolent-resistance.

Yoder's view in this regard is that peace is an inseparable aspect of redeemed and renewed human relationships. The primary driving force in human history was God working in, with, and through the non-violent, non-resistant community of the disciples of Jesus; that was the ultimate force in human affairs. The primary responsibility of Christians is not to take over society and impose their convictions and values on people who do not share their faith, but to be the church that promotes peaceful co-existence in society[662]. By refusing to return evil for evil, by living in peace, sharing goods, and doing deeds of charity as opportunities arise, the church witnesses to the fact that an alternative to a society based on violence is possible. The church's life is based on the conviction that God calls Christians to imitate the way of Christ in his absolute obedience, even if it leads to their death, for they also will finally be vindicated in resurrection[663]. Therefore, the DOV is called upon to be the imitator of Christ's absolute obedience to the Cross which demonstrated his love for humanity.

6.7 Radical Obedience

Patterson notes that Küng finally discusses the concept of radical obedience in contrast to the legalistic righteousness of the Pharisees and that he further affirms that Jesus challenges us to a life of radical obedience to the will of God[664]. He stresses that the common denominator of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Lord's Prayer is that God's will be done. Küng maintains that God's will is not simply identical with the written law and even less with the tradition which interprets the law. The will of God challenges the total man for the wellbeing of all humanity[665]. Küng argues that a New Testament example was the discussion on the Sabbath. The Pharisees criticised the disciples of Jesus for plucking some ears of grain on the Sabbath day. Jesus used this occasion to state bluntly his view of obedience to the Law – *"The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath"* (Mark 2: 27)[666]. In applying this maxim to all of God's revelation, Küng states that, "from the first to the last page of the Bible, it is clear that God's will aims at

[662]Yoder, J. H. *The Politics of Jesus*. Second Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994, pp. 93-111.

[663]Hauerwas, S. "When the politics of Jesus make a difference". *The Christian Century*, October 13, 1993, pp. 982-987.

[664]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, pp. 117-119.

[665]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 247.

[666]Ratzinger, J. M. *Religion: One Covenant*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999, pp. 109-110.

man's wellbeing at all levels… God wills life, joy, freedom, peace, salvation, and finally, great happiness of man"[667].

Jesus expected no more and no less than a fundamental and total orientation of man's life toward God; an undivided heart in the last resort, serving not two masters but only one. Awaiting God's rule in the midst of the world and among his fellow men, man should give his heart in the last resort simply and solely to God; not to money and possessions, not to right and honour, nor even to parent and family. Küng argues that, according to Jesus, we cannot speak of peace where the sword rules[668]. The Sermon on the Mount is certainly not meant to be a stricter legal ethic. Jesus made it clear that we are meant to put into practice the principles found in the Sermon on the Mount. Further, Jesus called for a radical alternative which goes beyond the destruction of the enemy to taking moral responsibility for the enemy and seeking the enemy's highest good.

For Küng, God's will does not waver nor can it be manipulated. From the concrete requirements of Jesus himself, it should have become clear already that God wills nothing for himself, nothing for his own advantage, for his greater glory. God wills nothing but man's advantage, man's true greatness and his ultimate dignity[669]. This then is God's will – man's wellbeing. Therefore, this radical obedience and identification with God's will and man's wellbeing, which Jesus took up from the standpoint of God's closeness, makes it clear that we are actually faced with something new, and it would be threatening to the old. God is not seen apart from man, or man apart from God. Men cannot be for God and against man, if they want to be devout. They cannot behave in an inhuman way by promoting or participating in violent activities which is against Jesus' teaching.

Küng argues that God's cause is not law, but man. Man therefore replaces a legal system that has been made absolute. Humanity replaces legalism, institutionalism, juridicism, dogmatism. Man's will, it is true, does not replace God's will. However, God's will is made concrete in the light of the concrete situation of man and his fellow men. Patterson says Küng knows from experience

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[667]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 251.
[668]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 249.
[669]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 251.

the psychological benefit a penitential obedience provides[670] – "A law provides security, because we know exactly what we have to keep…"[671]

In the light of this Küng, proceeds to affirm that Jesus challenge us to a life of radical obedience to the will of God. In this connection, he claims that the common denominator of the Sermon on the Mount as well as the Lord's Prayer is that God's will be done. Thus, the contemporary Christian is admonished that, "God's will is not simply identical with the written Law and still less with the tradition which interprets the law"[672]. The will of God challenges the total man for the wellbeing of all humanity, as mentioned above.

Crane, on Küng's work, refers to the story in Mark 10:17-22[673]. A young man came to Jesus and asked, *"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"* Jesus' immediate reaction was the refusal to be identified as just another moral teacher. He knew that ethical systems including the Jews', had become a distortion of God's purpose for the law, as a fence around the life of His people, and that the teachers tyrannise people to divert them from the call to radical obedience to the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom for whose life the moral prescriptions, so dear to this young man, were by themselves inadequate. The young man tried to defend the priorities which until then had governed his life—strict adherence to the moral system of the Jews. However, Jesus led him to the point where this sort of obedience is revealed in all its smug and pharisaic inadequacy – *"You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me"* (Mk. 10:22). The young man did not live up to the challenge of radical obedience to the Master and his Kingdom. He went away sorrowful, for he had many possessions.

The Nigerian church and society have been led to the point where *"the one thing you lack"* and the Lord's demand for radical obedience can no longer be ignored or, worse still, be watered down to superficial, pietistic injunctions. In the light of Darscy's statement about the divine and

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[670]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, p. 118.
[671]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 242.
[672]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 242.
[673]Crane, W. H. "Mission and Radical Obedience". An Address to the *World Mission Conference* Held at Montreat, N. Carolina, USA, 12th August 2001, pp. 4-6.

the demonic manifestations of imperialism and nationalism, it seems that radical obedience must mean three things for us now, as we face the imperative challenge of peace building in our time:

a) Radical obedience demands radical repentance.

b) Radical obedience requires meaningful Christian presence in the world where our Lord sends us as peacemakers.

c) Radical obedience is rendered in the context of the transcendent hope that our Lord has risen and that His Kingdom moves on towards its fulfilment in history[674].

Radical obedience demands radical repentance. On Küng's work, Stephenson rightly remarks that radical obedience is rooted in Jesus whose incarnation, life, death and resurrection have brought forth the beginnings of a new paradigm shift and a new humanity[675]. Our repentance is the Christian response to who Jesus Christ is, what He has done, and what He is still doing in dealing with the hostility of the old order and bringing the new order to its fulfilment in him.

As individuals and as the Church, we cannot claim obedience to Jesus as long as we are not deeply repentant for the way the church and society have acted as instruments of demonic powers which deny men—particularly men of other faith, but also the poor, the disinherited, and the weak of this earth —their full humanity under God. Radical repentance means challenging the structures, systems and attitudes of the society, and especially of the church, as these prevent men from knowing the full freedom and peace that is in Jesus Christ. Radical obedience and radical repentance might mean for many the willingness to become an opposition group in their churches and communities, working quietly and responsibly for the elimination of racial barriers. However, radical repentance means also the readiness to live by forgiving enemies[676]. It does justify the path of deepest loyalty and responsibility of the Church and society. Christian obedience is rendered to Jesus who was obedient unto death, even death on the Cross; the cost of radical obedience and radical repentance should not deter us.

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[674]Darscy, J. *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America.* New York: New York Press 1997, p. 330.
[675]Stephenson, J. R. *HansKüng: The Incarnation of God. An Introduction to Hegel's Theological Thought as Prolegomena to a Future Christology*. New York: New York Press 1989, pp. 291- 301.
[676]Crane, *Mission and Radical Obedience*, p. 331.

Secondly, radical obedience requires a meaningful Christian presence in the world where Jesus sends us as peacemakers. Christians make Jesus' hidden presence manifest and real to those who do not know or recognise him as the source of peace. The fact is that "presence" simply means involvement in concrete nation building for a culture of non-violence and changing the structures of our society that is still dominated by violence. Reynolds articulates this point in his book, *Vulnerable Communion: The Theology of Disability and Hospitality.* He claims that the power of Jesus' presence in this way is received as a liberating gift as well as a provocative demand. It is the promise of a reconciling and emancipatory love upon which those who follow him set their hope, in the expectation of an ultimate fulfilment. Moreover, it is this promise that in turn elicits a *metanoia*, a transformative allegiance and presence, which obligates a person to accept and embody that love[677].

Jesus' followers are called to become as little children, selling all they have, becoming the least, becoming vulnerable, and peace-making caregivers in the service of others. Indeed, Jesus himself embodies this by constantly crossing boundaries and turning around conventional expectations. For him, the kingdom of God resides in a boundary-transgressing openness to God and others. In his love, all people are welcome since "God's love knows none of the conventional distinctions between good and bad. The kingdom of God is radically inclusive"[678]. It truly indicates as priority the reconciling ministry of forgiveness as we see our task clearly as being witnesses of peace which is so dearly needed in the Nigerian society.

Thirdly, radical obedience is rendered to Jesus in the assurance of the transcendent hope that he has risen as conqueror of death, and that his Kingdom moves on to its fulfilment in history[679]. Nigeria is not forever condemned to live in the meaningless repetition of violence and bombs blasts of revolutionary movements which it witnesses daily. The fact is that life has meaning, and history has a direction toward which it is moving, that is, fulfilment under the leadership of Jesus Christ. It is in this hope that we are permitted to live, to affirm life in the midst of all that smells of death, and even to die in the knowledge that death has been swallowed up in victory - the

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[677]Reynolds, T. E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2008, p. 219.
[678]Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, p. 220.
[679]Crane, *Mission and Radical Obedience*, p. 334.

victory of Jesus Christ over the demonic civil rights, the humanisation of life in a technological world. All these must be seen from the perspective of this hope, which does not permit us to take ourselves too seriously, but which nourishes the springs of humour and leads us into the way of peace. According to Küng, we serve our nation best in the way of peace when our primary effort is to obey God. That obedience can help overcome our selfishness and enable us to look beyond our vested interests and attend to the common good of all, regardless of other faiths[680].

6.8 Jesus the Model of Peace

Küng shows that what is ultimately important, in every situation, in every place and at all times is that Christian freedom must constantly be realised afresh, both individually and socially. When Christians take Jesus Christ in his impressiveness, audibility and realisability as the basic model, it gives countless opportunities of putting the Christian programme into practice by attempting to develop systematically a programme of peace. Furthermore, Küng argues that Christian freedom can reveal a new way, not only in extraordinary situations, but more especially in many contradictory situations, by establishing different standards, scales of values and connections of meaning. According to Küng, Jesus expected his followers to renounce voluntarily rights without compensation[681]. If any individual or group today wants to take this Jesus Christ as a guide to peace building, no renunciation of rights will be required in principle. However, in a concrete situation for the sake of the other person, the possibility of renouncing one's rights will be offered.

The problem of peace and war is taken as an example, because for decades, it has proved impossible to establish peace in certain areas of the world[682]. In the Near East, in the Far East, but also in Nigeria, the question that one wrestles with is why is there no peace? It is easy to say it is because "the other side" does not want it, but the problem lies deeper than that. Both sides assert claims and rights to the same territories, nations, economic opportunities. Both sides can also substantiate their claims and rights – historically, economically, culturally, religiously and

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[680]Küng, H. *Great Christian Thinkers*. New York: Continuum, 1994, pp. 168-169.
[681]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 561.
[682]Arnson, C., and Zatrman, I. W. (eds.). *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed and Greed.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005, p. 15.

politically[683]. The governments on both sides have the constitutional duty to uphold and defend the rights of the state. The power alliances and the political camps have based and still base their foreign policy on stereotypes of the enemy which are supposed to justify their own position[684]. The political situation of the power alliances is thus characterised by an atmosphere of suspicion and of collective insinuations – a vicious circle of mistrust which renders any intention of peace and any readiness for reconciliation dubious from the every outset, since these will be regarded as weakness or mere tactics by the other side.

