

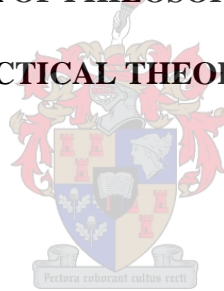
**THE IBIBIO CONCEPT OF PEACE
AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING:
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY WITHIN THE AKWA SYNOD
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NIGERIA**

BY

IVAN EKONG

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Promoter: Prof. J. H. Cilliers

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DECLARATION

I, the undersign, hereby declare that the content of this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it to any other university for a degree, either in part or in its entirety.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

ABSTRACT

The topic of this research is the Ibibio concept of peace and its implications for preaching: A practical theological study within the Akwa Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria (PCN). Conflict and violence are phenomena that are common to every human society. It would not be an overstatement to say that conflicts, war and various forms of violence are clear indications of a lack of peace in any given society. Numerous studies have been done by scholars of peace and international relations as well as social anthropologists political scientists, etcetera on themes related to peace-making, peace negotiation, peace-building, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation, especially in terms of national and international peace. International organizations, various nations, non-governmental organizations, as well as faith-based organizations have invested so much in the way of resources and energy in the search for peace, yet, the attainment of peace in our human society remains a mirage. On a daily basis, media reports indicate that, all over the world, violence is on the increase, sending thousands of innocent people to early graves.

In Africa, the story is even worse. Different approaches towards achieving peace have failed to yield the needed positive peace. Yet, little or nothing has been done in terms of searching for peace within the indigenous African context. In other words, indigenous initiatives, ideas and approaches towards peace and peace-building have been ignored in the field of scholarship. *The question is: What could be the role of the Church, its theology as well as its preaching towards the development of peace initiatives that are both theological and indigenous to the Ibibio people of Nigeria, given the volume of different forms of violent conflict that the people experience daily.* This study is based on the assumption that, if the Church critically examines indigenous Ibibio peace approaches, it may discover a missing link that could make this become effective in preaching peace among the Ibibio people who live in pain, hurts and poverty as a result of violence, thereby closing a gap in knowledge. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine critically whether the PCN's Akwa Synod and its leaders do in fact understand the Ibibio concept of peace, or not, and what the Church could draw from indigenous peace initiatives in order to make its preaching, as well as its peace-building practice, effective and relevant within the Ibibio social context.

Indigenous Ibibio people, both Church and community leaders and lay members of three congregations of the PCN's Akwa Synod were included as respondents. Using a mixed

method approach, through a questionnaire, focus groups and individual interview; data under review were obtained for the study. The interdisciplinary nature of this study informed the use of both theoretical and methodological triangulation. The empirical findings of this research reveal:

Firstly, Ibibio people understand peace as the absence of violence.

Secondly, the lack of peace has physical, psychological, economic, social, as well as political consequences in people's lives which, basically, result in deaths, suffering, injustice, poverty and the human person's loss of dignity.

Thirdly, justice and peace are significant elements for the well-being of society.

Fourth, religiosity could influence the way the Ibibio people act and do things.

Fifth, the leaders of the PCN's Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio concept of peace, even though the Church is yet to articulate a standardized peace-building procedure and training in a detailed document. Yet members and leaders, being mostly Ibibio natives, know what the Ibibio peace is all about.

This study has offered suggestions on how the PCN could integrate indigenous peace initiatives in order to become more effective in preaching peace within the Ibibio context.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om die Ibibio konsep van vrede en die implikasies daarvan vir die prediking te ondersoek, as 'n prakties-teologiese studie binne die Akwa Sinode van die Presbiteriaanse Kerk van Nigerië (PCN). Konflik en geweld is verskynsels wat algemeen voorkom in alle menslike samelewings. Dit is nie oordrewe om te sê dat konflikte, oorlog en verskeie vorme van geweld duidelike tekens is van 'n gebrek aan vrede in enige gegewe samelewing nie. Kenners van internasionale betrekkinge, sowel as sosiale antropoloë en politieke wetenskaplikes, ensovoorts, het al veel oor temas verwant aan die kwessie van vrede geskryf (oor vrede-maak, vrede onderhandel, vrede-bou, konflik en konflik transformasie, ensovoorts), veral in terme van nasionale en internasionale vrede. Internasionale organisasies, nie-regeringsorganisasies, sowel as talle geloof-gebaseerde organisasies het al baie belê in terme van hulpbronne en energie in die soeke na vrede, maar tog bly die bereiking van vrede in ons menslike samelewing blykbaar 'n illusie. Op 'n daaglikse basis dui media-verslae daarop dat geweld aan die toeneem is oor die hele wêreld - geweld wat duisende, onskuldige mense te vroeg na hulle grafte stuur.

In Afrika is die situasie nog erger. Verskillende benaderings tot die bereiking van vrede het misluk om die nodige positiewe vrede te lewer. In werklikheid is min, of niks, in terme van die soeke na vrede in sommige inheemse Afrika-kontekste gedoen. Met ander woorde, inheemse inisiatiewe, idees en benaderings tot vrede en vrede-bou is grootliks geïgnoreer, veral in wetenskaplike vakgebiede. Die vraag is: wat kan die rol van die kerk, die teologie, sowel as die prediking wees in die ontwikkeling van vrede-inisiatiewe wat beide teologies van aard en inheems aan die Ibibio mense van Nigerië is, gegewe die omvang van die verskillende vorme van gewelddadige konflik wat die mense daaglik ervaar. Hierdie studie is gebaseer op die aanname dat, indien die kerk kritiese ondersoek doen na die inheemse Ibibio vrede-benaderings, dit 'n vermiste skakel kan ontdek in die verkondiging van die evangelie van vrede onder die Ibibio mense, wat as gevolg van geweld in pyn, seer en armoede leef, en dat daardeur 'n gaping in kennis gevul kan word. Daarom is die doel van hierdie studie om krities te ondersoek of die PCN se Akwa Sinode en sy leiers die Ibibio konsep van vrede in werklikheid verstaan, of nie; en wat die kerk positief kan benut uit inheemse vrede-inisiatiewe om haar prosesse van preekmaak, sowel as haar vrede-bou praktyke, effektief en relevant binne die Ibibio sosiale konteks te maak.

Inheemse Ibibio mense, wat kerk – en gemeenskap leiers en lidmate van drie gemeentes van die PCN se Akwa sinode ingesluit het, het gedien as respondente in die empiriese navorsing. Met behulp van 'n gemengde metode benadering, deur middel van 'n vraelys, fokus groepe en individuele onderhoude is data verkry vir die studie. Die interdisiplinêre aard van hierdie studie het die gebruik van beide teoretiese en metodologiese triangulasie genoodsaak. Die empiriese bevindinge van die navorsing het die volgende na vore laat kom:

Eerstens, Ibibio mense verstaan vrede as die afwesigheid van geweld.

Tweedens, die gebrek aan vrede het fisiese, psigologiese, ekonomiese, sosiale, sowel as politieke gevolge in mense se lewens, wat basies lei tot sterftes, lyding, onreg, armoede en verlies van menswaardigheid.

Derdens, geregtigheid en vrede is belangrike elemente vir die welstand van die samelewing. Vierdens, godsdienstigheid kan die manier waarop die Ibibio mense optree beïnvloed. Vyfdens, die leiers van die PCN se Akwa Sinode verstaan wel die Ibibio konsep van vrede, selfs al het die Kerk nog nie hul gebrek aan 'n gestandaardiseerde vrede-bou prosedure en opleiding in 'n gedetailleerde dokument verwoord nie. Tog weet lede en leiers, wat meestal tot die Ibibio bevolking behoort, waaroor Ibibio vrede ten diepste handel.

Hierdie studie bied voorstelle aan oor hoe om PCN inheemse vrede-inisiatiewe te integreer ten einde meer effektief te preek oor vrede binne die konteks van die Ibibio.

DEDICATION

To my precious wife, Mrs. Grace Ivan Ekong and my lovely children, Noble-Praise and Favour.

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THE MAP OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA



The map of the Akwa Ibom state the home of the Ibibio people of Nigeria



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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CRARN	Child Rights And Rehabilitation Network
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
DOV	Decade to Overcome Violence
GAEC	General Assembly Executive Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge System
IPCR	Institute for Peace and conflict Resolution
PCEN	Presbyterian Church of Eastern Nigeria
PCN	Presbyterian Church of Nigeria
PDP	Peoples' Democratic Party
SCA	Strategic Conflict Assessment
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
USC	United Secession Church

CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH FOCUS AND OUTLINE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Peace is a popular theme within Christian circles as well as is the case in other religious and cultural spheres. According to Mbiti (2010:1) peace and reconciliation are not foreign notions, and their intensity has accelerated, be it from secular or religious consideration. Huber (1996:128-130) states that, although many religions claim to be in search of peace, putting it into practice has always posed a daunting challenge to humanity. Countless governments and international organizations have focused much attention on peace initiatives. As a Nigerian, the researcher has observed that the growing need for peace and peaceful co-existence has become one of the greatest challenges to our people, the government and civil society, while considering the numbers of people who have lost their lives and/or means of livelihood due to various forms of violent conflicts. Ikelegbe (2003:356) affirms that Nigeria's greatest challenge as a nation and a democracy is the peaceful and effective management of the conflicts and the protection of our pluralism.

Ibibio people, from the southern part of Nigeria, are predominantly Christians, yet cases of injustice; conflict, violence, poverty, corruption and the abuse of human rights still pose a pronounced challenge. Charles (1993:2-4) states that, like in other African cultures, a peace-reconciliation practice has been part and parcel of the Ibibios' socio-cultural value and practice even before the advent of colonialism. If Charles's argument is taken to be true, one can ask why then there is so much violence in contemporary Ibibio society, and could the understanding of peace within the Ibibio context help the Church to discover new ways for a peace-reconciliation practice? This research will therefore focus on the notion of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria and how its understanding could help the Church to become an effective agent of transformation to the Ibibio people through its prophetic preaching and teaching and, through its ministry of healing and reconciliation, empower the local congregants to set examples of alternative lifestyles, thereby fulfilling their role to help build a peaceful Ibibio society.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

According to Charles (1993:5), among the Ibibio people of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, there are deep-seated divisions, hurts, mutual mistrust, and fear that remain in the minds of various families, communities and clans. To Charles, the feeling of insecurity is based on a perception of certain communal or cultural economic and politically motivated differences and the sense of injustice and wrongs suffered during past conflicts. Imobighhe (2003:6-7) observes that a growing antagonism between individuals and communities is exacerbated by segregation, isolation and political prejudice. Little wonder that Mbiti laments that Africa is brutally wounded by the roughness of dreadful struggles in political, social, economic, and religious spheres. These deep wounds from ruthless blows on the body, mind, and soul affect the whole of society. Ortberg (2010:4) affirms: "Our society has become so politicized that people often hear words like justice, or life, or the poor, or compassion as code words for a partisan political allegiance in one direction or another."

Offiong (2007:598) observes a new wave of psychological and physical violence against children, namely child trafficking, child slavery and accusations of child witchcraft. He also identifies the trafficking and slavery of women as the worst forms of violence common within the Ibibio contemporary society. According to Stepping Stone, Nigeria's research, witchcraft accusations among the Ibibio are directed towards the most vulnerable people in the society, which include orphaned children and poor old women; often, suspects are tortured to death or even burned alive. Looking at gender violence, Sako-John (2004:16-18) affirms that violence includes intentional acts and behaviour directed at a person's emotional state aimed at making a victim's life miserable. She debunks the misconception that family violence is a personal problem between a husband and wife. Huber (1996:101-102) enunciates that justice, avoidance of violence, and the preservation of nature are basic elements of peace, belong together, and must not be played against each other. The most important options to achieve justice for the poor are to free persons from violence, and to preserve nature. Together, they must be developed for today's required strategy for peace.

According to Imobighhe (2003:9-10), the protracted ethno-religious, economic and political violence is in the Niger Delta geo-political zone, and economic centre of violence on oil resource control due to marginalization, mass youth unemployment and poverty. This has given rise to militant activities and the killing of innocent citizens within this region. Offiong (2007:1-4) states that the Ibibio people are part of the core ethnic groups within this Nigerian

region, apart from militant activities that have recently emerged as a major form of violence in the area. He argues that many innocent people have died prematurely through various forms of violent conflicts and their struggle for identity. The question is: How can the Church and her preaching bring peace and build peace in contemporary human society? Udoh (2005: 3-6) calls upon the Church and her members to search for new ways, as dialogue about peace within the Ibibio society has become more urgent than ever. He maintains that, if there is hope for justice and peace in our contemporary society, the Church must speak the truth without hesitation, because violence brings disorder in people's lives. Davis (2009:8) explains that religious peace-building is simply peace-building done by religious actors. This has a variety of social and political implications but does not involve a distinct set of activities. It is also an endeavour to work within religious traditions and religious contexts through unique activities, such as interfaith dialogue and education. From the above arguments, the realism that stood out is the fact that we live in a violent society and the need for interfaith dialogue for peace cannot be denied given the volume of violence in contemporary Ibibio society.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The researcher's motivation for this study was driven by a number of factors. He has observed that many innocent people have lost their lives and many others have been left in abject poverty as a result of various forms of violence in the Ibibio land. Huber (1996:40-48) opines that violent conflicts are a direct violation of human dignity, which is not an overstatement. The researcher is always moved when he sees people suffering or losing their lives as a result of conflicts and violence. In recent times, the increasing cases of violent conflicts in Nigeria, and particularly among the Ibibio people, have been, and still are, a major source of concern to him. One can see many left in the streets without food, shelter and means of livelihood. Others live in bitterness, hurt and pain - all as a result of injustice, oppression and different forms of conflict and violence, which deprive many of their human dignity as a result of poverty.

The researcher's childhood experience of the Nigerian Civil War is an experience that he cannot easily forget. Although the war was not fought in Creek Town (an ancient Efik community, where his parents were teaching before the civil war) due to the lack of an accessible road, the area still had its fair share of horror from the dreadful national disaster. One experience that the researcher could hardly forget while he was still an infant, took place

on a Sunday morning when his parents took him and his younger brother for baptism. As they were about to cross to the church premises, they saw many arrested people in chains who were to be killed by the Nigerian soldiers. The whole Church and society grieved. Yet, they (the children) were baptised, but the memory remains fresh whenever he (the researcher) remembers the day of his baptism. The question that has been bothering his mind is: Why must a man kill another man, why did this happen on the day of his baptism, why was the Church helpless and unable to intervene on their behalf? Until today, the researcher has not been able to find convincing answers to most of these questions. The fact remains that, whenever he reflects on his baptism, two strong images readily come to his mind: that of people led to be killed and the image of a helpless, sorrowful congregation. The researcher's question remains: How can we live in peace? What role can the Church play in peace-reconciliation and social transformation of human society?

Military intervention and civil unrest: As the researcher grew up in his early school days in the 1970s and 1980s, two disturbing phenomena, common in their society, were regular military interventions through coup d'état riots and civil unrest. Today, it is no different. These recurring phenomena then were, and are still, clear indications that their society was in dire need of peace. The intriguing question that, since then, has kept repeating in his mind was: When will our society ever be free from injustice, conflict and violence? Can we ever live in peace? These questions continuously drive his passion for this research.

Experience of religious crises in Kaduna and Jos cities: The experience of religious crises in Kaduna from 1998 to 2000, and in Jos from 2001 to 2002 remains the worst experience that the researcher ever had, considering the number of people whom he knew who lost their lives in the web of ethno-religious crises. The level of suffering and hardship that they had to suffer and its antecedent impact on people he cannot fully explain to this day, even though he was a living witness. This is one of the many factors that motivate his interest for this study.

The researcher's experience of conflicts and tension within the church: With his brief experience in Church leadership, not just as a Presbyterian minister, but as a parish minister, youth co-ordinator and as a chairman of the Calabar Synod congregational ministry of the PCN, he has also observed that, even within a congregation and other Church groups and organizations, some level of conflict exists, especially between the youth and the elders; although no physical violence was experienced in the Church. Recently, there was a power tussle in the Church's top hierarchy that led to secession of a particular synod; but the case is

yet to be finally resolved. This all seems to confirm the fact that conflict is commonly found wherever people exist and, as such, the researcher strongly sees an increasing need for reconciliation and peace, both within the Church, and in society at large.

The researcher's earlier research: His Master's theological thesis, which focused on preaching in the context of ethnic violence in Nigeria, was quite revealing. He was shocked by the number of communities involved in conflicts and violence within only the Calabar synodical area of the PCN. The number of innocent people who lost their lives and properties as a result of ethnic conflicts and violence is alarming. The fact that conflicts and violence is a direct violation of human rights and dignity is a major concern that motivates the researcher to embark on an in-depth study on peace to find out whether the Church, through its prophetic preaching and teaching, can bring about change in its paradigm, thereby becoming an agent of transformation in the current search for peace among the Ibibio people, and in Nigeria at large.

Notwithstanding the fact that peace and the fostering of a peaceful society has been analysed from sociological, political and even anthropological, there is a paucity of scholarship from the perspective of practical theology. The present study strives to fill this dearth by proposing a systematic examination of the manner in which theology can impact society positively in creating a sustainably peaceful milieu. Through an analysis of the Ibibio people of Nigeria, this study will attempt to show that it is possible for theology to surpass the spiritual and emotional needs of people by impacting on their quotidian relationships with one another.

1.4 RELATING PREACHING AND PEACE

According to Campbell (2002: 71), the reformed tradition affirms that the preaching and hearing of the Word is one of the "marks" that makes the church what it is and he summarises that: "where the preaching of the Word is absent, there is no church." Taking the argument further, Bergen (1998: 18) in considering the relationship between preaching and peace explicates that God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians are called to preach peace in the world. This affirms the essence of Jesus' ministry as contained in Paul's statement "He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to you who were near" (Ephesians 2: 17). Yoder (1985:11) argues that the above text did not refer to Jesus' verbal ministry rather it alludes to the fact that Jesus' life and death incarnated a message that his total being in the world.

Campbell (2002:72) agrees with Yoder's argument because what Jesus did embodied his "total being in the world", a new state of things described as peace *shalom*. However, Campbell critiques Yoder for drawing a sharp distinction between Jesus' verbal ministry and his incarnation of a message in his life and death. To Campbell, Jesus' preaching cannot be isolated from the gospel because the act of proclamation was part and parcel of the gospel he enacted in the world. Jesus' preaching becomes one of the key ways in which he exemplifies the presence of God's *shalom* in the world (2002: 70-72). The researcher affirms that the ultimate aim of Jesus' ministry was to bring reconciliation and peace to God's creations. Accordingly, the task of preaching peace must be of paramount importance to the body of Christ, if the church must hope to be an agent of transformation through its ministry of reconciliation and peace. Jesus' preaching of peace is therefore what Walter Wink (1992:14) calls a third way which involves active nonviolent resistance to principalities and powers that dominate our social structures. However, it must be clarified that preaching peace within Wink's framework is not passivity; rather it is speaking the truth, exposing the lies of the powers that hold people captive.

It was Brueggemann who noted the connection between silence and violence and argued that violence is the cultural narrative of our time and according to him, silence is one of the tap roots of violence (Brueggemann 1998:203 in Campbell (2002:75). The challenge of the study on Ibibio peace concepts and preaching is to discover and listen to the Bible as well as the indigenous Ibibio culture and what they have to teach us today about being the people of God in a culture that is wrestling with changes in the search for peace. Onah (2013:5) was not wrong when he stated that peace is not an abstract poetic concept but a down to earth practical concept conceived not in relation to conflict and war, but in relation to harmony and equilibrium. It is the totality of well-being, like what the Ibibio call *eduek* and the Yoruba *alafia* (2013:5). In other words, Long (2005:50) argues that effective preaching must be understood as having invested local flavour because the preacher participates in the mission of a particular community of faith, goes to the scripture on behalf of that community and hears a particular word for them. Thus the preacher must be one who stands in and with the community of faith, deeply involve in their concrete struggles to find meaning, to seek justice, reconciliation and peace, and to be faithful to the gospel as well. In sum, effective preaching aims at transforming society and without peace, social transformation will remain nothing but a mirage.

1.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Peace is currently a pivotal topic among the Ibibio, given the increase in the volume of violent conflicts, which are an assault on human dignity. Based on the above arguments, this study shall explore possibility and potential ways in which the church understanding of Ibibio indigenous notion of peace could make preaching more relevant within Ibibio context thereby contributing more meaningfully to transformation of the socio-political and economic condition of the people.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION/S

Research question is a fundamental element that forms a triad that guides and integrates the research process. However, research question can be addressed to different types of data be it empirical or non-empirical (Hendriks 2004: 222-224). Suffice it to say that in the study the researcher will engage a mixed method approaches (see 1.10 and 1.11). According to Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009:129), mixed research questions are concerned with unknown aspects of a phenomenon and are answered with information that is presented in both narrative and numerical forms. Consequently, mixed research studies require at least two research questions while the traditional qualitative or quantitative studies could begin with one (*ibid*). In formulating a research question, Creswell and Plano Clerk (2007:105) suggest two helpful approaches as follows: a researcher could formulate a single research question that is overarching by nature, thereby incorporating both qualitative and quantitative sub-questions. Alternatively, a researcher could formulate separate qualitative and quantitative questions regarding the nature of integration. In line with the above arguments, the research question in this study is in two parts: the main research question and the subsidiary research questions.

1.6.1 The main research question

Although the PCN's Akwa Synod might be aware of it, it possesses a profound understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace and the main research question that will guide this study is: how does the Ibibio conceptualisation of peace locate itself within the wider theological understanding of prophetic preaching about peace?

1.6.2 The subsidiary research questions

What is the general understanding of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria?

What socio-religious and cultural principles underpin the ethics of peaceful co-existence among the Ibibio people?

If there is a sense of religiosity among the Ibibio people, to what extent has the Ibibio religiosity reflected positively or negatively in the moral conscience of the Ibibio society?

Does the PCN have a prophetic and lucid vision for reconciliation, peace and social transformation to promote social justice, security and development?

To what extent does the Presbyterian Church, as a faith-based organization, serve as an agent of peace-reconciliation among the Ibibio people, who live in pain, hurts, deprivation and poverty as a result of injustice and violence?

1.7 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

With this study, the researcher hopes to achieve four main objectives. Firstly, the researcher seeks to contribute to the general understanding of how peace is conceptualized by the Ibibio people of Nigeria. Secondly, the study will examine Church's understanding of indigenous Ibibio peace concepts and how that understanding could promote dialogue and integration of indigenous peace building ideas as a vital acomponent part in the search for peace. Thirdly, the study will strive to reveal how Church preaching and peace building initiatives can bring about a shift in paradigm against praxis of violence, thereby becoming an agent of transformation in the current search for peace among the Ibibio people. Fourth, the study hopes to fill a gap in knowledge by bringing indigenous Ibibio peace building methods which has been marginalize over the years to the center in academic conversation.

1.8 AIM OF THE STUDY

Firstly, the study examines the understanding of the notion of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria. In order to do this, this study will closely examine the various meanings of the term, "peace" and their implications in the original context of the Ibibio people. It will also examine the church (Akwa Synod) understanding of Ibibios' notion of peace in relation to:

- well-being and material prosperity in the absence of war, diseases and famine;
- just relationships among people;
- the moral integrity of a human person;

➤ God and his good news.

In other words, this study hopes to examine critically the Ibibio concept of peace in relation to the physical, relational, moral and spiritual dimensions of humankind.

Mbon (1989:18-20) argues that the Ibibio world-view of the divine and the secular are not separate. Secondly, it will examine the extent to which a lack of peace has contributed to the violation of human dignity within the Ibibio context.

Thirdly, it will investigate how the Ibibio understanding of peace could help the Church within the contemporary Ibibio society to rediscover its value in the communication of the gospel of Christ through prophetic preaching and teaching, through its caring ministry of healing and reconciliation with a view to building sustainable peace and transformation among the Ibibio people.

Fourthly, this study will investigate the contribution that the PCN's Akwa Synod has made, and is making, toward the search for peace and reconciliation among the Ibibio people who live in a context of violence and poverty.

This study wishes to engage in a dialogue with different voices, as well as Nigerian voices, on the significance of context in theological discussions. McClure (1995:10-12) proposes that the process of sermon preparation can involve actual give and take conversations. Udoh (2007:2-3) maintains that, in Nigeria, the preachers' understanding of the cultural context of his audience is a key point that they should not be taken for granted. Kalu (2008:82-84) was not wrong when he asserts: a preacher can invite the laity to think together about developing a message; this allows the preacher to hear the understanding of the laity in relation to the issue under consideration. Long and Farley (1996:13) differ in their opinion about preaching. They clarify that preaching is not just a sermon and argue that a homiletic that assumes that any given sermon can make a huge difference, credits too much to sermons and not enough to preaching, which unfolds in a long season of a fruitful ministry. In line with Long and Farley's view, the researcher argues that preaching in the context of this study is not limited to the delivery of sermon/s, although sermons are vital part of it, but preaching goes beyond the act of delivering a sermon to embody all for which the Church exists. McClure (1995:13) argues that preaching must invite Church members to support others who live in very different situations, and help the Church members who stand with them in their situation. Stortz (1993:98-121) affirms: "Preaching must reach across boundaries and connect people,

creating new communities of commitment and hope.” From the above arguments, the researcher contends that, if the PCN’s Akwa Synod critically evaluates the Ibibio notion of peace with openness, bearing in mind its prophetic calling particularly among the Ibibio people, it can create a space for dialogue that, if well reviewed, could bring about a paradigm shift against the praxis of violence towards reconciliation, peace and social transformation.

Fifthly, this research hopes to suggest an alternative theoretical framework for meaningful preaching as a way forward. The Nigerian theologian, Bolaji Idowu (1960), summarises what can be called the underlying task of African theology, thus: “We seek in effect to discover in what way the Christian faith could best be represented, interpreted and articulated in Africans so that Africans will hear God in Jesus Christ addressing Himself immediately to them in their own native situation and particular circumstances.”

1.9 THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL NATURE OF THIS STUDY

This research is a practical-theological¹ endeavour aimed at establishing a theological-ethical reflection on the Ibibio concept of peace and how its understanding and application to religious and public life could help in peace-building and social transformation, thereby creating a veritable environment for democracy, social development, justice and peaceful co-existence among the Ibibio people. Hendriks (2004: 211) explicates that the focus of Practical Theology is on understanding of what is going on within a given context. In other words members of Ibibio community are involved in a vocationally based, critical and constructive interpretation of their reality. Van der Ven (1998:19) contends that Practical Theology is empirical theology on grounds that it examines our experiential reality in order to find credible facts. Scholars of Practical Theology such as Osmer (2008:25), Pieterse (2001:14) and Fowler (1995:5) agree that practical theologizing stays close to reality, which causes it to be considered “empirical.” Hence, a wide range of scientific methods can be used in order to understand a concrete praxis. These include historical, philosophical, sociological and literary methods which make practical theology an interdisciplinary approach. However, Pieterse (2001:14) maintains that a solid empirical method includes qualitative methods, such as

¹ According to Pieterse (2001:8) Practical Theology’s field has to do with apprehending, getting to know God, appropriating the biblical message and the concomitant religious actions. Apprehending is essentially a communication process. Hence the field of Practical Theology is to convey the faith, the actions that mediate it or, to put it differently, to communicate faith through these mediatory actions ... so we can define it as the study of communicative acts in the service of the Gospel within the context of modern society.

interviews and case studies, and quantitative methods, like the use of questionnaires and the use of statistical processing of results. Consequently, the researcher will use both qualitative and quantitative empirical designs, otherwise known as the mixed method design (see 1.9 & 1.10).

This study flows from a theological conviction that the PCN and its members are critical, social, and often political actors, and that their engagement in governance, conflict resolution and peace-building efforts can help to ensure holistic approaches to nonviolent resistance to all conflicts and violence. This may help in the reconstruction of social transformation and the long desired peace-reconciliation among the Ibibio people. It will try to describe both the historical and the contemporary understanding of peace in the Ibibio cultural context. It will also investigate the PCN's role in peace discussions and how she could use her communicative acts in the service of the Gospel² through prophetic ministry, to inform concrete action and change in the paradigm against conflicts and violence, thereby building peace, justice, reconciliation, social transformation and development.

1.9 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm describes the world-views, philosophical assumptions, ethical assumptions and theoretical assumptions that guide the entire research process as well as the appropriate approach to systematic inquiry (Chilisa 2012:19). This study is guided by the pragmatic research paradigm (Creswell 2009:10), also known as a transformative paradigm (Chilisa 2012:350). According to Creswell (2009: 10) scholars agree on pragmatism³ as a philosophical underpinning for mixed method research for focusing attention on research problem and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the the problem. In this study the data will focus on the research's contextual and local value. The study will exhibit a transformative attribute as it seeks to examine, on the one hand, the Ibibio understanding of peace from a holistic perspective, based on the participants' experiences of

² Pieterse (2001:8-9) echoes Nel (1998:4) in that the communicative acts should be in the service of the Gospel and the still-to-be-realised kingdom of God in modern society. The paradigmatic phrase "communicative acts in the service of the Gospel" touches on some key elements of this approach to Practical Theology. He adds that these acts are communicated, not just in language, but also in deed. They are intentional acts aimed at intervening in a situation with a view to transforming it. The transformation issue happens in the church and society. It happens through the proclamation of the Gospel – with a view to liberation.

³ "...pragmatism as a worldview arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in positivism). There is a concern with applications--what works—and solutions to problems (Patton 1990 in Creswell 2009:10)" "Instead of focusing on methods, the researcher emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985 in Creswell 2009: 10)".

the way they think and understand peace within their context and the indigenous mechanisms used for peace-building within their context. On the other hand, the study will also focus on the PCN's understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace vis-à-vis preaching for social transformation in an Ibibio context of violence. Creswell (2009:10-17) provides a six point philosophical basis for a pragmatic paradigm. Suffice it to say that Creswell paradigm stated below is the philosophical basis underpinning the researcher's choice of pragmatic mixed approach in this research. Creswell six points philosophical argument for pragmatic paradigm is stated as follows:

Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. It applies to a mixed methods research and allows the researcher the freedom to draw from both the qualitative and quantitative assumptions.

As researchers are at liberty of choice, they can choose methods, techniques as well as the procedures of research that best meet the need and purpose of their study.

Pragmatists do not perceive the world as absolute unity. Similarly, in a mixed method, researchers look for many approaches for data collection and analysis rather than one approach (e.g qualitative or quantitative).

To pragmatists, truth is what works at the time, and is not based on duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Therefore in mixed method study, researchers use both qualitative and quantitative data because they work together to provide the best understanding of a research problem.

Pragmatist researchers examine both the what-to and how-to of research, based on the intended consequences - where they want to go with it. A mixed research needs to establish a purpose and rationale for mixing data.

Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in a social, historical, political and other context. In this way, the mixed method includes a postmodern turn, a theoretical lens that is reflective of social justice.

As an approach, pragmatism therefore provides a lee-way to multiple methods, different world-views, different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection.

1.10 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Creswell (2009:3), a research design is an overall plan and procedure that guides the research process of data collection and analysis. To put it differently, Gray *et al.* (2007:34) describe a research design as an overall process of using imagination as well as the strategy of science to guide the collection and analysis of data. Taking it further, Durkheim (2006:34) maintains that a research design is a framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research questions and the implementation of the research. In the light of the above, this study was conducted with the use of a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both the qualitative and quantitative approaches, thereby mixing the two approaches in a single study (Creswell 2009:4). Brannen (2008:53) affirms that “mixed methods” means adopting a research plan that employs more than one research method, which implies working with different data. On the one hand, Newman (2011:165) argues that a study that utilizes a combination of methods tends to be richer and more comprehensive. On the other hand, Hammersley and Creswell (Hammersley 1996:167; Creswell 2009:14) agree that the combination of quantitative and qualitative method is often proposed on the grounds that it cancels or neutralizes the biases and weaknesses of other methods;⁴ which implies a form of methodological eclecticism (Hammersley 1996:167). Enunciating further, Bergman (2008:140) echoes that mixed methods are justified basically because it is believe that the mixed approach hopes to exploit the strengths of each research paradigm by combining the respective strengths within one single design.

From the perspective of peace-related research, Dedring (1976:24) argues that peace researchers do not accept the emphasis on a single research technique. Rather, the tendency is to opt for a broad methodology suited for the purpose of the investigation. To him, arguments in support of these broad conceptions of the scientific study of peace are convincing, especially in the light of the surge of the future-orientation of world-order studies.⁵ From the

⁴ By the early 1990s, the idea of mixing moved from seeking convergence to actually integrating or connecting the quantitative and qualitative data. For example, the result from one method can help identify participants to study or to ask for the other method (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998 in Creswell 2009:14). Alternatively, the qualitative and quantitative methods can be merged into one large database, or the result can be used side by side to reinforce each other. For example, the use qualitative quotes, to support statistical results (Creswell & Plano 2007 in Creswell 2009:14).

⁵ He maintains that the use of any single research tool does not assure success or meaning for investigation. In the light of large lacunae in the field of peace research and, in view of what has been achieved so far, it seems appropriate to argue for a selective and elective research strategy and methodology (Dedring 1976:24).

foregone, it is obvious that a mixed methods approach offers several advantages in a peace-related study. Consequently, the study of the Ibibio conception of peace and its implications for preaching within the PCN's Akwa Synod hopes to generate information on the experience of indigenous Ibibio people, who live within the context of various forms of violence, and the contributions of the PCN's Akwa Synod and its preaching towards peace-building and social transformation among the people. The researcher will use a transformative mixed method,⁶ and will collect both the quantitative and qualitative forms of data and then integrate the two by using the qualitative quotes to support the statistical results in order to enhance the quality performance of data (Creswell 2009:14).

1.10.1 Practical theological methodology:

According to Pieterse (2001:12), Practical Theology studies practical realities using empirical methods. This is so because a practical theological researcher must be able to measure what he or she observes, in order to determine people's views, feelings, experiences, etcetera, and reflect on them theologically. Richard Osmer (2008:1-4) proposes a constructive theoretical framework for Practical Theology, which he describes as "the four tasks of practical theological interpretation." This methodology will be adopted in this study, particularly because it engages in reflective, critical, communicative, interpretive, hermeneutic correlation dialogue in order to achieve its purpose of bringing new meanings and horizons to specific contexts.

The first task is what Osmer identifies as *the descriptive-empirical task* and it addresses the question: *What is going on in a particular social context or field of experience?* The descriptive-empirical step pays special attention to a religious praxis with a particular approach chosen for a study, because it represents the approach that is best suited for the purpose of a given study.

The second is *the interpretative task*. The research findings are not self-interpretive. Therefore, the interpretive task of Practical Theology seeks to locate such findings within an interpretive framework thus answering the question: *Why are these things going on?* In the interpretive task therefore, attention is given to wise interpretation which is deeply contextual and fitting for the particular circumstances that it seeks to understand and explain. To Osmer,

⁶ See Creswell 2009:14.

the important point is that contemporary theologians move beyond the findings of their empirical research and position them within an interpretive framework.

The third task is *the normative task*. Practical Theology does more than investigate and interpret contemporary forms of the religious praxis, as it seeks to assess such a praxis normatively from the perspectives of Christian theology and ethics with a view to reform, where there is a need. Consequently, the normative task addresses the question: *What ought to be going on?* In other words, what form ought the current religious praxis within this social context take? Osmer's emphasis here is that the normative task of Practical Theology involves exploring past and present practices of the Christian tradition, which provide a normative guidance in shaping the pattern of Christian life.

The fourth and final task of the practical theological methodology, as proposed by Osmer, is *the pragmatic task*. The main focus of this task is on *how Christians might respond* to religious praxis in effective ethical and faithful ways. In other words, how is a particular area of praxis shaped to fully embody the normative commitment of religious traditions in a given context of experience?

In line with Osmer's framework stated above, the researcher will employ the descriptive-empirical task in the study of the Ibibio concept of peace and its implications for preaching within the PCN's Akwa Synod, by paying attention to the religious and social praxis of both the Ibibio PCN members and their leaders and socio-cultural, political and economic happenings within the Ibibio society. Consequently, this study will examine the historical background of the Ibibio people, as well as the history of Presbyterianism in *the Akwa Synod*. In order to attain a better understanding of the Ibibio concept of peace, this study will engage an interpretive task as it draws on theories of art and sciences to explain why these patterns and dynamics occur. Various theories of peace will be engaged to explain understandings of peace, both in literature and in an empirical study. Pieterse (2001:14) argues that, in Practical Theology, we can approach research problems from different standpoints.

Based on the above arguments, it therefore holds that practical theological study could developed from the Ibibio understanding of peace and their indigenous peace-building mechanisms, form the way they (the Ibibio people) conceive the relity of peace and the world within their context. Such perception(s) hold great implications for transformative preaching among the people living in pain and poverty as a result of various forms of violence. By locating findings within a given theoretical framework, the interpretive task therefore seeks to

provide an answer to the question: Why do the Ibibio people understand peace in this way? In accordance with Osmer's (2008:4-12) framework, the normative task of this study will glean from the Christian tradition and the experiences of the respondents being members of the faith community, to provide a new direction and vision for preaching peace within an Ibibio context. Finally, the pragmatic task will provide suggestions that will be useful for transformative peace-preaching within the Ibibio society.

1.10.2 The indigenous knowledge perspective of the study

The title of this dissertation, "the Ibibio concept of peace and its implication for preaching: A practical theological study within the PCN's Akwa Synod" indicates that the study hopes to examine the understanding of peace, specifically within the socio-cultural, political, economic and religious context of the Ibibio people. According to Chilisa (2012:100-103) "Post colonial theories critique the dominance of Euro-Western languages in the construction of knowledge." She argues that indigenous knowledge of a people can play a sufficient role in contributing to the advancement of new knowledge, new concepts, new theories, new rules, methods and techniques in research that is rooted in former colonized societies' way of knowing and perceiving knowledge. Kovach (2010:40-48) affirms this argument when she writes: "Indigenous knowledge comprises of a specific way of knowing based upon the oral tradition of sharing knowledge; similar to what scholars identified as storytelling yearning, talk-story, re-storying, re-remembering."