Based on Küng's work, Patterson argues that, globally, the consequences are of considerable relevance. For example, the armament competition, against which all negotiations and treaties already contracted on the limitation and control of armaments remain ineffective or spirals of violence and counter violence in international crises, in which each side tries to outmanoeuvre the other power strategically, that is, politically, economically, and militarily[685]. Küng rightly points out that in different parts of the world, there is no genuine peace, because no one sees why only she/he and not the other person should renounce his/her legal rights and power. No one sees why she/he should not occasionally make his/her standpoint prevail, even brutally, if given the power to do so. Küng notes that people do not see why they should not subscribe to a Machiavellian foreign policy, which involves the least possible risk[686].

 Küng argues that Christ's message provides no detailed information as to how, for instance, the religious fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria should be handled; how the borders between Israel and the Arab States or the international fishing limits should be drawn; how certain conflicts in Africa, Asia, South America, particularly the Boko Haram conflict in Northern Nigerian should be settled. For Küng, the Gospel is neither a political theory nor a method of diplomacy[687]. However, the Christian message says something fundamental, something that statesmen could not demand so easily from their people, but which church leaders, theologians, and lay people in the whole world could very well say and certainly ought to say:

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[683]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 563.
[684]Bruck, T. "War and Reconstruction in Northern Mozambique". *Economics of Peace and Security*, 2006, 1(1), pp. 30-39.
[685]Patterson, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind*, p.150.
[686]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 568.
[687]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 562.

> That renouncing rights without expecting anything in return is not necessarily a disgrace; that Christians at least should not despise a politician who is prepared to make concessions… a renunciation of rights without recompense can constitute the great freedom of the Christian; he is going two miles with someone who has forced him to go one[688].

According to Küng, some Christians, in this freedom, become critical of all those who constantly protest their peaceful intentions, who always promise friendship and reconciliation for the sake of propaganda, but in practical politics are not prepared to give up their obsolete legal positions occasionally for the sake of peace. They are not prepared to take a first step toward the other person, to struggle publicly for friendship with another nation even when this is unpopular, send wrong signals. Again, the Christian who takes this great freedom as the standard and determining factor of life is also, in his small or large sphere of influence, a challenge to all who do not want to understand why it is appropriate in certain situations to renounce rights and advantages for the sake of men and for the sake of peace. It becomes a challenge to all who think that the use of power and violence, getting one's own way and exploiting others, whenever this is possible without risk to oneself, is the most advantageous, shrewdest and even the most rational policy[689].

Subsequently, Küng claims that the Christian message is decidedly opposed to this logic of domination, which gambles with men's humanity for the sake of legality, profitability and violence. It is an offer to see something positive, authentically human, in renunciation – a guarantee of one's own freedom and the freedom of others. Jesus appealed to his followers to use power voluntarily for the benefit of others. Any individual or group who takes Jesus Christ as the model will not be required to do the impossible today To renounce all use of power against others is not the example Jesus required from his followers but in particular situations they will see how they are called to use power for the good of others.

6.9 Implication of Küng's Christology of Peace for the Nigerian Church and Society

A number of key implications for the Nigerian church and society have emerged in the attempt to consider Küng's Christology of peace as a framework. The following points provide the main convictions that emerge from the discussion.

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[688]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p.564.
[689]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, p. 565.

First, peace plays an important role in the life of the church and the Christian community. It is evident that in all the four principles discussed above, the Christology of peace had a critical and liberating function in relation to the existing church. As regards both biblical and Christian tradition, the Jesus of history, through the four principles, reminded Christian communities of their tasks and key mandates. Peaceful co-existence was grounded in sharing love with our neighbours. Christians learn to move from defending what is theirs towards living peaceful, open lives. Christians find their feet as peacemakers and discover people from different walks of life, gain strength in working with them, acknowledging their mutual vulnerability and affirming their common humanity. The other is no longer a stranger or enemy, but a fellow human being with whom they share the road.

Second, if churches and societies are to be peacemakers, Christians must first strive for unity in their actions for peace. Congregations must unite to break the culture of silence about the violence within the church and unite to overcome habitual disunity in the face of the violence in Nigerian communities.

Third, as Christians, we believe that in Christ we participate in divine communion. This has implications for Christian efforts of peace building. God through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit establishes the reign of peace and justice. Following the way of Jesus Christ, Christians participate in the dynamics of God's reign of peace and therefore, they can work to transform conflicts, or defend human dignity and the sanctity of life, promote justice and sustainable communities, and build cultures of peace. It is through the ministry of peace and reconciliation that Christians are called to participate in the world of non-violence.

Fourth, Küng points out that a global ethic does not mean a global ideology or a single unified religion beyond all existing religions, certainly not the domination of one religion over all others. By a nation's ethic, one means a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards and personal attitudes. Without such a fundamental consensus, sooner or later, every community in Nigeria will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and individuals will despair[690].

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[690]Küng, H. and Karl-Josef K. *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions.* New York: Doubleday, 1993, pp. 21-24.

6.10 Conclusion

From the foregoing, Küng's work remains the basic framework of this research because he provides us with a Christology of active non-violence and an understanding of peace. He offers us a historical Jesus and a God-image that are incompatible with a punishing, conquering, and imperial Almighty God. Such images are also inconsistent with apocalyptic and imperial violence and war. If the Christian tradition wants to contribute to peace in the contemporary world, then it needs to rediscover the radical non-violence of its founder and take seriously his disclosure of God. For peace to have its root in the world and in Nigeria in particular, it has to be established through radical humanism, transcendence, love and obedience.

Küng's work, which is used as the framework, calls our attention to the question, why should one be a Christian[691]? For Küng, being a Christian means that the other humanisms are transfigured. They are affirmed to the extent that they affirm the human reality; they are rejected to the extent that they reject the Christian reality, Christ himself; they are surpassed to the extent that being a Christian can fully incorporate the human, even in all its negativity. Küng asserts that Christians are no less humanists than all humanists, but they see the human, the truly human, the human; they see human being and his God; see humanity, freedom, justice, life, love, peace. All these they see in the light of this Jesus who for them is the concrete criterion, the Christ. Thus, faith in Jesus gives peace with God and others.

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[691]Küng, *On Being a Christian*, pp. 556-569.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SYNOPSIS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research will be concluded with a summary and closing remarks on the issues addressed in the preceding chapters. To accomplish this task, the chapter will revisit the research question formulated in the first chapter, give a synopsis of the main work, make recommendations based on the research findings, put forward proposals for further research, and draw final conclusions on the research.

7.2 Validation of Research Question

It is the view of the researcher that the present study ultimately validates the research question formulated in chapter one. Therefore, the main objective of the research, namely to explore what lessons can be learned from the DOV programme's call to Nigerian churches to overcome violence in the society, to promote peace and dialogue, and to discern what the DOV means to Nigerian churches in their quest to be churches that serve peace in Nigeria, has been realised.

7.3 Synopsis of the Main Study

In an attempt to stimulate reflection and action around the DOV, the WCC identified the spirit and logic of violence. Violence is often legitimised by the prevailing norms, values, belief systems, cultures and structures of relationships in societies. Furthermore, religious interpretations are often used to justify and legitimise violence. One therefore wonders not only about the role churches played to overcome the spirit and logic of violence within and around, but also about the alternatives churches offer from their understanding of the Scriptures and traditions in a world torn apart by many forms of violence.

Again, any discourse on violence must acknowledge the role of power in all manifestations of violence. Violence, after all, is an irresponsible exercise of power over the powerless or the act of retaliation to such power. Sometimes, the fear and glorification of power encourage violence and inhibit the oppressed from resisting violence. By and large, the abuse of power has become an accepted way of exercising power. Power concentrated in the hands of one or a few, whether

234

political, economic, social or spiritual, attests to the dictum, "Power corrupts, and corrupts absolutely". It dehumanises people and destroys relationships. Power in the hands of the socially and economically privileged has the propensity to become a force of death and dehumanisation.

Furthermore, power is also an important element in the life and structure of the church. It is glorified, venerated and feared, and consequently concentrated in hierarchical church structures. Such notions of power have compelled churches, in many places and times, to maintain neutral positions whenever power was abused, despite the teachings of the church on issues of justice, witness, and identifying with marginalised people. The fact is that sometimes churches relate to their own structures of power as they seek to survive and grow, while also trying to be faithful to the imperative of the gospel of Jesus.

However, one cannot hope for a lasting peace without striving for justice. The general trend of many peace initiatives has been to focus on peacemaking while neglecting the need to uphold justice. It is the unjust desires of the powerful and the denial of justice that makes the victims resort to violence. Peace and justice cannot be pursued separately because violence is rooted in injustice. Furthermore, exclusion and oppression, in whichever form they exist, are results of both, injustice and violence. The economic structures and policies, which cause enormous human suffering, deprivation, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and the social structures and values which nurture inhuman practices, are also forces and forms of violence. The greed of a few which destroys the environment is equally a form of violence by the powerful.

In an increasingly pluralistic world characterised further by processes of economic polarisation at the micro and macro levels, the affirmation of identities—religious, ethnic, linguistic, social—has become a cause of conflict and violence between and within communities. Conflicts arising out of such assertions will turn violent in many parts of the world. Identities do not only evoke sentiments and loyalties but also operate as instruments in the pursuit of power and justice. Political, social, and religious hegemonic powers often manipulate the sentiments around identities. Even the much-dreaded terrorism, as a form of violence is committed for reasons that are centred around identities, whether patriotic, ideological, revolutionary, or reactionary. Religious fanaticism, which thrives on the sentiments that religious identities nurture, is threatening to divide communities and to cause large-scale violence.

It is important to note that the study has also examined this great call by the DOV, which is a concerted Christian voice addressed primarily to the Christian community worldwide. Inspired by the example of Jesus of Nazareth, it invites Christians to commit to the way of peace. Aware that the promise of peace is a core value of all religions, it reaches out to all who seek peace according to their own religious traditions and commitments. The call is received by the Central Committee of the WCC and commended for study, reflection, collaboration and common action. It is issued in response to a WCC recommendation and builds on insights gained in the course of the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010): Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace. Peace embodies a fundamental shift in ethical practice. It implies a different change in the framework of analysis and criteria for action. The call signals a shift and the implications for the life and witness of churches. The DOV's concept of non-violence and culture of peace presents more developed biblical, theological and ethical considerations, proposals for further exploration, and examples of good practice.

Peace is seen as embracing justice; without peace, can there be justice? Without justice, can there be peace? Too often, people pursue justice at the expense of peace, and peace at the expense of justice. To conceive peace apart from justice is to compromise the hope that "justice and peace shall embrace" (Ps. 85:10). When either peace or justice is lacking or in opposition, people witness a community of violence. Therefore, the Nigerian Churches and society need to reform their ways and work together for peace and justice.

Nigeria is experiencing a fundamental crisis and the causes of the conflicts are political, social, economic, ethnic and religious, but the causes are often rather complicated. Certainly, there are tensions between Northern and Southern Nigeria, but it is impossible to understand the present situation without going back to history to consider especially the destructiveness of colonialism, which isolated the North and deliberately kept it underdeveloped.