Wilsin (2001 in Kovach) observes that some methods are useful for indigenous research and others are built on a dominant paradigm and have become inseparable. To him, indigenous methodologies are a paradigmatic approach based on indigenous epistemology. As such, it is no longer a method that determines the characteristics of indigenous methodology, but the relationship between method and paradigm and the extent to which method harmonizes with the world-view. The researcher argues that, although this research is a practical-theological endeavour, a design after Richard Osmer's (2008:4) practical theological framework, and the fact that the study focuses on a particular context – the Ibibio nation - it thus justifies the need to explain features of this study's indigenous methodology. Adair *et al.* (1993:152 in Chilisa 2012:102) outlines four measures of indigenization of research to include:

First, *cultural reference*: the extent to which the research emanates from the cultural context of the researched, through the mention of the nation, its customs, norms and beliefs not found

in the West. This study, therefore, is in line with its cultural reference, as reflected in this study's title, as well as its content.

Second, *culture-based justification*: the rationale and justification of the research must emanate from the need and relevance of the study to indigenous societies. The volume of violence, injustice and poverty in our society made the study of the Ibibio notion of peace very relevant, as it seeks to examine indigenous peace and peace-building mechanisms as a complementary approach in our current search for peace in Nigeria and in Africa at large.

Third, *the conceptual base of the research*: The fact that the study has to be measured by the extent to which its conceptual framework for religious practices and beliefs, cultural traditions, norms, language, metaphors, community stories, legends and folklore, rapid social change, and public policies, as opposed to the conceptual framework from Western literature.

Fourth, *methodology*: the extent to which research methods and measures adapt to the culture of the researched; methodological indigenization reflects in research by indicating the extent to which local language is used in the construction of research instruments (the questionnaire, interviews and variables that originate from an indigenous knowledge system). In this regard, the Ibibio language was used as the medium of communication during data collection, as both the qualitative and quantitative questions were presented in the Ibibio language and was later translated into English language; the researcher then transcribed the data for presentation and analysis. The reason for using Ibibio vernacular is because the researcher wanted all participants to understand fully the questions, and for them to express themselves freely without language barriers. Chilisa's underlying principle for indigenous research underpins the researcher's use of Ibibio language in eliciting information from respondents.

1.11 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to De Vos (1998:45) research is a systematic way of investigating certain phenomena. The term "methodology" originates from two Greek words, *methodos*, which means method, and *logos* (logy), which means study, a technique of doing something, especially an ordered set of procedures used in a given activity (Ndiyo 2005:153). To Ndiyo, methodology therefore is a science of method and procedure used in any given analysis or activity; or a set of related principles, which are adopted to specify how to reach a particular conclusion or achieve a given objective (*ibid.*). In other words, De Vos (1998:241-242) states that research methodology deals with the know-how or scientific methods and techniques

employed to obtain valid knowledge. Therefore, research methodology is concerned with the relationship between various parts of the study and its findings; it defines what is perceived as legitimate knowledge and how that knowledge is obtained and ordered in a study (Guba 1990:36). Babbie and Mouton (2011:48-49) state: “Research methodology takes account of methods, techniques and procedures a researcher uses in the implementation of research plan or design and the fundamental principles and assumptions behind their use.” Durrheim (2006:7) maintains that the choice of research methodology depends on the research paradigm in order to ensure “design coherence” in any study. He further explicates that research methodology is coherent when sampling the technique, the data development process, interpretation and context that “fits” within the logic and with the purpose of the study. In this study, the researcher has adopted a mixed research method, because it allows the researcher the freedom to investigate and integrate multiple studies (such as qualitative and quantitative approaches) in a programme of inquiry (Delport & Fouche 2011:435). See 1.10 and chapter 5.2

1.11.1 Research ethics

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011:520), researchers have the right to search for the truth, but not at the expense of other beings. In social scientific research, there is a general agreement on what is an acceptable or an unacceptable ethical norm of social research. i.e. the importance of bringing no harm to the people under study (*ibid.*). To be ethical is to be concerned with justice or what is morally right. Ndiyo (2005:140) identifies the following to be among some ethical issues that the researcher must consider:

- Involving people in research without their consent or knowledge.
- Pressurizing people to participate in research.
- Concealing the true nature of the research from participants.
- Making participants commit acts that may abuse their human dignity.
- Denying participants the right of self-determination.
- Exposing participants to the risk of physical or psychological stress.
- Not treating research information with adequate confidentiality.
- Disrespecting participants’ privacy.
- Withholding benefits from participants, etcetera.

Based on the above arguments, this study paid great attention to ethical considerations while the study was conducted. The research instrument of measurement adhered to the ethical requirement of social research and the research participants involved in the study were in line with the acceptable standards of the Stellenbosch University; and the consents of relevant institutions, where participants were affiliated, were obtained. (See Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7) Participants were duly informed of the study's purpose and its importance, the researcher's qualifications and the fact that they were at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt any kind of physical or psychological discomfort. (See Appendix.1.)

The researcher organized professional pastoral counsellors to be available to offer professional counselling to participants in case a participant slipped into any form of trauma as a result of a flashback in his/her past memory of violent conflict in the course of discussing peace during the study. (See Appendix.4.) However, no participant was traumatized, and no one suffer harm in any way whatsoever. To verify the validity of the research data, the researcher applied triangulation, face validity, catalytic validity, as well as inter-subjective subjectivity (Hoofstee 2000:73-91, Mouton 2001:23-31).

1.11.2 Research procedure

The study relies on both primary and secondary data. The primary data collection was done with the use of a questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions. Being a mixed methods research, the researcher conducted the study in two phases using the qualitative and quantitative approach: The qualitative approach's open-ended questions were prepared and used to elicit information from respondents through focus group discussions and interviews. For the quantitative approach, the researcher designed a structured questionnaire and distributed it to members of three Presbyterian congregations within *the Akwa Synod* for the purpose of data collection. The secondary data were gathered from library books, journals articles, sermons, seminar papers, online sources, news reports as well as Church minutes and reports. The researcher's experience - being a Nigerian from the Ibibio stock, a Presbyterian clergy and a participant observer - also informed the research writing. In line with the study of indigenous knowledge, the researcher conducted the research using the Ibibio language as the medium of communication in order to allow all respondents to feel free to express themselves in the best possible way. (See 1.10.2).

1.11.3 Unit of analysis

According to Gray *et al.* (2007:305), unit analysis” is “the source of the data from which researchers are able to make generalizations. Hendricks (2004: 224) asserts: “Unit analysis refer to WHAT you study”, in other words what characterize the object, phenomenon, entity, process or event being investigated. Rubin and Babbie (2004:94-96) agree with Hendricks’ view when they describe unit analysis as specific objects or elements whose characteristics we observe, describe and explain in social research. These may include individuals, groups (including families and organizations), social event and social artefacts. Following the same line of argument Fouche and De Vos (2011:93) explicate that a unit of evaluation may include individuals, groups, organizations or social artefacts that one wishes to describe or explain, and about which one will collect data. Consequent to the above arguments, the unit of evaluation in this study is the Ibibio people who are community leaders, Church leaders and Presbyterian members within *the Akwa Synod*.

1.11.4 Participants

The research participants were adults, all natives of the Ibibio origin and members of the PCN’s Akwa Synod. For the qualitative research, a total of 26 leaders participated in the study, ten participants for each of the two focus group discussions (coded FGC and FGS), and six participants (coded P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6) for an individual interview (See 5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3 and 5.4.4) Among the participants, eight were experienced Presbyterian ministers who have held sensitive leadership positions in the PCN General Assembly and in *the Akwa Synod*. Other leaders were the Ibibio Royal Fathers, that is clan heads, village chiefs and both male and female elders of the Church. For the quantitative part of the study, a total of 146 respondents from three PCN congregations participated in the study (see 5.2 and 5.3 and 5.3.1). The focus of the study was to determine the concept of peace among the Ibibio people, and whether, or not, the PCN’s Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace, and how understanding an Ibibio notion of peace could help the PCN’s Akwa Synod to become more effective in her prophetic responsibility to the Ibibio society.

1.11.5 Population of the study

“Population” is a term used to describe all the possible cases of interest in a study (Gray *et al.* 2007:105). Babbie and Mouton (2011:174) succinctly define population as a total element from which the sample of a study is selected. Putting it differently, Strydom (2011:223) describes research population as the totality of persons, events, organization units, case

records or other sampling unit with which the study problem is concerned. Consequent to the above arguments, “population” is a collective term used to describe the aggregate of elements (or cases) of a type that forms a study’s subject. However, the population of interest varies depending on the purpose of the study (Gray *et al.* 2007:105). In this study, therefore, the population will be the Ibibio indigenes who double as PCN leaders and members within the Akwa Synod.

1.11.6 Sampling

According to Strydom (2011:223), scholars agree that “sampling” means taking a portion or a smaller number of units of a population as representative, or having a particular characteristic of that population. DeCuir-Gunby (2008:129) maintains that sampling involves the method in which research participants are accessed and the number of participants needed. Baker (2003:380) describes a sample as a small portion of the total set of objects, events, or persons from which a representative selection is made. Forcese and Richer (1973:121) elucidate that the essence of sampling is the selection of a part (sample) from the whole (population) in order to formulate deductions about the whole. The purpose of studying a sample is to facilitate an understanding of a given research population from which the sample is drawn since studying the entire population may prove impossible. Raulin (Graziano & Raulin 2000:133 in De Vos 2011:223) says what is important is “to understand the idea of representativeness and its relationship to generalizability.”

This research, being a mixed methods design (See 1.10), will draw different sample sizes for both the qualitative and the quantitative data. Creswell *et al.* (2008:74-75) affirms that different sample sizes are common in mixed methods designs because qualitative and quantitative data are usually collected for different purposes. In some cases, the research may use an equal sample size, as in concurrent design where same individuals are used for both the qualitative and quantitative sample. Another approach is to have unequal sample sizes in the qualitative and quantitative strands of the study for the purpose of providing a full picture of the situation (*ibid.*). In this study, the researcher used the unequal sample size approach: a large sample for the quantitative data collection, and a small sample for qualitative data collection.

According to DeCuir-Gunby (2008:130-131), there are different appropriate mixed methods analysis procedures: parallel mixed analyses, concurrent mixed analyses, and sequential mixed analyses. Creswell (2009:14 -15) reforms the three general mixed methods strategies

of inquiry slightly, and further argues that several variations exist within them. His reformed version includes a sequential mixed method, a concurrent mixed and a transformative mixed method:

Sequential mixed method: Here, the researcher seeks to elaborate on findings of one method with another. The researcher may choose to begin with a qualitative interview for discovery purposes, and later follow up with a quantitative survey method with a large sample, so that the researcher can generalize results to the population. On the other hand, the researcher may choose to begin with the quantitative method in which a concept is tested, followed by a qualitative interview which may involve a detailed exploration with a few participants.

Concurrent mixed method: The researcher merges quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. The researcher may decide to embed one smaller data within other larger data in order to analyse different types of questions (the qualitative addressing the process and the quantitative addressing the outcome).

Transformative mixed method: The researcher uses a theoretical lens with an overarching perspective within a design that contains both the qualitative and quantitative data. The lens provides a framework for topics of interest, methods for data collection and changes anticipated by the study.

In this study, the researcher will adopt the transformative mixed method as data from the quantitative study on the *Ibibio* concept of peace will be used to validate findings from the qualitative data. In the qualitative part of this study (see 5.4), a non-probability, purposeful sampling approach was adopted. Johnson (1990:34) clarifies that qualitative research uses non-probability sampling because, the qualitative approach does not aim at drawing statistical inferences. In the quantitative part of this study, the researcher used clustered random sampling. Questionnaires were distributed in three PCN congregations within the Akwa Synod (see 5.3).

1.11.7 Method of data collection

The researcher made use of both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires for qualitative and quantitative data collection respectively (Creswell 2008:217). Smith (2008:161) warns that the different kinds of questions solicit different types of data. In this study, a qualitative questionnaire was used for both focus group and individual interviews (see Chapter 5.4).

Similarly, the quantitative questionnaire was used for the purpose of collecting data from three Presbyterian congregations through survey (see the quantitative segment of the study in 5.3).

1.11.8 Data analysis

In this study, the researcher decided to use thematic analysis for the qualitative data analysis. According to DeCuir-Gunby (2008:313), scholars agree that data from interviews will be analysed with the use of thematic content analysis or inductive analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1990; Wolcott 1994; Coffy & Atkinson 1996). DeCuir-Gunby (2008:131) explains: “Thematic content analysis involves examining interviews and finding common themes as well as uncommon themes through the process of coding” (see 5.4.4.3). The thematic analysis was data-driven in order for themes to be formed directly from the original data and to facilitate a unique coding framework (Braun & Clerk 2006:77). The quantitative data analysis of this study was done by an expert, Dr. J. Harvey, of the Department of Statistics, Stellenbosch University, with the aid of computer programme data in order to guarantee validity and reliability (see 5.3). In this study, the qualitative and quantitative data are presented as analysed (see 5.3 & 5.4). For additional information on data analysis presentation and interpretation, see 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4.

1.12 THE POSSIBLE VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

Among the Ibibio people of Nigeria, the PCN is an important part of the faith community. Through the Church’s preaching, teaching and caring ministry, members are equipped in order face the challenges of responsible living in the society as worthy disciples and ambassadors of Christ. In the researcher’s view, if the Church can truly understand the fullest Ibibio notion of peace, it may create a space for theological conversation on an indigenous peace-building approach as a meaningful non-violent alternative towards achieving justice, reconciliation, peace and social transformation in the contemporary Ibibio society. The researcher maintains nonetheless that there is no available scholarship involving the overarching domains of practical theology and peace. This study thus attempts to elaborate a comprehensive interpretative and analytic paradigm of how practical theology can help in fostering peace through a dissection as a case study the Ibibio people of Nigeria who, according to the researcher, offer a fascinating example of the interaction of practical theology and peace.

1.13 DELIMITATIONS

This research, being a practical theological endeavour, will focus on the Ibibio notion of peace vis-à-vis the PCN ministry's practice of peace reconciliation in order to seek a point of departure that could create a liturgical and homiletical space for the PCN to preach peace reconciliation within the Ibibio society for social transformation. The scope of this research is limited to the Ibibio people of Nigeria and the PCN congregations within the Akwa Synod in the Ibibio land, being the immediate locale of the study. This is because, first and foremost, the researcher is an Ibibio, and the PCN is his personal religious background as well as the Church with which he is most familiar compared to other denominations. The study will also address how, in a specific sense, understanding Ibibio indigenous peace within the context of Church preaching and peace-building could bring about reconciliation, peace, and social transformation in the Ibibio society. The study will therefore not deal with other aspects of theology.

1.14 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

For the purpose of clarification, the researcher has chosen to define some key terms as used in the context of this study. These terms include the following: peace, conflict, violence, poverty, human dignity, Church, Presbyterian, preaching, indigenous knowledge and transformation.

1.14.1 Peace

According to Widjaja (2007:37), there is no fixed definition to the word "peace." However, the *Webster New International Dictionary* (1946:1797) provides several useful definitions of peace. Firstly, peace is a pact or an agreement to end hostilities or to come together in amity, between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity or dissension; a formal reconciliation between contending parties. Secondly, it is a state of public tranquillity or quiet; freedom from civil disturbance or agitation (*ibid.*) and, thirdly, a state or situation of being free from war. Within a community, peace is also defined as a state of order provided by law (*ibid.*). In the fourth instance, it is harmony in human or personal relationship, mutual concord or amity - living together in peace and happiness (*ibid.*). Fifthly, a mental or spiritual state in which there is freedom from that which is disquieting or perturbing - as fears, agitating passions, and moral conflict (*ibid.*). In general usage, peace is understood to be a state of tranquillity. For Widjaja (2007:37-38) the concept of peace is linked to the idea of

obtaining peace of mind, denoting the degree of mental calm or serenity. To be at peace with oneself and with others is not only to refrain from violence, but to cast off a semblance of anger or anxiety (Kerr 2006:422). Tuzin (1996:3-4) and others have suggested different definitions for the concept of peace.

Reflecting from a theological point of view, Widjaja (2007:38) argues that biblically peace is not simply understood as absence of war, the absence or reduction of violence, or the transformation of conflict without violence; peace rather refers to the wholeness of human beings and all creatures. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen to work with Widjaja's notion of peace, which involves the physical, relational, moral, as well as spiritual aspects of humankind.

1.14.2 Violence

According to Dentan (2000:18), violence is an act of aggression and abuse that causes, or intends to cause, injury to a person/s, animals or property. Of prime importance in Dentan's definition of violence is the presence of the definite intention to cause significant physical injury, damage and harm. While Huber (1996: xv-8) agrees with Dentan's definition of violence on the one hand, on the other, Huber defines violence as structural conditions that prevent people from developing and using their capabilities. As such, part of structural violence includes acts of segregation, corruption, injustice, abuse of human rights, etcetera. Looking at human society in general, Huber (1996: xv-8) believes: "violence permeates both our society and indeed our whole life." In this study, violence is understood in terms of both direct physical and structural violence.

1.14.3 Poverty

Social scientists have made various attempts to define the phenomenon of poverty, yet there is no concise and generally accepted definition, largely because the phenomenon of poverty affects the physical, material, spiritual, moral and psychological dimensions of human life (Ndiyo 2008:12). According to Ndiyo, the World Bank (1996, in Ndiyo 2008:12) views poverty as being unable to meet the "basic needs" (physical: food, health care, education, clothing, shelter, etc. and non-physical: participation, identity, etc.) required for a meaningful life. Wilson and Ramphela (1989:67) explicate that poverty means not knowing where the next meal will come from or to live in fear of eviction from one's meagre apartment due to inability to pay the rent. From the foregoing, "the poor" therefore refers to individuals,

households, or an entire community who are incapable of commanding resources sufficient to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.

1.14.4 Human dignity

According to Huber (1996:10), the recognition of all members of the human family, their inherent dignity, and equally inalienable rights is a basis for freedom, justice and peace in the world, because all humans are born free and have equal value. John (2004:1193) explicates that human dignity is an attribute of all human beings and it establishes the significance and worth of every person. For Christians, the confession of human dignity is fundamentally based on the fact that all people are created in the image of God. When human dignity is denied, it destroys both the legitimacy of governmental behaviour, as well as the humanness of social intercourse. Consequently, human dignity must retain its validity and cannot be revoked from a single human being. As such, the mentally or physically challenged, criminals, the unborn, as well as the dead, all have the right to this dignity (Huber1996:9-10).

1.14.5 Church

The general understanding of the term “Church” refers to an assembly of christian believers to whom the Gospel and sacraments are administered. Hence, the church has the nature of sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and unity among human beings (Villi-Matti 2002:28-29). Long (2001:156) maintains that the church is the body of Christ, mystically constituted with the unification of this body being made possible by the sacrament of baptism and the Eucharist. This body does not have fixed geographical boundary.

1.14.6 Presbyterian

The name “Presbyterian” applies to a diverse group of Reformed Churches that adhere, to some degree, to the teachings of John Calvin. Presbyterian theology emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the authority of the scriptures and salvation by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and maintains the popular Protestant watch words, “*sola gratia*” (grace alone), “*sola scriptura*” (Scripture alone), “*sola fidei*” (faith alone), and “*sola Christus*” (Christ alone) (Kalu 1996: v). Presbyterian polity is based on the principle of ecclesiastical government by presbyters (elders). Among Presbyterians, there are two types of elders, the teaching elders (the trained and ordained ministers) and the ruling elders (the ordained lay persons). The basic responsibility of both the teaching and ruling elders is to provide spiritual

leadership for members of the Church. Courts of the Presbyterian Church are constituted based on equal representation of both the teaching and non-teaching elders. The administrative structure includes the session, the Presbytery, Synod and the General Assembly as the apex court. On the PCN, see details in Chapter 4.

1.14.7 Preaching

Scholars of homiletics have defined preaching in various ways. Some define it as an act of witnessing Jesus Christ as the mighty acts of God, others define it as an oral communication of the Gospel of Christ through sermons and the prophetic proclamation of the good news of the Gospel in the form of sermon delivery (Cilliers 2004:22-32). However, Ortberg (2010:51) argues (and the researcher agrees) that preaching is much more than the delivery of a sermon. Cilliers explicates that preaching is the heart of the Church. Enunciating further, Nel (2001:5 in Cilliers 2004:18) argues that research has confirmed that preaching is the main source of a congregation's edification; without preaching, edification of a congregation is impossible. For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines preaching as all verbal and non-verbal acts of communication, or witnessing the love of God to humanity. In other words, within the context of this study, preaching is not limited to only sermon delivery; it rather merely *includes* sermon delivery. As such, providing food for the poor and less-privileged is also an act of preaching and when donating one's clothes to the naked, the Church is inevitably engaged in preaching. It is for this reason that Cilliers (2004:19) contends that many aspects culminate in concrete preaching. Lloyd-Jones (1976:9) is not wrong when he writes:

Preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called ... the most urgent need in the Christian Church is true preaching, and it is the greatest and most urgent need of the Church, it is obviously the greatest need of the world.

Scholars argue that the purpose of preaching is to bring about an encounter between God and human beings. Pieterse (2001:16) affirms that this encounter takes place in the framework of covenant within a communicative context, in which God is with us, and we with him. This makes contact with God possible while listening to the message of the Bible. However, to Hartshorn (2010:13-23), preaching peace is more than preaching *on* peace. He enunciates further that, although preaching peace is more than preaching on peace as, on Sundays or during a crisis of war, it is well and good, but preaching peace calls for a consistent and comprehensive understanding and practice. Juxtaposing the two, Hartshorn maintains that, on the one hand, preaching on peace has to do with interpreting texts, structuring a sermon,

considering the liturgical, congregational and social contexts, using language creatively, and communicating with mind, passion, voice and body. On the other hand, he argues (and the researcher agrees) that preaching peace and justice is far more than occasionally addressing peace and justice as topics in sermons, seminars and Bible study. It is an ongoing discipline integrated consistently into a perennial practice. Consequently, preaching peace therefore is a comprehensive enterprise that entails a wide range of skills and disciplines, including biblical interpretation, the use of language and illustrations, and addressing liturgical, ecclesial, social, and political contexts.

1.14.8 Indigenous knowledge

According to Odora Hoopers (2002:8-9) “the word indigenous refers to roots, something natural or innate (to) that which is essentially cultural.” Indigenous knowledge refers to the combination of knowledge systems, which include technology, social, economic and philosophical learning, or educational, legal and governance systems. Mapara (2009:139) succinctly states: “Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are a body of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that have survived for a very long time.” The Socioeconomic Data and Applications Centre at Columbia University website defines IKS as local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. Such knowledge systems have survived irrespective of the onslaught of Western colonial imperialism and racial arrogance. From the above arguments, all forms of traditional Ibibio peace mechanisms are classified as indigenous and, as such, will be critically examined in this study.

1.14.9 Transformation

According to Wayne Bragg (1987:39), transformation means to take what is and turn it into what it could or should be. Enunciating further, he argues that transformation involves God’s direct endeavours in which humankind is engaged as instruments for the realization of his purpose (*ibid.*). In line with Bragg’s argument, this study therefore holds that indigenous Ibibio people should have an opportunity to use what is at their disposal and turn it into what it could or should be. This means that the Ibibio people use their God-given knowledge about peace and their indigenous peace mechanisms to bring about positive sustainable peace in their society.

1.15 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter one, offers a general introduction to the present analysis through a presentation of the study's background, the motivation for the research, the research statement of the problem, research questions, as well as the study's purpose and aims. It explains the practical theological nature of the study, the research paradigm, research design, research methodology, and the value of the research to both the Church and society, the significance of the study, the delimitations, as well as definitions of key terms.

Chapter two explores various understandings of peace through a review and survey of definitions, as well as theoretical concepts of peace. In line with Robert Osmer's practical theological framework, this chapter addresses the descriptive empirical and interpretive tasks as it seeks to answer the normative question that this chapter focuses upon: *What ought to be going on?* In other words, what form ought the current religious praxis take within the Ibibio social context? Here, Osmer's emphasis centres on exploring the past and present practices of the Christian tradition which provide normative guidance in shaping the pattern of the Christian life for peace justice and social transformation within the Ibibio society. Consequently, a perspective of peace in ancient medieval and modern philosophical thoughts is discussed. Thomas Hobbes's peace theory, Emmanuel Kant's peace theory, Mohandas Gandhi's as well as John Galtung's concepts of peace are presented. Religious and cultural perspectives of peace discussed in this chapter include the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, the Greek concept of *erience*, the Arabic concept of *salam*, as well as the indigenous African concept of *ubuntu*. They are identified and discussed as an indigenous paradigm for interpretation of peace in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, this chapter provides the indigenous theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter three presents the historical background of the Ibibio people of Nigeria. It examines the origin and migration of the people, geographical location, socio-cultural life, political system, judicial system, the people's economic and religious life, traditional and religious beliefs, like their belief in God, the ancestors, and the existence of witchcraft. Perspectives of the Ibibios' modern life, as well as their need for peace, are also discussed. This chapter therefore is part of the descriptive empirical task: seeking to answer the question: What is going on here?

Chapter four begins with a brief history of the Presbyterian mission enterprise among the Ibibio people of Nigeria and the discussion, which moves onto the advent of the PCN and the

Akwa Synod, is significant in this study, since research participants and preaching are examined in the Church's background. Again, this chapter seeks to address the descriptive empirical task, as well as the interpretive task of Practical Theology. To unpack this chapter, the researcher begins with the conditions of the abolition of slave trade during evangelical revivals in Europe, followed by a call for mission from the Calabar kings, the pioneer mission resource persons, the Scottish missionary approach, which includes, as instruments for mission: education, health services, evangelism, and agriculture/food production. Third, during the advent of Presbyterianism in Ibibio land and other early European missions among the Ibibio, the following comprised their struggles/challenges in Ibibio land: cultural practices, polygamy, veneration of ancestors, belief in witchcraft, racial and ethnic conflicts, and the harsh environment. Discussion then moved to the success of the missionary enterprise among the Ibibio, which includes the saving of twins and their mothers, the development of *Efik*/the Ibibio vernacular, the Ibibio British relationship prior to the missionary enterprise. The Ibibio-British relationship during the missionary enterprise was also discussed, as well as the expansion of Presbyterianism among the Ibibio and the creation of the Akwa Synod. The chapter ended with a preliminary conclusion.

Chapter five of the study focuses mainly on empirical research, data presentation, analysis and interpretation of Osmer's theoretical framework. The chapter is guided by the descriptive empirical task, the interpretive task, normative task, as well as the pragmatic task of Practical Theology, as it attempts to answer the questions: *What is going on here, why is it going on / what ought to be going on? And how may we respond?* In other words, in this chapter, all of the four tasks that Practical Theology proposed in Osmer's (2008:4-12) model are engaged. This chapter can use theories of social science as well as theological concepts to interpret both the phenomena of peace and violence within the Ibibio context to construct ethical norms that will guide responses gathered from the empirical study.

Chapter six will engage in *the normative and pragmatic tasks* of Practical Theology. The *normative task* on the one hand addresses the question: *What ought to be going on?* In other words, what form ought the current religious praxis to take `within this social context? Osmer's (2008:4) emphasis here is that the normative task of Practical Theology involves exploring past and present practices of the Christian tradition that provide normative guidance in shaping the patterns of the Christian life. On the other hand the *pragmatic task* focus is, on *how Christians might respond* to religious praxis in effective ethical and faithful ways. In other words, how can a particular area of praxis be shaped to fully embody the

normative commitment of religious traditions in a given context of experience? Drawing from findings that emerged from empirical research and literature, this chapter will therefore resume by discussing the Ibibio concept of peace as an expression of an indigenous knowledge system (IKS) within the context of injustice, oppression, hurts, and various forms of conflict and violence. It will examine whether the PCN's Akwa Synod does, or does not, understand the Ibibio notion of peace. Here, a multidisciplinary approach will be employed in order to better understand and explain why these partners and dynamics occur (Osmer 2008:4). In this chapter, discussion will move in six waves, which include: the Ibibio peace indigenous knowledge, the meaning of peace in the Ibibio, the nature of the Ibibio principles of peace, sources of violent conflicts among the Ibibio people, sources of the Ibibio notion of peace, symbols and agents of peace in this society, the peace initiatives of the PCN's Akwa Synod and the Ibibio indigenous peace mechanisms, the contextual hermeneutics of peace within the Akwa Synod , and a preliminary conclusion.

Chapter seven, being the last chapter, provides concluding recommendations for the Akwa Synod, as well as other churches, regarding preaching peace and reconciliation within the Ibibio context since it is not possible for the researcher to cover every aspect of research, suggestions are made for possible areas of future research.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZING PEACE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section of the study is in line with Osmer's (2008:80) "interpretive task of Practical Theology (sagely wisdom)" aimed at drawing on theories of the arts and social science that make for a better understanding and interpretation of peace within the Ibibio context. This is because interpretive guides are maps that offer a picture of the possible paths that might be taken. The researcher believes that a survey of the concepts of peace will provide a leeway in discerning a most helpful theory in guiding discussions on the Ibibio notion of peace (*ibid.*). Galtung (1996:21) affirms that peace theories explain why a given phenomenon is in the world. Like any other academic discipline, peace study is very broad. It relates to different domains of scholarship as such it is impossible to cover every area in a single research. In light of the above arguments the researcher will unpack some philosophical understandings of peace, its characterization with a multidisciplinary approach, and various practical meanings of peace within the cultural and religious context will also be explored. Finally, this chapter will provide grounds for discussion of the Ibibios' peace.

2.2 THE GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF PEACE

According to Spinoza (in Kerr 2006:422), peace is not the absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. Tuzin (1996:4-5) argues (and the researcher agrees) that Spinoza's refusal to define peace as a thing, or absence of a thing, but as a moral condition, discloses a conceptual space in which peace and war — peace and any of its material opposites — can, and essentially do, exist together, because peace abides with (is buried inside) each and every one of them. Consequently, Spinoza's assertion that peace is not "an absence of war" did not deny a connection between the two. From this statement, it could be argued that peace is not only absence of war; it is the presence of war. In the connectivity between the two, it is difficult to locate peace ontologically. However, peace research has broadened the description of the subject by including the elimination of poverty and injustice in its definition of peace.

Nutter (1971:65) believes that to go much further in defining peace would rob the word of content and relevance. He maintains that it would be utopian, for instance, to describe peace as a state of affairs where all parties are satisfied. Although the above definitions attempt to summarise the meaning of peace in a general sense, no single definition could fully capture the concept of peace in its entirety. Little wonder, when considering the subject of peace, that scholars have avoided definitions; they rather try to operationalize the concept. Nutter (1971:65) states that the only thing more difficult than maintaining peace is defining it. Hansen (1987:1) puts it differently when he writes: “what peace actually is and how it can be realised are issues on which there is no agreement.” Developing further, Hansen argues that the perspective that a group brings to issues of peace depends on its historical and material conditions, as well as the position of the group within the power structure of the national or international system (Hansen 1987:1). If Hansen’s argument is to be taken seriously, it implies that the indigenous conceptions and mechanisms of peace and peace building must not be excluded in the search for peace within African context.

Kelson (1961:22) says peace is a condition in which there is no use of force. In this sense of the word, the law provides for only relative peace, in that it deprives individuals of the right to employ force, but reserves it for the community. However, Kelson (1961:22) argues that the peace of the law is not a condition of absolute absence of force, a state of anarchy; it is a condition of monopoly, a forced monopoly of the community. Howard (1971:225) succinctly states in other words that peace is more than an absence of war; “It is also the maintenance of an orderly and just society.” Kofi Annan (2001:43-44) proclaims: “peace is much more than absence of war; human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights.” As for Offiong (1997:423), peace is simply a state of harmony.

According to Hughes (1998:27) the key to God’s vision for humanity is for people to live in peace with each other, with God and with creation. Hughes argues that peace is much more than absence of conflict. It rather is the establishment and maintenance of healthy, nourishing relationships. From the Hughes argument above, it can be assumed that peaceful living is ideal conditions in which all humans and creation are supposed to live. But this assumption is far from the reality. It also holds that a peaceful society enhances democracy, justice, human rights and the general well-being of God’s creation. Similarly, injustice, corruption, conflicts

and violence constitute great obstacles to peace, justice, democracy and development in any given society.

Miller *et al.* (2007:38) are of the opinion that, from a biblical perspective, peace is not understood as absence of war, the absence or reduction of violence, or the transformation of conflict without violence. They postulate a four-fold definition of peace. *First*, that peace refers to the well-being and material prosperity signified by the presence of physical well-being and the absence of war, disease and famine. *Second*, that peace refers to just relationships signified by right relationships among people, nations, and social groups where there is no oppression or exclusion in whatever form. *Third*, peace also refers to a person's moral integrity; here, there is straightforwardness and no deceit, fault or blame. The *fourth nuance* to the word "peace" relates to God and his good news. The expression, "God of peace," derives from this fourth meaning. Miller *et al.* conclude that peace in the Bible relates to the wholeness of human beings and all creatures. Reflecting on the four-fold definition listed above, the question that readily comes to mind is can human really attend peace?

In a different perspective, Tuzin (1996:3) affirms that: "peace is not simply the absence of war or a 'feeling state' (usually fleeting) that is marked by an absence of inner turmoil." Rather, it is an idealized and probably a view of human relationship that is seldom, if ever, fully realized in daily affairs.

Andrieru (2011:1) maintains that it is hard to be against peace because the word "peace" is vague and often used generally to mean anything deemed to be "good." But, the concept is far more complex and needs to be unpacked in a critical manner, in order to rediscover the encounters, supports, blockages, play of forces, and strategies that, at a given moment, count as being self-evident, universal and necessary. To recognize that there are, or could be, different perspectives on the peace question is not to indulge in irresponsible relativism or to take refuge in philosophical anarchism of the type, but it all depends on people's point of view (Hansen 1987:1).

In line with the next section of this study, the research will examine different philosophical perspectives of peace.

2.3 PERSPECTIVES OF PEACE IN MEDIEVAL THOUGHTS

According to Howard Kainz (1987:1), philosophical interest and commitment to peace to any great extent, during the ancient and medieval period, except occasional anti-war sentiments expressed by Greek dramatics that elaborate and detail philosophical thinking about peace, has only come to the fore primarily in the last five centuries. Flower (1973:440) affirms that a more sophisticated appreciation of peace arose in the classical period of Greek thought. Both the tragedian, Euripides, and the comedian, Aristophanes, voiced general antiwar sentiments even though this was set within the context of war between Athens and Sparta. Plato, the great philosopher, who lived in the the ancient Greece, recognizes the desirability of peace in his writings, despite writing to an ideal state, when he describes a society on a marginal level of existence, without government or strife. Although this was rejected, Plato recast the republic in Spartan-like terms in order to control the internal aggression of human appetite in the world of scarcity. Flower (1973:440) Asserts that “Plato was too pessimistic to conceive of a world of such republics as his, and even expected human appetites to ensure the corruption of the best state, for the appetites are bound to engender a class struggle when the rulers inevitably makes mistakes.

Like Plato, Aristotle seems to regard war as inevitable, but wants the basic ethical and educational focus to be on peace rather than on war. While he appreciates the inevitability of social tensions (especially between the rich and the poor), he accepts the institution of slavery. He conceives men as essentially social and plastic, in the sense that reason can guide them effectively towards a stable polity (Flower 1993:440.). However, Ragland (2009:148) argues that Aristotle presents a praxiological perspective, which connects just acts with peaceful ones. This connection is essential because, to him, justice is a fundamental condition for peace. The concept of *eudemonia*, as expressed by Aristotle as human flourishing or happiness, strongly connects with the United Nation’s (UN) document explaining the actions necessary for peace. Aristotle’s thoughts about means and ends link with the process of orientation of contemporary peace educators (*ibid.*). Peace Studies is an interdisciplinary academic study as an intellectual field, and focus on the development of nonviolent strategies for redressing interpersonal, institutional, national and global conflicts. It stresses ideas of pacifism, mercy, reconciliation, constructive engagement, and forgiveness (Tuner 2006:434). Being a Utopian intellectual movement, it is characterized by a historicist and teleological view of progress, defined as an absence of war (*ibid.*).

2.3.1 Kant's concept of peace

Emmanuel Kant, a German philosopher, was influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's political philosophy and it is assumed that he developed his concept of eternal peace from Rousseau's project of perpetual peace, but took it more seriously than Rousseau (Kaniz 1987:65). Kant's philosophy of eternal peace holds that democratic states or republics are more peaceful in their external relations and are less inclined to go to war with one another. To him, a league of republic states would find no cause for war, since their interests and societies closely resemble each other (Kerr 2006:422). According to Caygill (1995:314) Kant describes perpetual peace as "The highest political good and idea of practical reason towards which we must act as if it is something real, though perhaps it is not." Kant's "perpetual peace" also defined an "end of hostilities" between human beings in the state of nature or between states in the state of war. But this must be achieved by gradual reform in accordance with firm principles that comprise the exclusion of secret reservations in treaties between states for future war, the forbidding of acquisition by any means of one state by another, the gradual abolition of standing armies, the forbidding of raising national debt for the purpose of external affairs, non-interference, and the respect for the law of wars (*ibid.*). Huber (1996:16) describes Kant's proposal for "eternal peace," where he names three conditions for a permanent peace among nations to include the following:

- A republican constitution in which all citizens enjoy freedom and equality and are dependent on only those laws applicable to all.
- International law by a league of free nations.
- Worldwide civil rights, guaranteeing every human being a secure life in every nation.