Actually, millions of people in the nation increasingly suffer from violence, unemployment, poverty, hunger and the destruction of lives. Hope for a lasting peace slips away as the country is being shaken more and more by corruption in politics, civil service, and apparently, in all areas of live. It is increasingly difficult to live together peacefully in the country because of social, radical, political, ethnic and religious conflicts. Even neighbours often live in fear of one another.

The nation continues to be ruthlessly plundered; indeed, the collapse of the unity and peace envisioned by its founding fathers threatens the whole nation.

Time and again, political and religious leaders are seen inciting aggression, fanaticism, hatred and xenophobia; they even inspire and legitimise violent and bloody conflicts. Often, religion is misused for purely power or political goals, which may even include war. People are filled with disgust, condemning these blights and declaring that they need not be. An ethic already exists within the religious teachings of the nation which can counter the nation's distress. Of course, this ethic provides no direct solution to all the complex problems in the country, but it does supply the moral foundation for better individual and national order – a vision which can lead the people away from despair and the society away from chaos.

As a result, participants in conferences by lawyers and others have often spoken out strongly about the need for constitutional reform and a just and honest legal system, to which all citizens, including government leaders, are accountable. Burke reminds us that in the constitutional foundations of world peace, "a healed world requires vision, institutions and their designs"[692]. One should acknowledge the importance of constitutional changes and legal systems, believing also that the powerless, marginalised, and voiceless, who are the majority in numbers both as citizens and as victims of violence, have to be brought into the process of establishing a culture of peace and non-violence.

The Decade to Overcome Violence: Church Seeking Reconciliation and Peace is a statement of confession as much as the commitment to a task. Members of the WCC's Central Committee on the occasion of its global launch declared that, "We launch this decade in a spirit of repentance that as Christians we have been among those who have inflicted or justified violence"[693]. This confession of complicity in violence is also a confession of faith that violence is contrary to the spirit of the gospel and that churches are called not only to affirm life in its fullness for all people, but also to overcome violence within and around them.

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[692]Burke, E. *Environmentalism: A Global History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, pp. 132-138.

[693]"Anti-Christian violence". WCC's Central Committee Meeting, 26th August-2nd September 2009 at the ecumenical centre in Geneva, Switzerland, 2009. The committee challenged WCC member churches to hear the cries of all "sisters and brothers in Christ enduring violence, threat and intimidation" to act in "costly solidarity" with them, and to challenge governments to protect the lives of their citizens. It also noted a decline of religious freedom in many parts of the world and an increase of religious intolerance.

7.3.1 Let the people speak

As mentioned in previous chapters, there are many stories to tell in Nigeria – stories soaked with violence such as of the violation of humanity and the destruction of properties, human lives and the environment. If all ears would hear the cries, no place would be truly silent. Many continue to reel from the impact of wars; ethnic, economic, political, and religious hostility and discrimination based on caste, which mark the disguised face of the country and leave ugly scars (permanent feelings of great sadness and/or mental pain that a person is left with after an unpleasant experience). The fact is that thousands are dead or displaced and homeless refugees within their own homeland. Women and children often bear the brunt of conflicts.

In various parts of Nigeria, women are abused, trafficked and killed while children are separated from their parents, orphaned, recruited as soldiers and abused. It may not be wrong to say that citizens of some African countries face violence by occupation, paramilitaries, guerrillas, criminal cartels or government forces. The same is true in the Nigerian context where citizens suffer under governments obsessed with national security and armed might; yet they fail to bring real security. Thousands of children die each day from inadequate nutrition and most severe poverty while those in power continue to make economic and political decisions that favour a selected few.

7.3.2 Let the Scriptures speak

The Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace (Isa. 32:17; Jam. 3:18). The two passages point to right and sustainable relationships in human society, the vitality of the church's connection with the environment, and the "wellbeing" and integrity of creation. Today peace is God's gift to a broken but beloved world as it was in the lifetime of Jesus Christ who said, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you."* (John 14:27). Through the life and teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians perceive peace as both promise and present – a hope for the future and a gift for the here and now.

Jesus told us to love our enemies, pray for our persecutors, and not to use deadly weapons. His peace is expressed in the spirit of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11). Despite persecution, he remained steadfast in his active non-violence, even to death. His life of commitment to justice ended on the

238

cross, an instrument of torture and execution. With the resurrection of Jesus, God confirmed that such steadfast love, obedience and trust lead to life. This is true also for the residents of Nigeria.

Wherever there is forgiveness, respect for human dignity, generosity, and care for the weak in the common life of humanity, people catch a glimpse –no matter how dim—of the gift of peace. It follows therefore that peace is lost when injustice, poverty and armed conflict, violence and war inflict wounds on the bodies and souls of human beings, on whole societies and on the earth as a whole. In this regard therefore, Hans Küng's framework of the Christology of peace represents a way forward for the Nigerian church and society to build a culture of peace and reconciliation in a complex and violent society.

7.3.3 Let the church speak

As the body of Christ, the church is called by the WCC programme of the DOV to be a place of peace making. In manifold ways, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist, the church's liturgical traditions illustrate how God's peace calls the church to share peace with each other and with the world. Nonetheless, more often than not, churches fail to live out their call. Christian disunity, in many ways, undermines the church's credibility in terms of peace making and reconciliation. Therefore, the DOV's Central Committee invites churches to a continuous conversion of hearts and minds. Only when grounded in God's peace can communities of faith be "agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and societies as well as in political, social and economic structures at the local and global level"[694]. A church that lives and proclaims peace is what Jesus called a city set on a hill for all to see (Matt. 5:14). Believers exercising the ministry of reconciliation, which is entrusted to them by God in Christ beyond the churches, do what God wants them to do in the world. However, the brief overview here highlights the need to discern the ways in which some theological convictions and traditional attitudes, which the churches have cherished for too long, have allowed, perpetrated or justified certain forms of violence. The church has to learn to act publicly. Churches are being challenged

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[694]WCC Assembly, Harare, 1998, pp. 14-16.

to promote peace, to bring about peace and to keep peace[695]. By so doing, the church will make a difference as truly committed Christians.

7.4 Recommendations

Since all research should contribute to an existing body of knowledge, by either supporting the findings of previous research or by producing new thought-provoking data that challenge existing paradigms, part of Getui and Kanyandago's study will be adapted as recommendations for the Nigerian church and society as a way towards peace and reconciliation. In this regard, the following recommendations are offered.

7.4.1 The victims of violence

The church and society need to take seriously the task of peace making and reconciliation at the grassroots, since they are too crucial to life and to leave to those with secular power. Peacemaking and reconciliation were considered the main tasks of respected elders not only in most clans and in ethnic communities in Nigeria but also in many Africa cultures. Getui notes that:

> While the role of elders may have diminished in some ethnic groups, their main task is to protect the family, clan and tribe from outside harm, as well as keep peace and unity within them. God and the ancestors are believed to be involved in ensuring the realisation of these purposes[696].

Elders should be considered important to this whole process. However, other groups such as women, youth, and religious leaders have emerged, which are also pivotal to ensuring the wellbeing of society because of the changing times and changes in conflict. When local government leaders are not part of the problem, they could also be effective in helping to restore peaceful relations among warring parties.

Why is empowering the victims so important? Seldom do those who benefit from violence give up their actions voluntarily. Victims of violence must not only demand a cessation of violence done to them, but be integral to the peace-making efforts so that non-violent ways of getting justice may become the norm for societies, as was the situation in Africa in the past. Further,

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[695]August, K.T.H. *Equipping the Saints: God's Measure for Development*. Bellville, South Africa: Hydro Stikland, 2010, p. 104.
[696]Getui and Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace*, pp. 164-166.

they must model a new way of behaviour in solving their problems, lest they encourage or even become perpetuators of violence later.

In practice, at least until World War 1, wars were fought by soldiers, and those who were killed in battle were soldiers. In Africa, there were youth groups which formed classes of warriors when wars arose. They fought with their opponents, but respected women, children and the elderly. Nowadays, whether in Nigeria or other parts of the world, most of the victims of war and other large-scale violence are civilians, the majority of whom are women, children and the elderly. However, peace and stability should be regarded as a regional imperative that requires commitment from all regional role-players.

Again, one would readily agree with Sen that systematically "engineered violence" makes effective, and often lethal, use of selected group identities with adversarial attitudes towards other group, combined with the downplaying of many other human identities, including the broad commonality of our shared humanity[697]. In resisting engineered violence, we need as clear an understanding as possible of the ways and means in which the thinking of many activists is influenced in the direction of violent. The battle for the human mind is at least as important in resisting terrorism and brutality as battles to secure physical bridgeheads.

7.4.2 The praxis of peacemaking and reconciliation

There are different aspects or elements to peacemaking and reconciliation, and this study has attempted to wed ways of peacemaking and reconciliation to gospel values. In this regard, therefore, the five important elements to peacemaking and reconciliation outlined by Getui and Kanyandago will be adapted but they are not regarded as mutually exclusive[698].

7.4.2.1 Healing of trauma

People, who have been victims of or been involved in some ways in violence, need to be healed of the subsequent trauma. They may need to discuss the experience with a friend or in a sympathetic group, while others may need professional help. South Africa has a Trauma Centre

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[697]Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, p. 132.
[698]Getui and Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace*, pp. 164-166. The five elements are: (a) Healing of trauma; (b) Community project; (c) Getting justice in non-violence ways; (d) Asking for and granting forgiveness; and (e) Removing the cause of violence.

for a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for victims of imprisonment, torture, detention, combat, exile, civil unrest and other forms of political violence. Counselling may involve individual psychotherapy as well as group or family therapy, crisis intervention and support-group programmes[699]. Nigeria does not have a well-developed support system to help the healing process. Different counselling centres, church groups and NGOs may have established their own system which is helpful but the country needs a clear-cut structure for healing trauma.

Another way of healing traumas is through workshops and seminars. In seminars, reconciliation is a spiritual exercise that takes place between the individual person and God through "story telling", but because the story is shared with other members of the community, there is not only reconciliation with God and self, but also with one's neighbour. Each person in the group tells his life-story in his own way, focusing on the joys and sorrows, the failures and successes, the pardon and forgiveness, with no time limit. All the others listen carefully, with complete attention, refraining from interrupting, judging and giving advice. When the storyteller is through, everyone gives thanks and praise to God, or bursts into a song. Readings from the Bible bring God's word to bear on the story and bring reconciliation.

7.4.2.2 Community projects

One of the most harmful effects of being a victim of violence is passivity. All people need to have control over their lives, whether they are displaced people, refugees, or people who live in their own homes. Usually, it is helpful to join with others who have been victimised in a similar way. The victims may receive help to begin small projects, but the important thing is that they are part of the discussion, planning and leadership when such projects are being set up or run. Projects could include simple activities such as artwork, sewing classes or recreation activities. Outsiders could offer material help or facilitation, but the victims of violence themselves take responsibility for their own lives, owning these projects and thereby becoming people with self-respect.

7.4.2.3 Getting justice in non-violent ways

The injustice of violence must be publicly denounced. There are many traditional and modern ways of getting justice in non-violent ways. Some traditional ways include processions and

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[699]Getui and Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace,* pp. 61-67.

rallies, waving branches, disrobing, ostracism, public denunciation, fasts and hunger strikes, drama and music, and so on. These are some ways of getting justice in non-violent ways, which could be strengthened in the Nigerian context to ensure peace and overcome violence.

Some modern ways of obtaining justice include memorials, formal statements, petitions, vigils, liturgies, boycotts, strikes, disobedience to illegitimate laws, sit-ins and so on. Pressure within the country combined with external pressure from donor organisations can be effective.

In addition, lessons could be learned from many past and present heroes of non-violent action such St. Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King (Jr.), Archbishop Dom Helder Camara and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A group of mothers in Nigeria fasted and suffered for months, being beaten as they called for the release of their sons who were held as political prisoners. One Kenyan bishop stood up to thousands of his own people who were ready to kill members of another ethnic group as he led them to safety. The leader of the Catholic youths in Juba, Sudan, was shot by a policeman who panicked when a large crowd was protesting the arrest of two priests. Christian non-violence is more than a strategy; it is a whole way of life modelled after Jesus who lived a non-violent life in word and deed.

7.4.2.4 Asking for and granting forgiveness

Both the perpetrator and the victim of violence must be involved in the difficult virtue of forgiveness, either asking for it or granting it. If the victim cannot forgive, he or she could remain a prisoner of fear or hatred. It is as if one is chained, dragged down, burdened, restricted mentally and spiritually. Victims who forgive free themselves from the oppressor and reconnect with the larger community. Granting forgiveness frees one from being haunted by the experience. It also enables one to work for justice and peace. Time and prayer may be needed for this kind of healing and forgiveness to occur if one has been raped, beaten badly, seen one's family killed, and so on. Forgiveness is not easy and, "To talk of forgiveness is not cheap grace that ignores tragic injustice and evil deeds"[700]. The New Testament is very clear about the need for forgiveness as the following examples show:

Matthew 5: 43-48 - *"I tell you love your enemies…"*
Matthew 6: 12 - *"And forgive us our debts as we…"*

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[700]Nyack, N. Y. "Forgiveness in peacemaking". *Fellowship in Africa,* July/August 1994, p.182.

Luke 23: 34 - *"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do…"*
Colossians 3: 13 - *"As the Lord has forgiven you…"*

The perpetuators of violence or oppression may need help to acknowledge their acts of injustice and seek pardon of and, where possible, to give compensation to the victims. Getui and Kanyandago relate that in 1988 a Vietnamese poet, peacemaker and Buddhist monk conducted a retreat in the U.S. to veterans of the Vietnam War, which led them to asking for forgiveness. Later, with like-minded veterans, some went to Vietnam to acknowledge directly the harm they had done and offered compensation to the victims[701].

7.4.2.5 Removing the causes of violence

In some cases, acknowledging the injustice done, asking for forgiveness and giving compensation will be sufficient to bring about true peace and reconciliation. In many cases the root causes would not have been addressed in the four steps mentioned above. Each case may be quite different from any other, so one must be careful of generalisations. However, unless the unjust situation is obvious as in the apartheid rule in South Africa, a few guidelines will be helpful:

- Firm data about the causes of violence should be gathered.

- Impartial and thorough social analysis of this data should be carried out.

- Action must include short-term and long-term strategies to eliminate the causes of violence, as well as of sustaining morale.

One clear example is the religious issue in Nigeria which continues to be a major problem. Church leaders have rightfully denounced the abuse of human rights, the political manipulation and greed of individuals which have resulted in the killing of many and displacement of tens of thousands of people. However, the religious leaders have not sat together with the people of goodwill to examine all the underlying facts behind the religious clashes such as population growth, unemployment, inequality in income sharing, increasing poverty, and so on. The churches and the society in general have no proper centre for gathering data, doing social

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[701]Getui and Kanyandago, *From Violence to Peace*, p. 165.

analyses and offering alternatives to the present situation. Therefore, they are constrained to making only denunciations without action.

Murithi's study though not based on field research, but rather on a discussion of the issues pertaining to Ubuntu and peace education is significant to this point. The discussion focuses on how Desmond Tutu utilised the principles of Ubuntu during his leadership of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It also outlines five stages of the peace-making process found among Ubuntu societies namely acknowledging guilt; showing remorse and repentance; asking for and granting forgiveness and paying compensation or reparations as a prelude to reconciliation[702]. Potential lessons for educating people on peace and reconciliation are highlighted based on the premise that the Ubuntu approach to building human relationships could act as an example to the world and to Nigeria in particular.

The example above shows the difficulty in tackling the root causes of violence. Nevertheless, churches are not exempted from working on the causes. There is no cheap peace. Luther King (Jr.) said that reconciliation is the final step in peace making[703]. The journey may be long, but there will never be an arrival without a beginning.

Therefore, overcoming violence implies overcoming its root causes. Such a pursuit also implies standing alongside certain groups of people who often suffer from multiple forms of violence because of unjust social and economic structures. Included in this pursuit is the struggle for restorative justice. Healing the memories of violence, dealing with the challenge of impunity, and striving for reconciliation based on truth and justice are important challenges ahead of the DOV process. As the churches commit themselves to this journey of peace, the biblical imperative of seeking justice must be allowed to challenge them, that is, by making justice the guiding value, reclaiming the centrality of justice in the affirmation of the Christian faith, preaching non-violence to violent social, religious, economic and political structures, and relating with those struggling for justice. It is in such a situation that the churches witness to their faith in the God, who heals, reconciles and has the power to unite a divided world. We shall look

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[702]Timothy M. *The African Union: Pan-Africanism, Peace-building and Development.* Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 1-5.
[703]Luther M. K. (Jr.). *Stride toward Freedom.* Boston: New York, 2010, p. 147.

a little more closely at what peace and reconciliation mean in Nigeria in relation to Scriptures and church tradition.

7.4.3 Scripture and church tradition in the Nigerian context

The Nigerian perspective brings new insights to the breadth and depth of the Good News proclaimed by Christ Jesus about peace and reconciliation. To understand these concepts, it is important to consider the African worldview especially the Nigerian worldview. In the African worldview, life, relationships, participation, and community are the larger and more important realities. Murithi, in an essay which examines the value of educating for peace, considers the African cultural worldview known as Ubuntu, which highlights the essential unity of humanity and emphasises the importance of constantly referring to the principles of empathy, sharing and cooperation in efforts to resolve common problems in the society[704]. Proverbs provide one form of communicating these realities, as the following examples show[705]:

> "A person is a person through other people" (Tswana, Botswana)
>
> "Life is when you are with others; alone you are like an animal" (Tumbuka, Malawi)
>
> "No matter how skinny, the son (or child) always belongs to the father (Kipsigis, Kenya)
>
> "When there is a feast, everyone is welcome" (Hausa, Nigeria)

The traditional African worldview is holistic, blending the spiritual and material organically. In contrast, modernisation has compartmentalised reality to the extent that morality and religion are divorced from politics, economics and aesthetics[706]. While in the West, justice is the overriding umbrella under which peace, reconciliation and unity fit, peace is the major all-embracing value in Africa. Peace means life and the continuation of life. Peace means good relationships with the living (at least with those incorporated into the clan), with God, with the dead and with the yet unborn.

As regards reconciliation, there are many different rituals and symbols of reconciliation in Africa, whether it is breaking a stick, green leaf or special tuft of grass, spewing out spittle, or

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[704]Murithi, *The African Union,* p. 15.

[705]Healey, J. and Sybertz, D. *Towards an African Narrative Theology*. Nairobi: Paulines Press, 1996, p.11.

[706]Mugambi J. N. K. and Nasimiyu W. A. (eds.). *Moral and Ethical Issues in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Nairobi Initiatives, 1992, pp. 4-5.

gathering at a reconciliation tree[707]. Reconciliation usually ends with a meal which is shared by all those present. One author notes the similarity of an African reconciliation process embedded in a meal to that of the Christian sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist[708].

The Old Testament further stresses the priority of justice in establishing a good relation with God. The prophets adamantly denounced the rich and powerful when they oppressed the poor. Isaiah taught that, "God's holiness is God's way of doing justice, because God is affronted whenever people oppress the weaker members of the society… God's radical holiness breaks out in works of divine justice"[709]. Similarly, liberation theology has made justice for the poor central to theological discourse. One author states that liberation theology has rootedness and passion, "The authors of liberation theology live in societies scourged by oppression and violence. They do not write theology for theology's sake, but rather as a means of supporting Christians in their struggle for justice"[710].

The New Testament builds on the Old Testament idea of justice and expands the concepts of peace and reconciliation. The Beatitudes is central to Jesus' teaching and an indication of how he directed his own life. Working for justice is central to the Beatitudes, and holiness is promised to those who do so. To be a peacemaker is to share in the very life of God. Similar to the Nigerian idea of overcoming separateness, Ephesians speaks of peace and reconciliation, emphasizing that peace and reconciliation are now symbolised and realised in the person of Jesus:

> For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end (Eph. 2:14-17).

In our view, the African understanding and praxis of peace and reconciliation is closer to that of the Gospels than what we have previously seen in the West, even with the tremendous contribution of liberation theology. While justice is important and crucial in Nigeria, especially at this time of blatant abuse of human rights, it must be seen within the larger cultural context of

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[707]Healey and Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, p. 286.
[708]Ambe, J. *Meaningful Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Africa*. Eldoret, Kenya: Gaba Publications, 2005, pp. 37-38.
[709]Collins, M. "Liturgy, holiness and justice in hard times". *Origins*, 11th January 2001, p. 174.
[710]Cadorette, Curt. "Liberation from violence: The contemporary Catholic challenge". *The Month*, August 1995, p. 147.

peace and reconciliation. People would gain new insights into the gospel if they understand the richness of these Nigerian values. At the same time, one believes that the New Testament declaration of peace and reconciliation being personified and fulfilled in Christ Jesus richly adds to the corresponding Nigeria values. It does not seem that Nigeria has yet plumbed the depths of gospel peace and reconciliation. African biblical scholars and theologians can offer their own people and the global church much help on this important aspect of the gospel.

7.4.4 Jesus as victim

In 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, Christians are called to the ministry of reconciliation, to be ambassadors of Christ. Christian discipleship demands a total commitment to Christ expressed by carrying one's cross (Mk. 10:30). The disciple has to taste the consequences of true discipleship in his life through suffering, possible martyrdom and death. Carrying one's cross is commonly preached and believed by Christians. Perhaps a new level of richness emerges when we reflect on Christ as a victim of violence because it then implies being in solidarity both with Jesus the victim and with all victims of violence. All persons are created in the image of God, and that image cannot be destroyed or eradicated. Therefore, every individual, irrespective of his/her physical or mental capacity, is unique, irreplaceable, and of infinite worth.

Naturally, Christians believe God took on our human nature in the Incarnation and that Christ is the fullness of the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Philp. 2:6-11). Therefore, Jesus is dishonoured when a person is dishonoured. Jesus suffers when a person suffers. Jesus is blasphemed whenever the human is defaced (Matt. 25:31-46). In a world where violence against some is legitimised, upholding and defending the value and worth of every human is perhaps the one radical way by which the churches can confront the spirit and logic of violence. Affirming human dignity also includes ensuring the rights of people to live in freedom and preserving the God-given integrity of creation on which all human life depends.

The call to take up our cross daily is the call to be in solidarity with Jesus the innocent victim and all victims of personal and structural violence, and the call to work towards eliminating all forms of violence. This call is to both individuals and to Christian communities, to be peacemakers and ambassadors of the gospel of reconciliation. While the vocation and ministry may seem overwhelming at times, it is healthy to remind ourselves that the task of reconciliation is the

work of God. Once Christians engage in it, in whatever way or on whatever level – in their families, in the community, or on a larger scale, they are doing this through the grace of God. Reconciliation was accomplished initially in Christ Jesus and it continues through his Holy Spirit. Such a belief should keep us humble and give Christians courage and energy to participate in the great ministry of reconciliation.