Weiner (2006:422) holds that Kant strives to show that peace was morally and rationally imperative as well as empirically feasible. However, Kant acknowledges the difficulty of establishing such a peace "with men, the state of nature is not a state of peace, but war." Cortright (2008:2) argues that, although Kant probably comes close to crafting a comprehensive philosophy of peace, his theory does not address questions of social equality, but socialists and feminists have broadened the peace agenda to include injustice and patriarchy.

2.3.2 Thomas Hobbes's concept of peace

Thomas Hobbes, a philosopher of human nature and human society, holds that peace is the main concern of politics, since the natural condition of people is that of war, in which life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short (Sorrell 1996:530-537). The ability to sacrifice immediate satisfaction for greater long-term benefits, especially peaceful order, is what allows men to contract away some liberties to a civil society and thereby avoid what would otherwise be a war of each against all, a life that would not only be brutish and short, but which would lack all the amenities of culture, agriculture, navigation, science and the like (Flower 1973:442). Hobbes believes that to seek peace is imperative. Hypothetically, he puts it thus:

Every man ought to seek peace, for in a condition where every man can injure any man as he pleases there can be no security, and everyone seeks security both by the necessity of his nature and natural right. And every man should denounce his right to defend himself in so far as all have agreed to denounce their rights to the extent they find it necessary for peace (Flower 1973:442).

Here, Hobbes's philosophy of peace implies that, if he fails to find peace, every man should defend himself in war as far as he can. However, Hobbes's classic metaphor is a state of nature which is also in a perpetual state of war (Nardin 2005:1053). Hansen (1987:4) affirms that Hobbes's concept of peace is based on his idea of man as a naturally selfish and aggressive animal to be restrained only by fear of death and terror. Consequent to these arguments, it will not be wrong therefore to conclude that the Hobbesian philosophy of peace indicates that peace is a result of strength.

2.4 PERSPECTIVES OF PEACE IN MODERN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Karl Deutsch, a strong proponent of democratic peace, proposes the idea of "security communities" - groups of states (such as Western Europe) in which there is little likelihood that states will resort to violence and a concrete commitment to settle disputes by negotiation. The idea, having been revived in 1980 by Michel Doyle, an American political scientist, became a foremost theme of academic and public debate on the nature of Post Cold War international order. Fukuyama (1999:6-27) another proponent of democratic peace, proclaimed that world society had reached the "End of History." To him, the end of the Cold War division marked a huge victory for both capitalism and democracy, heralding the beginning of a new phase in which liberal economic values will prevail. But critics have

questioned the reliability of the statistical evidence for democratic peace, especially in the pre-1945 period, and point out alternative explanations for regional clusters of peaceful states or security communities in Europe and America.

Darby (2007:3880) argues that the use of the term “peace process” has become a convenient term to describe persistent peace initiatives that develop beyond an initial statement of intent. Although this term may be recent, the concept is as old as war, but it only became popular in the 1990s, reflecting an increase in both internal violence and internal settlement following the end of the Cold War. Darby and MacGinty (2003 in Derby & MacGinty 2000:8) propose the following five essential criteria for successful peace processes:

- Protagonist willingness to negotiate in good faith.
- Inclusion of a key actor in the process
- Negotiation ability to address the central issue in dispute
- Force must not be used to achieve objectives
- Negotiators’ commitment to a sustained process.

Most peace processes begin with secret talks and move to open negotiations managed by the protagonist, but they often benefit substantially from contacts established by intermediaries, such as the business community, churches and academics (*ibid.*). Peace processes are always played out to a background of violence. Even when violence is ended by a declaration of a ceasefire, it mutates into other interrelated forms to threaten the evolving peace process (*ibid.*). In the theory of modern international relations, peace refers to the absence of war or violence. Little wonder Thucydides in Klinhaus2001: 69-73 asserts, “Peace is armistice in a war that is ongoing.” But, Thucydides’s idea of peace is often referred to as negative peace, which John Galtung (1996: 1-3 & 31) expands to mean a cessation of hostilities, but also a period when war is not imminent nor actually being fought.

Kerr (2006:422): “Peace in a negative sense may be regarded as a construct.” Howard (1971:225) affirms this when he writes that war starts in the minds of men, but so does peace. To Kerr, positive peace is a state of harmonious relationship between peoples. She argues that the attainment of positive peace requires the attainment of certain normative goals, such as the existence of social and cultural peace.

2.4.1 Mohandas Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha*

According to Chatfield (2001:11145), Gandhi's concept of "*Satyagraha*" is an ideology of proactive, nonviolent change. Taking it further he explains that *satyagraha* is a campaign of civil disobedience expressed in nonviolent resistance to what he regards as unjust laws. Greenawalt (2005:126) affirms that civil disobedience involves a public and non-violent breach of law committed in order change a law or policy, and in order to better society. According to Chatfield (2001:11145), the early sociological interpretation of *satyagraha* encroached onto the pacifist literature of the 1930s. But its scholarly analysis was expanded when it was later used with the methods in civil rights and antiwar campaigns. To Gandhi, the use of nonviolence in the struggle for justice applied the concept of peace as change without violence. Although Gandhi's philosophy of peace comprises truth (*satya*), courage and nonviolence (*ahimsa*) the two cardinal principles that underpin Gandhi's thought are truth and nonviolence; but truth is relative in word and in deed, and absolute truth is the ultimate.⁷ Gandhi maintains that all life is one; as such violence committed towards another is violence towards oneself, towards the collective, the whole self and thus is self-destruction and counter to universal law, which is love.

Similarly, the good of each individual in society consists of his effort to the good of all. Non-violence (*ahimsa*) is not just mere peacefulness or absence of overt violence; rather, it denotes active love, which, to Gandhi, is humankind's highest law. His thought emphasizes practical idealism. His principles progress towards the creation of nonviolent political, economic and social order. Thus, understanding peace as a nonviolent option for social change and for justice, rather than only the absence of war, underlies the common analytical distinction between positive and negative peace (*ibid.*). Peace can be interpreted in a narrow sense to be *absentia belli*, the absence of organized violence between groups defined by the fault. Social or internal peace is the absence of internal war.

2.4.2 John Galtung's concept of peace

The most elaborate attempt to construct a new set of concepts and, with it, a new theory emanates from Galtung's (*et al.* 2000: xi) philosophical thinking. According to him, a modern Norwegian philosopher, peace is a revolutionary idea. For him, to work for peace is to work

⁷ http://www.gandhihiserve.org/brief_philosophy/brief_philosophy.html.

against violence. Galtung (1996:9) postulates two compatible definitions of peace. First, peace is the absence/reduction of all kinds of violence. Second, peace is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation. From Galtung's definitions, the following holds: first, that peace work is to reduce violence by peaceful means. In other words, peace is negation of violence. The second definition is conflict-oriented: peace is the context for conflict to unfold non-violently and creatively. Thus, Galtung (1996:32) juxtaposes negative and positive peace and relates them to his notion of personal and structural violence. The absence of physical violence or cessation of direct violence constitutes "negative peace," while the absence of structural violence means the achievement of "positive peace." Negative peace is found where direct violence is absent. However, Galtung strongly criticizes this way of thinking as having a too narrow view on peace and what constitutes a peaceful society. He argues that peace is much more than absence of war and violence, and developed the term, *positive peace*, which to him is the best protection against violence.

Dedring (1976:20) argues that Galtung does not abandon the traditional concept of peace as absence of violence. Rather, Galtung's theory proposes to refine the idea and to complement it with the theorem of violence and of positive peace. Galtung's argument holds that violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations. Galtung's work explicates further that personal or direct violence is involved when an actor commits the violence, but structural violence is present when there is no concrete individual actor and the violence results from the structure and is perceived as unequal power, deprivation and injustice. Therefore, to Galtung, positive peace can be attained only with the abolition of social injustice, since power and resources are distributed in an egalitarian way in a condition of social justice or positive peace. In Boulding's (1997:76-80) view, Galtung sees confusion between his (Galtung's) positive and negative concepts of peace. He explains that what leads Galtung's misunderstanding of the "entropy concept" derive (one suspects) from the cardinal principle of his normative systems and overwhelming value, which Galtung gave to equality. Although Galtung's theory of violence and peace is widely acclaimed and accepted, in contemporary peace studies, Confortini (2006:334) asserts that feminist scholars, such as Tickner and Northrup identify the gender issue as one sensitive issue missing in Galtung's theories of violence and peace

Tickner (1992:59) and Northrup (2-5) (in Confrontini 2006:333) strongly hold that Galtung's theory must embrace and incorporate notions of gender as a social construct embodying

relations of power, since peace studies and feminism have much in common. By taking gender seriously as a category of analysis, prescriptions for a violent free society can be more than contemporary solutions to deeply ingrained attitudes to accept violence as “neutral.” Reardon (1990:138-139) argues that a feminist perspective as a peace tool would attempt to include all people; all nations based on a notion of extended kinship include the entire human family. Alger (1999:37) enunciates that the feminist vision of a peaceful world tends to begin with family and kinship relations and then extends the quality of these mutually nurturing relationships to the world. Consequently, the feminist perspective offers insight on the need for positive peace as it confirms and supports the need for peace tools, such as nonviolence, self-reliance, economic equity and human rights (*ibid.*). What is significant in Galtung’s concept of peace, and which makes it stand out for the researcher, is the fact that it clarifies the minimalist conception of “negative peace” as absence of war and enunciates the concept of “positive peace,” which includes absence of war, but goes beyond the narrow understanding of peace as absence of war, to embrace the re-building of infrastructure as well as social structures through reconciliation, addressing root causes of violent conflicts and wars, such as poverty, inequalities and structural insecurity; reducing conflict opportunities, creating peace-supportive and sustaining structures and establishing a foundation for economic growth and development. Consequently, the desirability and prospect of “positive peace” lies in its comprehensiveness, its long-term approach and its ability to link security with development. To Galtung, we end direct violence by changing conflict behaviour, structural violence by removing structural contradictions, and injustice and cultural violence by changing attitudes. Galtung’s model of peace, therefore, could be seen as responses that relate directly to broader strategies of peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building.

2.5 RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES OF PEACE

As much as there are social philosophical perspectives of peace, it suggests that there are other dimensions of peace as well. However, that is not the focus of this study. It is important to examine the religious conceptions of peace. In this section of the study, the researcher will unpack discussions on the Hebrew, Greek, Arabic and African conceptions of peace, taking peace in the Hebrew context as the point of departure.

2.5.1 The Hebrew concept of *Shalom*

The Hebrew word *Shalom* comes from the root word *sh-l-m*, which means whole, complete, and perfect. *Shalom* is extremely relevant to a consideration of a new welfare reality. *Shalom* refers to ideas behind English words, such as prosperity, wholeness, health, well-being, health, welfare and peace. Weis (1988:142-143) explains further that many passages in the Hebrew Bible use the term *Shalom* to focus on larger societal complexes, but the idea of *Shalom* applies to all levels of life - the individual, family, village, town, and city level. To Weis, *Shalom* is what God created the world and us to be, as well as the condition he intends for this world. To say that individuals have *Shalom* implies the following:

- that they are healthy in body, mind and spirit.
- they have dignity and self respect.
- their family is intact and their human relationships are constructive.
- they contribute and therefore are respected members of their community.
- their labour is productive and that its fruits are sufficient to sustain them as well as their families.
- and that they control the resources needed to achieve a basic level of economic security.

Shalom is frequently used in the Hebrew Bible to enquire about someone's welfare (2006:28). Today, its equivalent is the question: Are you okay? When used with the verb "to go," *shalom* can also mean "safe travel" (Gen 29:6; Ex 18:7; 1Sam 10; 2Sam 7, 18:29; 2Kings 4:26; Jer. 15:5, 33:4). Taking it further, Yoder (2006:28) adds that *shalom* is not used only to enquire about the well-being of people, but to also ask whether everything is as it should be (see Ps 73:3; Isa 54:13; Jer. 33:6). Yoder explicates that, *shalom* can be used to enquire about people's personal relationships, as well as the relationship of nations (*ibid.*). Amugamwa (2008:32-33) observes that *shalom* is often used when speaking about material and physical circumstances. But Van Schalkwyk (2012:100) contends that the concrete aim and theological vision of *shalom* is also what faith-based social service and community development works towards. In a practical set-up, it deals with *shalom* as the welfare and well-being which we hope would be the immediate and long-term result. Following the above arguments, it therefore holds that the Hebrew concept of *shalom* covers every aspect of peace for humans and all other creation, be it physical, spiritual, political, economic, psychological, as well as the social dimensions for individuals, groups and nations. However, much as the

Hebrew Bible consists of many passages that speak about various concepts of *shalom* (peace), there also are various accounts of violent conflicts. Ariarajha (2003:1-7) maintains that violent conflict and war were common among the tribes in Palestine due to the struggle over scarce land on which to survive. He argues that the image of God in the Hebrew Bible was closely associated with war and conquest. For instance, in Deuteronomy (7:1&2), “When the Lord your God shall deliver them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show them mercy.”

2.5.2 The Greek concept of *erene*

According to Ryder (1965:148), *eirene* meant the general state of peace but, in the fourth century BC and later, the word *eirene* became a technical term used for treaty, based on the principle of autonomy. From Ryder’s (1965:148) standpoint, peace refers to common peace which was an outgrowth of power politics, but the theory of common peace was not proposed by ancient scholars as a solution to the dilemma of Greek particularism. Desjardins (1997:18) holds that the message of peace is widely distributed in the New Testament in the life and teachings of Jesus in the four Gospels and the life of early apostles, like Peter and Paul. There are 100 explicit references to peace in the Greek text that occurs both in the noun, the verb and the adjective form of the word. The noun *eirene* (peace) occurs 92 times and the noun *eirenopois* (peacemaker) once, the verb *eireneuein* (to live in peace, be in peace, keep the peace) four times, and the verb *erienopiein* (to make peace) once, and the adjective *erienikos* (peaceful, peaceable) twice⁸ (*ibid.*). It is also observed that the word appears in every New Testament book, with a significant proportion of occurrences in the Pauline corpus, except in 1John. Desjardin argues that the high frequency of peace in the New Testament makes the concept of peace stand out even for a casual reader. While clarifying what New Testament writers mean when referring to peace, Desjardin’s argument reveals that there are various understandings of peace in the New Testament. He sees peace as a gift from God which could result in the breaking down of some of the divisions between God and humans and between humans themselves. Peace could also mean eternal life, as well as tranquillity that anticipate eternal life, as expressed in Paul’s letter to the Romans. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace (Rom 8:6). In a concluding remark to the

⁸ *Eirene* (peace): Mt 10:13; Mk 5:34; Lk 1:79, 2:14, 29, 7:50, 8:48, 10:5,6, 12:51, 14:23, 19:38, 24:36; Jn 14:27, 16:33, 20:33; Acts 7:26, 9:31, 12:20, 15:33, 16:36, 24:2; Rom. 1:7, 2:10, 3:17, 5:13-16, 14:17, 19, 15:13,33, 16:30, etc.

Romans, Paul states: “May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:13; see also Gal 5:22). Similarly, Paul also refers to peace as reduction in interpersonal conflict as a result of the Christians’ relationship with God. Desjardin (1997:18) observes also that, quite often, the theme “peace” is used to mean a significant reduction in the conflict between humans - simply meaning getting along harmoniously with others (which he would have likened to Christians’ new relationship with God) (Rom 12:18). Desjardin maintains that, for Paul, peace often meant absence of violence - physical or otherwise (refer to: Rom 14:19; 1Thess 5:13; Rom 7:15; 1Tim 2:1-2). However, he concludes that as much as there is peace in the New Testament, violence also abounds. He maintains: “Though faced with the threat of physical violence, Christians must not reciprocate even to the point of death” (*ibid.*). Supporting the nonviolent pacifist position, Swartley (2006:259) asserts that the key verses on peace (and war) in relation to justice and righteousness are:

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle willing to yield full of mercy and good fruits without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. Those conflicts among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it, so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it, so you engage in disputes and conflicts ... (James 3:17-4:4).

The above New Testament text makes clear that conflicts and violence are connected with socio-economic factors. As one can see in the above text, envy and jealousy lie at the heart of the community’s moral failure. However, from a non-violent and pacifist standpoint, Swartley (2006:44-67) argues that peace has been neglected as a prevalent theme in the New Testament, using words such as reconciliation and forgiveness as a case in point to enunciate that peace and peacemaking stand at the centre of the Christian message. Arguing against pacifism, Cortright agrees that, throughout history, the cause for peace has been on trial, standing like a forlorn defendant before a court of established opinions, misunderstood and mangled on all sides. Peace is naked, poor and mangled⁹. Again Quoting Shakespeare’s drama, the life of King Henry V act V scene ii, line 34 Cortright echoes; “to be called a pacifist, it is almost an insult to be labelled cowardly or selfish, unwilling to fight for what is

⁹ Cortright www.Cambridge.org

right¹⁰, but to fight in the positive peace context is to resist violence with non-violent actions.

2.5.3 The Arabic concept of *salam*

The word “Islam” is from the Arabic word, *salam*, which means peace in its fullest sense (Stockwell 2012:275). This indicates that the concept of peace is an integral part of Islamic religion (Shalaby 1977:34). Adeniyi (2008:64) states that one of the attributes of Allah, the Supreme Being, is *as-Salam*, “the source of peace.” While examining the Islamic approach to peace and violence in the Turkish experience, Saritopark (2005:414) agrees with Adeniyi that peace *al-salam* is one of the most beautiful names of God, therefore Muslims are expected to imitate God’s principle of peace, which is also aimed at making this world a peaceful abode for all creatures and for humans to be closer to God in order to reflect on God’s name, *al-salam*.

According Wehr (1996:425 in Adeniyi 2008:64), the word “peace” has been used for different situations. To him, *salam* and *sakinah* are two words used to describe peace in the Qu’ran. First, the word *salam* literally means safety, security, immunity, freedom from faults, defects or blemishes, soundness, well-being, peace and peacefulness, salutation and greeting. Taking it further, Stockwell (2012:275) maintains that the greeting, *assalumu aliakum*, wishes the recipient peace – specifically, good health and freedom from harm and danger. Adeniyi (2008:64) argues that, of the 42 times that the word peace occurred in the Qu’ran, only 11 of those occurrences relate specifically to a condition; others refer to salutations either in this world or in the hereafter. Second, the Arabic word, *sakinah*, also means peace, and refers to a high level of peace, which is tranquillity and calm (*ibid.*). Islamic concerns for peace are reflected in its doctrines, as well as the practices it prescribes for adherents. In the light of the above, the researcher agrees with Tekin’s argument that the Qur’anic view of peace is interwoven with its view of universal and moral discourse, which unites all human beings. Since human beings are created with an innate disposition (*fitrah*) that leads to knowledge of, and belief in, God (Tekin 2001:6-7) However, Durkee (2002:68-69) argues that peace has its price, and the price is a concerted struggle (*jihad*) and often outright war with a terrible and implacable enemy. This struggle must, of necessity, have, as its outcome, victory and opening, for any other outcome is slavery worse than death; for defeat is the

¹⁰ *ibid*

denial of unlimited eternal life and ecstatic life wrought by covering up (*kafafa*) the truth in submission to the foe. This position is enunciated in the following scriptures: So it is that we are ordered to be those “who struggle in the way of *Allah*” (5:54); for “Allah has preferred in degree those who struggle” (4:95); for “those who struggle in our cause, surely we shall guide them” (29:69); “whenever incitement from *shaytan* arouses you, seek refuge in Allah” (17:199); “fight against the friend of *Shaytan*” (4:76); and “fight the unbelievers totally” (9:36); “slay them wherever you find them” (2:191); and “until there is no more persecution or treachery” (8:39). This struggle demands that a terrible clarity of self is homologous and isochronous with the anchoring of utter discernment in the self, a discernment that is and must be absolutely ruthless and totally intransigent in the firm determination to root out whatever remains of the enemy. Indeed, this discernment is often called a sword (Durkee 2002:69). In the light of the above, it is evidently clear that the price of peace is that violence and war is part of the Islamic doctrine of peace. Therefore it may not be wrong for the researcher to argue that although word Islam is derived from the Arabic word *salam*, which means peace, violence is often used as a means for peace, especially in the context of fighting “the religious other” perceived to be the enemy.

2.6 PERSPECTIVES OF AFRICAN CONCEPT OF PEACE

The nature of the principles of these peace processes and conflict resolutions in indigenous African societies was anchored on the flexibility and elasticity of the rules and guidelines of peace in the society (Anifowose 2010:22). Mbiti (2011:5) locates the African concept and practice of peace in the African oral culture of proverbs, rituals formulas, prayers, creedal formulations, and symbols from the perspective of indigenous religion of every African people, which evolved from ancient times without founders. He (Mbiti) argues that the African concept of peace is centred on a monotheistic acknowledgement of God as their invisible creator of all things, to whom people pray and give praise names. Gowan (2002:8) maintains that peace does not always mean exactly the same thing; every time one says it, the word has a range of meanings. According Hansen (1988:1), the majority of African scholars understand peace as a condition that makes it possible for the majority of people to enjoy physical security, a modicum of material prosperity; the satisfaction of the basic needs of human existence, emotional political efficacy and psychic harmony. While the researcher agrees with the arguments as stated above, it is evidently clear that the concept of peace can be interpreted in different ways, but the most common understanding of peace within an

African context is that peace means absence of war. Desmond Tutu (1999:34-35) technically locates peace in an African philosophy of *Ubuntu* when he writes:

Ubuntu is very difficult to render in into a Western language as it speaks to the very essence of being human. When you want to give high praise to someone we say *Yu, u nobuntu*’; he or she has *Ubuntu*. This means that they are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. They share what they have. It also means that my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in theirs. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, ‘a person is a person through other people’ (in Xhosa *Ubuntu ungamntu nhabanye abantu* and in Zulu *Umntu ngumntu ngabanye*). I am human because I belong, I participate, I share. A person with *Ubuntu* is open to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened, that others are able and good; for he or she has proper self-assurance that comes with knowing that he or she belongs in a greater in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.

Taking it further, Nussbaum (2003:21) puts it differently when she explains that *Ubuntu* is a capacity in African culture for compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interest of building and maintaining the community. The concept therefore invites us to believe and feel that your pain is my pain, my success is your success, your wealth is my wealth, and my salvation is your salvation. In essence, *Ubuntu* is an African expression of human interconnectedness and in the sense that our common humanity and responsibility for each other flows from our connection. The eclipse of *Ubuntu* has darkened the spirit of modern-day African political systems. One could imagine the potential of *Ubuntu*’s sunlight, where it is embraced as a vital part of the African renaissance or as an African contribution to help a divided and fragmented world.

The African philosophical concept of *Ubuntu*, as is seen in Tutu and Nussbaum’s views above, stresses the unity and togetherness of people and the responsibility they have for each other. Manda (2009) affirms *Ubuntu* as one of several African philosophical approaches to a comprehensive understanding of cultivating cohesion and positive human interaction with one another and with creation in respect of building peace in our daily life.¹¹ The religious dimension of *Ubuntu* connects with the African belief that one’s ancestors continue to exist among the living in the form of spirits and that they are linked to the divine spirit. As such, in times of need or distress, one can approach the spirit of one’s ancestors to intercede on one’s behalf. This understanding underpins the religious dimension of the *Ubuntu* perception about human relationships (*ibid.*).

¹¹ URL:<http://www.africafiles.org/article/accessed.20/7/2013>

A peace-making process engendered all that was good in traditional African societies as it facilitated the security of people, properties, the environment and traditions with a view to making the indigenous African society so composite. The African belief in the supernatural to govern the natural society emerges from an African understanding that man was not alone in the psychic arena, as certain other forces existed to complement man's frailty (Anifowose 2010:110-111). Consequently, the strategy of peace-making and security in the traditional African society included both the physical and spiritual angles. The physical derived from the wisdom of elders, kings and chiefs, while the spiritual derived from the Supreme Being, divinities, priests and priestesses, as well as diviners. The latter group employs what was regarded as extra-judicial devices¹² (*ibid.*).

In the traditional African society, peace-making models, religion and philosophy were inseparable. Hence, in dealing with extra-judicial methods in African society, the force of traditional religion is inevitable. Adewoye (1977:7) agrees with this view when he identifies kings, chiefs and elders - human agents in the resolution of known causes of conflicts while, in the unknown causes, the super-naturals and their representatives stage-managed conflict resolution through strategies considered very metaphysical in approach and administration (*ibid.*). Anifowose (2010:111-113) holds that the use of extra-judicial methods, as peace initiatives in the traditional African society, was particularly aimed at facilitating peace and ensuring a harmonious relationship among members of the society - secret societies, such as the Ogboni confraternity in most Yoruba communities especially among the Egba and Ijebu, the Ekpo and Ekpe societies in the Efik/the Ibibio people, and the Ndidibia society among the Igbos - all of Nigeria, as well as the Poro and Sande societies of the Mende of Sierra Leone (Opoku 1978:197) are examples of societies that made use of extra-judicial methods in their administration of justice and display of conflict resolution in their respective domains. However, Osaghae (2001:25) argues that, in Africa, peace studies is hampered by unrealistic goals, reactive and emergencies approach; than proactive and comprehensive objectives. Other challenges include dearth of relevant data, reliance on foreign expertise, poor implementation, and lack off feedback as well as poor evaluation strategies. It must be said,

¹² Extra-judicial devices were associated with the religious inclinations of the Africans. They were means beyond the physical power and wisdom used to resolve conflicts by African traditional and religious leaders, as well as age grades and other associations in the traditional African society. These devices included oath-taking, the use of ordeals, causes, communication and blood feuds. These devices were employed to resolve conflicts, the causes of which were unknown, and their methods of resolution were beyond human comprehension (Anfowoshe 2010:111-114).

without fear or favour, that sometimes African traditional religions, like some other religions, have used coercive means to seek peace. It is possible that above challenges as listed by Osaghae above may be a result of using foreign approaches to solve African problem like the old axiom, using a round peg on a square hole. Yet, Hansen (1987:1) argues that a means of addressing conflict and achieving peace can draw upon traditional African values and beliefs on the need for security sector reforms or transformation, because African concerns in this area usually prioritize reconciliation to address broken relationships and the need for human development to address the challenges of vastly uneven development. Fred-Mensah (2005:1) further affirms that African peace mechanisms being indigenous approaches to peace-building and conflict resolution, is social capital. Fred-Mensah succinctly defines it as “capability of social norms and customs to hold members of a group together by effectively setting and facilitating the terms of their relationship ... collective action for achieving collective mutual beneficial ends. (2005:1)” To study the Ibibio concept of peace in order to understand its implication for preaching within The PCN *Akwa synod*, attention will be given to indigenous peace initiative, specifically on the peace-building mechanisms of the Ibibio people of Nigeria.

Although the above analysis of different perspectives of peace, from different times and geographical areas, might seem both cumbersome and necessary; the researcher contends that it is not only essential but also imperative to locate the present research study within the wider scholarship on peace. Such a reading of different perceptions of peace has made it possible for the researcher to identify the gaps in scholarship whilst appreciating the validity, strength as well as weaknesses of these previous studies on peace from different place and times.

2.7 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher examined different meanings, as well as theories of peace from philosophical, cultural, and religious perspectives. However, it must be mentioned that theories on concepts of peace are very broad and cannot be exhausted in a single study. Hence, this chapter did not attempt in any way to discuss exhaustively theories of peace in order to ground the study within a suitable conceptual framework. Consequently, the study is anchored on an understanding of peace, through nonviolent options, which implies the search for peace by peaceful means. This view will guide the general idea of this research. From an

indigenous perspective, *Ubuntu*, the African philosophical concept of being human which emphasizes community and inclusiveness, provides the ground for the church's conversation with indigenous peace initiatives for a possible way forward. The next chapter of this work will therefore focus on the historical background of the Ibibio people of Nigeria.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE IBIBIO PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the historical background of the Ibibio people of Nigeria. Since history or tradition influences present-day people and the ones whose praxis is studied, this chapter pays attention to the Ibibio as a context being studied in order to understand what is happening in their praxis (Pieterse 2001:13). As it is a known fact that every theological endeavour is done within a context, the understanding of the Ibibio history, therefore, is taken into account as a necessary point of departure for addressing the problem presented in this dissertation. Following Osmer's (2008:4) theological framework, the task of this chapter is the descriptive-empirical task¹³ of practical theological interpretation¹⁴. Discussions in this chapter will be unpacked in the following six stages:

- the Ibibio origin and language
- Geographical location
- Socio-cultural system
- Socio-political and judicial system
- Economic system
- Religious beliefs in pre-colonial Ibibio.

¹³ Gathering information that helps to discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts... Much of the time congregation leaders carry out the descriptive-empirical task of practical theological interpretation along these lines, through informal information-gathering, careful listening, and looking more closely at patterns and relationships that are taken for granted. Yet, leaders may often desire to gather information in ways that are more systematic... The descriptive empirical task helps leaders to learn how to carry out practical theological interpretation in a more systematic and disciplined fashion (Osmer 2008:4-6).

¹⁴ Today, it is no longer accurate to view this field as solely concerned with applications, with helpful techniques and skills applied to the life of a church. Practical theologians carry out diverse research programs and make their own constructive scholarly contributions to the theological enterprise as a whole. The scope of the field includes matters beyond the church and it is often directed towards shaping public policy and social transformation (*ibid.* ix-x).

3.2 THE IBIBIO PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

The Ibibio of Nigeria are one of the oldest Benue-Bantu tribes of Sub-Saharan Africa (Talbot in Noah 1980:5). Written accounts are generally silent on subjects of the Ibibio origin, except vague testimonies of their antiquity in the present location, information on the Ibibio origin is scanty and very speculative (Noah 1980:5).

Pre-eminently, it is important to state that, far back in history, the Ibibio seem to have migrated to their present location from two major directions. One group perhaps reached present-day Nigeria by an overland route and the other by a marine route. The Ibibio who migrated along the overland route settled at Ibom in Arochukwu, probably in about 8000 B.C. Here, they established the foremost shrine, now known as “the long *juju* of Arochukwu.” That was before they moved to their present location. Among the sea-borne the Ibibio included Oron, Eket and Ibuno who, upon arrival, moved northwards and eastwards until they came up against the Eastern Ibibio who were expanding southwards (Noah 1980:6-7). The Eastern Ibibio are the Ikono, Itu, Ibiono Ini and the Anang, the Ibibio who migrated via a sea route from the Cameroon (*ibid.*). According to Udo (1883:153), one result of war in pre-colonial Ibibio was a migration of the vanquished and the establishment of new settlements. Kalu *et al.* (2010:167) echo: “migration has become a major feature of contemporary Africa.”

Esen (1982:6) makes a point when he observes that pre-colonial Ibibio were largely rural people living in small villages on their ancestral farmland, a people joined together by their rich, beautiful language and kinship loyalties - a happy and contented people whose unity, though fragile, has stood up against all the divisive influences of foreign religion, politics, and sub-group ideology - a people with a wealth of shared traditions. Forde and Jones (1950 in Noah 1980:1) observe that the word “*Ibibio*” is both an ethnic and a linguistic term; that the people formerly had no name to which they referred to themselves as a whole. Udo (1983:2) affirms that “the origin of the name Ibibio is not known.” The Ibibio society was a highly structured one, with its hierarchies and social classes, whether political, social, religious or military organizations (Essen 1982:42).

3.2.1 The origin of the Ibibio language

As already stated in 3.2 above, the origin of the Ibibio language and name is not known. It is however reported that in 1777, Olderdrops, a missionary in Sierra Leone, placed the Moke near Ijaw of New Calabar and distinguished them from the Igbo and Bibi (the Ibibio). By 1850, the name had been in use by the Aro Igbo who called the Ibibio “Ibibi,” and by the Efik who called them “Ibibio.” Udo (1983:2) asserts: “It has been suggested that the name Ibibio is Ibibio in origin. The word means short, brief, and precise.” Udo argues that this implies that the Ibibio people do things in direct precise ways, the language is brief; one Ibibio word may stand for two, three or as many as five different things, the meaning depends upon how the word is pronounced. Generally, the Ibibio think of their name as meaning that their people do things in a precise, brief manner (*ibid.*).

Noah (1980:4) holds that the origin of the Ibibio is a subject of extensive speculation, but it seems that the word might have originated from the Ibibio encounters with the pygmies who originally occupied the Ibibio area. Udo (1982:2) observes that the early Europeans, who visited the Ibibio coast, had various nicknames for the Ibibio people with whom they lived at various points on the Ibibio coast and which later became names for the Ibibio. The names are Agbishere, Egbo Shary, Kwa, and Moko. Udo maintains that the names, Agbishere and Egbo Shary, are corruptions of two Ibibio words, “ibo emesiree” meaning “you (plural) say good morning.” Jeffreys (1935:15-16) says that Egbo Shary may have come from the Ibibio words “*ekpo esiere*”, where “*ekpo*” means a secret society and “*esiere*” means good morning. Eventually, to the European slave’s buyers, these names became names for the Ibibio. Noah (1980:2-3) states that “Moko”, another nickname which the Ibibio were called, was a corruption of the Ibibio word, *Mokop* (I have heard you or I understand you.), a word which derives from the trade vocabulary, which every European trader with the Ibibio had to learn.

Another account on the origin and language of the Ibibio by Jeffreys suggests that the Ibibio may have come from “*Igbo-Obio*,” and that it can resolve into “*Ibi-obio*.” He explicates thus: the word “*Ibi*” comes from a root meaning “people” or else from another word “*gbo*” which means “slaves.” “*Obio*” comes from a root meaning country, bush, and forest. He concludes by saying that the Ibibio were either from the “*Ibi-obio*” which means “people of the bush,” or from “*Igbo-obio*” which means “slaves of the bush” (Jeffreys 1935:15-18). Udo (1983:3) an Ibibio professor of History, opines that the name “Ibibio” is derived from the Ibibio command word “*ibobio*” (to behead people or animals), as the beheading of culprits,

such as recalcitrant slaves and sacrificial animals with one stroke of the machete, was part and parcel of the Ibibio culture.

Umoh-Faithman (1999:1) agrees with Udo about the name Ibibio, but disagrees that Ibibio is derived from the Ibibio command word, *Ibo-bio* (behead). He argues further that, if this were so, the name would not have originated from the Ibibio themselves. Faithman (*ibid.*:2) maintains that the correct information about the Ibibio name is as called and handed down from generation to generation by the Ibibio kinfolk, therefore the name *Ibobio*, corruptly called the Ibibio, is fully *Ibom Obio* or *Obio (Abasi) Ibom*, literally meaning nation of a great God. Although Noah seems to be standing alone, on the one hand the researcher hold that Noah's position should not be ignored as it calls for further research in order to validate his claim. On the other, the researcher agrees with the account that Ibibio migrated to their present location from the Cameroons. There are some minor variations among Ibibio language groups but to Noah (1980:7) irrespective of the dialectal groups (such as Anang and Oron) Ibibio people are one. He attributed the dialectical variations to the long period of isolation quoting Swadeh (1971 in Noah 1980:7-8) who argue that language vary to reflect a variety of personal contacts and social situations. Linguistic homogeneity can only be expected only if population is small, socially unified and geographically limited. The researcher shares the same view with Noah and in the study all Ibibio sub groups are regarded as Ibibio.

The researcher maintains that an analysis of language is important because language is the heart of human interactions. The use of language is thus central to the creation of peace because words are cocooned with the power to both create peace as well as initiate conflict. Any analysis of peace and its maintenance is incomplete without an examination of power that is found in the word, both spoken and written. Practical theology thus moves from the written word of the Bible to its prophetic declaration through preaching.

3.2.2 The geographical location

Akwa Ibom State, the home state of the Ibibio people of Nigeria, is one of Nigeria's 36 states with a population of over five million people, and approximately ten million people in diaspora currently. The state is the highest oil and gas producing state in Nigeria¹⁵. It is

¹⁵ http://speakersoffice.gov.ng/constituencies_akwa.htm/accessed/11/17/2013

located in the coastal Southern part of Nigeria between latitudes 4° 32' and 5° 33' north, and longitudes 7° 25' and 8° 25' east¹⁶.

The Ibibio speaking people occupy the extreme southern corner of Nigeria (Udo 1983:1). In the south-west, the Ibibio have a common boundary with the Ijaw of the River State; to the west and north-west, their neighbours are the Igbo of Abia State; to the north-east they have a common boundary with their Efik cousins and the Ekoi of the Cross River State; and in the East with various ethnic groups in the Cameroon; and the Bight of Bonny border to its south (Udo *ibid.*). Essen (1982:5) asserts: "Ibibio are the original owners of much of the land lying east of the Niger and South of the Benue." Ibibio has a coastline which stretches from the Akpyefe river at the Nigeria-Cameroon border in the east, to the Andoni river to the west, a distance of more than 130 kilometres; it extends northwards to Itu Mbon Uso which lies 110 kilometres south-east of Bende and Arochukwu in the Abia State. Noah (1980:1) succinctly states that the Ibibio occupy mostly a mainland part of the former Cross River State and they constitute the fourth largest ethnic group in Nigeria. The Ibibio present homeland, the Akwa Ibom state, was carved out of the former Cross River in 1987.

The Ibibio people are found everywhere in Nigeria but, apart from their home state, a great number of them are found in Cross River and River States, as well as in Abia, Imo and Bayelsa States. There are two vegetation belts, the mangrove swamp forest that fringes the coast, and the rain forest belt which lies north of the mangrove forest. And, there are two seasons within a year -the dry and the rainy seasons. The dry season begins from late October till early in March and the rainy season from late March until early October. The land itself is generally flat with few hills around Itu in the northern part of Ibibio land.¹⁷ According to Talbot (1969:343) the "greater part of the Ibibio country is formed of alluvial sand and a few rocks are to be encountered."