7.4.5 Respect and understanding

Respect and understanding are values at the heart of what we might call the 'peace approach'. The approach involves a tradition of doing things through dialogue, whereby everyone has the right to speak, to be heard and to be consulted in order to arrive at a common view. It involves a belief in a shared process and in the ability of people to make use of that process, no matter how diverse their views are. In essence, it is about seeking a consensus and valuing the process that led to a common view. One may ask why respect and understanding matter now. According to Sen[711], respect and understanding matter now for three important reasons that have the possibility of helping in the Nigeria society.

First, respect and understanding are important because of the prevalence and the far-reaching effects of violent conflict in the Nigerian society today and the apparent persistence of conflict even as, the world becomes more interconnected. Secondly, respect and understanding are critical issues now in Nigeria because of the persistence of the Boko Haram onslaught and the fear of terrorism. Thirdly, as we have already noted above, our increased technological capacity for destruction through more sophisticated and powerful weapons of war makes the avoidance of human and environmental catastrophe as a result of war a matter of profound urgency.

7.4.6 Directives for the Nigerian church and society

Four irrevocable directives are identified here for the Nigerian church and society:

a) Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life;
b) Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order;
c) Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness;

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[711] Sen, *Peace and Democratic Society*, pp. 49-112.

d) Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership with women and religious bodies.

7.5 Proposals for Further Research

Owing to the limited scope of this research, certain issues could not be addressed. However, the following recommendations are offered to augment the content of this study. Some of the following issues may be explored theologically:

- the commodification of the human person, peoples, nature, sources of livelihood and relationships;
- the importance of safety, security and development alongside the struggles for human rights and basic needs;
- the dynamic of the struggles for land, identity and justice in the light of their role in violent conflicts;
- the environmental injustice and racism that surreptitiously find their way into the dominant ideologies of development;
- the ethical questions posed by recent trends in bio-technology;
- western anthropocentrism that undergirds many of the world affairs today including the destruction of cultures, peoples, life sustaining systems, other species, and the earth's resources;
- the predicament of the victims of HIV/AIDS;
- the denial of human dignity to people with disabilities.

7.6 Conclusion

From the foregoing therefore, it is evident that peace is a much-needed component of life in Nigeria. Peace is not simply an absence of war and violence, but the absence of fear, tension and mutual mistrust. Peace makes life liveable. In fact, it is a crucial aspect of life itself, which, according to the Bible and African traditional society, is the gift of God. Therefore, if peace signifies the complete well-being of an individual or a group, do we have peace? Is it possible to attain peace in a chaotic nation such as Nigeria? There is a temptation to answer negatively. However, if God himself is our peace (Eph 2:14), is it impossible for him to restore peace to the

world? To do this, he would use his people on earth. As an organisation, the WCC is a representative of God's people and it has embarked on the journey of making peace by initiating and launching the *Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Peace and Reconciliation 2001-2010.* It calls on people from all works of life to participate in this great movement but it also enjoins individuals to initiate and promote peace. Thus, the religious leaders who preach peace in churches, mosques, temple and shrines but practice the opposite of what they preach need to stop the hypocrisy for God to use them to usher in peace. Christian leaders must awake to their prophetic calling to defend truth and justice not only inside but outside their churches in order for true peace to reign on the continent.

The role of the church is to empower its people in order to attain the peace and reconciliation which are central to the gospel. The various cultures in Nigeria also regard peace and reconciliation as crucial. The Nigerian church could focus on these crucial elements as it urges the society to attend to the plight of the victims of violence.

Church leaders and ministers need healing, not only those who have been victims of violence, but those who are caught up in the confusing and rapid economic, social, political, and religious changes going on in the nation. Leaders need healing to be healers. We should bear in mind that churches and societies are on sacred ground, and peace and reconciliation touch not only the deepest part of one's soul and heart, but also the very mystery of Jesus Christ who is our peace and reconciliation.

However, Christian communities in many parts of the world today are the targets of different forms of religiously motivated violence or they find themselves under threat and intimidation. In many situations which are exacerbated by ethnic conflicts, Christians frequently find themselves in the midst of war, and even in times of peace, they often realise that their government is unable or unwilling to fulfil its responsibility to protect the citizenry. The WCC has noted a decline in religious freedom in many parts of the world and an increase in religious intolerance. Acknowledging the responsibility of each part of the Body of Christ to the whole Body and remembering the New Testament call to *"weep with those who weep"* (Rom. 12:15), to *"contribute to the needs of the saints"* (Rom. 12:13), and *"to bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ"* (Gal. 6:2), the WCC:

a. Challenges its member churches to hear the cries of sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the world who are enduring violence, threat and intimidation and to give voice to their suffering so that their pain will not be ignored; pray without ceasing for an end to violence and a restoration of life; engage in acts of costly solidarity such as pastoral visits, generous sharing of financial resources, sending letters of support and consolation and, when possible, offering hospitality and sanctuary to those who are forced to become refugees, while at the same time helping to facilitate their repatriation.

b. Asks its member churches to engage in public witness challenging their own and, when appropriate, other governments to protect the lives of citizens in accordance with international standards of human rights.

c. Lifts up the programme "Accompanying Churches in Situations of Conflict" and calls upon the general secretary and officers of the WCC to stand in the forefront of the witness for religious freedom, monitoring situations of violence and alerting its member churches, facilitating ecumenical responses, organizing ecumenical visits of solidarity, and addressing governments and international organisations by calling on them to protect those who are vulnerable.

d. Requests the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs to develop policy and proposals for supporting religious freedom in multi-faith contexts and effectively engaging the churches in the defence of Christians experiencing violence.

e. Encourages churches in all contexts to demonstrate interfaith sensitivity in their witness, by preaching and teaching against retaliation, honouring the right to religious freedom for all.

f. Reminds the churches that their witness against anti-Christian violence is made more credible when it is matched by a clear commitment to protect all vulnerable persons and communities regardless of their religious identity. This study upholds the above recommendations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A[712]

Four Themes of the DOV on the Causes of Violence

In an attempt to stimulate reflection and action around the Decade to Overcome Violence, The WCC has identified four themes on which to focus its own contribution to the next four years of the Decade. A study document explaining the meaning and implication of these themes for use by churches and others will be ready by July 2002

The Spirit and Logic of Violence

Violence is often legitimised by the prevailing norms, valves, belief systems, cultures and structures of relationships in our societies. For example, the assumption that human beings are by nature evil and have the propensity to be violence has justified the creation and continuation of highly repressive regimes and traditions. Another assumption that some human beings are inferior to others has justified and continues to justify violence against certain sections of the people in every place all over the world. There is also the assumption that violence is divine attribute, and this has justified acts of human aggression in the name of God and "justice". The doctrines of redemptive violence, the theories of just war and the recent holy war, and the legacies of the crusades and colonisation, have their roots in these assumptions.

Religions interpretations are often used to justified and legitimise violence. We therefore must ask: How can the churches overcome the spirit and logic of violence within and around? What alternative can churches offer from their understanding of scriptures and traditions in a world torn apart by many forms of violence.

The Use, Abuse and Misuse of Power

Any discourse on violence must acknowledge the role of power in all manifestations of violence. Violence, after all, is an irresponsible exercise of power over the powerless or retaliation to such power. Sometimes it is the fear and glorification of power that encourages violence and inhibits the oppressed from resisting violence. By and large, the abuse of power has become an accepted way of exercising power. Power concentrated in the hands of one or a few whether political, economic, social or spiritual "corrupts, and corrupts absolutely", dehumanising people and destroying relationships. Power in the hands of the socially and economically privileged has the propensity to become a force of death and dehumanisation.

Furthermore, power is also an important element in the life and structures of the church. It is glorified, venerated and feared, and consequently concentrated in hierarchical church structures. Such notions of power have compelled churches, in many places and times, to maintain neutral positions wherever power was abused, despite the teachings of the church on issues of justice, witness, and identification with marginalised people. With such inner contradictions, how do

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[712] Appendix A is a reflection on the DOV project, which identified four major root causes of violence which are outlined below (see p. 173 above). The work of the WCC Central Committee on DOV focused on four themes.

churches relate with their own structures of power as they seek to survive and grow, while also trying to be faithful to the imperatives of the gospel? In issues of power abuse within church, whose side will the churches take? What are the alternative ways by which the churches can redefine power? How can they remain and become communities instead of power structures?

The Issues of Justice

One cannot hope for a lasting peace without striving for justice. The general trend of many peace initiatives has been to focus on peacemaking and neglecting the need to uphold justice. it is the unjust desires of the powerful and the denial of justice that makes the victims resort to violence. Peace and justice cannot be pursued separately because violence is rooted in justice.

Furthermore, exclusion and oppression, in whichever form they exist, are both injustice and violence. The economic structures and policies, which cause enormous human suffering, depravation, poverty, homelessness, unemployment; and the social structures and valves which nurture inhuman practices, are also forces and forms of violence. The greed of a few which destroys the environment is also a form of violence of the powerful.

Overcoming violence implies overcoming the root causes of violence. Such a pursuit also implies standing alongside certain sections of people who often suffer from multiple forms of violence because of the unjust social and economic structures. Included in this pursuit is the struggle for restorative justice. Healing the memories of violence, dealing with the challenge of impunity, and striving for reconciliation based on truth and justice are important challenges ahead of the DOV process. As the churches commit themselves to this journey of peace, the biblical imperative of seeking justice must be allowed to challenge: how do we reclaim the centrality of justice in the affirmation of Christian faith? How do we preach nonviolence to violent social, economic and political structures? How do we relate with those struggling for justice?

Religious Identity and Plurality

In an increasingly pluralistic world characterized further by processes of economic polarization at the micro- and macro-levels, the assertion of identities –religious, ethnic, linguistic, social – has become a cause of conflict and violence between and among communities. Conflicts arising out of such assertions are going to turn violent in many parts of the world. Identities do not only evoke sentiments and loyalties but operate as instruments in the pursuit of power and justice. Political, social, and religious hegemonic powers often manipulate the sentiments around identities. Even the much-dreaded terrorism, as a form of violence is committed for reasons that are centred around identities, whether patriotic, ideological, revolutionary, or reactionary. Religious fanaticism, which thrives, nurture, is threatening to divide communities and cause large-scale violence of sorts.

 In such a situation, how do churches witness to their faith in God who heals, reconciles and unites? How can the churches provide a trans-denominational and trans-religious presence and witness in a divided world? The DOV provides an opportunity to the churches to rethink the realities of their denominational presence, ambiguous positions, and exclusivist claims. Interfaith dialogue has been identified as an important means towards this end. But the challenge for us is

to explore further to identify possibilities that are people-based and effective in healing and building communities.

Appendix B

Overview of the Decade[713]

The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace, 2001-2010, was built on long-standing WCC policies and programmes concerning peace with justice and the Christian response to violence. [See next section for a resume of ecumenical policies and positions on key issues.] The most recent programmematic foundations were laid by the Programme to Overcome Violence and the Peace to the City campaign. In some countries these activities continued and made significant contributions to the DOV. In others places, foundational work and learning were not carried forward.

2 The new decade was also inspired in a broad sense by the recently completed Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, 1988-98, during which violence against women received critical attention among many churches. That decade gave birth to the 'Living Letters' project, teams of people making solidarity visits to churches and communities across the membership of the WCC. This became an important legacy to the Decade to Overcome Violence.

3 The solidarity visits of the decade for women found that a "culture of silence" in the church prevented women from telling the full story of the violence they experience. The decade ended with a call to the churches of the WCC to move from solidarity with women to accountability for violence in its various forms – "sexual, religious, structural, physical, spiritual, and military" – and for ending the "culture of violence" that affects the life and dignity of women. Member churches were urged to pursue ongoing "conversation, conversion, prayer and action".

4 Informed by experiences like these, the new decade began with a broad aim to "move peace building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church and to build stronger alliances among 54 Just Peace Companion churches, networks and movements which are working toward a culture of peace". To reach the goal churches would:
• Address holistically "wide varieties of violence, both direct and structural, in homes, communities and international arenas";
• Strive to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence;
• Create new understanding of security in terms of cooperation and community;
• Learn from and work with communities of other faiths in pursuit of peace and to challenge the misuse of religion;
• Challenge growing militarisation and the proliferation of weapons.

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[713] The final draft of the DOV report has been taken up by an increasing number of churches across the globe as outlined in "Appendix B" below, which is an overview of the final report by the DOV Central Committee.

5 Organisers in the churches were called to engage in study processes, campaigns, peace education, story-telling and inter-cultural sharing of worship practices and prayers celebrating peace and peace-making as a common concern. The decade was intended as an opportunity for churches, ecumenical organisations, groups and movements around the world to make a "positive, practical and unique contribution to building a culture of peace".

6 A sampling of the actual contributions follows, year by year. Concurrently, long-standing work of the WCC would amplify the decade on peace from different angles: for example, under the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, *Peace building and Disarmament*, studies and consultations on militarism, and *Impunity, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation*; the ongoing work of *Justice, Peace, Creation and Poverty, Wealth and Ecology* with its substantial ecumenical heritage; and a study process of the Commission on Faith and Order, *Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence: In the Way of Christ for the Sake of the World*.

2001 DOV launch

7 The global launch of the DOV took place in Berlin with public worship and festive celebrations on 4 February 2001. There were also regional, national and church launches in Latin America, West Africa, the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa, USA, Germany, Denmark and elsewhere.

8 When churches gathered to launch the Decade to Overcome Violence in Asia, they did so in Indonesia where one of the violent conflicts that marked the post-Cold War era was taking place. This was a war within a country – the independence struggle of East Timor. A WCC delegate described it as "military oppression…decades of pent-up hatred… religions abused…burning churches" and, embodying hope for peace, the National Council of Churches in Indonesia collaborating with Muslim Contexts of Just Peace_55 associations to hold a seminar on reconciliation.

9 One international DOV project developed and shared resources in support of Christian world communions in their efforts to address violence against women and girls. Highlights of the work included a meeting in Scotland where participants from every major Christian tradition shared stories of concern and models of good practice, as well as resources for education, training, worship and theology. The conference drafted the *Dundee Principles* to guide prayer, study and action in overcoming violence against women, and made plans for dissemination of the resource in various church families.

2002 'September 11' and Palestine – *Aftershocks and Occupation*

10 The fearful and violent aftermath of 11 September 2001 influenced events and projects dedicated to the DOV. It coloured churches reflections on their own positions, attitudes and approaches to violence and peace. It fuelled a debate about religion, violence and power in the June 2002 event called "Interfaith Exploration into the Heart of Religion", a consultation to identify traces of violence and peace in diverse religious traditions.

11 September 11 also cast its shadow on a women-to-women solidarity visit to the Philippines related to DOV. Women from nine countries joined Filipino women in assessing the impact of militarisation on women and children. A US-Philippines military operation was taking place against the Abu Sayyaf militant group at the time. Women from all churches formed an Ecumenical Women's Forum to protest the presence of US troops and bases. The ecumenical visitors encountered many of the issue being identified at international DOV consultations –

national consequences of the so-called 'War on Terror', international financial policies playing out disastrously in the lives of local communities, violence against

Women and children during armed conflict, and the marginalization of women during processes to end conflicts.

12 Similar issues at the global level were debated by a consultation in Geneva, including the impact on women of racial violence and domestic violence, the role of media in normalizing violence against women, and the violence of governments spending far more on the military than on education, food and health combined. In the aftermath of September 11 – when violence was often portrayed as a clash of faiths – women in Syracuse, New York, USA, carried out a DOV-related inter-faith project called "Women Transcending Boundaries".

13 Meanwhile, a new WCC campaign and programme very much in the spirit of DOV took shape. The campaign *End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East* was launched to mo56 Just Peace Companion bilize member churches and ecumenical partners to address the causes of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel was the major outcome of the campaign. In it, churches and specialised ministries undertook to send civilians to the Occupied

Palestinian Territory and to Israel to be part of an ongoing ministry of solidarity and presence with people suffering from and affected by the occupation. In addition, the 'accompaniers' would be witnesses in their own societies about what was happening under occupation and about the long-denied need, among both peoples, for peace with justice. The programme, convened and guided by the WCC, required recruitment, training, management and follow-up in each participating country as well. By the end of the decade some 700 people from about 15 countries had served as accompaniers.

2003 Sudan – *Healing and Reconciliation*

14 The DOV turned to accompanying churches and movements in support of their peace work – through greater sharing of resources and with an annual focus which began with Sudan. The 'healing and reconciliation' foreseen for Sudan was meant to build on peace building experience gained elsewhere in Africa. It was largely frustrated, however, because a peace agreement for Sudan was not signed as hoped in mid-2003. Nevertheless, connections to the churches involved in Sudan were strengthened and churches around the world learned about the healing and reconciliation ministries of Sudan's churches. Other plans were precluded by the continuing conflict and uncertainty there. The DOV study guide "Why Violence, Why not Peace?" became a story with some 70,000 tellings. That was the number of copies of this resource eventually distributed or downloaded. Faith and Order held a consultation on *Interrogating and Redefining Power* (Cret-Berard, Switzerland, 10-13 December 2003), as part of the study process *Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence*.

2004 USA – *The Power and Promise of Peace*

15 Churches, parishes and ministries in the USA learned about the DOV and took part in it in different ways. There was a Lenten Fast from Violence, a Scholars' Retreat, and a Blessed are the Peacemakers Award, for example. *The Power and Promise of Peace*, the annual theme, shaped the public launch of the US focus in Atlanta and denominational, academic and local activities during the year. Participants sought to strengthen churches and movements working for peace in the USA and to generate resources to support them. Goals included deepening the

understanding in the churches Contexts of Just Peace_57 of power, of militarism and of building peace at the community level.

16 Canadian churches reached out to their own society with a DOV open letter, thanking God for courage of those who have "witnessed to truth, justice and peace in a time when fear, insecurity and manipulate patriotism have paralysed so many". They joined US churches in deploring discrimination against Arab and Muslim citizens, and in repenting of the violence done to America's indigenous peoples. The Canadian churches expressed the hope was that "together we can break through barriers of isolation, and form bonds of unshakeable unity in justice and peace, so that as you make witness for the world God wants and has promised, you will know that you are not alone."

17 Meanwhile, the DOV began an annual event that was accessible to member churches in every region of the world. On 21 September 2004, for the first time, the WCC called churches and parishes to observe an International Day of Prayer for Peace, concurrent with the United Nations International Day of Peace. 24-hour peace vigils and prayers for the region of the annual focus were encouraged. The DOV web site carried messages on the theme, 500 resources and links to over 200 organisations working to overcome violence. There were 250,000 visits to the site in September. DOV resources included a new book in the WCC Risk series, "Axis of Peace" by Wesley Ariarajah and a video "Roots of Violence" about post-war Sierra Leone. Faith and Order's DOV-related study process *Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence* held a consultation called *Affirming Human being Dignity, Rights of People and the Integrity of Creation.*

2005 Asia – *Building Communities of Peace for All*

18 As the mid-point of the decade approached, churches and groups in all regions had been encouraged to take ownership of the DOV in their context. Depending on their response and the reach of WCC initiatives, the decade was now serving in some churches as a catalyst for peace studies and reflection, for awareness-raising and networking. In some cases there was grassroots ownership of the decade. Congregations, initiatives and Christian peace services had begun to develop various grass-roots projects in order to address the different forms of violence that are experienced today in families, schools, streets and civil conflicts. In all cases the decade was offered not as distant initiative but as a framework for churches to become involved. Groups beyond the WCC membership were welcome. A mid-decade review noted that there are churches, "and not too few", who so far seemed to have made little new room in their life and praxis for nonviolent ways of thinking and action as a result of the decade.

19 The DOV was hardly known in some regions. 58 Just Peace Companion 38 Events like the 2005 Conference on World Mission and Evangelism demonstrated the DOV's local-global dynamics and its bridging role. Pioneering aspects of the conference – Orthodox context and full participation of Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical delegates – resonated with the gathering's peace-oriented theme: *Come, Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile: Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities*. The DOV held a plenary on "Mission and Violence". The DOV motto, *Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace*, was echoed in the conference invitation to churches to approach mission in a more humble way and in its call for Christians to become 'ambassadors of peace'.

20 The annual focus on Asia, *Building Communities of Peace for All*, was launched at the assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia in Thailand. Its purpose was to express solidarity with church peace efforts, move beyond stereotypes to deeper understanding of the challenges

inherent in peace, and celebrate peace and reconciliation work being done in the region. Regional participants then carried the focus and its goals forward, for example, in programmes of national councils of churches, at an interreligious conference in Indonesia and at the WCC Pre-Assembly meeting in Sulawesi.

21 DOV also began cooperating with external peace building initiatives at a global level. One was the Violence Prevention Alliance of the World Health Organisation. WHO had come to see violence prevention and mitigation as an important priority in public health. As in other fields of health, there was much common ground with churches. DOV also began cooperation with the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.

22 A third example was a project called Global Priorities. Its purpose, in keeping with the Millennium Development Goals, was to shift a small portion of global military spending (which reached a record $1 trillion in 2004) into child survival programmes. The vehicle chosen was to seek a bipartisan congressional resolution in the US, where half the world's military spending takes place. Steady progress has been achieved. In parallel DOV published a study comparing world military and social expenditures, the arms trade and development assistance. Two other new WCC publications made resources of the decade available for wider ecumenical use. *Streams of Grace* carried the *Dundee Principles* (on preventing violence against women, above), plus conference reports and policy statements about continuing work in this field. An online Lenten series, *Cries of Anguish, Cries of Hope: 40 Days to End Violence against Women* was produced with the World Student Christian Fellowship and the World YWCA as part of the decade. Contexts of Just Peace_59

2006 WCC Assembly in Brazil; Latin America –*And We Still Work for Peace*

23 The DOV Latin America focus was launched at the WCC Assembly in Brazil. To observe the focus year, the Latin American Council of Churches called on churches to make a culture of peace a main item on their agenda and to encourage and support local congregations to become "households of peace" – contributing to peace projects locally, raising awareness about domestic violence and educating children about peace. The regional focus included development of a peace education curriculum. It drew on the experience of Latin American Organisations in the WCC-led Ecumenical Network on Small Arms.

24 The Porto Alegre Assembly decided that the decade should be completed with a consultative process to develop an ecumenical declaration on just peace and an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in 2011. The Assembly also adopted a landmark policy document, "Vulnerable Populations at Risk: Statement on the Responsibility to Protect". Some saw endorsement of this emerging norm as an appropriate response to genocide, mass killings and so-called 'ethnic cleansing'. Others saw the 'R2P' norm in the tradition of Just War theory, providing justification for armed intervention at the expense of peaceful means of conflict resolution. Despite such differences, the new policy was an important step in the DOV and in the ecumenical debate about peace.