3.3 THE IBIBIO SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE

The Ibibio are happy, cheerful people, warm and hospitable to strangers, proud of their homes and heritage, sentimentally attached to the tombs of their ancestors, but they reach out vigorously towards modernization through education (Esen 1982:6). Like in most African

¹⁶ <http://www.aksgoonline.com/>accessed/11/ 17/2013.

¹⁷ http://www.aksgoonline.com./about_geography/.aspx . Accesed /11/17/2013.

societies, the family is the cradle of social interactions and education in the Ibibio society. Umoh Faithman (1999:99) asserts: “In pre-colonial Ibibio ... social interactions and alliance were formed through four institutions, namely: friendship, ally, grandparent/child relationship.” He maintains that these social relations united the Ibibio society, helped the people to avoid war and facilitated peace between the Ibibio and their neighbours. The details of these social relations are discussed later in this study (see 6.6). The Ibibio society maintained a high moral standard; their morality manifests in different ways, which include: respect for parents, elders and the aged, amongst others. According to Noah (1980:10):

The respect which the Ibibio people extended to the aged stemmed from a number of cherished convictions. Among the Ibibio knowledge and wisdom were social assets which accumulated with age, hence the Ibibio saying *osong owo osongo ifiok* (the older the wiser). To this extent, age and wisdom were synonymous. The aged were seen as the only people who had the right knowledge of the customs. In a society where writing was largely unknown, memory was the main repository of knowledge, skills, the appropriate rites and secrets of all rituals and ceremonies.

In his argument on the Ibibio social conduct, ethics of fear, and respect for parents and elders, Umoh Faithman (1999:107) maintains that no child dares to call any of his parents by their real names.¹⁸

Scholars believe that the Ibibio cultural folklore, riddles, songs, dances, masquerades, and wrestling provided a platform for socio-cultural interactions, education and recreation among the Ibibio people. The age grade was another social institution apart from performing the vigilante/security functions, each age grade helped in the development of the society by sweeping the village, weeding and clearing village roads and surroundings of the streams and others by financing projects such as town halls through communal efforts (Udo 1983:137-152).

Other strong socio-cultural institutions were Ibibio secret societies, which performed multifarious functions ranging from social, religious, humanitarian, moral to economic political and judicial. In the final analysis, they all exercised a great stabilizing influence on the Ibibio society (Udoh 1983:137). Prominent among the secret societies for men were the

¹⁸ The Ibibio believed that calling one’s father or mother by their real name was an insult to them. Ibibio children, in ancient times, used to address their mother as “*Nne*”; subsequent generations address their mother as *Mma* or *Mama*. Also ancient Ibibio address their father as *Tete*, *Nte*, *Ante* or *Ete*, *Nso*, *Baba* and *Papa*. There was strict adherence as far as conduct and ethics were concerned (Umoh-Faithman 1999:107).

*Ekpe*¹⁹, *Ekpo*²⁰, *Obon*, *Akata/ Ekpama*. Udo maintains that among these secret societies, both *Ekpe* and *Ekpo* remained as vital agencies of law enforcement in pre-colonial Ibibioland (*ibid.*). See 3.3.1.1 & 3.5. Socio-cultural organizations and groups were formed based on gender and age; in other words, men's social groups were separate from women, in most cases.

3.3.1 Men's social organizations

The pre-colonial Ibibio traditional society was a man's society, created by men for men and was dominated almost entirely by male interest. Women were seen and regarded as inferior to men (Esen 1982:79). The male folks were formally grouped in age sets or grades (*nka*), the status of which increased with seniority. According to Forde and Jones (1950:73), a set, informally established for a group of boys of about ten years of age, was formally recognised when its members were approximately twelve years old. From the age of 12 to 17, a set was subject to education in moral instruction, native laws and customs. Ibibio scholars agree that in traditional Ibibio society, the age grade institution served as a disciplinary institution and guardian of public morality. (Udo1983:152), (Ekong 2001:74-75) and (Esema 2002:17). Under the guidance of senior sets, they could punish their own members for unseemly behaviour toward society's older men. They were given executive powers as policemen and could impose fines and provide assistance to members in times of need. Forde and Jones maintain: "Age sets of all sexes often form recreational groups for such purposes as dancing and singing. After middle age they ceased to function" (*ibid.*). Other Ibibio socio-cultural and recreational male groups were *Ekpo Nyoho*, *Atat/utuekp*, *Ekoong*, *Ekpe*, *Obon*, *Akpang*, *Akata/ ekpama*. Scholars hold that the principal men's cult groups are *Ekpo*, *Ekoong*, *Ekpe*, and *Idiong* societies. Much as all the groups and secret societies were important in the Ibibio context, for the sake of this study the researcher will briefly discuss the *Ekpo/Ekpe* secret societies.

¹⁹ Ekpe, a status club which is also a system of government and a law enforcement agent to which Efik, the Ibibio kings, were accountable (Udo 1983:274).

²⁰ a) Ekpo a ghostly force. b) A social club particularly among the Ibibio and Anang. There were two kinds of Ekpo: 1) Ekpo Nyoho - a public masked parading organization, and 2) Ekpo Ekong or Ekong Nkemba, which is popular among the Ibibio from Itam and Ibiono of Itu and Ibiono Ibom local government areas, Akwa Ibom State. This is a highly secret organization. They both have their secret days during their season. There is a tendency to confuse Ekpo with Ekpe, even by Nigerian writers (*ibid.*).

3.3.1.1 The Ekpo/Ekpe secret societies

The Ekpo society was a symbol of male authority, supremacy and chauvinism (Esen 1982:79). Talbot (1923:183) echoes: “Of all the Ibibio secret societies, of which the most mysterious is *Ekpo Nyoho*.” He maintains that the lesser festival of the *Ekpo* cult was held at the planting of farms, while the greater rites are held at harvest-time.

Talbot observed a connection between a ghost’s seed-corn and the garnered grain. In classical times of both the Greek, the Romans, and the *Ekpo* cult of the Ibibio people of Nigeria, see the following:

It is interesting to note that, in classical times too, there was a close connection between the ghosts, seed-corn, and the garnered grain. Indeed both with Greeks and Romans, one of the chief duties of ancestral spirits seems to be that of watching the eternal round of panspermia and parmakarpia, and guarding the seed-corn in the sacred Mundus. Much the same idea seem to obtain among the Ibibio of to-day, as propitiation of these terrible rulers of the ghost realm must be carried out both at seed time and harvest (Talbot 1923:183.)

Andreseki (1970:57) observes that “when a young Ibibio man joins the society of adult males, he becomes an apprentice member of a politico-religious underground movement, one of whose chief functions is the subjugation both in the home and in the society.” Esen (1982:79) opines that perhaps without confessing it, men were secretly afraid of the potential power of women, which is probably why they did everything to suppress women and prevent the realization of their dangerous potential. He argues: “in order to keep women in utter submission, the ancient Ibibio thought of a number of measures to overawe women and keep them in fear and in eternal debt to the male.” And they succeeded (1982:79.). To put it differently, Andreseki (1970:57) affirms that men, often disguised as horrifying ancestral spirits (*Ekpo*), as officials, would periodically parade through the villages, beating non-initiates and women found outside their houses. They could also be called to flog wives or daughters considered guilty of disrespect to husbands, parents or elders.

Andreseki observes: “When a young Ibibio man joins the society of adult males he becomes an apprentice member of a politico-religious underground movement, one of whose chief functions is the subjugation both in the home and in the society” (*ibid.*). Based on the above discussions, it is the researcher’s argument that although the traditional Ibibio people believed they had “peace” as a result of the threats as well as the fear factor imposed on non-initiates and women through activities of secret societies, yet, it became evident that the male folk used various forms of violent means in order to force people to respect traditional values

in the Ibibio society. These acts often led to the abuse of the human dignity of women and the weak in the society and, as such, should not be encouraged. The question is: How can the church help society in the use of its God given peace-culture to achieve peace by peaceful means?

3.3.2 Women's social organizations

Like other African cultures, social interactions began in the family, then to the wider society. Women were free to interact with family members and other women within the society. There were different socio-cultural groups in the villages. These groups differed from village to village though most of them were common in all the Ibibio cultural societies. Abasiatai(1987:72) quoting Tylor & Malinowski states "Culture itself is a complex whole, and includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and all other skills that one acquires as a member of society." Folk music and dances formed an integral part of the Ibibio socio-cultural life. Men and women had their cultural groups that provided for social interaction and recreation. They came in various forms and arrangements, and were expressed during festivals, seasonal displays and in the moonlight. Such traditional dances include *Ebre*, *Edop*, *assia Uboikpa*, *Ababat ukpo*, *Asiko*, *Assian nkanaban*, *mbaya*, for women ; (Okon 2004:). Among all the socio-cultural clubs or societies of the Ibibio, scholars have identified two main women's organizations commonly found in most Ibibio communities. These include *Nka Iban Isong* and *Ebre* clubs. In fact, all married women were expected to join the *Ebre* club.

3.3.2.1 Nka iban isong

Iban Isong (women of the land or community women) was a strong women's pressure group in Ibibio society. Abasiatai (1991:193) holds that *Iban Isong* is an exclusively women's society which is mid-way between freemasonry and a trade union. Its objective was to safeguard women against the tyranny of the men folk. To put it differently, Okon (2004:33) affirms: "Iban Isong was a secret society for women." Udo (1983:153) argues: "The name *Iban Isong* is a shortened form of *Iban Ison Esit*, literally meaning hard-hearted women, strong willed women." This was because the *Iban Isong Esit* (hard-hearted women or strong-willed women) were stern in their judicial proceedings and they left no stone unturned until they had brought an offender to complete humiliation and sometimes to death.

Okon (2004:34) contends that Udo's interpretation of *Iban Isong*, to mean hard-hearted women, is an over-ambitious interpretation of the guild. He argues in support of the former view. To him, the emphasis is on land, or earth, a cliché for motherhood. It has to do with women's authority in view of their role in procreation and relationship to nature. It is sad to note how members of *Iban Isong* (women of the land) were grossly misunderstood in the Ibibio society. The researcher strongly argues that the *Iban Isong* were a group of bold Ibibio women, who used indigenous methods in the fight for justice, liberation and restoration of the Ibibio women folk's dignity in a male dominated world.

Apart from social and judicial functions, scholars agree that the guild (*Iban Isong*) also had economic, political and religious functions. But the social significance that concerns us here aims at building and sustaining good morals among the women folk as well as the men folk (Udo 1983:153-154; Okon 2004:34). If the right of an Ibibio woman was violated or her dignity abused, she resorted to the *Iban Isong* for justice, as their mode of justice was instant, total and devastating. Narrating how *Iban Isong* fight for the rights of the women folk, Udo (1983:153) says:

Any man who abused a woman by talking about her sexual anatomy was deemed to have committed a grave crime against the Iban Isong Esit. The aggrieved woman usually took the case to the Iban Isong (Esit), who will fixed a day on which it will try the culprit. At about 5 a.m. the women arrived the man's compound.. ordered people in the compound to leave, prevented others from entering the compound. They made the culprit to sit in a central and conspicuous place, while all of them stripped and stood nude before him, forcing the man to look at them. Their faces and bodies painted black and they held objects made in the shape of a woman's uterus ... The women remained in the state of mourning throughout the day, while at the same time they rained curses upon the man. They called upon the supreme God of the sky (*Abasi Ikpa onyong*), who had made women and endowed them with the sexuality which enabled both male and female to pass into this world, but which the culprit had disgraced, to kill the man, and not to give him any issue; they called upon the gods and goddesses (Ndem) to kill the man whenever he attempted sexual intercourse with any woman ... such a man would die soon after the visit by Iban Isong, if their demands were not met. It was in this way that the Ibibio women earned respect from their husbands as well as from other persons.

From Udo's statement above, one could say that *Iban Isong* Ibibio were groups of women who stood up to fight for peace and justice for the weak and oppressed and, as such, they were seen as agents of social transformation in the Ibibio traditional society in their own way.

3.3.2.2 The *Ebre* club

On the other hand, the *Ebre* club had both social and judicial functions. The social functions included the staging of plays when a new member joined the club and also during the funeral of a deceased member, among others.

According to Udo (1983:152):

Ebre club maintained zero tolerance for theft. However poor, no members must commit theft. If a member was caught in theft, she stripped and her body with smeared with charcoal, after which she was paraded around the village streets with the stolen item or items tied together and hanging on her neck or she was made to carry it on her head. A culprit of theft is immediately expelled from the club and from that day till the end of her life and even beyond she was ridiculed in songs and looked down upon by every member of the clan who knew her.

3.4 THE IBIBIO POLITICAL SYSTEM

Before the colonial era in Nigeria, the Ibibio had a simple but strong political system similar to their Igbo neighbours. In the absence of a large scale machinery of political organization among the Ibibio, such as such as existed among the Hausa-Fulani and the Yoruba of Northern and Southern Nigeria, the British invaders concluded that the Ibibio had no political and legal system that was worthy of preserving (Udo 1983:115-117). The Ibibio society consisted of villages, each of which belonged to a larger political unit known as a “clan,” which was often named after the original founder of the clan’s first village. Each Ibibio village had equal status (Noah 1980:9-10).

According to Udoh (1983:117), the Ibibio political organization consisted of six administrative divisions augmented by clubs, which included:

*Idip Ete*²¹ literally translated to mean the father’s womb;

Ufok, a collection of families (*Idip Ete*);

Epukuk, a collection of families (*ufok*), who trace their origin to one father, a modern lineage, or extended families;

²¹ Literally, the father’s womb but, in this context, it refers to a man, his sons, his brothers and half-brothers (Udoh 1983:117).

Obio or *Idung* (village), a collection of lineages (*Ekpuks*);

Oduk (village groups or sub-clans); a strong sub-clan can easily become a clan as time goes on; and

The apex is *Ikpaisong* (clan) a collection of village groups who trace their origins to one village in the clan.

3.4.1 Idip Ete: A political unit among the Ibibio

An Ibibio family unit, consisting of a man, his wife or wives, and children is distinguished by the term *idip* (Forde & Jones 1950:72). The *Idip Ete* coincided with the family unit of the Western World, except for the fact that it was polygamous. This polygamous nature of the Ibibio society resulted in very large families (Noah 1980:10).²²

In the *Idip Ete* political division, the father and husband was the head. He, together with his senior wife (*akamba anwan* or *atai anwan*), his eldest son, and a few other intelligent members of his *Otung ekwere* or *ebiet* (compound) formed an irregular/ad hoc committee which tried cases that involved members of the family. They apportioned blame to the guilty and praised the deserving. Their fines included drinks, chickens and goats but, in most cases, corporal punishment. Though their decisions were not upheld by legal sanctions, they were promptly obedient because such decisions are backed by the norms of the Ibibio society and a sense of collective responsibility for the family.

3.4.2 Ufok: A political unit among the Ibibio

The increase in the population of a particular *Idip Ete* gave rise to the formation of *Ufok*,²³ which consisted of a man's nucleus families and his brothers (Noah 1980:65). As a political unit of the Ibibio society, their judicial functions were mainly the settlement of disputes within the extended family, especially such disputes that the nucleus family (*Idip Ete*) could not settle, or disputes that involved two or more nucleus families - mainly matters concerning marriages, deaths, births, festivals, and farmlands (Umoh-Faithman 1999:65). Again Udo (1983:118) states: "In terms of political organization, the oldest man among the members was

²² At present, there seems little danger of a decrease in numbers among the Ibibio, for the greatest pride of both men and women is to become parents of many children. As large as the number seems, however, it is quite outdone by the crowd of children that surrounds many chiefs (Talbot 1915:209).

²³ In many Ibibio communities, this is identical with *Ekpuks* but, among the Annang sub-group, the distinction is very clear (Udo 1983:118).

the head and his title was *Obong Ufok* (the head of the house). Together with other senior members of the *Ufok*, the formed *Esop Ufok* (house assembly or council) met as occasion demanded at the compound of the *Obong Ufok*. Umoh-Faithman (1999:65) observes that the house political structure in the Ibibio past conformed to what was obtained in an early Israeli family system called “near kinsmen” (Lev 25:49; Ruth 2:1, 3:12; Deut 25:5-10).

3.4.3 Ekpuk: A political sub-division among the Ibibio

The third political division in the Ibibio cultural society was *Ekpuk* (lineage), which literally means knot. According to Udo, it was so called because it binds all the members together (1983:118-119). Umoh-Faithman (1999:67) affirms: “As the third political set up, in the Ibibio past, *Ekpuk* was the maximum of the Ibibio man’s family.” He argues further that no matter how big and numerous a village in the Ibibioland may have been, it had not more than seven *Ekpuks* and there is no hope of increasing *Ekpuks* (lineages) in any village in Ibibio land in recent times (*ibid.*). But, this argument can be challenged as many new clans and villages are springing up daily in modern Ibibio political society. Among the *Ekpuks* in a typical Ibibio context, one of the *Ekpuks* is always regarded as senior to the others, or the founding *Ekpuk*. Udo (1983: 118) reacting on what he regarded as distortion of fact from the Europeans who wrote on political structure of traditional Ibibio society argues:

Ekpuk is the modern extended family. Due to lack of adequate knowledge of the indigenous political administration in the Ibibio, the British colonial administrators who carried out ethnographic surveys of the Ibibioland between 1932 and 1936 erroneously concluded that “*Ekpuk* was the lowest administrative unit” in the Ibibio land. As a matter of fact, *Ekpuk* was the highest political administrative unit of the lineage (extended family), and lower in rank only to the village, village group, and clan councils.

The oldest man in each *Ekpuk* was the head and was always known and addressed as “*Obong Ekpuk*.” In political, social, economic, religious and judicial matters, *Esop Ekpuk* treated matters which *Esop Ufok* could not solve. Udo (*ibid.*) maintains:

No dispute, no matter how trivial or grievous, was permitted to be taken to the village council (*Esop Obio*) without first being cleared by members of this council. Any disregard by a member was considered a serious offence by the other members of the *Ekpuk*. The *Ekpuk* remains a vital instrument for maintaining peace and order within the *Ekpuk*.

3.4.4 Obio or *Idung* (village): As a political sub-division among the Ibibio people

In a traditional Ibibio society, *Obio* or *Idung* (village) was the fourth political division and was made up of a number of *Ekpuks* (lineages) which varied in number from village to village (*ibid.*). To put it differently, Forde and Jones (1950:71) affirm: "... village (*Idung* or *Obio*) comprising a number of wards sharing a common meeting place, which is the traditional centre of local control, and having a recognized leader among the heads of the lineages known as *Obong Obio*, *Obong Idung* (village head) or *Ete Idung* (father of the village)."

In his book, *Guest Christology*, Enyi B. Udo (1988:175), an Ibibio theologian, argues:

Obio marks the beginning of a definite social organization and central authority. It cannot be described as village or family. Obio is too extended to be netted. ... a semi autonomous body with mini cultures; these range from observing their own market days, ethical regulations and social controls.

The primary function of the *Obong Idung/Obio* was to see to the overall well-being of the village. Politically, it was his responsibility to preside over *Esop Idung* or *Esop Obio* (the village council). Each village had a number of other subordinate chiefs who assisted the *Obong Idung* (village chief) in the daily administration of the village. Edet A. Udo (1983:121) holds that subordinate chiefs could be called ministers. Their functions and the importance attached to them varied from village to village. Although the *Obong Idung* permanently presided over the village council, he was merely *primus inter pares*, without any individual authority except in his capacity as a mouthpiece of the *Esop Idung* - the ultimate authority in the village. The functions of the *Esop Idung* included, among others, decisions on the time to commence farming and the particular area to be cultivated each year, to see to it that they fixed a period when no palm fruits might be collected and a date for the collection, to regulate the cutting of yam-stakes for the training of yam vines and the confinement of livestock to prevent depredation of crops.

Udo maintains that it was the responsibility of the *Esop Idung* to handle matters that the *Ekpuks* within its domain could not handle, but the principal offences heard by the *Esop Idung* were cases of murder, witchcraft, adultery with the wife of a village head or an *Ekpuk* head, sexual intercourse between a man and a mother of twins, or between a man and a mourning woman, habitual theft, digging of new yams before the prescribed time, attempted

suicide, arson, and serious breaches of other village laws, customs and traditions (*ibid.*:123-124).

3.4.5 Oduk (sub-clan): As a political division among the Ibibio people

The *Oduk* (village group or sub-clan) was made up of a number of villages with stronger affinity. In most cases, these villages may have been far apart, but they had very strong ties. *Oduk* was the fifth division in the Ibibio political structure. Each clan (*Ikpaisong*) may have consisted of two or more *Oduk* (sub-clans). According to Udo (1983:130) geographical location was another factor in the formation of village groups in the clan. In his research, Udo cited the following examples: “In Nkari, the Enyong creek divided the clan into two, north and south; the Ikpa river divided Uruan into north and south; the Kwa river divided Iman into east and west, etc.” (1983:130).

Still examining this fifth political division in the Ibibio cultural society, in his argument Umoh-Faithman(1999:68-69) describes this structure as *Ession* or *Esien*, which means environment, referring to an environmental extent of a group of villages of one dilated and socio-religious affinity, as in the *Ekpe* and *Ndem* religious cult. Umoh-Faithman may not be wrong, since Ibibio has numerous dialects within the one Ibibio language. For this study, the researcher will make use of the term *oduk*, which is more popular among the Ibibio people, in order to be more consistent.

Udo holds that in the oldest village in each group was the parent of the group and, in most cases, the oldest *Ntinya* chief (*Obong Oduk*). In the parent village of the group was the head of the group (1983:130). The sub-clan’s head (*Obong Oduk*), together with other villages within the sub-clan and other intelligent members appointed within the sub-clan, constituted the *Esop Oduk* (sub-clan council or group council) in modern times called a town council. The main function of the sub-clan council includes the settlement of cases between member villages. Cases that the *Oduk* (sub-group council or sub-clan council) could not resolve were referred to the *Esop Ikpaisong* (clan council).

3.4.6 Ikpaisong (clan): A political division among the Ibibio people

Among the Ibibio of Nigeria, *Ikpaisong* (clan) is the sixth political and administrative division and its court remains the apex traditional court of the land. Udo holds that the name *Ikpaisong* was modified over the years. Originally, it was probably called *akpkup isong*.

Where *akpakup* is typical, the Ibibio word means “all embracing” (1983:130). To the Ibibio, *Ikpaisong* means all embracing land, in fact, the entire land, where people of one parent live together and have one common *Ndem* (diety), one or more common totems, and a common destiny.²⁴

Udo (1983:130) and Ekong (2001: 108-109) agree that Ibibio clans claimed common ancestries, worshipped common deities, organized defence against external aggressors and were mutually interdependent, acknowledging common political, social economic and religious codes of ethics.” Putting it differently, Udoh (1988:177) affirms “Clan is the culmination of all symbols and every symbol of authority represented here is practically autonomous.

At the head of each *Ikpaisong* is the traditional ruler, the *Okuku* or *Obong Ikpaisong*.²⁵ Though the traditional institution of *Okukuship* or *Obonghip* is practically the same throughout Ibibioland with slight differences here and there, methods of installation, functions, status and powers of *Mbong* or *Nkuku Ikapaisong*, the Ibibio (clan heads), are generally the same.

3.5 THE IBIBIO JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Among the Ibibio of Nigeria, political matters in society rested on the *Esop Idung* or *Obio* (village council) and *Esop Isong* or *Esop Ikpaisong* (clan council). According to Udo (1983:136), the Ibibio law enforcement agencies were secret societies of which the Ibibio had a number. Among all the secret societies in Ibibio, the *Ekpo Nyoho* (masquerades)²⁶ was viewed as a strong judicial agent of, and was responsible for, the enforcement of law and order. Since *Ekpo* was regarded as a ghost, its orders were no respecter of persons. Udo (1983:140) echoes:

The Ekpo could not be offered bribes to avert justice, as in modern times, since it was believed that the Ekpo could vanish from people’s sight at any time after giving its

²⁴ A memorandum, submitted by the Ibibio State Union to Prof. G.I. Jones’s Commission of Enquiry into the Position, Status, and Influence of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria (Aba: Ikemesit & Co. Ltd., 1965).

²⁵The traditional ruler in Eket, Iok Abasi Etinan, and Oron Uyo in Calabar; the incumbent of this office was referred to as Obong Ikpaisong, while the Okuku is commonly used in Abak, Ikot Ekpene, Itu, (Ibiono, Ikono, and Ini areas) (Udo 1983:132).

²⁶The Ekpo Nyoho masquerade usually dressed in strange terrifying ways so that the sight of them frightened the non members, the women and children. Consequently, ignorant people of the community always believe that they were dead ancestors (Udo 1983: 137-138).

judgement. It was also believe that the Ekpo (ghost), like Abasi Ibom (God), knew all the truth and so their actions were justified

Consequently, orders of the village or the clan councils were carried out by members of the *Ekpo* society. Next to this society, was the *Ekpe* Lodge. In some riverines, the Ibibio communities' judicial functions were carried out by the *Ekpe* society (see 3.3.1.1).

Udo (*ibid.*:142) argues: "Whereas the *Ekpo* was used to enforce law and order in all parts of southern Ibibio land, the *Ekpe* was a most important instrument for the enforcement of law and order in the riverine Ibibio."

Beside the *Ekpo nyoooho* and *Ekpe*, other important the Ibibio judicial instruments were: *Mbiam* (oaths), *Idiong* (divination), *Afia* or *Ukana* (ordeal), *Ayei* or *Eyei* (young palm fronds), *Nnuk-enin* (elephant tusk), *Eyeyin* (grandchildren), *Ukot/Ukod* (in-laws), *Iman* (kinsmen/allies), *Nka* (age grade/club) and women's groups, such as *Ebre* and *sban isong*. Some of these instruments will be considered later in section 2.2.4.5 (the Ibibio symbol of peace).

However, Esen (1982:12) argues: "The village laws were enforced by the agents of these secret societies through physical coercion." Judicial procedures among the Ibibio were prompt and direct, laws were enforced to the letter, and punishment was inflicted on those who would not obey. From the foregone, the researcher argues that maintenance of law and order among the Ibibio pre-colonial society was not really acts rendered by individuals from their freewill and love which they had for their community/communities; rather they were actions out of fear of punishment and death.

3.6 THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE IBIIO PEOPLE

Similar to other African states, the Ibibio pre-colonial economy was basically a subsistence economy. According to Udo (1983:195), this economy depended to a large extent on land. He adds that, from time immemorial, the Ibibio have attached great importance to their land. They regard it as their "First Mother." It is their mother earth, because the soil is their source of water - the river, sea and ocean are so much a part of their everyday life. Udo maintains that land has become the very centre of their lives and of their communities. Hunting was part of their economic life. From the forest, men hunt and bring home the meat of the vast variety of wild animals that abound in them (*ibid.*).

There is no doubt that the main occupation of the Ibibio was farming and fishing. The Ibibio people's other forms of occupation during the pre-colonial era included other seasonal occupations such as wood carving and weaving. Although civilization through Western education has brought many changes in modern Ibibio society and many Ibibio people today engage in all manner of professional careers to earn an income, yet, due to the high level of unemployment and poverty, a good number of the Ibibio people in the rural areas engage in traditional Ibibio occupations mentioned above as their means of livelihood.

Essen (1982:5) says, "The Ibibio are a farming and fishing people, every year they fight to push back the ever advancing rain forest in order to cultivate their food crops of yams, maize, plantain, cassava and cocoyam." Udo (1983:211) holds that the main Ibibio food crop in pre-colonial days was yams (*bia* or *udia*), supplemented with various species of cocoyam (*ikpong* or *mkpong*) and bulbil-bearing yams (*edomo*), plantain (*ukom*), bananas (*mboro*), maize (*akpakpa* or *akpukpa* or *ibokpot*), three types of beans: *nkoti*, *nsama* and *ibaba*, and vegetables, for example, fluted pumpkins (*nkong /ikong ubong*); other wild vegetables that were not planted but gathered from the bush, included: *editan*, *afang*, *meme*, *utasi*, *ntoong*, *nyama*, etc. Today, most of these wild species are planted in home gardens. On the other hand, all the year round, fishermen go round their numerous creeks, rivers and the open sea in their dug-out canoes to harvest fish, crayfish, crabs, periwinkles and other seafood. Udo is not wrong when he asserts:

It is their soil and water so to speak which bore them both their cash and food crops ... believe that without their land they will be dead men, women and children, and would do nothing to profane the land, if this happens, they immediately expiate the sin by offering sacrifices (1983:211).

The main cash crop remains the palm fruits from which they derive palm oil and palm kernels.

3.7 THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE IBIBIO PEOPLE

The religion of black men, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara, has been subjected to various levels of evaluation and criticism by the outside world. Many of the critics have criticized the faith of Africans, making light of the various religious objects and concepts that they found during exploration, and political, economic, academic or missionary visits to the African continent (Udo 1983:238). To affirm this observation further, Dopemu reports that Sir Samuel Baker (in Dopemu 1991:20) says:

Without any exception, the people of Southern Sudan are without a belief in a supreme being; neither have they any worship or idolatry nor is the darkness of their minds enlightened by even a ray of superstition. Their mind is as stagnant as the morass which forms its puny world.

But Trope (1917:26-27) contends that it is totally inappropriate to use terms such as pagan and heathen to refer to people in their primal cultures, even though their religious orientations are not expressed by means of a congregational type of worship, elaborate temples or rationalised creeds of faith. Similarly, Mbiti (1989:9-10) agrees with the above argument when he wrote:

Though it cannot be denied that the departed occupy an important place in African religiosity, it is wrong to interpret traditional religions simply in terms of worshipping the ancestors... To see them only in terms of ancestors worship is to isolate a single element, which in some societies is of little significance and to be blind to many other aspects of religion.

However, Livingstone (1917:26-27) contradicts Baker's erroneous concept of African religiosity when he observes:

The Negroes... were not destitute of religious beliefs though their theology, indeed seemed somewhat too complicated for comprehension, nor were their lives unregulated by principles and laws, they were ruled by canons and conventions as powerful as those of Europe; their social life was rooted in a tangle of relationships and customs as intricate as any in the world.

To Udo (1983:239), the early Western critics of African traditional religion might not be blamed for their ignorance. Being alien to the continent and knowing little or nothing about it, its people and their ways of life, their views were guided by imagination and unverified stories. Scholars have argued that, in an era when great cathedrals, temples, and mosques dedicated to God, Yahweh and Allah, adorned the Western and Eastern world, the absence of large buildings dedicated to the absence of any form of physical representation, or a large building dedicated to a supreme being, who, among the Ibibio and in other African communities, immediately produced the impression that God was not known nor worshipped in Africa.

Twesigye (1996:191) puts it like enunciates that the African religion, unlike Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, had no fixed canon in the form of sacred books or sacred scriptures. However African open canon is oriented to God's supernatural activities of revelation in both cosmic creation and redemption. Ibibio, like other Africans, authentic human life and harmonious human existence were inseparable from God. He (God) was their

true source of grounding, the people generally believed that being religious was co-extensive with being human.

Although no systematic cosmogony seems to have developed among the ancient Ibibio, Esen (1982:45) argues:

There are no extant traces of any consistent and generally accepted Ibibio theories of the origin of the universe or how the world came into being, or the origin of life and death. Nonetheless the Ibibio developed and lived by a religion of their own which can stand side by side with any other in terms of organization, observances, and conception of the sacred and divine.

The traditional religion of the Ibibio has been described by writers who have studied it from religious, philosophical or anthropological views. In his book, *African religions and philosophy*, Mbiti (1969:2), states: “Wherever the African is there is his religion; he carries it to the fields, takes it to a beer party, to a funeral and other ceremonies and, if he is educated, takes it to school or university; and, if he is a politician, he takes it to the political arena.” Turaki (1999:146) asserts: “Theologians and scholars have confirmed that generally Africans have a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, there are also concepts and beliefs about his nature, form, status and attributes.” He maintains that the African traditional knowledge of God has content valuable to our understanding of traditional belief in the Supreme Being (*ibid.*).

Like other Africans, the Ibibio traditional religion and beliefs were based on the Supreme Deity (the Great Spirit), *Abasi Ibom*, the Creator, *Obot*. Udoh (1988:76) affirms that the name “*Abasi*” was already there before the Scottish missionary arrived. Esen (1982:46) affirms that the Supreme God of the Ibibio was *Abasi Enyong* (God of the Heavens), otherwise variously known as *Abasi ikpa enyong* (God of the sky) or *Abasi asana enyong* (God who makes the white sky). Among ancient Ibibio of the Akwa Ibom State and Efiks of the Cross River State, *Abasi Ibom* (the great God) was distinctly recognized as the Supreme Being - beneficent in character - who is above every other spirit, good or evil.

Whereas the Ibibio call God “*Abas Ibom*,” their Ibo neighbours call him *Chineke*, *Chi-okie* (*Chi*=God; *Okike*=that creates). The Yoruba of Western Nigeria know him as *Olodumare* (the Creator) (Dowu 1962:18-19). Unlike the Yoruba, who were ruled by Oba as their monarch, the Ibibio had no human king that could exercise political and religious authority over all the Ibibio people who believed that only the great God in heaven (*Abasi ibom ke enyong*) is their sole King (Umoh-Faithman 1999:70). Indeed, *Abasi Ibom* controlled all things. Esen

(1982:46) is not wrong when he asserts: “To them God (*Abasi*) controlled the earth (*isong*) and had precedence over all other deities including *Abasi Isong* (God of the earth), he is the controller of life itself, and could not be counted out of any situation where human beings and their welfare were involved.”

The Ibibio believed that *Abasi* (God) and lesser spirits/deities (*mme ndem*) controlled natural phenomena. As such, offering of sacrifices and libation was a normal form of ritual worship among the Ibibio. This ritual was usually performed by a traditional priest or a senior elder. Udo (1882:241) argues that, although the Ibibio believe in minor deities (spirits called *mme ndem*), and in ancestors, and that they build shrines for them, they believe, above all, in the Supreme God called *Abasi Ibom*. It is their belief in lesser gods and deities that qualifies the Ibibio traditional religion as polytheistic. Esen opines thus: “Other deities (*mme ndems*), and the Ancestors are only functionaries of the supreme God, *Abasi Ibom*, who is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent” (*ibid.*). To the Ibibio, *Abasi* is so large that he cannot be housed. And, as such, he has no shrine similar to the great cathedrals, temples and mosques that exist in other parts of the world.

It is obvious that the ancient Ibibio themselves fashioned a theocratic state in which everything moved by the supreme authority of gods and lower deities who acted directly through the agency of the ancestors, chiefs and elders; a system in which the god, the ancestors, and man himself interacted freely within approved bounds, influencing and complementing each other for the good of all. Turaki (1999:170) once observed that African theologians and scholars define the place of divinities, gods and spirits in terms of the “absolute transcendence” of God and also in the hierarchy of being. He maintains: “The transcendence posture of God helps Africans to define the place and the role of God, divinities, gods and spirits and the existing space between God and the human beings is filled up by gods, divinities and spirits, who are sometimes called the intermediaries” (*ibid.*).

It was Mbiti who argued that traditional concepts still form the essential background of many African peoples, though this may differ from person to person and from place to place. Even educated Africans do not subscribe to all the religious and philosophical practices and ideas. The majority of our people, with little or no informal education, still hold to their traditional corpus of beliefs and practices.

3.7.1 Abasi Enyong (the Supreme God)

As mentioned above, *Abasi Enyong* was the creator, controller and sustainer of all things including life itself, and could not be counted out of any situation where human beings and their welfare were involved. *Abasi Enyong* controlled the earth (*Isong*) and had precedence over all other deities (*Mee Ndem*) (Esen 1982:46).

Amaku (1952:84) states:

Ke Kupuru nke Obio etinyin Abasi, ke usem nyin, oworo ererimbot emi. Kpa ke idem at eset oro, ekese owo ke idut nyin ema ediono at Abasi ke usung mmo. Mmo eme ediongo enye nte andibot ye Ete kpupuru nkpo ke enyong ye ke isong, ye ke inyang ye ke mmong emi odude ke idak isong. Okposuk edi mmo esituakde ibuot eni itiat ye eto, mmo ema efiok ete Abasi emi akanamde mme nkpo emi kiet kiet onyung onode mmo odudu emi mmo ekerede ete mmo enyene, odu. Odo edi ntak emi mmo ekekotde enye, 'Etinyin Abasi' ye obio ererimbot emi Enye obotde obio etinyin Abasi.

The above is translated by Esen as follows:

In everyone of our folk tales, the city of our-father-God in our language, means this world. Even in those very ancient times, many people in our nation knew the real God in their own ways. They knew Him as the Creator and as the Father of all things in heaven and earth, in the seas and in the water that is under the earth. Although they used to bow down before stones and wood/trees, they knew Him who created all things, who gave power to all gods, and forces, and that his power supersedes the powers of other gods. That is the reason why they called Him our-father-God, and the world he created, the city-of-our-Father-God (*ibid.*).

Amakus's observation clearly reveals that the ancient Ibibio believed in the supreme God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible. The supreme God was known and described by the ancient Ibibio through his attributes, some of which included the following: love, mercy, kindness, grace, and peace, to mention but a few.

Abasi Ima (The God who loves)

Abasi Uwem (The living God)

Abasi Mbom (God who is merciful)

Abasi Emem (God of peace)

Abasi Mfon (the gracious God)

Abasi Ete (God the father)

Uko ke ekong (Mighty in battle/ strong in warfare)

Abasi Eduk (the God that prospers/God of bumper harvests)

According to Esen, the supreme status of *Abasi Enyong* is underscored in the proverb, “*Odo etim-me ototot Abasi, atuak isong*” which literally translates thus: The instrument for digging the soil first acknowledges God and clears with him, before striking the earth.