25 The DOV Study Guide came out in its 13th and 14th languages – Arabic and Amharic. The DOV website received one million hits in September, the month of the annual International Day of Prayer for Peace. 2006 also included a Faith and Order consultation, *A Theological Reflection on Cruelty: The Ugly Face of Violence*, part of the study process *Nurturing Peace, Overcoming Violence*.

2007 Europe – *Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*

26 A steering committee of young adults chose the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi as the theme for Europe. Churches in Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia were among those active. The German Kirchentag devoted an entire day of its programme to the topic of overcoming violence. Swiss church initiatives addressed domestic violence, street violence and racism. In Greece, Orthodox churches staged a major consultation on reconciliation.

The DOV call to peacemaking and to peaceful living also found expression at the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Romania, a gathering sponsored by the Conference of European Churches and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences. A consultation in Ireland dealt with healing of memories. A meeting in Germany focused on the Responsibility to Protect. 60 Just Peace Companion

27 Beyond Europe, the World Student Christian Fellowship included the decade in their annual meeting. A conference in Tanzania analysed the interactions between wealth, ecology and poverty. DOV participation continued in the Global Priorities campaign and the Violence Prevention Alliance of the World Health Organisation (above). DOV encouraged members of the Ecumenical Network on Small Arm to continue their association and advocacy, even though coordination of the network had been suspended during the post-Assembly changes within the WCC secretariat.

28 For the International Day of Prayer for Peace the WCC once again invited churches worldwide to hold services, prayers and vigils. The invitation was accepted in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia, including churches in North America that organised peace picnics on the day; churches in the Democratic Republic of Congo that held a conference on Violence and Human Rights; and Muslim and Christian leaders in Kenya who attended a workshop together.

2008 Pacific – *Witnessing to God's Peace*

29 The DOV theme for the Pacific was to witness to the peace of God. Launched at the Pacific Conference of Churches Assembly in late 2007, the focus highlighted the challenges that climate change poses to the peoples and churches of Oceania. The DOV reference group met in Fiji as part of the annual focus and the region developed material for the 2008 International Day of Prayer for Peace. 50 At the international level, the DOV formally joined the Violence Prevention Alliance of the World Health Organisation. There were two consultations co-hosted by DOV and the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, namely, *Religions: Instruments of Peace or Cause of Conflict?* And *Human Rights and Human Dignity*. The DOV and the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network also organised two conferences: *Response of Women with Disabilities to Violence, HIV and AIDS* in Democratic Republic of Congo and *Women, Disability and Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean* in Cuba. 31 Meanwhile, seminaries and theological institutes were invited to contribute to the first draft of the Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace or to write just peace declarations of their own. Planning for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation also began.

2009 Caribbean – *One Love: Building a Peaceful Caribbean*

32 The 2009 annual focus was developed by churches in the Caribbean under the leadership of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC) and in cooperation with the WCC secretariat. The theme "One Love – Building a Peaceful Caribbean" embraced stories, actions and symbols from the Contexts of Just Peace_61 regional context that dealt with thanksgiving, confession,

forgiveness, reconciliation and healing as well as injustice and violence. The theme was shared among the churches through events, prayers, posters and postcards. The Jamaica Council of Churches and the Jamaica Violence Prevention Alliance joined the CCC, national councils of churches and the WCC in sponsoring a regional seminar on the impact of violence, theological implications, and strategies for violence prevention especially by churches. The gathering also worked on regional issues, participation and contributions for the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston.

Resources were also collected within the region for the annual International Day of Prayer for Peace and used in Sunday services and special events around the world including at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva.

33 The DOV office continued its networking with related global initiatives such as the International Coalition for the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World. This included promotion of a declaration on Children's Right to Violencefree Education and to Peace and Nonviolence Education by UNESCO in 2011, and work on youth violence and evidence-based prevention measures at a World Health Organisation conference. The WCC also rallied international church support for the Global Priorities Campaign which seeks passage of a US congressional resolution to reduce government spending on nuclear weapons and increase government support for child survival programmes. The 2009 accompaniment and facilitation of church and partner initiatives to reduce and prevent violence was both a culmination of nearly ten years of work and, increasingly, forward-looking preparation for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation to mark the end of the Decade.

2010 Africa – *Work and Pray in Hope for Peace*
34 The focus for the final year of the DOV – Africa – was launched in Addis Ababa by representatives of the All-Africa Conference of Churches, the African Union, Ethiopian churches, the WCC youth commission ECHOS, and the advisory group for the DOV. The panels and presentations modelled the goals for the year: to highlight churches, related groups
and ministries working for peace in Africa and raise awareness of that in other regions of the world. The DOV newsletter, WCC and AACC websites and the annual International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September picked up the task thereafter. Church leaders from across Africa met in Nairobi for a festive worship service on the peace prayer day. During the year, church representatives from Africa took part in the development of the Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace in preparation for the Inter62 Just Peace Companion national Ecumenical Peace Convocation in 2011. A cross-section of African church peace projects was researched and contacted to raise awareness about the focus and for participation at the 2011 convocation. Highlights of the Living Letters

35 A rich ecumenical heritage of concern and engagement supported the World Council of Churches declaration of a Decade to Overcome Violence. One example was the teams of people who made solidarity visits to churches and communities across the membership of the WCC during the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, 1988-98. Concerning violence, the visits had found that a "culture of silence" in the church prevented women from telling the full story of the violence they experience. In visit after visit these Living Letters teams also found that the life and dignity of women were affected by cultures of violence in society. Sending "Living Letters" became an important legacy from one ecumenical decade to the next.

36 The Decade to Overcome Violence Living Letters began in 2007 during the second half of the DOV and as part of the lead-up to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. The WCC

started sending ecumenical teams of 4-6 men and women to countries experiencing violence on a certain scale or with recent histories shaped by endemic violence. The Living Letters teams went to listen, to learn, to pray together for peace in the community and in the world, and to share approaches and challenges in overcoming violence and in making peace. Living Letters teams visited 17 countries from 2007 to 2009. (During that period there were
also eight ecumenical delegations sent out because of crises or emergencies affecting member churches.)

Appendix C[714]

Selected Cases of Violent Conflicts in Nigeria since May 1999

S/N	DATE	LOCATION	PRINCIPAL ACTORS
1	May 31, 1999	Warri Mayhem (Delta)	Violent clash between the Ijaw and Itsekiri communities which has its roots in the grievances harboured by the Olu of Warri and his subjects over the recognition of new Kings in Warri by the Military Administration
2	July 2, 1999	Sagamu Crisis (Ogun)	A violent ethnic clash between the Yoruba resident and the Hausa/Fulani residents. The news attributed the crisis to the OC.
3	July 22, 1999	Kano reprisal Killing	Hausa/Fulani youth took vengeance on the killing of their Kith and Kin in Sagamu. Their target was the Yoruba community.
4	August 4, 1999	Arobo-Ijaws/Ilaje clash (Ondo)	A violent clash between two feuding communities, the Ijaw and Ilaje communities of Arobo, Ondo state.
5	October 5, 1999	Eleme/Okirika (Rivers)	Violent clash between the Eleme and Okrika communities over traditional and legal titles to the stretch of land where Port Harcourt refinery is located.
6	October 19, 1999	Ijaw/OPC (Ajegunle, Lagos)	It reported to be an extension of the Arobo-Ijaw/Ilaje crisis which started with kidnap of an Ijaw man *(sic)*.
7	October 1999	Aguleri-Umuleri (Anambra)	A violent communal clash between two neighbouring communities of Aguleri and Umulari. It is linked to the April 4 clash which resulted from an orgy of hatred and vengeance.
8	November 8, 1999	Odi Killing (Bayelsa)	Youth group associated with Egbesu

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[714] The data included in this appendix is from Elaigwu (2004).

			youths kidnapped and killed policemen in revenge of the killing of their members. The Ajegunle Ijaw/OPC crisis also heightened the restive Ijaw community. The town received a shelling and bombardment with artillery from soldiers.
9	November 16, 1999	Oleh-Olomuro (Isoko-Delta)	A bloody communal clash between Oleh and Olomuro over sharing of used pipes from Oleh-Olomuro flow station.
10	November 26, 1999	Eleme/Okirika (Rivers)	An extension of hostility between the two neighbouring communities of Eleme and Okirika.
11	February 28, 2000	Kaduna Mayhem (Kaduna)	Kaduna city exploded in violence as Muslim and Christian extremists and other hoodlums clashed over the proposal to introduce Sharia.
12	February 28, 2000	Aba reprisal riot	The riot which began in Aba, Abia state as a reprisal to that of Kaduna, later spread to other Eastern state. It was reported that the Aba riot was a fall-out of Kaduna violence.
13	March 10, 2000	Ife-Modakeke crisis (Osun)	Communal killings between Ife and Modakeke communities of Ijesha. This was a fresh hostility after a long truce. It believed to have a history of ancestral rivalry which became heightened by local Govt. creation and the tussle over the location of the Headquarters of the new LGC.
14	March 18, 2000	Okirika-Eleme crisis (Rivers)	A communal hostility between the Eleme and the Okirika communities which degenerated claiming several lives.
15	April 1, 2000	Gokana communal crisis (Rivers)	A bloody encounter involving six communities in Gokana LGA of Rivers state.
16	April 14, 2000	Agyragu crisis (Nasarawa)	Communal clash that started with a protest against the location of Local Govt. Headquarters. The militant youth group started the riot and later took to the streets killing and destroying.

17	May 4, 2000	Ife-Modakeke II (Osun)	Another round of hostility between the two warring communities
18	May 16, 2000	Akaasa-Igwama (Bayelsa)	A bloody ethnic encounter between the Akaasa and Igwama communities
19	June 5, 2000	Olowo Stool crisis (Ondo)	A violent clash between supporters of two linage groups over the succession of the Owo Stool. The tomb of Pa Ajasin was destroyed in the conflict.
20	July 2000	Tsagari crisis (Kwara)	Clash between Tsagari and Shara communities of Kwara state which claimed several lives.
21	September 8, 2000	Kaltungo religious crisis (Gombe)	A religious violence that was sparked off by the presence of the state's *sharia* implementation committee.
22	October 17, 2000	OPC-Hausa/Fulani (Kwara)	A face off between the militant members of the OPC and Hausa/Fulani community over supremacy of Emirate system in the state.
23	October 18, 2000	OPC-Hausa/Fulani (Lagos)	Violent clashes between the militant OPC and Hausa resident *(sic)* in Ajegunle, which escalated and spread to other parts of the city recording heavy casualties. It was gathered that the clash might have been a spill over of Ilorin crisis
24	October 21, 2000	Minna reprisal (Niger)	Violent ethnic crisis erupted after the OPC assaults in Kwara and Lagos states
25	October 22, 2000	Owaale-Olukare crisis (Ondo)	Hostilities between Owaale and Olukare of Ikare (Ondo state) over Obaship
26	December 2, 2000	Hadejia crisis (Jigawa)	A sectarian disturbance that was caused by a debate between Muslim and Christians in Hadejia (Jigawa). There was wanton destruction of worship places.
27	June 28, 2001	Azara crisis (Nasarawa)	An ethnic conflict between the Tiv and the Azara indigenes. It started with gruesome killing of an Azara Traditional leader. And later spread to the Tiv village, with the Tiv community on the defence.
28	September 7, 2001	Jos crisis	A violent ethnic religious crisis between the Muslim/Hausa and Fulani