The Ibibio farm instrument or tool referred to here as *etim-me*, is a stout sharpened pole used for boring holes on farmland for the purpose of positioning yam stakes. The operation involves holding the *etim-me* with two hands, raising it vertically skywards, and bringing it down with force on the chosen spot on the ground so that it pierces deep into the soil. To the Ibibio, the skyward raising of the *etim-me* was a symbolic act of asking *Abasi enyong* for permission to strike or disfigure his property, the earth (Esen 1982:46).

The worship of the supreme God (*ukpono Abasi Ibom*) among the Ibibio was a daily practice, but such practices were extremely complicated for the early European missionaries to understand. For Udo (1883:254), the worship of the supreme God among the ancient Ibibio embraced ritual offerings and sacrifices, the pouring of libations and invocations, and prayers. Its manifestations included shrines, altars and cultic objects, such as vessels, vestments and sacrificial victims, such as goats, sheep, cows, dogs and hens. Udoh’s research reveals that the Ibibio revered the supreme God (*Abasi Enyong*) above lesser deities even though they built no temples or shrines for Him. However, Ibibio scholars agree that the reason why no temple or shrine was built for God was because they believed that God is so big that no building constructed by men could accommodate Him. Secondly, the supreme God, though known and worshipped, did not belong to the Ibibio alone for He was the Father of all races and the Creator of all things visible and invisible.

3.7.2 Abasi Isong

According to Turaki (1999:135), the gods and divinities play a significant role in determining traditional morality and ethics. Among traditional Ibibio people of Nigeria, there was a clear distinction between *Abasi Ibom Abasi Enyong* (Supreme God) and *mme Abasi Isong/ Ndem isong* (lesser gods or deities). Udo (1983:257) argues that, to the Ibibio, the supreme deity was a spirit and minor deities (*mme ndem*) were called spirits, but there was no confusion of them. He maintains: “Whereas *Abasi Ibom* is everywhere, and has no dwelling place, *Mme ndem* (spirits) have dwelling places throughout the Ibibioland. Lesser gods/deities (*mme ndem*) though small are also unseen, but shrines can be built to house them.”

Esen (1982:52) asserts: “Every Ibibio Clan has its own deity/deities, whose worship entailed special modes of behaviour, prescribed sacrifices, the observance of holy days, and abstinence from the meat of some special kind of animals regarded as sacred to such a god.”

The following are some Ibibio clans and their deities: the Nsit clan had Anyaan as their deity, Ibesikpo had Akasima, Uruan had Atakopo, Oku had Udu, Eket had Itauma, Offot had Ukana, Ikono had Etefia, Ibiono had Anantia, Etoi had Afia, Ukpom had Ebom, Itam had Awa, Iman had Itina, etc. (*ibid.*).

Ibibio scholars agree, and strongly hold, that clan deities were a strong unifying force within the clan.

It was observed that Ibibio proverbs were interwoven with sacred observances. Sacred days, such as *Ederebo/Edemetaha*, were specially set aside for worship and sacrifice, especially by Ekpo initiates. On such days, women and men, who were not full initiates of the *Ekpo* cult, had to remain indoors. Hence the proverb, “*Anyaan ifung- onok Ederebo*” (the observance of *Anyaan* cannot be postponed from *Ederebo*) (*ibid.*).

The above Ibibio proverb about *Anyaan* (*Nsit* deity or the *Nsit* clan’s god) and *Ederebo* (the eight days of the Ibibio week) was the Ibibios’ strong resolve not to postpone an event from a particular day. As *Ederebo* was set aside for the rites of *Ayaan*, it was impossible to perform those rites on another day. Among the Ibibio from the *Itam* clan, *Ebok* (monkey) was regarded as a sacred animal; hence a common Ibibio proverb, *Etiedie ekop ete Itam eta ebok*. This proverb emphasizes a strong irrevocable resolve that an undesirable event will never be allowed to happen. One need not hail from *Itam* or *Nisit* to use these proverbs, as they were general Ibibio proverbs (Esen 1982:55; Udo 1983:252). The common medium in which the Ibibio people communicated with their gods and deities was through prayer and pouring of libations, which will be discussed later in this dissertation.

3.7.3 Belief in the ancestors

In the African context, ancestors²⁷ are highly valued. Turaki (1999:34) asserts that the ancestors hold a place of prominence in the traditional society. If they are not worshipped,

²⁷ Turaki (1999:176) states: “The ancestors are dead members of a family, a clan or a tribe. They are of ripe age and even though dead, they are a part of a community. The African community consists of the unborn living (those about to be reincarnated), the living and the living dead, those who are deceased but are still remembered by the living.” Steyne (1990:80) describes the relationship between ancestors and the living thus: “Life has no

they are at least highly revered. Like elsewhere in Africa, ancestor worship is a very important aspect of Ibibio traditional religion. It was Udo (1983:3) who said that the Ibibio have a firm belief in life after death and regard their ancestors as the invisible part of their lineage. Esen (1982:54) argues: “The Ibibio believe that when the venerable patriarch of the family dies, he is really not dead, but protect them and their interests against harm.” It is a common belief among the Ibibio that, even after death, the dead still live in spirit among their descendants, and continue with the protecting function of the entire family, much in the same way as when they were alive.

Thorpe (1991:120) argues:

In Africa, particularly, every member of the community is closely linked with the community. This creates a chain which binds each person horizontally to the other members of the tribe, and vertically to both the deceased ancestors and coming generations. Individuals cannot exist alone. They *are* because they *belong*.

According to Udo (1983:258), it might be said that the Ibibio regarded their ancestors as the greatest part of God’s agents or functionaries (*Mmme isung utom Abasi*), who lived in a sacred land given to them by mother earth. The Ibibio believe that the ancestors can still hear them if they call; hence the popular the Ibibio proverb “*Ekpo akpa enyin Ikpaha utong*” (it is the dead man’s eyes that die, not his ears).

Esen (1982:54) argues that, if the dead are still listening and hearing what is said; then it becomes very necessary to watch what one says as ancestors would not want to hear things that are unworthy of their descendants. Among the Ibibio, it is necessary to avoid making statements of doubtful veracity about the dead and the consciousness of the living dead cause men to be careful when discussing the dead. Esen (*ibid.*) asserts: “No one may lie against the dead as they are around listening and may punish anyone involve in such activities.” Turaki (1999:176-177) affirms:

The ancestors are the most powerful, basic and primary component of the kinship in an African community. An African is a place where death and life co-exist communally and in interdependence and solidarity. Religion, culture, customs, life and meaning are all mediated, moderated and sanctioned by the community of the ancestors; they are the custodians of the community

In an event that involves the invocation of ancestors, the liturgy embraces those remembered, those known and those unknown. As is popularly said, “We cannot remember all of you by

meaning apart from the ancestral presence and ancestral power. The tie-in with the dead is so much a part of the whole fabric of life that, when some one is about to depart this life, they are requested to take greetings or requests to the previously departed. But communication does not end there. The deceased will again communicate with the living in this present life.”

name, nevertheless we invoke you all (ibid).” Like elsewhere in Africa, the Ibibio ancestors are also connected with certain professions, like medicine, crafts, or the priesthood, which are mentioned as far back as the first one who initiated the practice. So also are those who were the aboriginal heads of clans. These classes of ancestors were supposed to live permanently in the spirit world (Udo 1983:262). Little wonder that Idowu (1976:188) asserts: “In fact the place where Ancestors lived permanently is the ‘paradise’ for which Africans yearn as the final home – a ‘heaven’ in which they have a happy, unending reunion with their folk who are waiting for them on the other side.” The above discussions the researcher contends that it will be impossible to completely detach Africans irrespective of faith from the belief in ancestors; having survived till date. The veneration of ancestors in Ibibio tradition, demonstrates that belief in ancestors occupy a central place in Ibibio religious and social life.

3.7.3.1 Qualification for being an ancestor among the Ibibio

It is important to note that not all the dead were regarded as ancestors among the Ibibio people. Udo (1983:258-259) maintains: “No person who died accidentally, or was crippled or an insaned person, for example, was revered. The ancestors consisted chiefly of forefathers and grandmothers. Ibibio ancestors were honoured and worshipped, but it was only the good ancestors who were noted for their good life, justice bravery, wise judgement and philanthropy.”

In his book, *African Traditional Religion: A definition*, Prof Idowu’s (1976:187) argument affirms this: “Only good people became ancestors after they had received the ‘Well done!’ judgement of Deity or of ‘the court of ancestors.’ Bad or wicked people will be cast into a place of rubbish heap, the hell of potsherds.”

Ibibio ancestors are believed to still be with their people (Shorter 1973:59-60). Their descendants generally invoke their presence through prayer at all times, especially in times of difficulties, and share food and drinks with them (Esen 1982:54; Udo 1983:259). Kalu (2010:4) echoes: “ancestors the living dead, across the boundaries freely, their presence being acknowledged through sacrifices, libations, and festivals when they visit the human world as marked guests.”

Turaki (1999:177) remarks that, in the event of death, the descendants of an ancestor would normally offer libations at his tomb or another fixed place when seeking blessings or petitioning for something. Some Africans will not think of drinking or eating anything

without giving a token offering of it to the ancestors. Turaki is not wrong in his comment as this offering or pouring of libation is a common practice among the Ibibio even to date, be it at family, village or clan meetings.

Udo (1983:259) maintains that the Ibibio ancestors were often associated with God in prayer and were approached as intermediaries between people and the Supreme Deity. They were said to be in the arms of *Abasi Ibom*, and with the other members of the company of departed. Little wonder Udo (1983:259) echoes the Ibibio song says: *Owo ama akpa onyong Ekpo anyong ebine Abasi ke enyong* (When a person dies he goes to his ancestors and to God in the sky) (*ibid.*). If the above argument is true it indicates that even before the advent of Christianity Ibibio people believe in life in the after life although this belief may not exactly the same within the Christian context.

Enunciating further Udo (1983:259) maintains: Ibibio ancestors guarded public morality as they knew what was good for their offspring, because they had interpreted the mind of mother earth while alive, and now they were with God, - they knew what God liked and disliked. They had laid the social foundations of their lives on goodness, truth, and purity and they would want such goodness to be continued by their lineage, being loyal to the traditional code of morality given by God. The reward of loyalty to the ancestors manifested in good fortune, such as a bumper harvest or more children, while disloyalty resulted in famine, poor harvests, childlessness, sickness and at worst death. Turaki (1999:177) maintains:

The “fatherhood” of an ancestor is derived from his being the first progenitor or the original seed of the lineage, the clan or the tribe. As the original seed his life is transmitted to all that proceed from his loins. He is the life-source of his seed and genealogy. The “fatherhood” of an ancestor ... is indeed the most fundamental religious tenet and concept. The ancestor, as the head-father of the lineage, clan, or tribe, is the basis of unity, community and existence for all that take their life-source from him.

The Ibibio believed that the ancestors were able to intervene with the gods of the spirit world on behalf of the living. Affirming the Ibibio belief in incarnation, Talbot (1969:262-66,301 in Udo 1983:260) holds that the Ibibio ancestors propelled the spirit world and they also increased their offspring on earth, the latter by reincarnation, which gave a frustrated Ibibio person a brighter hope for the next circle of life.

3.7.4 Reincarnation

Reincarnation was, and still is, a strong belief among the Ibibio people. Although some African tribes, like the Yoruba, do not really believe in incarnation, the Ibibio strongly believe that deceased persons do reincarnate as grandchildren or great-grandchildren within the family. Reincarnation among the Ibibio is not limited only to one's biological grandchildren or great-grandchildren; it is believed that one can reincarnate to be born to sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts and to other extended relations (Udo 1983:261). Far back in history, the Ibibio experimented about this in their own traditional way; by cutting parts of the body of the dead as a mark to know if the person would reincarnate, and any child born with such a cut part of the body was believed to have reincarnated with the maimed part. A child who strongly resembled his/her ancestor was also generally suspected to be a reincarnation of the deceased ancestor.

3.7.5 Belief in the existence of witchcraft

According to Steyen (1990:242 in Turaki 1999:195), witchcraft and sorcery refer to systems of belief centred on the idea that persons in the community will resort to means to bring harm to others through nefarious supernatural powers. Udo (1983:260) asserts: "All the Ibibio people up till today believe in the existence of witchcraft (*ifot*), they believe that a witch (*ifot*) is a spirit and more than ninety percent of deaths are said to be caused by witches (*ifot*) and wizards (*uben*).” He maintains that the belief is so strong that even Christians among the Ibibio are not excluded from it. McFarlan (1946:30-36) affirms: "No death was considered natural except through extreme old age so that, in the case of sickness or death, it was supposed that someone or other was practicing witchcraft (*ifot*) or wizardry (*uben*) against the life of the sufferers.”

It is a general belief that witches and wizards can travel anywhere in the world for their oppressions. As such, costs are no barrier to them. Initiates must be ready to offer human sacrifices: children, spouses, relations or even non-relations. It is also an Ibibio belief that those appointed to be sacrificed must first change into different species of animals before they are killed. When that happens, then the person dies suddenly (Udo 1983:260-261).

Esen (1982:164) argues that "this philosophical curiosity of the unknown may account for the alleged involvement of thousands of the Ibibio in witchcraft and similar cults." The field empirical data presented in chapter 5 affirms that even till date Ibibio people still believe in

existence of witchcraft and witchcraft accusation is a major cause of interpersonal violence and abuse of human dignity.

3.8 THE IBIBIO WORLD-VIEW

Since humans have been so uniquely created and so distinctively different, there is no doubt that different people are bound to perceive the environment and its various components in different ways, making different meanings out of what they see. These principles hold strongly for the Ibibio. Kalu (2010:3) succinctly asserts: “Undergirding each culture is the world-view that enables the explanation, prediction and control of space-time event.”

Esen (1982:61) echoes: “No two persons see the world in the same way. And the various ways people perceive and interpret the world may be express as continuum from the very dark and unpleasant to the very bright and enjoyment.” He (Esen) argues that a person’s world-view is the way he sees and interprets the world generally. It has been proposed that the wise sayings of a people may reveal what attitudes such people have towards the various stimuli in their world environment. It follows that one can come close to ascertaining the collective view of a people by analysing the lyrics of their music, their common traditional prayers and proverbs. If the above argument holds, it therefore means that Ibibio music, folklore and proverbs are connected to their world-view and can yield valid clues to the kind of people that the Ibibio are. It would be necessary to examine the general world-view, which those proverbs appear to indicate how Ibibio perceive their world.

Two crucial questions may be posed in this regard: How did the ancient Ibibio perceive the universe and nature in relation to human life? What truth came out of their senses? The fact was observed that as many Ibibio proverbs, folklores and songs have survived to this day, this indicates that ancient Ibibio perceived order in nature. They appreciated that effects were related to causes and vice versa; hence, the sayings: *Uma utuk natk ntak otoho* (if you cheat the nature you provoke it to anger); *Uyo owo odo Uyo Abasi* (the voice of man is the voice of God); *Owo sine ukem-ukem ono Abasi* (among gods man is at the centre); and *Ayara adia Abasi abat isua* (the insolent eat and have their pleasures; the gods count their years). These proverbs acknowledge God’s supremacy over man, and reveal human helplessness. Yet, they strongly affirm the central place of man in the divine hierarchy and his great potential to influence the thinking and mediate the actions of God/gods in relation to man.

However, there is sufficient evidence that the Ibibio also noted that nature and life were full of conflicts, contradictions and uncertainties. Little wonder that, in his judgement of the Ibibio world-view, Esen asserts: “On balance, their world-view was reasonably positive and hopeful ... they accepted the challenges of the natural world and went on to create a culture that has survived” (*ibid*: 65).

The next segment of this study therefore hopes to engage discussion on the reasons why we urgently need peace in the Ibibio today.

3.8.1 Peace in the Ibibio world-view

According to Kunhiyop (2008:7-8), the key element that led to a clear comprehension of the African view is understanding the roots of African values and moral behaviour; failure to understand them inevitably leads to drawing wrong conclusions about African morality. Mbon (1997:102) clarifies: “African traditional ethics were regulated by a law based on sacred sanctions which had their origins in the world of the spirits and ancestors.” Offiong (1997:42) argues that conflict is common in human society, since there is no human group or society in which life moves along in harmony at all times. He maintains: “The Ibibio society is aware of the repercussions of unresolved conflicts, informal and formal mechanisms were developed to bring about conflict resolution and peace.” Mbon (1997:104-105) affirms that, among the Annang(Ibibio sub group) and the Ibibio of Nigeria, it was believed that if a member of the community had evil intentions against another member, then that person’s conscience and attitude were an offence to the gods and ancestral spirits. In other words, and as Offiong (1997:425) echoes, that the Ibibio tenaciously believed in ancestors (*ikan*). This belief is entrenched in their theology and world-view. He observes that these ancestors are active “living dead” members of their respective communities, “empowered to function as guardian spirits” and “mediate with God and other ancestors” on behalf of their descendants. According to Ashiwaju (1989:3), the ancestors have their varying degrees of taboos which have to be jealously observed to avoid unpleasant circumstances or calamities.

Charles (1993:343-344) asserts that the Ibibio notion of peace, like other African concepts and practices, is rooted in the Ibibio people’s indigenous religion and practices. He maintains that the Ibibio peace reconciliation practice could be found in their oral culture of proverbs, rituals formulas, covenants, oaths, prayers, creedal formulations, symbols, and in the Ibibio notion of a trinity. Kalu (2010:298) affirms thus: “Proverbs, songs, riddles, and dances exude within moral guidance.” For Offiong (1997:2-4), other dimensions of peace have to do with

relationships among persons, families, and informally constituted community courts. He maintains that, in traditional Ibibio society, peace actors include individuals and institutions within the society, the elders, “*Ukot*” (in-laws), “*iman*” (community ties), “*Ayeyin*” (grand-child/children), “*Esop isong*” (council of elders), and “*Iban isong*” (women of the land). The above-mentioned institutions and individual peace brokers, as well as the different roles they play in peace processes among the Ibibio people, will be closely examined. However, Ibibio scholars, such as Mbon (1997:102-103), Offiong (1997:421) and Charles (1993:4), agree that the Ibibio strongly believe that the supernatural powers of “*mbiam*” (an oath) promote conflict resolution, peace, reconciliation and social control in general.

3.8.1.1 The need for peace in the Ibibio society

The phenomenon of war and peace was not strange to the Ibibio traditional society. Like any human society, the Ibibio were punctuated by conflict, war and peace (Udo 1983:154). Eka (2008:32) asserts that human society would become dull and spineless without differences and contradictions; the existence of incompatible interest and goals leading to conflicts cannot be denied. Whatever perspective of violent conflict is examined, the nature and goals are the same and changes in society are frequently the result of differences or contradictions (*ibid.*). Here, the emphasis is not to attempt to eliminate the differences, contradictions or even conflict, but to develop any adjustment of interest and goals or effect changes in the Ibibio societies that would readily permit the resolution of those contradictions without a resort to violence.

Galtung (1996:70 in Cooser 1967:61)) argues that conflict is a condition in society. He maintains that an active system is said to be in conflict if the system has two or more incompatible goals. The dispute could easily lead to efforts to hurt or harm the actor who is perceived to be standing in the way. The above view indicates that conflict is a process; in other words, it may be interpreted to mean “a struggle over value and claims to scarce resources, status, power in which the aim of the opponents are to neutralize eliminate their rivals (*ibid.*)” It therefore follows that, when conflict is viewed as a condition, it is essentially a situation in which the source of the discrepancy between value expectations and capabilities is another group competing for the same values. When conflict is defined as a process, it refers to an interaction between communities in an attempt to achieve their goal (Lockwood 1957:134-146).

Dahrendorf (1958:127) states that authority, not property, is the prime cause of social conflicts. He categorizes conflict as being legitimate, reutilized or illegitimate and uncontrolled as interest groups developed and began a conflict with those with exclusive access to authority. Wehr (1979:4) explains that the challenging group engages in illegitimate or encapsulated conflict, since they are not accorded legitimacy by the dominant authority. But, Dahrendorf (1958:127) considers society to have two faces: those of consensus and of conflict. Arising from this, he resides in contradictions and conflicts of interest in the society. In Lockwood's (1957:134-146) view, he emphasizes that there are mechanisms in societies that make conflict inevitable. Like any other simple society elsewhere, the Ibibio society was organized around an intrinsic fear of the unknown. In order to forestall criminal and violent acts, the Ibibio people of Nigeria devised a number of social control mechanisms. First, these mechanisms were aimed at instilling fear in potential criminals. Second, apart from this, the Ibibio also had certain institutionalized symbols that they used to check or prevent crimes and conflicts.

In order to maintain peace, certain social control mechanisms were devised through oral education by the telling of folktales and indoctrination, and in traditional beliefs; physical sanctions were also instituted for some deviant acts, particularly those that were believed to endanger the stability and well-being of the society (Ekong 2001:130). Since most deviant behaviours in the Ibibio society were regarded as sinful or sacrilegious, and were likely to invoke the wrath of gods on people either in the form of famine, pestilence and disease, natural disasters, death or a combination of any of these (*ibid.*).

To understand Ibibio peace is to understand the Ibibio world-view. Esen (1982:62) clarifies that a collective world-view is not necessarily the personal world-view of every single individual in the group. A people, tribe or nation has a way of perceiving the world, of responding to other people, of reacting to a natural crises or calamity, of taking victory or defeat, of appreciating nature, and so on. These attitudes reflect on the patterns of their unconscious group behaviour and shared ways of life. This is because African indigenous systems have been subordinate to forces of colonization and neo-colonialism which have worked, and are still working, to subvert the African socio-cultural life.

3.9 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Discussions in this chapter present a brief historical background of the Ibibio people, although much attention focuses on the pre-colonial era in order to capture important aspects

of the traditional Ibibio in their original context. Their political structure, economic, social and religious life, as well as their judicial system, indicates that, from time immemorial, the Ibibio people had a way of using their indigenous knowledge systems to ensure well-being, harmonious communal relationships, peaceful co-existence, and the maintenance of law and order among members of their society. However, in contemporary times, the influence, certain aspects of the Ibibio culture and indigenous practices are gravitating towards extinction, especially among the city dwellers due to Western scientism and modernity. This affirms Pearsall's (1999) assertion as cited in Mawere 2010:215) that Western hegemonic tendencies have demonized African IKS and have advanced the view that they are diabolic, barbaric, and backward. However, in the rural communities, most IKS as well as indigenous cultural practices are still intact. The question is: How can the church and its theology in the Ibibio society dialogue with indigenous practices in their common search for a sustainable peace in contemporary Ibibio society? To this end, the next chapter of this research will focus on the history of the Presbyterian mission enterprise in Ibibio land.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE AMONG THE IBIBIO

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It becomes necessary to trace the historicity of Presbyterianism in the Akwa Synod from its inception, because the Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria is the indigenous home of the Ibibio people and the Akwa Synod is named after this state.

The heading of this chapter is based on two principles: First and foremost, every theology is done within a given context. Second, the study of the Ibibio concept of peace aims at examining how the Akwa Synod of the PCN has engaged, is engaging, or hopes to engage, the Ibibio indigenous knowledge of peace-reconciliation in its transformative preaching as a means to change paradigms of violent conflict; and to address, prophetically, the systemic reasons for violent conflicts; inspire concrete congregational and societal actions for reconciliation and for peace, thereby making a difference among the Ibibio in particular, and in Nigeria at large. As such, a good understanding of the Akwa Synod, the indigenous Synod of the Ibibio Presbyterians of the Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria, as part of the descriptive empirical task, becomes imperative.

In this chapter, discussions will therefore move in four waves; beginning from a brief history of the Scottish missionary enterprise in Old Calabar, the European missionary activities among the Ibibio, challenges and successes of the Scottish Mission among the Ibibio and a brief history of the Akwa Synod of the PCN.

4.2 ABOLITION OF SLAVE TRADE/ EVANGELICAL REVIVALS IN EUROPE

The history of Presbyterianism among the Ibibio is the fruit of European mission which began in the 19th century in Calabar. Udoh holds that, in the 1820s, the wave of an evangelical revival, witnessed in Scotland and England, brought about a radical shift in favour of volunteerist evangelical organizations, and missionary societies also increased greatly. Missionaries, in the likes of David Livingstone and Alexandra Dauff, inspired the vigorous support of world evangelism, and the Edinburgh Universities gave it much impetus (Udoh 1996:33). This wave of evangelization came after “the double-headed monster” (colonialism and slave trade) had raped Africans of their human dignity.

Aye (2009:54) affirms that, for four centuries, the trade across the Atlantic rocked Africa so much, and drained it of its lifeblood and manpower but, with the agitations of William Wilberforce; global ethics were seriously and rapidly changing public opinion in many circles, so that what was regarded as “legitimate” trade soon became “illegitimate.” In 1807, the British parliament finally approved a bill to end slave trade and, in 1833, it made a law abolishing slavery, not only in Britain, but also in all British controlled lands overseas (*ibid.*).

In 1840, two slave ships from Old Calabar were captured by the British navy and two more were wrecked at the estuary. It therefore became necessary for the British government to persuade African slave traders to discontinue the trade, and many of them were willing to give it up because of the problems they had to face in this lucrative, yet most precarious, trade. Aye (2009:55) enunciates further that, when King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town of Old Calabar was once asked why he continued with the slave trade, he replied that he only continued with it because he had no alternative trade. Although some African slave traders wished the trade to continue, many were getting fed-up with it because of the brutality and violence associated with the trade.

4.3 A CALL FOR MISSION FROM CALABAR

In 1844, after the abolition of slave trade, a number of Efik leaders struggled to adjust to the new economic order. On 6 December 1841, the anti-slave trade treaties were signed by two Efik kings: King Eyamba V of Duke Town and King Eyo Honesty II of Creek Town, on the one hand, and the British Navy Squadron on the other hand. From this time on, Efik rulers regarded the abolition treaty with all seriousness (2009:55.).

Concerning the Christian missionary enterprise and Presbyterian mission in Nigeria, the invitation of King Eyamba V and King Eyo Honesty II of Old Calabar is of great historic significance. Waddell (1863:224) captures the content of the letter thus:

I am very glad you come to settle treaty proper, thank you for doing everything right for me yesterday. Long time I look for some Man-of-War, and when French man come I think he want war and send one canoe to let you know, but too much wind live for him catch Fernando Po, and no one come help me keep treaty as Mr. Blount promise, and when I no give slaves French Man-of-War come make plenty palaver. But I no will.

One thing I want for beg you queen, I have too much man now I can't sell slaves, and don't know what for do for them. But if I can get some cotton and coffee to grow and man for teach me and make sugarcane for we country come up proper, and sell for trade side I very glad. Mr Blythe tells me England glad for send man to teach book

and make we understand God all same white man do. If Queen do so I glad too much, and we must try do good for England always. What I want for dollar side is proper Romall and copper rods, I no want fool thing, I want thing for trade side and must try do good for Queen Victoria and all English woman. I hope Queen and young King can live long proper and I am Sir your friend.

(Signed) King Eyo Honesty.

A similar letter was also written by King Eyamba V of Duke Town to the Queen of England through Commander Raymond and the content of his letter reads thus:

If I can get some coffee to grow and man for teach me, and make sugar cane for we country come up proper and sell for slave side I very glad. Mr Blyth tell me England glad for send man to teach book and make we understand God all same as white man do. If Queen do so I glad too much and we must try to do for England always (Mcfarlan 1957:3).

From the request of the Efik kings, as stated above, it could be argued that the surplus of slaves, whom they were not allowed to sell, could be put to use as farm hands in agro-industrial projects based on coffee, cotton and sugar-cane as that could inform a new trade relationship with Europeans. They wanted schools so that indigenous African people could receive Western education and civilization, like the whites.

In 1843, after due consultation with his chiefs, King Eyamba V sent a reminder signed by seven of his chiefs on the same matter. Although their letters of invitation were not addressed to any specific religious denomination in Britain, because the kings did not know them, their request matured after an interval of almost four years. When their request was made, it was through the combined effort of the Jamaican missionaries and the United Secession Church (USC).

Aye (2009:60-61) maintains:

Attention was naturally turned to the West Indian Presbyterian congregation minister, the Rev. Hope Masterton Waddell, a Protestant minister of Scottish-Irish extraction, who trained briefly in Scotland and was sent to Jamaica on mission to serve among the African slaves in the West Indies in 1829. In 1844, a Missionary Society was formed in Jamaica, and the Reverend Hope Masterton Waddell was appointed a pioneer missionary to Old Calabar.

Scholars argue that Waddell was perhaps considered to be an appropriate pioneer minister for the Calabar mission base, because of the fact that he had sufficient experience in mission among African slaves in the West Indies. On 6 January 1846, the pioneer mission team left Liverpool for Calabar. On board with Rev. Waddell were Mr. Samuel Edgerley (printer and

catechist), Mrs Edgerley, Mr. Andrew Chisholm (a West Indian carpenter), Mr Edward Miller (a West Indian teacher) and George Waddell's black boy, and arrived at Calabar on 10 April 1846.

4.3.1 The pioneer mission resource persons

Aye (1996:4-6) argues that the quality of the mission's home base is important for an understanding of the pace of their activities in the mission enterprise. He maintains that the Calabar mission was sponsored by a cash-trapped, relatively weak body, wrecked by an internal problem; that the mission was half-heartedly authorised with stringent strings attached, and that the mission was not supposed to become more adventurous than the home base's lean purse could handle.

It could be observed that, from the very beginning, the Calabar mission was not manned by highly trained personnel. While evaluating the component of the pioneer team for the Calabar mission, Aye (*ibid.*) asserts:

Quite uncharacteristic of later Scottish enterprise, on the contrary these leaders were godly mechanics more typical of the English missionaries of the period. In Scotland the missionary not only went to colleges such as Glasgow's but, in fact all the older Universities, St Andrews, Aberdeen and Edinburgh ... But with much pluck and spiritual fervour this early group arrived through Fernando Po to the Mangrove Swamp of Cross River.

4.4 THE SCOTTISH MISSIONARY APPROACH

It is obvious to Ibibio historians that the early missionaries, who arrived at the shores of the Ibibio nation, adopted a number of strategies in order to penetrate the Ibibio with the gospel of Christ. Udoh (1999:31-35) maintains: "The Scottish Missionaries who pioneered Presbyterianism among the Efik/the Ibibio people of Nigeria adopted a holistic mission approach which included evangelism, introduction of Western education by the establishment of schools, introduction of medical services, and improvement of agriculture." This holistic approach is discussed below, beginning with the introduction of Western education.

4.4.1 Education as an instrument of mission

The term "education" can be defined in different manners depending on the view and expectations that one may have. Onwuka (1996:140) holds that educators have generally come to education as a process by means of which humans acquire knowledge, skills, habits,

values and sentiments that enable them to be of service to themselves and their society. Education is intended to reinforce the social ethics that exist in a particular country and, at the same time, it prepares the children and young people for the place which they will occupy in society.

The call for the Calabar mission focused on the socio-economic and religious needs of the Calabar people. From the word go, the Efik kings identified three areas which they needed the Queen of England to address, as already mentioned in their letters of invitation (see 4.3 above). These areas included education, agriculture and religion, if the definition and function of education was anything to go by. Onwuka (1996:140) argues (and the researcher agrees with him) that Africans, in their various contexts, had acquired knowledge, skills, habits, values and sentiments which guided their actions and service in their peculiar context. This affirms the general assertion that stresses the fact that every human society, however advanced or backward, had its form of education (*ibid.*).

One therefore wonders why the Efik kings had to invite the missionaries, and one questions the motive behind such invitations. On the one hand, it may be argued that the early Europeans, who traded with the kings, capitalized on their weaknesses and ignorance, and manipulated them to write those letters. But, with a critical look at education in an indigenous or traditional context, one would admit that it was deficient in literacy which is only one aspect, but a very significant tool, of education. It was for this reason and others that Onwuka (1996:140-141) argues thus:

To provide this missing component in indigenous education was one of the reasons why the early Africans invited missionary educators. Enlightened chiefs were eager to acquire the white man's skills and tricks, particularly those of reading, writing and articulating. Already contact with the European trades had sparked off the desire to be able to keep records and read and speak the language of the traders ... Thus the early European traders had started to spread Western literacy before the arrival of missionaries.

In support of this argument, Onwunta (2006:30) affirms that the Scottish missions invested a high proportion of their activities in, and gave priority to, education. As much as education was an important vehicle for Western civilization; it was an indispensable tool for the European missionaries to communicate the Gospel to the Ibibio natives, as they themselves needed to read the Word of God. It is possible that the missionaries believed that, if the needs raised by the Efik kings in their invitation letters (in 4.3 above) were effectively addressed, it could bring about socio-economic transformation in Old Calabar and its environs (which

include the Ibibio area), an area so badly devastated by slave trade. Little wonder that Walls (2002:262) states: For many other missions, education was simply one branch of missionary activity made necessary by missions' other activities, or required as a price of its presence in the local setting. For the Scottish missions... education was mission."

Scholars generally hold that the introduction of Western education was part of the mission strategy, which was primarily aimed at the promotion of the Gospel. Consequently, schools ultimately served as a "nursery of the infant church" (Udoh 1988:63). He further explains that Western education was therefore used by the Europeans as an inducement to lure Africans into the missionary orbit for initiation into "Christian" civilization (*ibid.*). However, Agha (1996:249) and Udoh (1988:63) agree that, since the arrival of the Scottish missionary in 1846, the education of children has continued to progress steadily.

In other words, Anene (1966:51) echoes: "Presbyterians considered education as the greatest instrument for transformation of the society." As such, schools were opened in almost every area of the mission work and those schools still bear "Presbyterian" in their names (Onwunta 2006:30). Western education acquired by native Ibibio people promised many advantages for personal advancement and social transformation, following the European political and economic model. According to Udoh (1996:34-35), Mary Slessor made history when she started the first school among the Ibibio people at Itu in 1904. Consequently, Western education flourished and rapidly spread to almost every corner of the Ibibio land within the Presbyterian mission area. It is important to mention that, while the Scottish missionaries were pioneered missionary activities in Ibibioland, however they concentrated within the Itu area. Other missionary organizations that arrived in the Ibibio land later also established schools in their respective domains. Apart from education, the Scottish missionaries introduced medical services to the people who, previously, used traditional medicine. The next section of this discussion will focus on health care as an integral part of the Scottish missionary strategy among the Ibibio people.

4.4.2 Health services as an instrument of mission

When the Scottish missionaries arrived at Calabar in 1946, their worst enemies were tropical diseases, which hit many of them so suddenly. Unfortunately, they had no medical doctor. A number of them died and this badly affected the mission work. These health challenges that the missionaries faced, induced them to pay much attention to medical services. According to Ecoma (1996:176), their first medical missionary, Dr. Archibald Hewan, a Jamaican, came

only almost ten years later. However, the missionaries had some skills, as most missionaries of the 19th and 20th centuries had some medical training in first aid, the dispensing of bottled drugs, and tropical diseases, before going to Nigeria. The Rev. Edgerly was one of these so-trained missionaries, to whom the Nigerian government gave “a missionary permit” to open a clinic and a dispensary at Creek Town (*ibid.*).

Again, although the provision of medical services was not one of the requests made by the Efik kings in their letters, as stated above, the missionaries themselves viewed health needs as part of the full Gospel. According to Onwunta (2006:32), it was said of Mary Slessor that “her days were full of treating the sick, teaching the Bible and visiting neighbours.” The understanding of medical work, as part of the holistic approach in mission, propelled the Scottish to provide such services, but also to train African converts as medical workers and to ensure that health clinics and hospitals were established to sustain medical programmes. Ecoma (1996:175) affirms it thus: “The missionaries were, to a greater extent than any other group, the men and women who brought medical care to Nigeria ... and were able to extend medical work inland because they proved their good motives to the people and were made welcome.”

Prominent among such Africans who were trained by the Scottish mission, was Dr. Akanu Ibiam of blessed memory. Until today, this late elder statesman is seen as a great icon of the missionary medical practice in the PCN. He studied medicine and graduated from the University Of St. Andrew Scotland, in 1934. He was instrumental in the opening of some medical institutions in south-eastern Nigeria (Onwunta 2006:32).

Among the Ibibio, one of the earliest dates in connection with medical works at Itu was 1897. By 1903, Mary Slessor had selected the site for the location of a hospital at Itu. But the first real hospital was opened in 1905 by Rev. Dr. David Robertson (Ecoma 1996:178) to provide medical services for the Ibibio natives.

In 1926, Dr. Macdonald launched a revolution against leprosy among the people of the area, a disease he encountered in his daily consultation routine there; a challenge to which he alone could face up to. Kalu (1996:197) affirms that, in 1935, the number of patients who were permanently residing in the colony increased to 1600 and, in 1956, 286 patients were pronounced free of leprosy (Udoh 1996:36). The success stories of Rev. Macdonald and the leper colony at Itu are fully captured in the book, *Can Ghosts Arise?* According to Udoh, Miller summarises the impact of the Macdonald revolution at the Itu leper colony, when

writing the preface to *Can Ghosts Arise?* Thus: “Covering thirty years of work is a story that is a shining witness to the fact that no human situation is beyond where the grace and power of God’s Holy Spirit is mediated through dedicated discipleship to God and Christ” (Macdonald 1983:13).

Commenting further Udoh (1996:36) asserts: that Itu was more than the pool of Siloam” In traditional Ibibio society, leprosy (*akpamfia*) was an incurable disease which was vicariously traced to evil spirits or poisoning. The disease was enigmatic and disastrous and, in all its effects, was so much dreaded that the social stigma attached to it was unbearable. Victims suffered as outcasts and were ostracised. The efforts of the Presbyterian mission, particularly in medical work among the Ibibio, brought hope to those in much need of help, and improved the health and socio-economic conditions of the victims.

According to Ecoma (1996:190) some Scottish/Presbyterian medical missionaries served in the Ibibio Presbyterian area from 1900 to 1963. This confirms the commitment that the Scottish missionaries had towards a holistic missionary enterprise among the Ibibio people of Nigeria. From the discussions in 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 above, it is obvious that education and medical services, provided by the missionaries, were part of evangelism as well as holistic preaching.

4.4.3 Evangelism: As an instrument for mission

As already mentioned above (see 4.2), the Scottish mission started in Calabar in 1846, but mission evangelism among the Ibibio started about 50 years later. It is believed that a number of factors account for the delay. Prominent among several of those factors was the impact of slave trade, which benefited the Efik kings. As such, they became powerful and influential due to much wealth that they acquired from slave trade (Aye 1996: 15). The power, arrogated

to these kings, made them bold, as they insisted on missionaries that concentrated within the Efik enclave. Since the missionaries arrived shortly after the abolition of slave trade, even those who thought they were free, were still enslaved by superstitions and fear of supernatural forces. It has been observed that, within the society itself, people were divided into classes: the rulers and the ruled, the free and the slaves. Scottish mission evangelism came at a time when many people, especially slaves, women and twins, were not sure of their lives, even the free-born were enslaved by their superstitions (Onwunta 2006:31). Although the class distinction and the terrain posed a huge challenge as the missionaries had to walk long distances day and night through water and thick forest in order to preach the Gospel to the people, they were not deterred (*ibid.*). Their preaching of the Gospel became both the liberating force, as well as the uniting factor in society. The missionaries laboured to feed the natives with spiritual food, but they were not unmindful of the need to increase production of physical food; therefore, they brought various species of food crops from Europe to Africa.

4.4.4 Agriculture / food production as an instrument of mission

Agriculture was, and still is, the main occupation of traditional Ibibio people. In the pre-colonial days, yam (*bia/udia*) was the people's main food crop. Other food crops included coco-yam (*mkpong/ikpong*); bulbil-bearing yam (*edomo*); various types of beans such as *nkoti*, *nsama* and *ibaba*; plantain (*ukom/miniyong*); and bananas (*mboro*) (Udo 1983:212). Ibibio vegetables include: fluted pumpkin (*nkong ubong/nkong ubong*), supplemented by other wild vegetables from the bush, such as *afang*, *editan*, *atama*, *adusa*, *ntoong*, *meme*, *utasi*, *nyama*, and *mkpafere*. According to Udo (*ibid.*), most indigenous Ibibio fruit trees grew wild in the bush, except pear (*eben*) trees, which were planted in people's compounds and along footpaths and gardens.

After the abolition of the slave trade, it could be recalled from the invitation letter of the Efik kings to the Queen of England (in 3.2.1 above) that agriculture was one of the core demands of the rulers of the people of Old Calabar. Particularly mentioned were cotton and coffee, but for whatever reason, there is no record to show that these cash crops or other main cash crops were given to the people and, as such, the Ibibio agriculture depended on palm produce as their main source of income. However, the request of the kings of Old Calabar was partially answered in 1893, when the colonial government introduced and popularized new crops, which led to the establishment of a botanical garden in June 1896 in Calabar (Onwuka 1996:156).

Onwuka (*ibid.*) explains further by relating: “Curators for the garden were trained in the famous Kew Gardens in London. This encouraged Hope Waddell to establish an agricultural department in 1896 ... where it planted 1,500 coffee plants and many citrus and banana trees.”

Udo (1983:212) holds that the Presbyterian missionaries introduced about 30 cash and food crops, including flowers, into the Ibibio land. The efforts of the Europeans in agriculture, as in other areas of mission, were complemented by the Jamaicans who were part of the missionary team. Little wonder that Onwuka (1996:156) observes: “Hope Waddell was fortunate to have some Jamaicans who were interested in agriculture. Their knowledge and enthusiasm did so much to encourage local food. Not only did they raise flower gardens, they also planted food crops.” These crops were generally accepted and renamed by the Ibibio natives. These crops included:

Cassava (*iwa*): Although, at first, the Ibibio people did not accept the cassava, as old people neither ate nor allowed it to be planted on their farms, but the younger generation gradually embraced cassava and, today, it is fast replacing the yam (*ibid.*).

Coconut (*isip Mbakara*): *Isip* means nut, while *mbakara* means white man, or those who rule others (*ibid.*).

Two species of cocoyam: the first (*mkpong/ikpong mbakara*), is interpreted as white man’s cocoyam. The second species of cocoyam was called *ssimeka*. Scholars hold that this species probably came from Jamaica, so the name was mispronounced “*esimeka*.”

Sweet potato (*udia umana afa* meaning modern food): *udia* meaning food, and *umana afa* meaning young generation.

Other fruits brought by Presbyterian missionaries included mango (*mangoro mbakara*), pawpaw (*udia ebua/ewa*), pineapple (*eyop mbakara*), avocado pear (*eben mbakara*), orange (*sokoro*), cocoa, and guava among others (Goldie 1890:14 in Udo 1983:213). Among the Ibibio and their neighbours, these crops were grown both for family use and for markets, where the crops were bartered for other things that the family needed.

4.5 THE ADVENT OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE IBIBIO LAND

Presbyterianism among the Ibibio people is a fruit of the sacrifices, toil and hard labour of the Scottish missionaries who were invited by Efik kings to Old Calabar in Nigeria, Udoh (1996:26), a foremost Presbyterian theologian of Ibibio stock, affirms: “That we are made

beneficiaries of the toils and labour of missionaries, prayers and funds from partner churches underscores the replenishing fruit of the gospel which allows not only for celebration but also for reflection and commitment to keep the faith.”

Before we begin discussing the history of Presbyterianism, particularly among the Ibibio, it is important to mention that certain factors explain the establishment of the Presbyterian PCN in the 19th century. According to Aye’s (1996:1) account, these factors include the new tone in evangelism in Scotland, a more vibrant evangelical stirring in Jamaica, and the instrumentalist perception of Christianity in the hub of trans-Atlantic trade among Efik rulers.

It is on record that the Scottish pioneered the mission among the Ibibio people. Although the Scottish mission was established in Calabar in 1846, it was not until 1903, about 50 years later, that the Europeans, with the Gospel, were able to penetrate the Ibibio hinterland lying just 20 miles away from their station. According to Ekong (2001:9), the delay was largely due to the activities of Efik and other coastal middlemen who feared a possible threat to their strong position to exploit both their European friends and their hinterland kinsmen, who objected vehemently to any European attempt to penetrate the country directly.

Another explanation for the late penetration of missionaries into the Ibibio land was the prevalence of internecine wars that made the area unsafe for strangers. Ekong (*ibid.*) asserts: “A number of military expeditions had to be undertaken by the colonial administration before the Ibibio subgroups of the hinterland could be subjugated.” To put it differently, Udoh (1996:33) affirms: “The establishment of the Presbyterian faith in the Ibibio land followed the print of a colonial military boot. Faced with superior military weaponry, and uncoordinated forces of the conquered village groupings, the Ibibio... succumbed.”

Historians attribute the spread of Presbyterianism and the missionaries’ Christianity among the Ibibio people to the work of the second generation of missionaries who, with their strong character and will, were prepared to defy normal conventions in order to claim the Ibibio for Christ in very difficult times and circumstances. A leading pioneer in this class, whose influence immediately penetrated the Ibibio hinterland more than any other missionary or official, was Mary Mitchell Slessor and to her, and around her, a great part the history of Presbyterianism among the Ibibio people was built (*ibid.*).

4.5.1 Other early European missions among the Ibibio

Apart from the Scottish missionaries who penetrated the Ibibio nation with the Presbyterian faith from Itu, were the missionaries who also later arrived on the Ibibio shores through Opobo and Qua Iboe respectively.

According to Goldie (1890:139 in Udo 1983:203): “The second group of Christian missionaries came from the Anglican Church with their base at Onitsha. The Anglican missionaries of the Niger Delta Protectorate explored the south-western part of the Ibibio land, reaching Opobo and Bonny in 1892.”

In 1887, Mr Samuel A. Bill, a Presbyterian missionary, arrived in Ibuno at the mouth of the Qua Iboe River and opened the Qua Iboe mission there in 1890 (Ekong 2001:65). Udo (1983:303) affirms: “Having quickly established Ibuno as his centre, Bill explores western Ibibio country, establishing his mission centres at Ndiya in 1898, Okorotip and Mkpanak in 1899.” The Qua Iboe mission therefore was the third group of missionaries among the Ibibio.

In 1893, the Primitive Methodists later arrived in south-eastern Nigeria and opened their first station at Archibong Town. Three years later, they opened another station at James Town. This became their base for exploration work (*ibid.*).

In 1903, the ban on further expansion into the Ibibio mainland was still holding for good reasons. For Mary Slessor no reason was good enough to prevent her from reaching beyond Itu, Ibiono to Ikono and perhaps Ikot Ekpene (Udoh 1996:31-34).

According to Ekong (2001:65), western and central Ibibio did not come into contact with Europeans until 1902 and Christianity did not come to this area until 1919, when the Wesleyan Methodist Mission was established at Ikot Ekpene, followed by the Qua Iboe Mission in 1920, the Catholic Mission in 1925, and the Lutheran Mission in 1936. From this time onwards, a number of missions have sprung up, the largest bodies being those of the Catholics, Presbyterian Lutherans and Methodists. However, indigenous churches seem to have more adherents than those of foreign denominations (Messenger 1960:268-278).

4.6 STRUGGLES/CHALLENGES OF MISSIONARY ENTERPRISES IN IBIBIO LAND

Every human endeavour is full of its own peculiar challenges; the Scottish mission to Nigeria and among the Ibibio in particular, was not in any way an easy one. This section of the study

focuses briefly on the major setbacks encountered by the Scottish who pioneered Presbyterianism among the Ibibio. It is important to say that, although there were other European missionaries from the Anglican Oua Iboe Mission, Lutheran Mission, Methodist Mission as well as the Roman Catholic mission activities among the Ibibio; the researcher purposely chose to focus on the Presbyterian mission, since his study within the PCN's Akwa Synod falls within the Ibibio geographical location.

The Presbyterian Church in Ibibio has been facing, and is still facing, a number of challenges, although this Church has survived for more than 166 years in Nigeria and about 110 years in the Ibibio land; yet, the challenges are still enormous. Much as there were challenges, there were also opportunities which the early missionaries and forebearers also explored in order to draw more Ibibio to the love of God through the spreading the gospel of Christ.

4.6.1 Cultural practices: A challenge to mission in pre-colonial Ibibio society

Different people tend to perceive the environment and its various components in various ways, making different meanings out of what they see. Esen (1982:61) holds that the various ways people perceive and interpret their world may be expressed as a continuum for the very dark and unpleasant, to the very bright and enjoyable. He argues further:

A person's world-view is the way he sees and interprets the world generally. That perception is not a function of wealth or lack of it. The richest man in the world (whoever that is) may actually be perceiving this world as unpleasant and threatening, while the poorest man (whoever that is) may be seeing his world-environment as quite acceptable, full of opportunities for a hearty laugh even in the face of hunger or other adversities (Esen1982:61.).

If Esen, in any way, is correct in his argument, it will not be wrong therefore to say that the way that the early missionaries perceived the pre-colonial African, the Ibibio people and their environment, was quite different from the way that the early Ibibio perceived themselves and their cultural environment; this in itself accounts for the resistance which the early missionaries encountered among the pre-colonial Ibibio and other African cultures.

Onwunta (2006:42) echoes:

One of the problems that have continued to haunt mission work in Nigeria is the issue of culture ... The missionaries had insufficient or poor understanding of people's culture. This affected the work negatively and brought a lot of social disintegration and dislocation both in families and various communities.

Bujo (1992:9) holds that African culture and religion was utterly ignored by the colonizing power that used the African as an object of no value, and for which any substitute could be found. The Ibibio have a rich cultural heritage which many have vowed to preserve at all costs (Udoh 1996:45). There are some cultural issues which the missionaries encountered in their missionary enterprise among the Ibibio but, for want of space and time, the researcher wants to focus on the issue of polygamy, the veneration of ancestors, and witchcraft as the trio that affect every Ibibio person existentially.

4.6.2 Polygamy: A challenge to mission among the Ibibio

The Ibibio social structure begins with the family; traditionally, the Ibibio marriage, like in other African contexts, is polygamous and it remains a great challenge even today. Ekong (2001:33), a professor of Rural Sociology, asserts that an Ibibio man could take as many wives as he wished, but married women were expected to keep strictly to one husband. In fact, polygamy was the normal pattern and a status symbol. Udoh (1988:44-45) affirms this:

True African laws recognize polygamy. It is a system by which an economically capable man may legally have more wives than one. The number of wives a man had corresponded to his social status. Hence African kings took in the largest number of wives. For example, despite his outstanding contribution to Calabar mission - both by reforming the society through *Ekpe* laws and offering his services as a translator - King Eyo of Creek Town, like many African rulers, refused to be converted. In Rev. Waddell's estimation, this was due to his love for money and power. What really caused his rejection of the Gospel was his refusal to give up polygamy. King Eyo added wives upon wives.

It is sad that a poor understanding of the Ibibio, and indeed the African marriage system, caused missionaries to despise polygamists and acknowledged monogamists as rightful members of the Church. One could not deny the fact that polygamy has its social problems but, in the researcher's view, missionaries did not pay close attention to the serious issue of polygamy, as they were rather in a hurry to condemn it outright. Little wonder Onwunta (2006:42-43) argues thus:

The missionaries fail to understand that polygamy was more than a matter of male lust but an issue of economic security for women in rural Africa ... But one may still question whether the policy stance of the missionaries could not have had another alternative. Up till today, the position of many mission Churches on the issue can be best described as embracing double standards. Having insisted and appealed to monogamy as the standard form of Christian marriage, they did little or nothing about the fate of those coming from a polygamous background. Thus, they created a class of human beings who were socially uprooted and also kept "floating" after severing their matrimonial ties. Now that the church is becoming serious with mission in Northern Nigeria which is a Muslim enclave, there is a need for a critical evaluation of the Church policy in the knowledge that Islam has ample appeal and permission for men marrying up to four wives if they are capable and so desire. This situation calls for a serious dialogue with Islam and the culture of the people.

The researcher still believes that, during the advent of Christianity in Africa, if the Western missionaries were patient with Africans, studied the African context carefully in line with Scripture; they would have had a more mature approach to handle it better.

4.6.3 Veneration of ancestors: A challenge to mission among the Ibibio

Ibibio people have strong ties with their ancestors, as death is a mere passage from the human world to the spirit world (see sections 3.7.3 & 3.7.3.1). This passage enhances the spiritual power so that one could operate in the human environment and especially in the human family as a guardian, protective spirit/power/influence (Kalu 2000:54). In all African society, there is a strong belief in ancestors (Amanze 2002:62).²⁸

Turaki (1999:34) enunciates further when he writes: “The ancestors hold a place of pre-eminence in traditional society. If they are not worshiped, they are at least revered.” Esen (1982:54-55) maintains that ancestral worship is a very important aspect of the Ibibio traditional religion, as the Ibibio people believe that, when a venerable patriarch of the family or clan dies, he is not really dead, but has gone to another world from where he continues to watch over his children and protect them and their interests against harm. To Esen (1982:54-55), the ever-abiding presence of ancestors, and their close involvements in the everyday affairs of the family or clan was acknowledged through prayer and drink offerings. Indeed, among God’s functionaries (*mee Isung utom Abasi*), the Ibibio regarded their ancestors as the greatest (Udo 1983:258).

The Ibibio understanding of their ancestors does not differ from that of the Chewa people of Malawi. According to Amanze (2002:142):

Among the Chewa family, spirits are directly concerned with the welfare of their descendants. They act as guardian angels, being active in day to day activities of their people. They protect them against dangers such as diseases of all kinds, witchcraft, sorcery, accidents and others. They ensure their descendants have good health, plenty food supply and children. They heal the sick, warn their descendants against

²⁸ The *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1977:44) has defined the word “ancestor” as “one of whom a person is descended,” such as a father, a mother, a grandfather, a mother, and so on. From this group of people, one can trace one’s ancestry or one’s line of ancestors. The *Webster New Dictionary of Synonyms* gives a more elaborate discussion of the meaning of the word, “ancestor,” according to which this term is synonymous with “progenitor,” “forefather,” and “forebear,” that is, a person from whom one is descended. It holds that the word ancestor, especially in genealogical and historical use, implies lineal descent through one’s father or mother. In more general use, the word ancestor, especially in the plural, may imply kinship through collateral or through race. Furthermore, the term ancestor often suggests knowledge of identities and family pride in them as persons (*ibid*: 43).

impending personal or family disasters, guide them on matters of morality, provide peace and stability to family members, and intercede on their behalf ... They act as ears and eyes of the living.

In traditional Ibibio, like in other African contexts, one's ancestor occupies a place as the living dead who is almost indispensable.

But, it is generally observed that, as important as this issue was to the Africans, the worship and veneration of ancestors remains a problem which the early missionaries failed to address at the early stages of establishing the Christian Church in Ibibio land and elsewhere in Africa. Bediako (1983:113), a Ghanaian scholar, raised a theological question on the veneration of ancestors, thus:

How does Christ who is God according to Christian confession not simply remain abstract but become an existential experience and reality of the Church? How does that relate to their perception of ancestors in the communal life of the people and in their individual perception of themselves?

Although many African scholars, such as Bediako, Kalu, Nyamti, Turaki, Mugambi, Amanze and Maluleke, have struggled to provide appropriate theological responses to assuage the agitation attending the debate; yet, the question still points to the fact that in many parts of Africa, the issue of ancestral veneration was far from being answered by the missionaries; and, until today, this issue remains a problem for the PCN. Onwunta (2006:44) argues (and the researcher agrees) that, from every indication, the Church in Africa needs a new hermeneutical lens to re-examine the issue if we are serious about doing contextual theology today.

4.6.4 Belief in witchcraft: A challenge to mission among the Ibibio

As already stated in 3.7.5, the Ibibio believe in the existence of witchcraft, even today. As the phenomenon of witchcraft constitutes a challenge to the missionary enterprise among the people, it is important to listen to voices of scholars on this issue from other African cultures. Perhaps, the most disturbing element in African life is the fear of bad magic, sorcery and witchcraft (Mbiti 1975:164). According to Bolaji Idowu (1973:176), the question of witchcraft must be viewed in the context of evil in general, as they are considered to be the personification of evil of the highest degree, by most accounts. Idowu maintains that the Yoruba of Nigeria experience witchcraft as the manifestation of unmitigated evil in its essence - malignant, obstructing, spoiling and totally diabolical.

Udo (1983:260) claims that all the Ibibio people, even to this day, believe in the existence of witchcraft. They believe a witch is a spirit and more than 90% of deaths in the Ibibio land, including those caused by accidents, are said to be caused by witches and wizards (see 3.7.5).

Little wonder that Onwunta (2006:44) laments thus: “Another matter which was and still is a problem to deal with in the missionary engagement is witchcraft.” But the modern missionary movement, child as it was of the evangelical and pietist movements, was deeply influenced by the Enlightenment (Walls 2002:176), and could not provide the needed response to the socio-religious phenomenon. Onwunta (2006:44-45) argues:

The reality of witchcraft was at best a matter of intellectual caricature to some uninformed missionaries. It is clear that during the missionary education, a scientific world-view and Christian convictions intermingled and seemed equally opposed to the magical. But African world-views were different. The frontier between the empirical world and the spiritual world was being repressed every day in both directions. Africans responded to the gospel in multitude, but they could not easily lose vision of that open frontier. As a result, the theology they inherited, and the church practice based upon it, frequently did not seem to fit the fact of daily experience. The problem was that some of the devastating problems of life-witchcraft, for instance- were beyond the mission theology, by the Western theology. The resultant clash between world-view and theology, between what people see the world to be and the resources the church supplies for coping with it in a Christian way, has been incalculably damaging. There was hardly any mutuality and reciprocity in theological learning in the church, hence, a real and imaginary dichotomy existed in the missionary theatre.

Much as the researcher would agree with Onwunta’s argument, suffice it to say that the pride and arrogance on the part of missionaries was one thing that did not allow them to listen to African people to see what they could learn from indigenous Africans such as the Ibibio people, since the European missionaries perceived themselves to be the superior race.

4.6.5 Racial and ethnic conflicts: A challenge to mission

The traditional Ibibio communities, like any other human societies, were not free from conflicts, violence and wars that did occur but, in the pre-colonial era, the Ibibio had various ways of resolving both major and minor conflicts. Onwunta (2006:47) maintains: “Conflicts were prevalent among the local people; just as it was among the missionaries themselves.” Udo (1983:304) asserts: “The major job of the invasion and of the opening up of the Ibibio and Igbo countries for trade, Christian missionary and British political administration, lay with the maxim guns- the consuls.”

The researcher would like to briefly examine conflict in Ibibio society and during the colonial era; as well as conflict among the missionaries themselves. After 100 years of collaboration in missions, the relationship between the European and their West Indian counterparts was not so smooth, and this adversely affected the mission enterprise in Nigeria. Aye (1987:132-133) captured it thus:

What was clearly noticeable after the Centenary was the severing of that ecclesiastical rope that linked the Calabar Mission with its parent Church in Jamaica, and this had to happen under the malicious weight of some sensitive social matters. Indeed, it had begun to be expressive before the centenary days because no new Jamaican member of staff was being recruited to the mission after retirement of Mr F.A. Foster in the late thirties. The early cordial relationship among racial groups in mission was giving way to dissatisfaction that engendered bitterness among the West Indian members of staff, and this had begun to be sensed in 1921 when the Rev. Macgregor, Principal of the Hope Waddell Training Institution, threatened to resign his post as protest against the deteriorating race relations provoked by some European members in the virgin seat of learning. Mr Manderson-Jones appeared to have been the last of the West Indian staff of the Institution who finally resign his job for the legal profession.

The racial conflict, as captured by Aye above, went beyond the colour and language divide and subtly became the essential determinant for charting a course in Nigerian Presbyterian mission. Onwunta (2006:48-49) opines: "One could say that the seed of ethnicism in PCN today might have been sown with the spirit of racism that prevailed in the days of Scottish missionary enterprise." He maintains: "Whatever may have been the success of that missionary endeavour, the abiding effects of ethnicism and racism present the greatest obstacle yet to be overcome in our contemporary mission" (*ibid.*).

Although the colonial masters helped in creating conflict among the Ibibio and Africans in general, without showing them lasting ways of resolving such conflicts, yet, the Ibibio and other African societies had various ways in which the Ibibio resolved conflicts and prevented wars, thereby building peace and reconciliation within their communities and with their neighbours. Since ethnicity is not the main focus of the study, the researcher will not be examined ethnicity in details for two reasons: one in order to keep to the focus of the study and two it is the researcher conviction that the problem of ethnicity is a possible area for future research. The big question which is yet to be answered is: To what extent have the church explored indigenous options for peace reconciliation? And, in what ways can the church engage these indigenous forms of conflict resolution and peace-reconciliation methods in order to find the missing peace for which the Ibibio people have been searching?

4.6.6 The harsh environment: A challenge to mission

It has been mentioned earlier in this study that the Ibibio people, also known as the *Akwa Ibom* people of Nigeria, occupy the tropical rainforest region. This area is always very hot during the dry season and, during the rainy season; the rains can be very heavy, lasting for hours. Mosquitoes are very common in the area and, as such, due to malaria attacks, some of the early missionaries lost their lives. Mcfarlan (in Ogarekpe) succinctly captures this when he writes:

The inaccessibility of the hinterland was one of the deterring factors for effective propagation of salient values. Calabar and the environs were surrounded by thick equatorial jungles infested with malaria carrying mosquitoes. Black water fever also attacked the missionaries and took a toll of them and planning ahead became difficult (Mcfarlan 1957:38 in Ogarekpe 1996:224).

The work was quite enormous and the resource persons were but few. As popular Scripture has it: “The harvest was plentiful but the labourers were indeed very few.” The death toll on the missionaries was indeed a great challenge to mission work, as the mission office was always short of personnel. This contributed to the slow pace of the spread of Presbyterianism among the Ibibio people.

4.7 THE SUCCESS OF MISSION ENTERPRISE AMONG THE IBIBIO

Much as the European missionaries faced challenges, they also made significant progress and success in their missionary enterprise in Old Calabar in general, and among the Ibibio in particular, but the success story cannot be fully captured in this study for want of space. Apart from the fact that European missionaries brought Christianity to the Ibibio people; they also established churches, schools, hospitals which help in the spread of Western culture and civilization among the Ibibio natives. The missionary enterprise yielded fruits that brought social transformation among the Ibibio people, which include: the saving of twin babies and their mothers, freedom for women, and the development of the Efik/Ibibio vernacular.

4.7.1 The saving of twins and their mothers

There were different forms of violence in traditional Ibibio society, although few of them were regarded as cleansing of the society from the wrath of the gods and ancestors of the land; others included inter-communal and ethnic conflicts and wars. These forms of violent conflict usually led to the loss of lives and properties. The worst form of violent conflict in Ibibio history includes the killing of twin babies and their mothers, as well as the slave trade.

Onwunta (2006:40) states: Life meant little or nothing for a woman who had twins as slavery was common and slaves usually killed so were women who gave birth to twin babies. The birth of twins was perceived as an evil sign not only among the Ibibio but in many part of Old Calabar.

The missionary work of Mary Slessor brought the killing of twin babies and their mother to an end. She also taught the natives to stop the killing of wives and slaves of a “wealthy man”/“big man” when he died because they cannot help him in the afterlife. Mary’s bold engagement with the Ibibio natives succeeded in saving the lives of hundreds of women and twin babies who were thrown into the forest to die of hunger or to be devoured by dangerous animals (*ibid.*). The courageous preaching and teaching of the gospel of love brought about this remarkable change of attitude towards the killing of twin babies, their mothers and the slaves and wives of a wealthy man after his death. This change among the people was indeed a major paradigm shift that brought about social transformation among the Ibibio and its environs.

4.7.2 The development of the Efik/Ibibio vernacular

The development of Efik/Ibibio vernacular was one great success of mission among the Efik/Ibibio people of the Cross River and Akwa Ibom States of Nigeria. According to Mcfarlan, the mission house was full of destitute twins and rescued orphans. These “unwanted children” were never allowed to remain idle. They were exposed to Western education and most of them studied in both their own vernacular as well as the English language. The importance that the missionaries attached to the development of the vernacular could be seen in the educational and intellectual legacy. Sanneh (1993:77) puts it in this way:

Mother tongue was a direct consequence of mission’s careful development and promotion of vernacular languages in Africa, and from that we come upon the spring of cultural particularity and renewal, the very bases on which significant literary and artistic creation in Africa has gone forward and entered the wide stream of world history. Therefore we owe these linguistic pioneers, missionary as well as African, an incalculable debt for being the architects of the new consciousness which a maturing humanity ranks among its most prized possessions.

As much as the Scotts are applauded for the development of the vernacular, many Ibibio scholars believe that the missionaries developed the Efik vernacular and neglected the Ibibio. However, Udo (1983:313-314) seems to see it differently when he says:

The preservation of the Ibibio language, reduce for the first time to a written form, was the work of imperialists ... it is the bounden duty of the Ibibio people to shelve their differences ... take up where the imperialists have left off, improving if need be, what they have done, knowing that our task is not for the present but for the future.

Ogarekpe (1996:227) argues that the claim that missionaries did not understand indigenous cultures is not true, and maintains that, if they did not have a good understanding of indigenous cultures, they could not have translated so many Scriptures accurately into the vernacular. There is no doubt that the European missionaries made concerted efforts in the development of the African vernacular - which obviously should be appreciated - but one must not pretend that, even their translations were not without some lapses - some key term/word which either means *ekpo* was intentionally omitted in the holy Scriptures. For example, the word "spirit" (which means "*ekpo*") in the Efik and Ibibio translation, remained spirit in the Efik Bible. As such, the indigenous Efik/Ibibio people cannot use the word effectively when praying in their mother tongue. The question is: Was this omission intentional, or was it as a result of the "negative satanic" attachment that often follows the frequent use of the word *ekpo* (spirit) in the Ibibio context? It is the responsibility of the Presbyterian Church, being the first Church planted in Ibibio soil, as well as other churches within the Ibibio context, to provide an answer to this question, if we ever hope to deeply understand Christian spirituality within her context.

4.8 THE IBIBIO-BRITISH RELATIONSHIP PRIOR TO THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

In 1884/85, the Berlin conference arose with a declaration of the Oil River Protectorate with Calabar as headquarters of the new administration. This move was designed to justify its occupation and economic and political control of the southern territory of the Niger of which the Ibibio nation was an integral part. In 1891, Claude Maxwell Macdonald, was head of the administration of the new protectorate, which later renamed the area "Niger Coast Protectorate." According Udoh (1996:30), "This development shaped to a large extent the politics and religion of the Ibibio. For one, a strange new political relationship was bound to emerge - one defined by force rather than by living and learning together."

With the emergence of the formal British administration, the Ibibio traditional religious beliefs and practices, which previously had enjoyed undisputed status and loyalty, were under attack. Among the Ibibio, cultic authority was supreme, and religious as well as political

leaders were each in their own way and, by virtue their office, sacred and witnessed great changes. Udoh (1996:31) holds that: “Although British officials had previously penetrated the mainland, there was no effective grip on the Ibibio even with the help of strong military force.”

Roger Casement, who succeeded Claude Macdonald, first attempted to penetrate the hinterland; this attempt started from Calabar to Itu. He bribed his way with gifts of tobacco and clothes to the *Ikot usen* and *Mbiabong* in Ibiono. However, his team was driven back by a swarm of bees loosed by some Ibibio in a neighbouring market, as it was believed that some cultic association was capable of oozing out of bees’ systems by means of magical powers. The second attempt which successfully brought the protectorate closer, started among the Opobo and the Eket River.

By 1894, Itu had attained the status of a military base, Ikot Ekpene in 1902, and Uyo (currently Akwa Ibom State Capital) in 1905. In 1907, the British penetrated the Ikono area, but Nkwor, a sub-division of Ikono, suffered a reprisal particularly at Edem Idim, Ibam Edot, and Ikot Atim for holding a district commissioner in 1905, and were fined ten guns and ten goats. Mbiabong Ikot Udofia was punished for purportedly murdering a court messenger, two interpreters and a mail boy. The inhabitants ran to shelter their kinsmen. But for Charles Partridge, and the lecture he had received from Mary Slessor (whom the natives generally called *Eka afid owo*, mother of all) on the dignity of Africans, Captain Nair would have extended punishment to many more Ibibio communities (1996.:32). He enunciates the sufferings and pains of the people further when he writes:

It is clear that the Ibibio paid heavily in life and property for “Civilization” and the Christian gospel. I do not mean that they suffered losses in defence of the Christian faith like the martyrs of the Great Persecution in the 4th century. They had no faith to defend except the inherited religion of their forebears. And neither were they yet exposed to the form of education by which the new faith was understood. Rather to the extent that they resisted the colonial military forces however feebly, they paved the way for the gospel seed to fall on their soil (1996:32).

While, on the one hand, the researcher agrees with Udoh’s argument that the Ibibio did not suffer in defence of the Christian faith, like the martyrs of great persecution in the 4th century, on the other hand, the researcher strongly argues that the faith that the Ibibio defended then was the faith they knew, which had shaped their world-view and every thing around them.

4.9 THE IBIBIO-BRITISH RELATIONSHIP DURING THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

Historically, the spread of the mission's Christianity among the Ibibio began in 1847 with Mary Slessor who opened the Itu and Ikot Offiong Presbyterian stations. Mary had joined the Scottish mission in 1876. In 1888, she moved to Okoyong and endeared the people to herself. Her fame spread far and wide and many of the Ibibio and Aro chiefs continually invited her into their lives. The important need of the Ibibio chiefs included schools, a church and protection against military and spiritual warfare (Udoh 1996:33). Much as Mary's evangelical work prospered among the Ibibio, education also witnessed the same. The school that Mary opened at Itu flourished and, due to some squabbles, the need to open another became urgent (*ibid.*)

Among Mary's pupils, who later became Ibibio indigenous pioneer ministers, were Mr. Efiang Utit and Mr. E.U. Uya, who first started as teachers. Rev. Utit served for nine years as a teacher and was ordained in 1918. These two indigenous Presbyterian ministers and many others alike, helped greatly in the spread of the Presbyterian faith among the Ibibio. Udoh (1996:35) affirms it thus: "We find their signatures in important documents as conveners of committees and pillars upon whom the nurture and growth of the faith rested in their generation."

Another veteran missionary, who also worked among the Ibibio at Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku, was Rev. Dr Alexander Cruickshank, who served the mission for 54 years. The people of Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku speak of his personal love that endeared them to Christ. His influence on individuals and institutions remains so unchallenged that schools in the area exist in his memory. He help in moulding the Ibibio pioneer ministers and also opened church services at the leper colony at Itu.

The second group of Christian missionaries came from the Anglican Church with their base at Onitsha. The Anglican missionaries of the Niger Delta Protectorate explored the southwestern part of Ibibio, reaching Opobo and Bonny in 1892 (Goldie 1890:139 in Udo 1983:203).

In 1887, Mr Samuel A. Bill, a Presbyterian missionary, arrived at Ibuno at the mouth of the Qua Iboe River and opened the Qua Iboe mission there in 1890 (Ekong 2001:65). Udo (1996:31-34) echoes: "Having quickly established Ibuno as his centre, Bill explores western Ibibio country, establishing his mission centres at Ndiya in 1898, Okorotip and Mkpanak in

1899. In 1903 the ban on further expansion into the Ibibio mainland was still holding for good reasons. For Mary no reason was good enough to prevent her from reaching beyond Itu, Ibiono to Ikono and perhaps Ikot Ekpene.”

According to Ekong (2001:65), Western and central Ibibio did not come into contact with Europeans until 1902 and Christianity did not come to this area until 1919, when the Wesleyan Methodist Mission was established at Ikot Ekpene, followed by the Qua Iboe Mission in 1920, the Catholic Mission in 1925, and the Lutheran Mission in 1936. From this time onwards, a number of missions have sprung up - the largest bodies being those of the Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Methodists. However, indigenous churches seem to have more adherents than those of the foreign denominations (Messenger 1960:268-78). It is important to note that the missionaries were informed by their cultural background, world-view and theology; these social factors influenced their activities and also brought both internal and intellectual changes among the Ibibio people and their environment.

The next section of our discussion will focus on the Presbyterian mission’s expansion among the Ibibio and the creation of the Akwa Synod.

4.10 THE EXPANSION OF PRESBYTERIANISM AMONG THE IBIBIO AND THE CREATION OF THE SYNOD

As previously mentioned, the Presbyterian witness began in 1846 through the initiative of freed slaves from Jamaica and the kings of Calabar. During her early stage, the PCN was known and addressed as the CSM. In 1858, it became strong in south-eastern Nigeria and, with its constitution, operated as a Presbytery of Biafra. In 1921, it was known as, and called, the “Synod of Biafra” and, in 1945, the “Presbyterian Church of Biafra.” In 1952, the name was changed to the “Presbyterian Church of Eastern Nigeria (PCEN)” and, with the Nigerian Independence in 1960, it became the PCN. The Church (PCN) runs four tiers of government, namely the Session, Presbytery, Synod and the General Assembly, as the apex.

The Akwa Synod of the PCN was inaugurated from the defunct synod of the South East on 7th February 1999, (The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria Diary 2012:330). The Rev. Dr. Eno Afia the Synod was the first moderator, with a total of five Presbyteries: Namely, Ediene Presbytery with five parishes, Ikot Obong Presbytery with thirteen parishes, Ikpe Presbytery with six parishes, Itu and Uyo Presbyteries with ten parishes respectively. At present, the Rev. Idoreyin J. Ekpe is the fifth moderator of the Akwa Synod. It is important to clarify that

the Akwa Synod is not an autonomous synod, as all the nine Synods of the PCN operate under the General Assembly of the PCN, being the apex court of the Church.

Although, historically, the PCN was the first Church planted in Ibibio soil, Presbyterian evangelism and mission has been, and still is, very slow, as the Church is yet to be planted in most of the Ibibio communities. Out of the 36 local government areas of the Akwa Ibom State, the Presbyterian presence is strong in only six local government areas, namely: Itu, Ibiono, Ibom, Ikono, Ini, and Uyo, with a few congregations: Ikot Ekpene, Oron, Abak, Etinan, Eket, Ikot Abasi, and Uruan. Like other Synods of the PCN, the Akwa Synod is currently engaged in mission work to traditional non-Presbyterian parts of Ibibio land. As such, the Synod has a non-parish-based mission coordinator working with both ordained and lay missionaries.

Being part of the PCN and the world-wide tradition of Reformed Churches, it believes in the gospel of the sovereign grace of Christ over all the realms of life. The Synod remain true to the basic affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love; and maintains the popular Protestant watch words, “*sola gratia*” (grace alone), “*sola scriptura*” (scripture alone), “*sola fidei*” (faith alone), and “*sola Christus*” (Christ alone) (Kalu 1996:v). The Akwa Synod, being one of nine Synods that constitute the general assembly of the PCN, is guided by the practice and procedure of the PCN.

In order to maintain a common liturgy in PCN nation wide, the book of service of the PCN provides references and a study of Presbyterian liturgy (VanGerpen1992: vii). According to VanGerpen several features are included which are intended as an aid to studies, both privately and in training classes. The regular order of worship, order for baptism/membership confirmation, order for the Lord’s Supper, order for the ordination/induction of church workers, order of service for special occasions, creeds, prayers/benedictions, and the Lord’s Prayer are the main contents. These orders reflect a deep level of theology and therefore are worth studying (VanGerpen1992: vii-xi)

Worship in the Presbyterian tradition is never a mere show, sensationalism, or entertainment, but for the praise and glory of God. The PCN liturgy therefore consists of an approach to God, hearing the Word of God, and responding to the Word of God in an orderly and planned manner. This distinctive feature of PCN worship is its dignity - the solemn worship of God in his holiness and majesty (VanGerpen1992:1). However, Onwunta (2006:38) was quick to

observe that, to date, “the PCN is yet to have any standard liturgical guide that is truly original.” He maintains that almost all the orders and prayers have been revised or adapted from partner churches and other Reformed allies (Onwunta2006: 38). The question is: If the PCN could not develop a liturgy that is indigenous for more than 170 years of existence, how could she hope to minister meaningfully to the needs of indigenous people in the Nigerian context?