			Christian/indigenes. The subject of discord between the Jasawa development Association and Plateau youth council was political over political appointment in Jos North.
29	September 15, 2001	Onitsha Reprisal	A reprisal killing of Northern *(sic)*, in Onitsha after the Jos crisis in which several Igbos fell victims.
30	October 2001	Okrika crisis	A chieftaincy crisis which snowballed into (clan) violence encounter *(sic)* that claimed several lives and destruction of properties *(sic)*.
31	October 12, 2001	Kano riot	A peaceful anti-American protest over the bombing of Afghanistan turned violent, taking ethnic and religious tone. It degenerated into uncontrollable violence which claimed lives and damaged properties and places of worship.
32	October 29, 2001	Tiv- Jukunn/Fulani conflict	An ethnic clash between Tivs and Jukunn Fulani which was extension of the May 2001 clash and could be linked with the protracted dispute between both sides. Newswatch reported that 16 soldiers were killed which later lead *(sic)* to the gruesome revenge on the Tivs by the Nigerian army.
33	November 2, 2001	Gwantu crisis	A clash that started on a political ground (over the relocation of LG Headquarters) later took on ethno-religious dimension which in *(sic)* places of worship were destroyed
34	December 30, 2001	Vwang crisis	A violent communal conflict in Vwang district between the indigenes and non-indigenes exploded in the backdrop of the Sept. 7 Jos crisis. It started when an illegal group of 40 men attacked the District Head of Vwang. It also had religious colouring.
35	January 18, 2002	Awe crisis	A renewed communal clash between two

			indigenous communities in Awe LG of Nasarawa State. The cause was not certain but two people were killed and several others injured.
36	February 12, 2002	Idi Araba Mayhem	An inter-ethnic violent *(sic)* between the Hausa resident community and the Yoruba resident *(sic)* in Idi Araba (Lagos). It started on the trivial accusation of the Yoruba man being man-handled and but later escalated and took on ethnic line *(sic)*.
37	March 25, 2002	Ikom crisis	A fresh hostility erupted at Ikom, Cross-Rivers. When Ofara Natives launched a revenge attack against their Nselle neighbours killing ten (10) people in the process.
38	March 2002	Ika communal clash	The Punch reported an inter-communal war in Ika Local Govt. of Akwa-Ibom state. Hundreds of lives were said to be perished *(sic)*.
39	May 2, 2002	Jos Mayhem	Another Mayhem that followed PDP congress but later took an ethno-religious colour.
40	May 13, 2002	Bori crisis	A communal clash in Ogoni land over the ownership of Bori town between the Yeghe people and the Zappa community
41	May 27, 2002	Fulani-Irigwe crisis	An ethnic clash between the Hausa/Fulani and the Irigwe Indigenes in Bassa, Plateau, which was said to be a reprisal attack.
42	June 2002	Isoko crisis	A clash between youth *(sic)* of Ozoro and Okpaile communities in Isoko, Delta state. The Punch reported that five people were found dead and more injured.
43	June 2002	Yelwa-Shendam mayhem (Plateau)	A religious-cum-ethnic fracas between the native people (predominantly Christians) and Hausa settlers (predominantly Muslims). This violence extended to about 14 LGCs in Southern Plateau.

44	July 2002	Wase (Plateau)	The Yelwa-Shendam riots spilled over to Wase.
45	January 2003	Abotse, Edo	Conflict over land ownership: irate youths protested against strangers taking over their lands.
46	January 31, 2003	Warri, Delta	Renewed hostilities between the two feuding communities - Urhobo and Itsekiri. Several lives were lost including police officers.
47	February 2003	Obubra, Cross River	Inter-political conflicts between supporters of ANPP and PDP over council elections.
48	February 23, 2003	Ozoro	Supremacy battle between supporters of youth leaders over alleged management of patronage, which claimed over 25 lives.
49	February 28, 2003	Jato-Aka, Benue	Politically motivated conflict between ANPP/UNPP/PDP.
50	March 2003	Langtang North, Wase and Kanam LGC of Plateau	Fresh ethno-religious conflict in the three neighbouring LGCs.
51	March 17, 2003	Warri, Delta	Continued hostilities that led to death of over 100 people and sacking of 20 towns by suspected Ijaw militia.
52	May 2003	Inyimagu/Agbaja, Ebonyi	Communal clash between *(sic)* fuelled by cultist rivalry
53	May 2003	Warri	Ethnic clashed between Ijaw and Itsekiri over the former's agitation for political autonomy
54	May 12, 2003	Effurun, Delta	Clash between supporters of PDP and AD in Effurun LG.
55	July 2003	Edo/ Kogi	Communal clashes between boarder *(sic)* communities in Edo and Kogi states - Ekepedo and Ogori over land ownership.
56	July 10, 2003	Andoni, Rivers	Communal clashes over lingering chieftaincy tussle in Ataba community
57	July 14, 2003	Epen, Delta	Communal clash in Epen, a community in war ravaged Uvwie LG. The conflict is connected to political rivalry in the area.
58	August 2003	Delta	Renewed hostilities between Ijaw and Itshekiri.

59	August 14, 2003	Warri	Extended Ijaw Itsekiri crisis.
60	October 2003	Owo, Ondo	Violent clashes over chieftaincy tussle, which led to the killing of several people including a high chief.
61	November 12, 2003	Ebokiti, Delta	Attack by suspected Ijaw militants on Itsekiri communities on the Benin River. The attack is connected to the alleged kidnapping and killing of Ijaw youth in Iyara.
62	November 2003	Burutu, Delta	Ijaw youths in a new assault abducted oil workers and soldiers in Burutu LG.
63	November 23, 2003	Rivers	A reprisal attack by Debam community on Npolu-Oroworukwu community, which is believed to have launched attack on Debam community.
64	November 24, 2003	Lagos Island	Violent clash between rival groups of Area Boys over sharing of money paid by business man for clearance of his imported goods.
65	December 9, 2003	Bayelsa	Communal clashes between Ijaw and Epie communities following the killing of an Ijaw youth.
66	January 19, 2004	Irawo, Oyo	Communal rivalry among feuding clans in Irawo, Atigbo LG, which claimed 25 lives.
67	January 2004	Ganye, Adamawa	Clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers over grazing land.
68	January 9, 2004	Warri, Delta	Attack on Ijaw communities by suspected Itsekiri militia.
69	January 2004	Diebu, Bayelsa	Violent clash in the riverine community of Southern Ijaw LG following attempts to dethrone the traditional ruler of the community. Five people were feared dead.
70	January 2004	Yobe	Militant Islamic group operating under the name of Muhajirun launched a Taliban-like attack on police. Men of the Nigeria Army killed five and arrested severally others *(sic)*.
71	January 16, 2004	Gbukuma, Rivers	Communal clash between riverine

			communities, which claimed several lives and the kidnapping of a traditional ruler *(sic)*.
72	January 17, 2004	Delta	Bloody clash between Ugbukuru and Obotie communities over land dispute. Over 25 lives were killed.
73	January 18, 2004	Rivers	Gun battle between Bush Boys and Niger Delta Vigilante in Okrika kingdom. This was believed to be a renewed hostility between the rival groups which is characterised by attacks and counter-attacks.
74b	January 20, 2004	Sapele, Delta	Fierce fighting between Urhobo and Itsekiri, which is believed to be the spill over of the Obotie/Ugbukueusu clash, not fewer than 10 persons were killed.
75	February 2004	Wase/Kanam, Plateau	Violent clash between Mavo and Taroh communities, which claimed 11 lives. Suspected Taroh youths were alleged to raid Mavo villages.
76	February 17, 2004	Takum,Taraba	Politically triggered mayhem in Takum LG between supporters of PDP and NDP over local elections.
77	February 21, 2004	Makurdi, Benue	Communal clash over land ownership between Minda and Kparev groups. Several lives were lost.
78	March 11, 2004	Okitipupa, Ondo	Clash between supporters of claimants of Jegun of Idepe chieftaincy title.
79	March 23, 2004	Epebu, Bayelsa	Bloody clash between oil communities in a coastal town over disagreements in the sharing of royalties given by an oil company. At least 14 lives were lost.
80	March 27, 2004	Kwande, Benue	A renewed violence between supporters of UNPP and ANPP in Adikpo and Jato-Aka villages. Over 6 people were feared dead.
81	April 3, 2004	Makarfi, Kaduna	Religious protest in Makarfi town over desecration of the Qu'ran by a Christian teenager.
82	April 11, 2004	Langtang South, Plateau	Communal clashes that led to the sacking

			of Taroh villages in Langtang South LGC by suspected Hausa-Fulani insurgents.
83	April 26, 2004	Bakin Chiyawa, Plateau	Renewed hostilities launched by suspected displaced Fulani herdsmen. The conflict was believed to be spill over of the ethno-religious crisis that has been bedevilling southern Plateau LGs of Langtang South and North, Wase, Kanam and Shendam.
84	May 1, 2004	Yelwan Shendam, Plateau	A fresh ethno-religious mayhem that claimed over 650 lives and over 250 women abducted by suspected Taroh militia.
85	May 12, 2004	Kano	Kano mayhem following the Yelwan Shendam ethno-religious crisis in Plateau. Non-Muslims were attacked in reprisal of the Plateau crisis. Over 200 lives were feared dead.
86	May 19, 2004	Kwande, Benue	Renewed hostilities on Jato-Aka village, which claimed 50 lives and the tomb of a former minister was destroyed. This was believed to be an extension of the political conflict between supporters of UNPP/ANPP/PDP.
87	June 5, 2004	Konshisha/Gwer, Benue	Boundary disputes between neighbouring Konshisha and Gwer communities. Thirteen lives were lost.
88	June 8, 2004	Numan, Adamawa	Ethno-religious crisis in Numan over the construction of a mosque's minaret over the Hamman Bachama's palace. Over 50 people were feared killed and the traditional ruler of the area deposed.
89	June 12, 2004	Iko-Nyo Ndem/Efut-Esighi, Cross River	Communal clash between Iko-Nyo Nde and Efut-Esighi communities over the ownership of oil palm plantation.
90	July 14, 2004	Port-Harcourt, Rivers	Gun battle between rival militant groups over struggle for control of territory within the metropolis.
91	August 3, 2004	Quanpam, Plateau	Fresh outbreak of violence in Lankaka village suspected armed militia from a

			neighbouring state allegedly stormed the village community killing two and razing twenty houses.
92	August 14, 2004	Andoni, Rivers	Bloody clash between "Biafrans" and Federal troops in Ataba, Andoni LG. Government claimed that the conflict was over lingering chieftaincy disputes.
93	August 2004	Yenegoa, Bayelsa	Clash between two factions of Ijaw Youth Council over leadership tussle. Not fewer than 6 lives were lost.
94	August 29,2004	Port-Harcourt, Rivers	Clash between youth groups believed to be cultist groups operating along canals and waterways. Not fewer than 500 lives were lost between February and August 2004 in cult-related killings in the state.
95	September 2004	Rivers	The leader of Niger Delta Volunteer force declared an all-time war against Nigeria after claiming to have successfully cleansed River state of cult groups. He claimed to liberate the Ijaw nation and the Niger Delta. The group has been involved in fierce fire exchange with the police and military.
96	September 27, 2004	Limankara, Borno	A self-styled Taliban group hiding on the Goza hills and Mandara mountains on the north-eastern boarder *(sic)* with Cameron raided police station killing officers and stealing ammunition.
97	November 10, 2004	Awka, Anambra	Escalation of Anambra political crisis: hundreds of armed youths stormed the state capital destroying government properties. Seven people were feared dead.