4.11 TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF PEACE IN THE AKWA SYNOD

There is no doubt that the current wave of violence experienced in contemporary Ibibio society is of great concern to both the church and society. The question is: What can the church and her preaching do in order to eliminate or, at best, reduce violence to its barest minimum, thereby restoring justice, peace and social transformation within the Ibibio society. Karl Barth (1964:120), the foremost Protestant theologian states that theology is a discipline of the church in which it continuously tests itself and its proclamation by its own norm, which is Jesus Christ as witnessed in Scripture. This is so, because the Christian faith calls people to freedom and responsibility in every sphere of life and, if the above argument holds, it therefore becomes an indispensable task of theology to inquire how the Gospel might reform and transform human life in a concrete way in our own time and in our own situation, so that life can become more meaningful as we prepare for life hereafter (Karl Barth 1964:119-120). In the light of Barth’s position, as stated above, it becomes the PCN’s Akwa Synod’s responsibility to discover how its theology, as well as the preaching of the Gospel, might bring about peace and transformation of human life, which has been devastated as a result of violence. This is relevant, particularly because many victims of violence are subjected to terrible suffering, pain, and poverty which rape them of their human dignity. Mwanza (2013:40) is not wrong when he argues that true transformation depends on the establishment and affirmation of all people’s dignity and self-worth, which is a basic need of people if they must be fully regarded as humans. Consequently, the church, being God’s agent and instrument of peace, has a responsibility to act out God’s intention to the world in the spirit of love. Little wonder the seventh beatitude states: “Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the sons of God (Matt 5:9).

Swartley (2006:56-57) rightly observes that peace-making is rooted in God’s character and, since children bear the image of parents, therefore Christians, being children of peace, bear peace in themselves as the Gospel’s mark of identity. This implies that the Christian calling is

to reflect the character of God's children, both in thought and action. To engage in peace-building, Jesus trained his disciples to love their enemies - an act which is humanly difficult. Klassen (1984:12-66) contends that the call to love one's enemies is unique to Jesus, but the Torah also recommends kindness and help to the enemy in need (Exod 23:4-5; Deut 22:1-4). To Swartley (2006:59), the goal of non-violent resistance is to overcome evil with good and to transform hostile relationships into friendship through reconciliation, truth, and forgiveness.

Wink (1987:60) argues that the phrase, do not resist *me antistenia*, in Matthew 5:39, means not to resist with violence, although nonviolent resistance is not a guarantee that the opponent will refrain from violence, nor the fact that there will be no casualty. It creates a paradigm shift by using "*moral jujitsu*" to disarm the enemy by a surprise response. From Wink's argument, it therefore holds that the love for the enemy should prompt Christians not to be mere pacifists but rather to resist evil with nonviolent actions. Horsley (in Swartley 2006:61-62) explicates further that Jesus' radical third way, expressed through the love for one's enemies, seeks to transform relationships, so that the dehumanization of both the oppressor and the oppressed, aggressor and the victim could live peace. Mbiti observed that the strength of African traditional religions lies in the integration into the whole of human existence. If one thinks these religions must be supplanted by Christianity, one faces great problems. However, if one recognizes that these religions represent valid African understandings of the divine and that it needs only to be supplemented, then it is indeed strength. From the above arguments, the researcher can therefore argue further that, for the church's theology and peace preaching to be relevant to indigenous Ibibio people, contextualization becomes imperative. Consequently, peace-building concepts as well as peace preaching must be based on reinterpretation. Anthropological data must be reinterpreted theologically so as to build on the people's existing indigenous peace initiatives which are line with the scripture.

4.11.1 The church as an agent of peace

The concept of the kingdom of God has become one of the significant biblical themes that underpin the Christian response to the world's dehumanizing tendencies. This manifests in the current fight against injustice, violence and poverty which to some peoples' view, it is an integral part of the coming of God's kingdom on earth. Hughes (1998:29) is not wrong when he argues that the establishment of God's kingdom not only begins when individuals accept the Lordship of Jesus; rather, it occurs whenever God's values are established in a particular

situation where there is social justice, protection and the strengthening of the poor and vulnerable.

The Hebrew culture presents the concept of peace holistically for the people of God, with justice as the fundamental basis for *shalom* (see 2.). However, Old Testament concepts of *shalom* - harmony, health, well-being and prosperity - as well as the New Testament image of the Kingdom of God, encompass the present and future. Elliston (1989:68) also argues that living in a peaceful, rightful relationship is the heart of the message of the Gospel, as Jesus Christ came not only to heal broken relationships between humans in a redemptive way, but also to restore harmonious living in a community of faith. Since the community of faith does not exist in isolation, the need for peace therefore calls for a church debate with other humans within the larger society. Mwanza (2011:116-117) affirms that, through Christ, God chose to reconcile the universe. Consequently, the Lordship of Christ gives the church the responsibility to make changes in history, and particularly such changes that will predict the day when the kingdom will be fulfilled in peace with God, the neighbour, nature and with the self. Taking it further, August (2009:34) states that there is a need for a greater mutual discourse about the kind of life and society that people want. A need also exists for cultural communication, for a continuous conversation (a speaking together) and jointly considering the nature of the relevant society, the mutual values on which the society is based, the mutual challenges that must be met, and the priorities that must be established.

4.12 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

According to Osmer's theoretical framework engaged in this study, the story of Presbyterianism in the Old Calabar area provides a background understanding of the context in which this study is conducted. The core argument and conclusion drawn from this chapter may be expressed as follows: the European missionary enterprise had both positive and negative impacts on indigenous Ibibio people of Nigeria. Even though the people were introduced to Western education, culture and Christianity, which brought an end to some forms of violence, especially the killing of twins and their mothers, their approach, for some reasons, failed to fully address the phenomenon of violent conflicts in Ibibio. First, the slave trade, imperialism and racial discrimination, which battered the entire black race, were their worst forms of violence. Second, the missionaries and British officials were unwilling to listen or learn anything from indigenous African people, including the Ibibio of Nigeria.

However, the next chapter of this work will focus on the Ibibio notion of peace and preaching, being empirical research data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IBIBIO PEACE AND PREACHING: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter surveyed the history of the Presbyterian mission enterprise among the Ibibio people of Nigeria, which is particularly significant, because research participants are of Ibibio origin and mainly members of the PCN's Akwa Synod. As such, the three PCN congregations are used as a case study in this research. In this chapter, the researcher investigates the Ibibio concept of peace and its implications for preaching within the Akwa Synod of the PCN, by presenting and analyzing data gathered from field research. According to Osmer's theoretical framework, this chapter is guided by the descriptive empirical task, the interpretive task, normative task, as well as the pragmatic task of Practical Theology, as it attempts to answer the questions: *What is going on here, why is it going on, what ought to be going on, and how may we respond?* According to Osmer's (2008:4-12) argument, the researcher can apply theories of social science as well as theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations or contexts to construct ethical norms that will guide responses gathered from the empirical study. Again, as members of the Christian community (as in the case of the PCN's Akwa Synod) the next question they face will be: What are we to do as a Christian community in response to our shared life within the context of injustice, violence and poverty (Osmer 2008:4-12). Consequently, relevant interview questions in this study are built around the research, the purpose of the research (see 1.6), the aims of the research (see 1.7), and the research questions (see 1.5). To unpack this chapter, the researcher will shed light on the research design, method of data presentation and analysis. But, research findings from empirical research will be presented in two phases: the first will include the quantitative results and the second the qualitative research results. It is hoped that this in-depth study will help the PCN's Akwa Synod to understand the Ibibio concept of peace in order to revisit its preaching in order to become an effective prophetic agent of change and social transformation.

5.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a strategic plan and procedure for research; it involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods (Creswell 2009:3-5). Durrheim (2006:9) affirms that a research design is a framework of action which serves as a bridge between the research question and the implementation of the research. In this study, the researcher used the mixed methods paradigm. Johnson *et al.* (2007) explain further that a mixed method is a research methodological approach in which a researcher, or a team of researchers, combine elements of qualitative approaches in a single study. Taking it further, Hammersley (1996:167) and Creswell (2009:14) affirm that a combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods is often proposed on the grounds that it cancels or neutralizes the biases and weaknesses of other methods,²⁹ which implies a form of methodological eclecticism (Hammersley 1996:167). Enunciating further, Bergman (2008:140) echoes that a mixed method is justified basically, because it is believed that this approach hopes to exploit the strengths of each research paradigm and to combine the respective strengths within one single design.

Dedring (1976:24) argues that peace researchers do not accept the emphasis on a single research technique. Rather, the tendency is to opt for a broad methodology suited for the purpose of investigation. To him, arguments in support of this broad conception of the scientific study of peace are convincing, especially in the light of the surge of future-orientation of world-order studies.³⁰ From the foregone, it is obvious that a mixed method approach offers several advantages; consequently, the study of the Ibibio concept of peace and its implications for preaching within the PCN's Akwa Synod hopes to critically examine respondents' views on indigenous Ibibio peace mechanisms and possible contributions it could make for the PCN's Akwa Synod and for its peace preaching to be more effective and relevant within an Ibibio social context. The researcher will use a sequential transformative

²⁹ By the early 1990s, the idea of mixing moved from seeking convergence to actually integrating or connecting the quantitative and qualitative data. For example, the result from one method can help to identify a participant to a study, or question to ask for the other method (Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998 in Creswell 2009:14). Alternatively, the qualitative and quantitative methods can be merged into one large database or the result can be used side by side to reinforce each other; for example, to use qualitative quotes to support statistical results (Creswell & Plano 2007 in Creswell 2009:14).

³⁰ He maintains that the use of any single research tool does not assure success or meanings for investigation. In the light of a large lacuna in the field of peace research and in view of what has been achieved so far, it seems appropriate to argue for a selective and elective research strategy and methodology (Dredring 1976:24).

approach³¹ to explore a mixed research methods design, where qualitative data collection and analysis follow up with the quantitative data collection and analysis to enhance the quality performance of the data.

5.2.1 The method of data presentation and analysis

The researcher used a mixed methods approach in collection, presentation and analysis of data (see 6.2). At this stage, it is important to clarify that the researcher will present and analyse data in two phases using triangulation. According to Bergman (2008:68) “Triangulation is a one phase design in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed in parallel and they merge together to develop a more complete understanding of or to compare the different results.” Since this study is informed by a concurrent triangulation approach (Creswell 2009:213-214), the first phase of presentation will focus on the quantitative data derived from a structured questionnaire administered among respondents, and the second will focus on qualitative data derived from focus group discussions and an individual interview phase, as indicated in chapter 1.6.

5.2 PHASES OF PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Being a mixed methods research, the data presentation, analysis and interpretation will be presented in two phases (see 5.3). Phase one being the quantitative data presentation analysis and interpretation, and phase two will focus on the qualitative data (see 5.4).

5.3 PHASE 1: QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The focus of the quantitative questionnaire is to elicit information from respondents on their understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace, the respondents’ thinking as regards the PCN’s Akwa Synod’s understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace, as well as what they feel the Synod and its preaching has done among the Ibibio people living within the context of various forms of violence.

First and foremost, the researcher presents the format in which the questionnaire was distributed among participants and the mode of collection. Second, results were presented in

³¹ A sequential transformative approach has two distinct data collections - one following the other by using two phases. A sequential transformative researcher may be able to give a voice to diverse perspectives, to better advocate for participants, or to better understand a phenomenon (Creswell 2009:212-213).

the form of histograms in which they agreed, disagreed, strongly agreed and strongly disagreed; they were used to indicate the percentage of the respondents' responses.

5.3.1 Questionnaire distribution

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, 50 questionnaires to each of the three PCN congregations located within the Akwa Synodical area, of which a total of 136 were returned. However, 14 copies were not returned (See Table 2.) below summarizes the distribution of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Summary of distribution of the quantitative questionnaire

SN	Destination	Number of questionnaires sent out	Number of questionnaires returned	Number of questionnaires not returned
	Congregation (C1)	50	48	2
	Congregation (C2)	50	42	8
	Congregation (C3)	50	46	4
	Total	150	136	14

The table presented above indicates, in summary, how the researcher distributed the questionnaire to respondents under study in the three congregations within the PCN's Akwa Synod. The approach used was the descriptive method, which gives an analytical picture of the population under study (Ndiyo 2005:71). Below is the presentation of how participants from the three PCN congregations within the Akwa Synod responded to the questions. The first three questions require basic information about the respondents' gender, age, and the location of the congregation. Questions four to twelve focus on the main research question and subsidiary research questions (see 1.6 and 1.6.1) in the following order: agreed, disagreed, strongly agreed, and strongly disagreed.

5.3.1.1 Question 1: What is your gender?

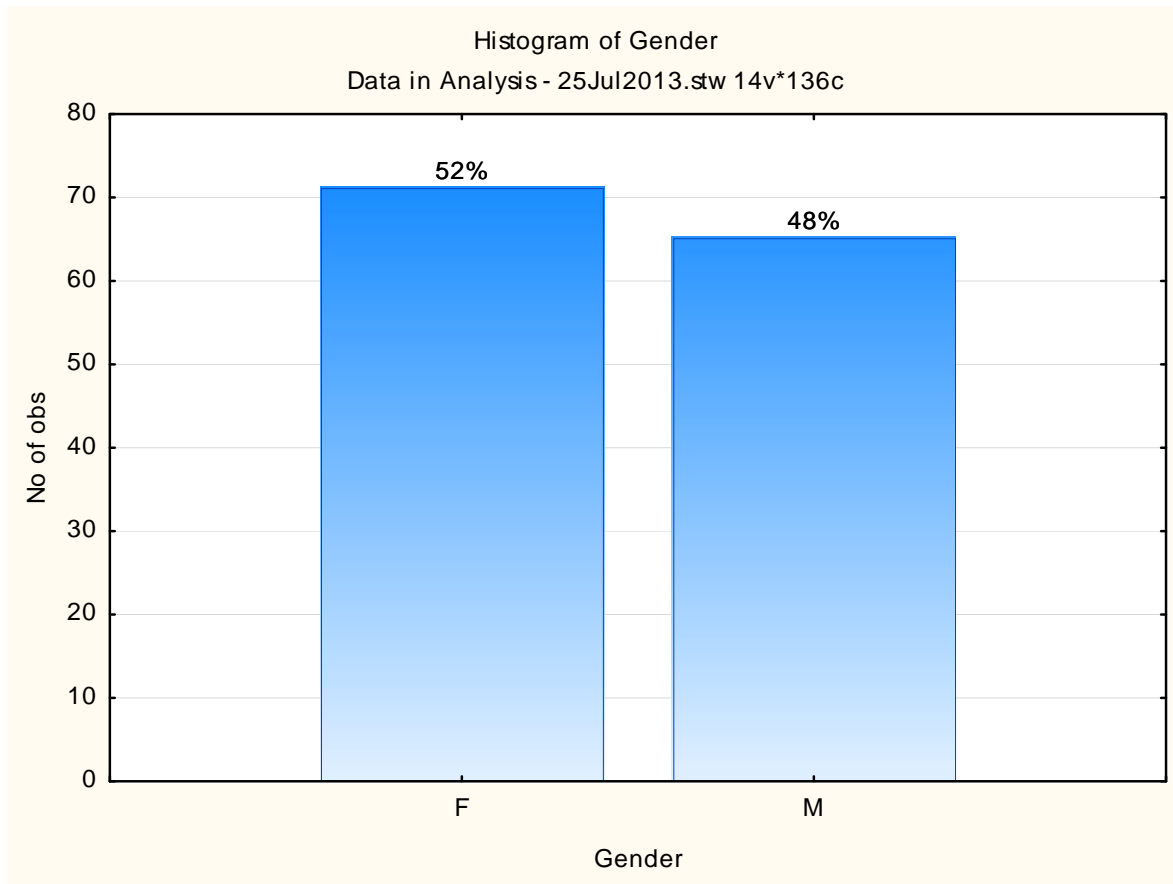


Figure 1: Histogram of Q1

The researcher collected data from both male and female participants from the three congregations studied. The above histogram presents 136 participants, being the total population sampled; 71 respondents representing 52% of the total sample population were female, and 65 respondents representing 48% were male.

5.3.1.2 Question 2: In what age bracket do you belong?

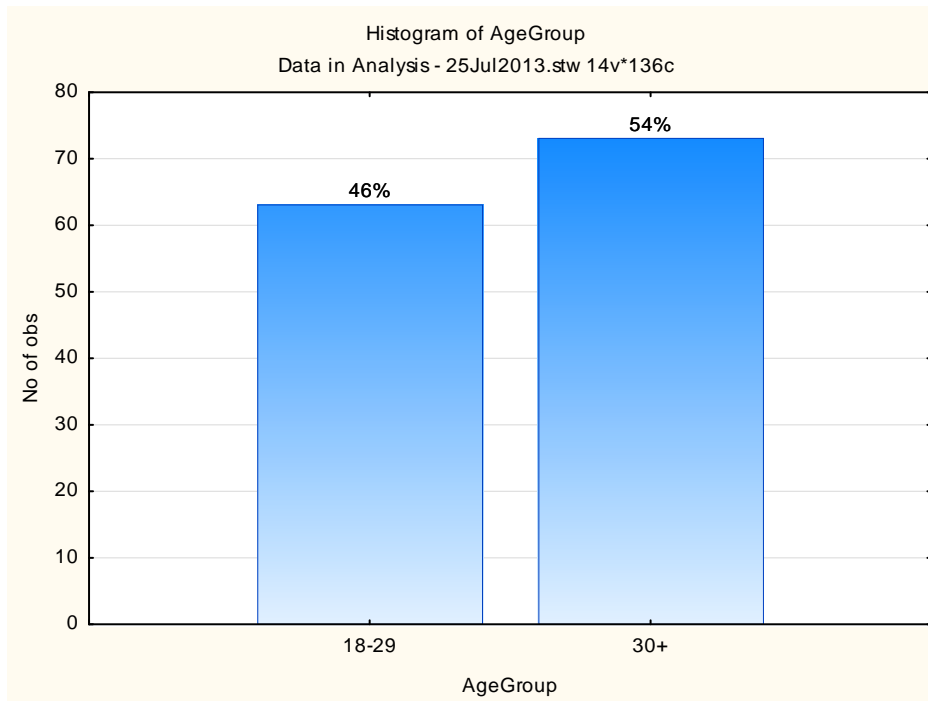


Figure 2: Histogram of Q2

The histogram of the age group, presented in figure 1 above, aims to show the opinion of the younger generation and that of the older ones on the Ibibio concept of peace. In order to have a balanced view from both the youth and older generations, the researcher grouped the sample population into two groups: age 18 to 19 years representing the youth, and age 30 years and above representing the older generation, respectively. Out of 136 respondents, being the total sample population, 63 respondents representing 46% of the sample population were youths, and 73 respondents representing 53% were of an older generation.

5.3.1.3 Question 3: Where is your congregation located?

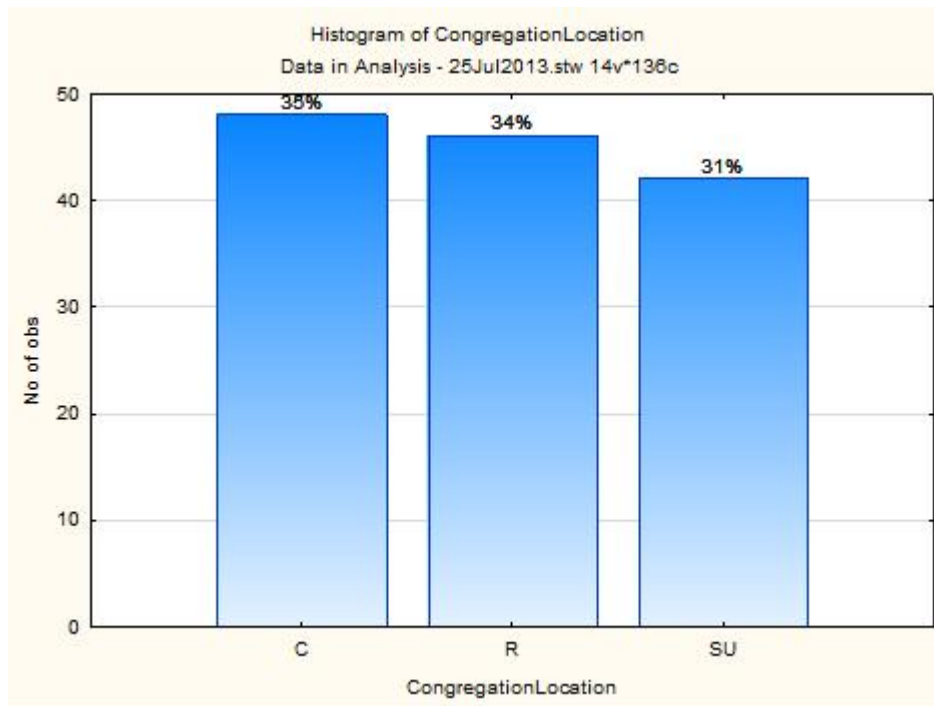


Figure 3a: Histogram of Q3

In the histogram presented above, out of a total sample population of 136 respondents from three Presbyterian congregations within the Akwa Synod, 48 respondents represented 35% of respondents from a congregation located in the city, 42 respondents represented 31% from a congregation located in a semi-urban area, and 46 represented 34% of respondents from a congregation located in a rural area. This proves that the study gathered views from participants located in different parts of the Ibibio society - from rural dwellers, semi-urban dwellers as well as those residing in the city.

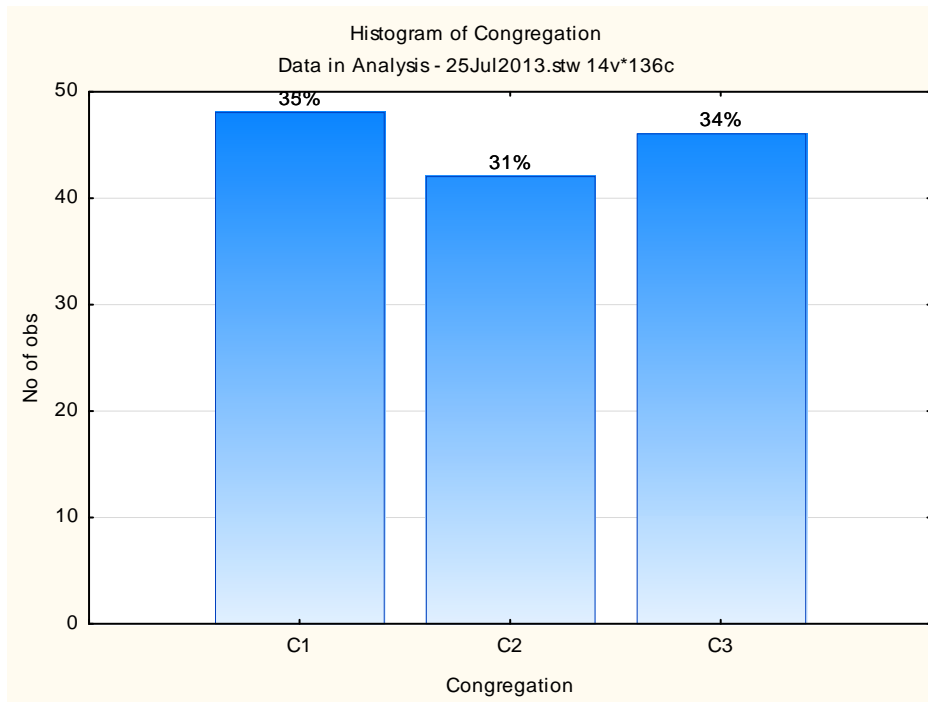


Figure 3b: Histogram of Q3

From the histogram presented above, out of the total sample population of 136 respondents from three Presbyterian congregations within the Akwa Synod, information in this section is the same as histogram 3a, but the difference is in coding. A congregation coded C1 in 3b represents congregation C. This indicates that the congregation is located in a city in histogram 3a. The congregation coded C2 in histogram 3b represents the congregation coded R in histogram 3a, which indicates that the congregation is located in the rural area. The congregation coded C3 in histogram 3b represents a congregation coded SU, which means that the congregation is located in the semi-urban part of the Ibibio land. Which affirms the fact that the views of respondents, residing in the rural, the semi-urban and the urban areas, were considered, since the Ibibio people are found in these areas.

5.3.1.4 Question 4: The Ibibio people understand peace as absence of violence

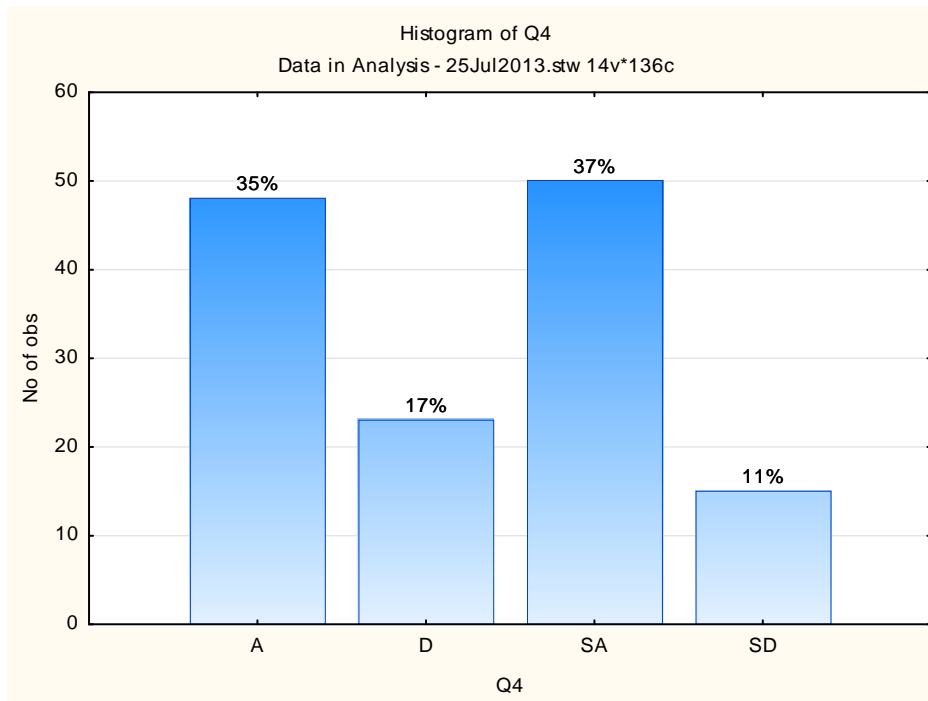


Figure 4: Histogram of Q4

Histogram of question 4 above indicates that out of 136 respondents, 50 (37%) respondents strongly agree that the Ibibio people understand peace to mean absence of violence and 48 (35%) agree, thus in total 72% agree. On the contrary, 23 (17%) respondents disagreed and 15 (11%) strongly disagreed, thus together 28% disagree.

The above information from the quantitative study, with 72% respondents who agree, is the highest percentage that indicates that the Ibibio people of Nigeria often understand peace as absence of violence. Ibeanu (2007:3) confirms this in his argument when he says: “Peace is regarded as converse of war: hence we read in modern literatures that war and peace are two sides of the same coin.” Taking it further, Onah affirms the idea of peace as absence of violent conflict, when he reflects on the concept of peace in African traditional religions (ATR) as is contained in a litany of prayer for peace among the Kikuyu of Kenya: “Peace is a good relationship well lived; health, absence of pressure or conflict ... being strong and prosperous ... peace is the totality of well-being” (Rweyemamu 381 in Onah <http://www.africakaworld.net/afrel/goddionah.htm>).

5.3.1.5 Question 5: The Ibibio people's culture and practices promote peaceful co-existence in society

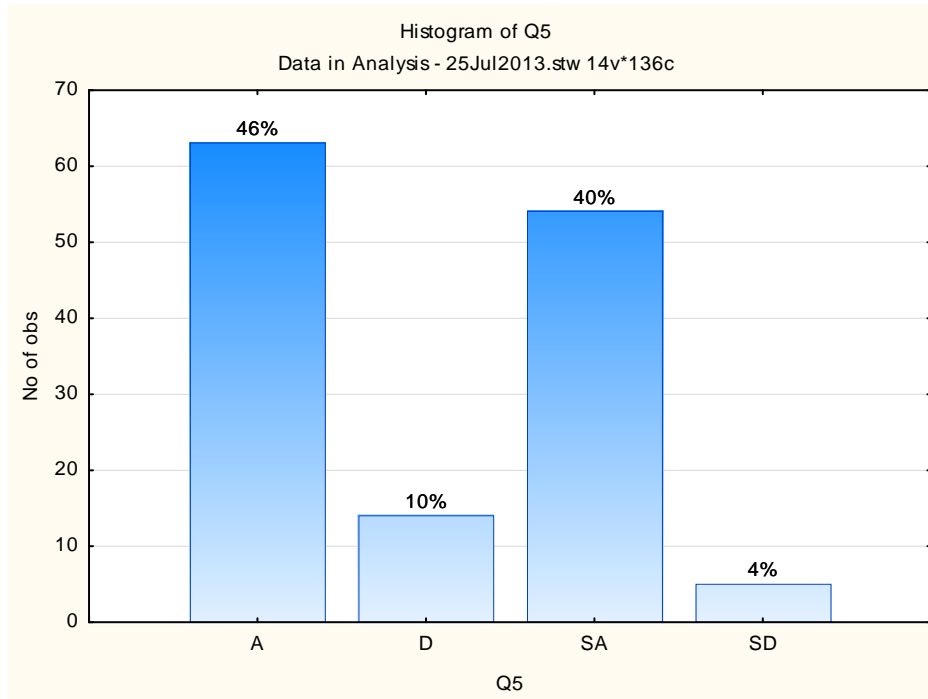


Figure 5: Histogram of Q5

The above table indicates that out of 136 respondents 54 (40%) strongly agreed that the culture and practices of the Ibibio people do promote peaceful co-existence in the society, while 63 (46%) agreed; thus, altogether 86% agreed. However, 5 (4%) strongly disagreed while 14 (10%) disagreed, so, a total of 14% disagreed.

The above information has 86% as the highest number of respondents who agreed that the culture and practices of the Ibibio people do promote peaceful co-existence in society. Mawere's (2010:209) argument validates the above data when he states that indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) were used to administer peace, harmony and order amongst African people in their physical environment.

5.3.1.6 Question 6: The Ibibio people are religious and religiosity influences the ways in which members of the society live and act

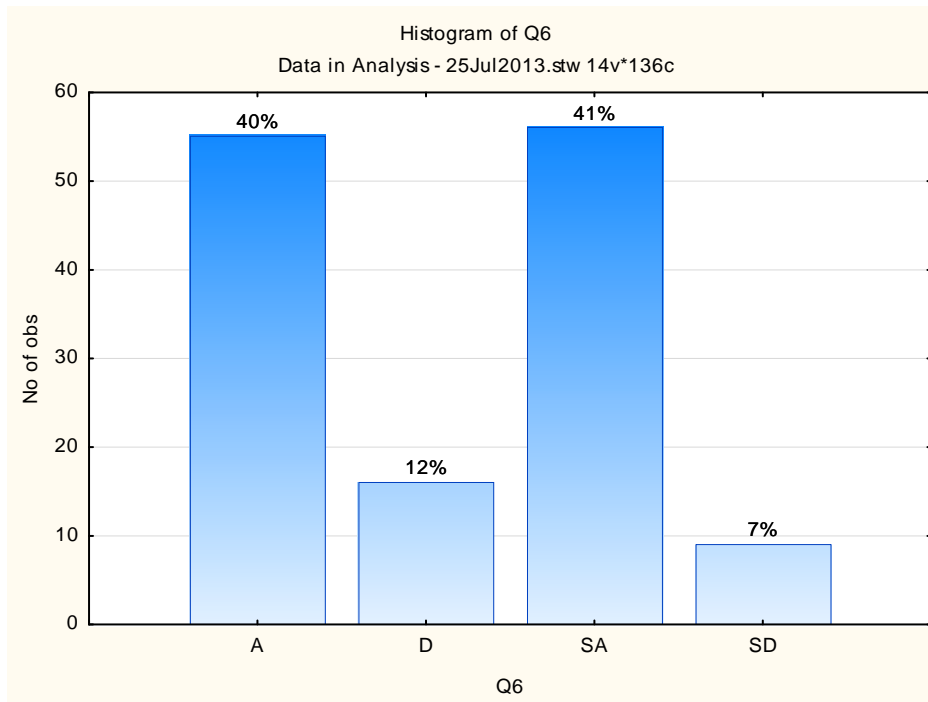


Figure 6: Histogram of Q6

The above table indicates that out of 136 respondents, 56 (41%) strongly agreed that religiosity influences the way people live and act in the Ibibio society, while 55 (40%) agreed, putting the total of respondent who agreed at 81%. However, 16 (12%) disagreed, while 9 (7%) strongly disagreed, thus, a total of 19% disagreed.

The above information, with 81% as the highest percentage of respondents who agreed, therefore indicates that religiosity does influence the way in which members of the Ibibio society live and act. Onah (2013)³² affirms in his assertion that for Africans, religion embraces life as a whole and worship touches every aspect of life; however, only God and divinities are worshiped and this is done through sacrifice, offering, prayer, invocation, praise, music and dance. In many localities in Africa there is no direct cult of the Supreme Being, yet God is the ultimate object of worship whom the people approach through

³² (Ona<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/goddionah.htm> 19/07/2013)

intermediaries: religious functionaries, the ancestors and the divinities. There is no clear separation between the spiritual and the material, the sacred and the profane.

5.3.1.7 Question 7: Absence of peace has an influence on the life and activities of the Ibibio people

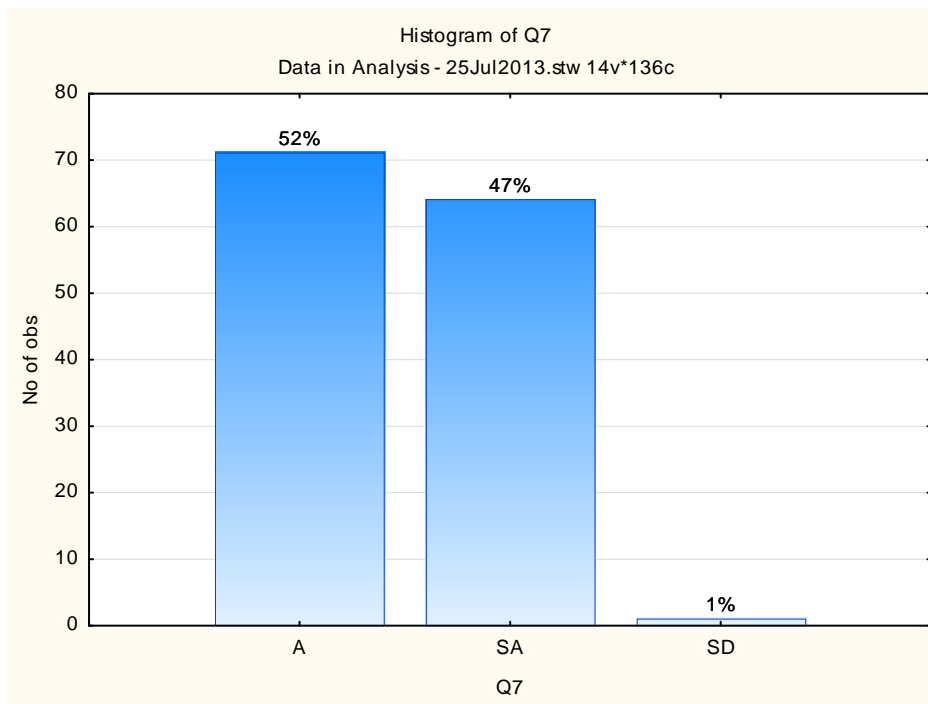


Figure 7: Histogram of Q7

The above table indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 64 (47%) strongly agreed that if there is no peace, it will have an influence on the life and activities of the Ibibio people, while 71 (52%) agreed. On the contrary, no respondent disagreed, while 1 (1%) strongly disagreed, i.e. in total 1% disagreed.

The above information, with 99% being the highest percentage, indicates that the absence of peace has a great influence on the life and activities of the Ibibio people. Kajom's (2012:17-56) argument that holds that the increase in various forms of violence engenders an atmosphere of insecurity that hampers political economic and social activities and has become a feature of life in different parts of Nigeria; this validates the data presented above. Taking it further, Adejogju (2009:55) agrees with Kajom when he laments, "Africa has been a continent enmeshed in violent conflicts."

Jekayifa (2001:) supports the above view when she argues that cultural relativism helps to judge and interpret the customs of others objectively; as it removes biases thereby promoting mutual understanding and peaceful living together.

5.3.1.8 Question 8: Conflicts and violence do occur in the Ibibio society and the consequences include the destruction of lives and properties, displacement, hurts and poverty of people

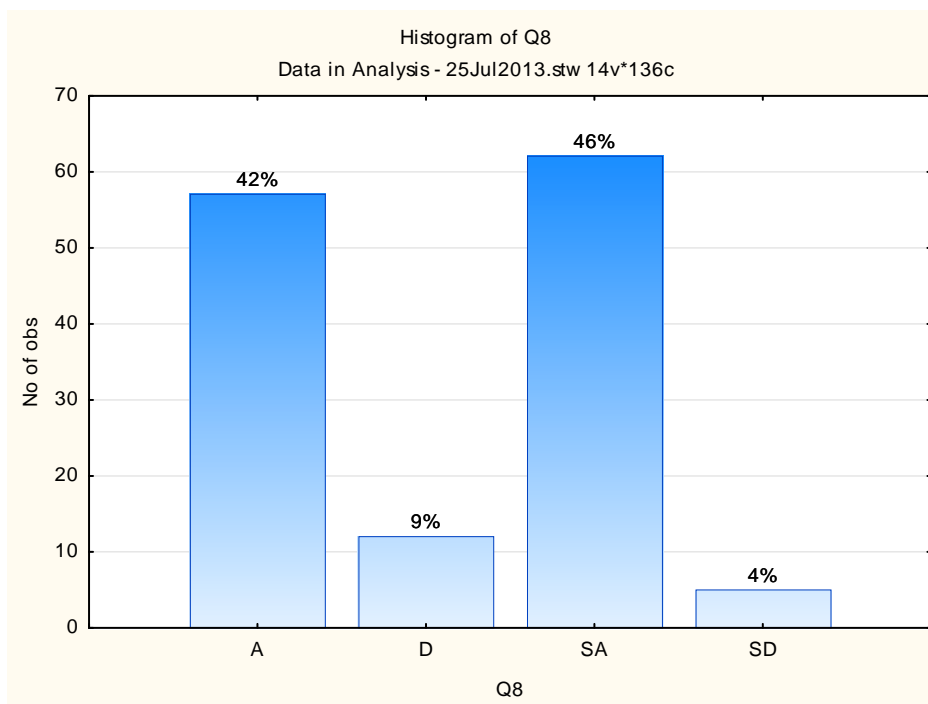


Figure 8: Histogram of Q8

The above table indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 62 (46%) strongly agreed that violent conflicts do occur in the Ibibio society and the consequences include the destruction of lives and properties, the displacements of some victims, suffering, hurt, poverty and under-development, while 57 (42%) agreed, making the total number of respondents who agree to stand at 88%. However, 16 (9%) disagreed, while 5 (4%) strongly disagreed, giving a total of 13% who disagreed.

The above data shows 88% as the highest number of the respondents who agreed that conflicts and violence do occur in the Ibibio society and the consequences include the destruction of lives and properties, displacement of people, sufferings, hurt, poverty and

underdevelopment, which indicates the extent of the negative influence of violence and the urgent need for peace in the Ibibio society. To validate this claim, in a key note address delivered at the 7th annual meeting of the Akwa Synod, Udoh (2005:36) laments: “... abuse and violence seem to have taken the greater part of our youths.” To support Udoh’s assertion, see figure (See figures 19 & 23.)

5.3.1.9 Question 9: The PCN’s Akwa Synod usually speaks out and does things to prevent conflicts and violence

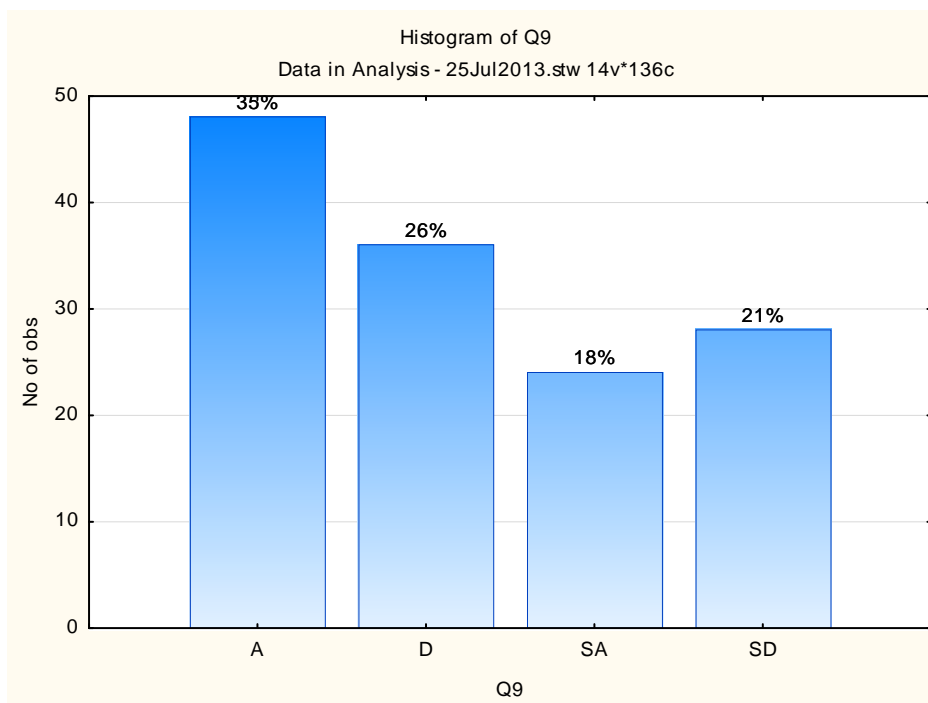


Figure 9: Histogram of Q9

The above table indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 24 (18%) strongly agreed that the PCN’s Akwa Synod usually speaks out and does things to prevent conflicts and violence, while 48 (35%) agreed, thus a total of 53% agreed. However, 36 (26%) disagreed, while 28 (21%) strongly disagreed, i.e. altogether 47% disagreed.

The data indicates that 53% of respondents, which is the highest percentage, affirm that the Akwa Synod does speak out and does things against violence. See qualitative data in 5.5.6.

However, the 47%, being the total number of respondent who disagreed, cannot be taken for granted. The qualitative data invalidates this point more clearly, as some respondents strongly hold that the voice of the PCN is not strong enough, while others maintained that the PCN has not done enough. Yet, some still believed that whatever the PCN has done was restricted to where a PCN presence exists (i.e. where there is a PCN congregation) as they felt the PCN should reach out also to other areas (see 5.5.6. & 5.5.6.4.)

5.3.1.10 Question 10: The PCN has plans and views about reconciliation and peace, and to change society for the better, which could promote justice, security and development.

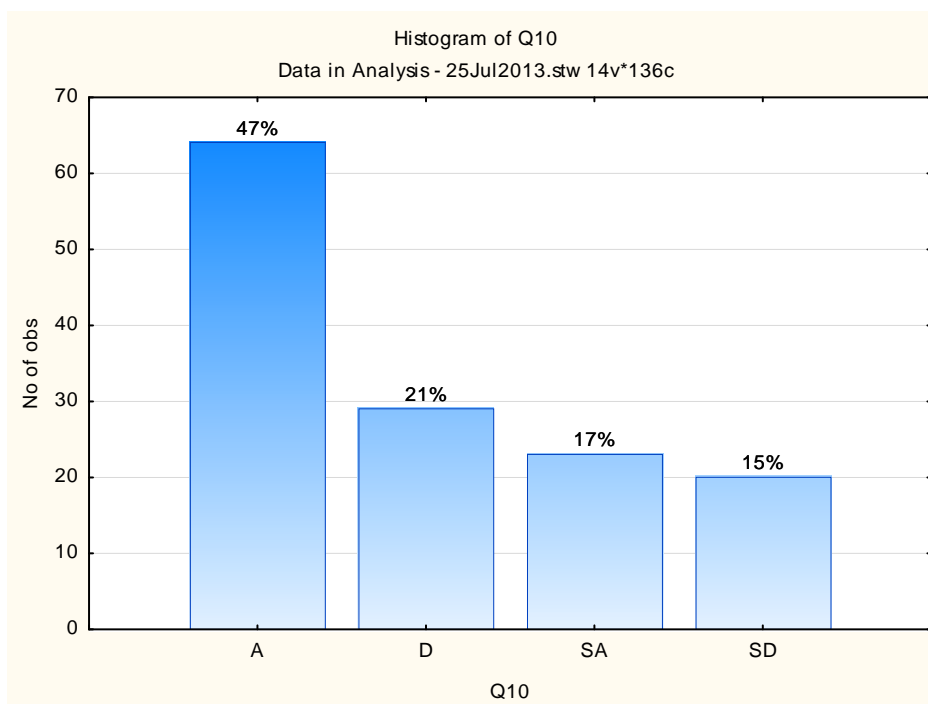


Figure 10: Histogram of Q10

The table presented above indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 23 (17%) strongly agreed that the PCN has views and plans about reconciliation, peace and changing the society for the better, which could promote justice, security and development; while 64 (47%) agreed, i.e. a total of 64% agreed. However, 29 (21%) disagreed, while 20 (15%) strongly disagreed, thus a total of 36% disagreed.

The above information with 64%, which is the highest percentage, indicates that the PCN has views and plans about reconciliation, peace and changing the society for the better, which could promote justice and peace.

5.3.1.11 Question 11: The PCN's Akwa Synod does strive towards peace among the Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflict and violence.

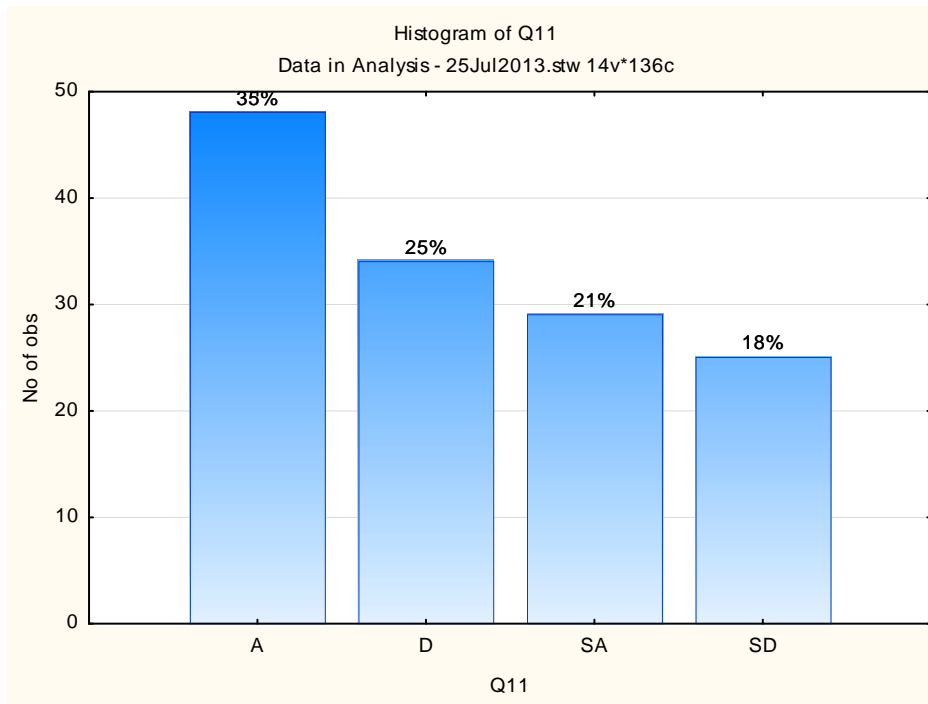


Figure 11: Histogram of Q11

The above table indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 29 (21%) strongly agreed that the PCN's Akwa Synod does strive towards peace among the Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence, while 48 (35%) agreed, i.e. a total of 56% agreed. However, 34 (25%) disagreed, while 25 (18%) strongly disagreed, giving a total of 43% who disagreed.

The above information, with 56% being the highest percentage, indicates that the PCN's Akwa Synod does strive towards peace among the Ibibio people who live in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflict and violence. A communiqué, jointly signed by the Prelate and the Principal Clerk of the PCN, affirms this as unacceptable. The Senate recently approved the amendment to the constitution, which allows under-aged children to qualify for marriage in Nigeria, saying that the provisions amounted to child abuse as it was a violation of the Child Rights Law (Uka & Eme 2013). To validate this further, the Akwa Synod's

Minute AKSY/023/2005 affirms: “Synod agreed to show interest in peaceful settlement of the crisis between Ekim Mbuk and Ikot Mbuk Idoro by visiting the area and also encouraged Ikot Obong presbytery in her efforts” (Oku & Edem 2005:21). Huber (2010:15) echoes: “As ubiquitous violence is as omnipresent is the task for the church. The church has to give ethical guidance, which includes political ways to overcome violence - nonviolence in principle is one of them.”

5.3.1.12 Question 12: The PCN’s Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ among the people.

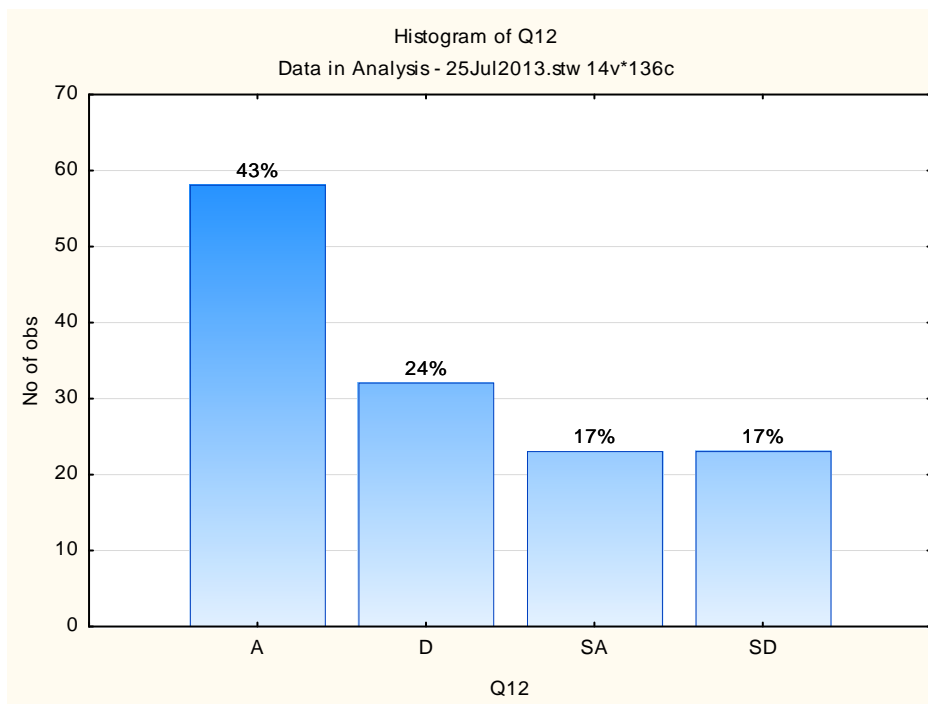


Figure 12: Histogram of Q12

The above table indicates that, out of 136 respondents, 23 (17%) strongly agreed that the PCN’s Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching of the gospel of Christ among the people, while 58 (43%) agreed, giving a total number of respondents who agreed at 60%. However, 32 (24%) disagreed, while 23 (17%) strongly disagreed, i.e. a total of 31% disagreed.

The above information, with 60% as the highest percentage, indicates that the PCN's Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the Gospel of Christ among the people.

5.4 PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Before the researcher resumes the presentation and analysis of the qualitative data, it is imperative to clarify that, in this section of the study, two instruments of measurement and triangulation were used. Babie and Mouton assert that we can triangulate according to methodologies, paradigms, methods and researchers. They maintain that triangulation is the best way to enhance the validity and reliability in qualitative research. On the strength of the above argument, the researcher considered the use of focused discussion and individual interviews as the best method to elicit information from respondents. The process of data collection from both the focus group discussion and individual interviews is presented below.

5.4.1 Focus group discussion (FGD), a method of data collection

The researcher carried out two focus group discussions using an open-ended questionnaire, in order to elicit information from respondents (Bless 1995:122). Members of each group were chosen carefully. The first FGD consisted of 10 men who hold leadership positions both in the PCN's Akwa Synod and in Ibibio society, and the second FGD consisted of 10 women who hold leadership positions both in the PCN's Akwa Synod and also in the Ibibio community. The researcher conducted the study along these lines of groupings in order to allow uninhibited expression. These groupings allowed respondents, irrespective of gender, to participate freely and to disclose their feelings and information based on the research questions. In line with ethical requirements, participants were given an opportunity to withdraw from participation in the study at any time, if they so wished (see Annexure.....). Respondents were instructed to speak one at a time, but interaction among the respondents was encouraged. Data was recorded both on audio and video tapes to ensure that participants' views were accurately recorded.

5.4.2 Method of individual interview data collection

Individual interviews were conducted with six church leaders in the Akwa Synod. The purpose of these interviews was for two reasons: 1) to develop a deeper understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace from the perspectives of church leaders in the Akwa Synod; and 2) to

examine views of respondents to determine if there could be possible points of departure for preaching peace within the Ibibio context.

5.4.3 Data transcription and coding

The researcher manually transcribed the audio and video tapes from both the interviews and focus group discussions.

5.4.4 Codes for focus group discussions and personal interviews

Respondents' type of interviews and groups, particularly for FGD, were identified to facilitate the process of analysis. For an outline of how the codes were assigned, see Table 3.

As a case in point, the first focus group discussion held at the Ikpa council pavilion was coded FGC; individual interviews are coded P; the first respondent from the FGC is coded FGC1; and the first individual interview is coded P1. Therefore, the following codes are used throughout the study: FGC1, FGC2 (as an example for male FGD); FGS1 FGS2 (as an example for women FGD) and P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 and P6 (as codes for individual interviews). See table 3below for a detailed description.

Table 2: Assigned codes used in the study

Group Codes	Description of interview: FG = Focus group; P = Individual interview.	Number: FGC1 = Focus group (participants men only) Interview 1 and P1 = Individual interview 1.	Codes
C = Focus group discussion with men only			FGC1 = Men's focus group interview 1. P1 = individual interview 1
S = Focus group discussion with women only.			<p>FGS1 = Women's Focus group interview 1.</p> <p>Individual interview respondent 2= P 2.</p> <p>FGC3= Men Focus group interview 3. P3= Personal interview 3.</p> <p>FGS4=Women Focus group interview 4.</p> <p>P4= Personal interview 4.</p> <p>FGC4= men Focus group interview.</p> <p>P5= Personal interview 5. FGS 5 = women Focus group interview 5. P6= Personal interview 6. FGC6= Men focus group interview 6. FGS6=women focus group interview 6.</p> <p>FGC7= Men focus group interview 7. FGS7=women focus group interview 7.</p> <p>FGC8= Men focus group interview 8. FGS8=women focus group interview 8.</p> <p>FGC9= Men focus group interview 9. FGS6=women focus group interview 9</p> <p>FGC10= Men focus group interview 10. FGS10=women focus</p>

			group interview 10.
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The researcher used a thematic method of data analysis to analyse both the data from individual interviews, as well as from focus group discussions:

Qualitative data analysis:

On completion of data transcription, the researcher cautiously compared the transcribed data with the video tapes to assess its accuracy, and responses were categorized into thematic sets of descriptions. Respondents' views relating to identified themes were selected in line with the main research question. The direct quotes (verbatim responses) were also selected by the researcher to be used as illustrations in this part of the study. Owing to the fact that the researcher used the same sets of questions for focus group discussions and individual interviews, the responses from both the focus groups and individual interviews will be presented together under the same themes and sub-themes. The data presentation and analysis will be presented together, while interpretation will reflect the respondents' views from the quantitative data as presented below.

5.5 QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.5.1 First discussion question: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? How will they describe peace?

The main aim of the interview's Question 1 was to gather information from respondents on both the general and individual understanding of peace within the Ibibio context. Presented below are responses from participants.

5.5.1.1 Etymology of peace in the Ibibio language

"In the Ibibio thinking, peace (emem), originates from the Ibibio word (meem), which is interpreted as "to calm situation" or "to soften"/"to make soft" or "to make simple"/"to make easy." Other words used to further discuss peace in the Ibibio context include words such as ifure (tranquillity and calmness), eduek/uforo, (prosperity)" (FGC2) Appendix 10.)

5.5.1.2 Peace as absence of violence

Under this theme, the sub-themes that emerged include the following: that the Ibibio understand peace to be violence free, a state of tranquillity/calm, well-being, happiness, agreement/harmony and a fear of God.

“I think that the Ibibio people regard peace as a situation where there is no physical violence such as communal or intertribal war” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

“Peace to me is absence of hostilities” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“If there is any element of violence in the society, there is no peace, therefore to me peace means absence of violence” (FGC 2). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think peace in their context also means cessation of violent conflict” (FGC8). (See Appendix 10.)

“...Therefore to me peace in the Ibibio world-view can be described as a condition that is trouble-free, conflict-free, a condition of safety” (FGC1). (See Appendix 10)

“To me peace is the absence of violent conflict” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10)

“... most people think peace is just absence of conflict, violence and war”(P6). (See Appendix 17.)

“In my language, I understand peace as the absence of conflicts and violence” (P2).(See Appendix 13.)

“The Ibibio think of peace as a state of tranquillity and comfort, a situation free from disturbances, which could be as a result of violent attacks, like war or the outbreak of an epidemic in the community - anything that threatens the existence of the community threatens the people’s peace. Therefore, peace can be likened to a state of calm, a condition free from violence and other vices that threaten communal life” (P4) (See Appendix 15.).

“The Ibibio people understand peace to be absence of war, a situation where there is no violent conflict” (P5) .(See Appendix 15.)

The respondents’ views presented above include views from FGDs and individual interviews. Parrinda’s (1987:221) argument affirms the above views when he asserts that, in ancient Greece, peace was basically understood as the absence of violence. To validate respondents

views further Akpabio an indigenous Ibibio Presbyterian Pastor in a sermon preached on the 21st October 2012 at the PCN ikot Inyang Congregation define peace as freedom from war or disturbances. To him (Akpabio) peace conveys the idea of health, safety soundness as well as completeness. (See appendix 19.)

5.5.1.2.1 Peace as the fear of God

As could be seen from respondents' responses, the results in this section are presented below.

"Peace is living within the fear of God, it is the fear of God that can help us in the way we treat one another" (FGS 8). (See Appendix 11.)

"Peace for me is an inward experience which humans have as a result of their relationship with their God" (FGS10). (See Appendix 11.)

"I also think true peace is not man-made and has nothing to do with war; the Bible describes it as the peace that passes all human understanding, because that kind of peace is God's gift, there is no human government that can offer humans that kind of peace" (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

"I think real peace comes from God as a result of regeneration. That is why Jesus said in the Bible, 'My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives" (FGC4). (See Appendix 10.)

Mbiti (2010:7) supports this view when he says: "Peace is grounded in a spiritual dimension since God is the source of lasting peace." Taking it further, Bolaji Idowu (1962:47) describes similar beliefs among the Yoruba who identify God as the nodal point of peace, social justice, and harmony. He is the one through whom peace and interpersonal harmony are affirmed, sustained and nourished.

5.5.1.2.2 Peace as well-being

"To me, peace in our context is understood as the general well-being of an individual or community..." (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

"I understand peace as a condition of well-being" (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

"I believe it is when an individual or a society is healthy then we can say there is peace" (FGS6).

"Without good health and prosperity there is no peace" (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“... through our farming culture, I know that a good harvest was a sign of peace and blessing from God” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

5.5.1.2.3 Peace as happiness

“To me, I see peace as happiness because there can be no happiness in the home or society if there is no peace, so to me peace is happiness and there can be no happiness when there is conflict and violence everywhere...” (FGS 2). (See Appendix 11.)

“...Peace is also a condition or atmosphere where there is happiness and mutual understanding...” (FGC2).(See Appendix 10.)

“To me, if members of a family or community are not happy, it simply means that there is no peace, as such peace means happiness” (FGS7). (See Appendix 11.)

Mbiti (2010:7) validates this by putting it the other way round: “Where there is no peace, there is no fortune, no happiness, no joy, no freedom, no strength or incentive to work, no motivation to live.”

5.5.1.2.4 Peace as tranquillity and calmness

“When there is calmness...there is peace” (FGS4). (See Appendix11)

“I think his people simply understand peace as a state of calm...” (P1). (See Appendix 12)

“...peace in Ibibio context include words such as ifure (... and calmness)...” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“I understand peace to be comfort” (FGS3). (See Appendix.11.)

“...I think peace is understood as a state of tranquillity where there is no conflict and violence” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

“The Ibibio think of peace as a state tranquillity...” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

The above responses agree with Kerr’s (2006:422) position that peace is understood to be a state of tranquillity. To him, the concept of peace is linked to the idea of obtaining a peace of mind, denoting a degree of mental calm or serenity. To be at peace with oneself and with others is not only to refrain from violent action, but to cast off a semblance of anger or anxiety. (See literature in Chapter 2.)

5.5.1.2. 5 Peace as harmony

“Peace to me is also a state of harmony” (FGC1).(See appendix 10).

“I think it is only when there is unity that we say there is peace, when we have division and fighting here and there that means there is no peace. So to me, our people understand peace to be unity” (FGC1). (See Appendix10)

“...Peace also means co-operation that comes from mutual agreement which involves give and take” (FGS5). (See Appendix11.)

“Peace means agreement to work or stay together we find out that when there is mutual agreement among people or parties there is peace” (FGC9). See Appendix 10

“Peace is like an agreement made to end all forms of hostilities” (P1).(See Appendix 12

“The Ibibio simply understand peace as being togetherness. To them peace means agreement and unity” (P3).(See Appendix 14)

“Peace is a genuine agreement to end conflict, violence and war” (P5).(See Appendix16)

The above responses agree with Offiong (Offiong 1997:423) position that peace in Ibibio is simply a state of harmony (see 2. 2). Mbiti’s (2010:7) interpretation of African peace supports the above data further, thus: “Peace means tranquillity, good fortune, good health, with the freedom to live and work ... where there is no peace there is no fortune, no happiness, no joy, no freedom, no strength or incentive to work, no motivation to live. Absence of peace means suffering for people and for nature.” However, the research presents views of other respondents who did not conceive of peace from the perspective of absence of war

5.5.1.3 Peace, not just absence of violence

“To me peace has to do with elimination of exploitative social structures in our society, and restoration of freedom of human rights” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“To me, no society can be absolutely free from conflict and violence; as the Ibibio proverbs say,

i) “Abang ye abang odoreke kubium itreke ndutuaya” (pots that are kept up together can never fail to hit each other).

ii) *“Mbara okpok osop se sop some iniehe se anam ukim” (no matter how sharp the lizard's nails, it can do nothing to an Iroko tree).*

“I strongly believe that peace in the Ibibio understanding does not mean absence of conflict or violence, as human life cannot be totally free from it. As such, there could be some forms of conflict and violence in the society and, depending on its degree, if such conflict or violence does not affect the general well-being of the community, it means there is peace. For example, if an interpersonal or inter-family conflict does not disrupt the well-being of the community, this need not necessarily be regarded as a lack of peace. Peace may be regarded as the absence of violence and war, but this excludes minor conflicts, annoyances or personal quarrels, because people do agree to disagree without such disagreements disturbing the general well-being of the society as already mentioned by FGC2. To me, I think peace goes beyond absence of violence to issues of injustice, gender inequality and corruption which, to me, is even more serious” (FGC10). (See Appendix 10.)

Spinoza (in Kerr 2006:422) supports the above response when he says: “Peace is not the absence of war, it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice ... attainment of positive peace requires the attainment of certain normative goals systems.” Gwama (2007:57) agrees with the view when he succinctly states that “peace is not the absence of war, instead it is a war against evil and injustice.” Mary and Christopher (2006:35) further explicate: “Positive peace is seen in the light of efforts toward the building of positive peace and non-exploitative structure, with a substantial component of justice and human rights.”

The data indicates that the Ibibio understanding of peace could be classified into two broad categories: The majority of the respondents understood peace in the Ibibio context as the absence of conflict and war or “direct” violence. However, two respondents remarked that no society can be completely free from conflict and violence, but it depends on the degree. If the degree is very minimal, it means there is peace. The responses presented above indicate that most of the respondents think of the Ibibio concept of peace, basically, as absence of violence.

To validate the above findings further, the quantitative data in 5.3.4.1 - where a total of 72% of the respondents, as the highest percentage, agreed - indicates that the Ibibio people of Nigeria often understand peace as the absence of violence. In other words, according to the data of the study, the indigenous Ibibio people understand peace in line with Galtung’s theory

of negative peace (see 2.4.2). However, a few respondents see peace in the Ibibio context beyond the absence of violence, but rather issues that border on justice, fair play and freedom, which also is in line with Galtung’s concept of positive peace (see 2.4.2). Although the Ibibio notion of peace could be classified in two broad categories, considering the respondents’ general views, the individual views should also be taken into consideration. In line with Galtung’s theory of peace in 2.4.2, the figure presented below summarizes respondents’ views on the Ibibio understanding of peace derived from respondents’ views and gleaned from the entire study.

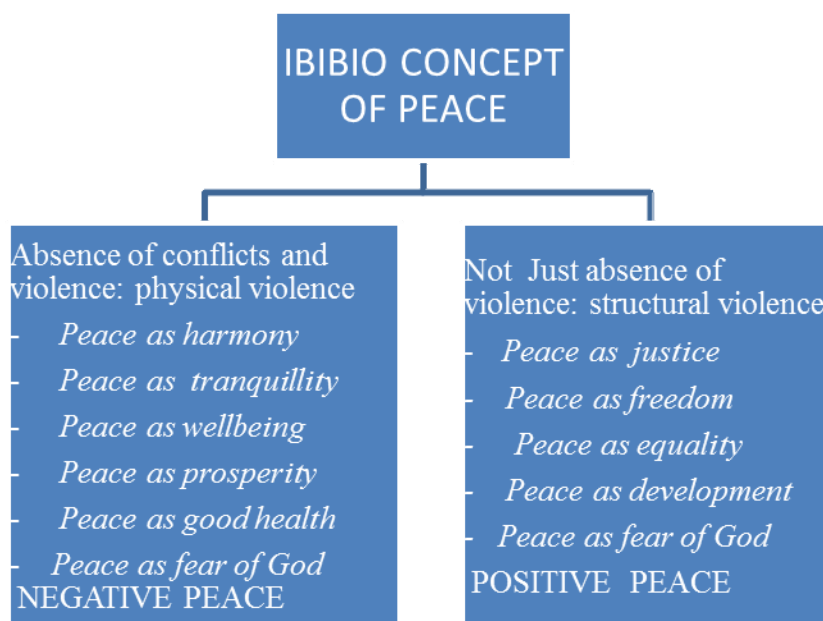


Figure 13: Summary of the Ibibio concept of peace

Undoubtedly, the data from both the qualitative and quantitative study in 5.4 above agree with views is found in the literature in Chapter 2. Although people may differ in their understanding of peace, the truth remains that peace is beyond absence of violence and war. Spinoza (in Kerr 2006:422) affirms: “Peace is not the absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice.” He argues that attainment of positive peace requires the attainment of certain normative goals systems (*ibid.*). This further affirms Anan’s position (see 1.5.1). Based on the data analysis presented above, it becomes

clear that the Ibibio people of Nigeria mainly understand peace as an absence of violence, which is negative peace in Galtung's peace theory (See 2.4.2). Beyond the negative peace concept, there is also a need to look at peace in the larger picture by addressing structural violence. The existence of peaceful social and cultural beliefs and norms, a commitment to non-violence, the presence of justice at all levels (economic, social, and political) could be a step in the right direction towards the achievement of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria.

5.5.2 Elements of peace in the Ibibio culture

FGD Question 2: In your view, what is it in what you believe and in your culture that makes peaceful co-existence among the Ibibio people possible?

The aim of this question was to elicit information from respondents on what they think are elements of peace and peaceful co-existence within the Ibibio context. The researcher believes that this question is relevant to the study, because it hopes to uncover the socio-cultural principles that underpin the ethics of peaceful coexistence of the people. Little wonder Haruna *et al.* (2003:17) opine: "All African cultures, customs, traditions and civilization emphasize not only the value and significance of peace in society, but also the necessity of having to ensure that there is peaceful co-existence and harmony among various groups that live in a community and between them and their neighbours." Taking it further, Adedeji (1993:208) echoes an old saying that culture is the centre of existence of a people. Consequently, the themes that emerge under this category include informal education, traditional peace practices and religiosity, and will be analysed and interpreted as follows:

5.5.2.1 Indigenous education

Informal education is identified as part of Ibibio culture that promotes peaceful co-existence. But the following sub-themes emerged as sources of indigenous peace education: story telling proverbs, folk tales and riddles, songs and prayer.

"To me, our folk tales, proverbs and riddles of our people is a rich source of peace in our context"(P5).(See Appendix 16.)

"Our indigenous informal methods of educational training were very practical approaches, as the younger generation learnt from their elders the communal ways of peaceful co-existence through story telling" (FGC1).(see Appendix 10.)

“To me the wise sayings from our elders, our proverbs, our folk tales, folk songs and riddles remain the greatest source of the Ibibio notion of peace” (FGS5).(See Appendix11.)

“...through informal education and in informal ways which include moonlight tales, proverbs, songs, rituals and prayers to which the young people could easily adapt..”(FGC3) (See Appendix 10.)

“... to me our educational methods and curriculum which trains individuals from infancy, through story telling, folk tales, proverbs, prayer, music and riddles, effectively trained people to embrace the value of justice, fair play and peace as it consists in many illustrations which demonstrate advantages and disadvantages of peaceful coexistence” (FGS2).(See Appendix 11.)

“In my opinion, I think the cultural norms and values of our (the Ibibio) people itself makes for peaceful co-existence because it was a practical method of educating individuals and people were taught to respect themselves and others as well...” (FGC7).(See Appendix.)

Okoro (2010:143) affirms this position. His argument is that, in human history, education is the main instrument employed by the society to preserve, maintain and grapple with its social equilibrium; hence a society depends largely on the quality of its citizens' education. Ekong (2001:131) states that, in order to induce conformity or forestall commitment of sacrilegious acts, certain social control mechanisms devised among the Ibibio include the telling of folk-tales which emphasizes the enormity of sanctions, indoctrination, and various sanctions to be instituted for acts capable of endangering the peace and stability of the entire community.

5.5.2.2 Religious practices

“The Ibibio culture and religious values were passed on from one generation to another through informal education and in informal ways which include moonlight tales, proverbs, songs, rituals and prayers to which the young people could easily adapt. Both religious and cultural values facilitate peaceful co-existence in our society in a very significant way” (FGC3).(See Appendix 10.)

“...in those days when traditional African worship was popular people of the same community shared a common shrine and spoke the same language. So you can see the people live and share their lives together and have a lot of things in common. Then what affects one person affects the other. Then the sense of being our brother's and sister's keeper was very

strong. All these and much more strengthened peaceful coexistence among our people...” (FGC5). (See Appendix10.)

“...I will also like to mention that religious rituals were usually performed when there was any threat to peace in order to appease God, other deities and ancestors...” (FGC2). See Appendix 10

“Our culture places a high moral value on virtues, such as obedience and respect for parents and elders, respect for traditions, laws and taboos, respect for God and deities. All these trainings help to regulate the behaviour of members of the society in ways that promote peaceful co-existence” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11)

“I believe our source of peace is in God, that is why our people pray to God for peace before embarking on any project, a journey or before the commencement of important events” (P6).(See Appendix 17.)

The above data agrees with literature in 3.7 – 3.7.4. Again Antia’s (2005:91) argument validates the above data when he explains that, among the Ibibio, libations were poured and sacrifices made during harvests, new yam festivals and other important functions, as members always prayed for long life, prosperity and an increase in the population; making vows to be of good behaviour: to cooperate and to love one another and to be faithful and loyal to both the family and the community, never to do things that will bring shame to the family, ancestors and the community. Furthermore, ancestral spirits were usually invoked to watch out and punish defaulters. To validate it further, Ekong (1988:202) affirms that the belief in the supernatural is very strong among Nigerians, like other Africans, as it relates to the here and now. As such, the ability of African indigenous churches to perform spiritual healing of physical diseases, to forestall witchcraft, and tell the future are more related to the daily experiences of the rural dwellers, as it becomes more attractive to them than the ordinary preaching and hope for a better future life in heaven that other foreign churches offer.

5.5.2.3 Traditional symbols

“The Ibibio cultural symbols and traditional ways of the settlement of disputes promote peaceful co-existence. One such symbol is the ayei (palm frond). For instance, if there is a quarrel or conflict among people, when the ayei is raised, the parties were expected to stop the fight” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

“I feel our respect for cultural symbols of peace, such as ayei, nuuk enin, religious covenants and sacrifice. These practices help regulate attitudes and behaviour of people in our society” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think our people had high respect for our traditional symbols of peace. For instance, in those days, if there was a conflict or war among parties and someone raised a palm frond, the warring parties had to stop fighting and give peace a chance...” (FGC1). (See Appendix.10.)

Ekong (2001:135), a professor of Rural Sociology of Ibibio extraction, affirms the above views thus: “The Ibibio also had certain institutionalized elements and symbols which they used in checking or preventing crimes. This includes *eyei* (young palm frond); *mbritem* (ginger lily or bush cane). These plants as well as animal materials were variously used as *uwang*, or symbols, to warn trespassers that the wrath of the gods or *juju* has been invoked upon them. Ibibio scholars agree that *Nnuk enin* and *Ayei* were used as symbols of peace, as an accused could be asked to swear on it to prove his/her innocence, or as a notice of no trespass, an instrument of injunction (Esen 1982; Udo 1983; Essen 2001:92).

5.5.2.4 Ibibio communal life

“Communal life is one unique aspect of our cultural life that promotes peaceful co-existence” (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

“Communal life is one unique aspect of our cultural life that promotes peaceful co-existence as emphasis is not on individuals but on community. The age grade system promotes and facilitates peace and peaceful co- existence” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“Our strong communal life is one unique aspect of our cultural life that promotes peaceful co-existence. This is reflected in a common Ibibio proverb that says: “Eto isdaha ikpong ke ikot ikaapa akai” (A tree cannot form a forest), and “Ubok mmum ubok mmum ase atud ukpa” (Many hands will push together a big log of wood). These two sayings affirm that an Ibibio person knows that one needs the support of the next person when one is in difficulties. As such, one would strive to live in peace with one's neighbours both as individuals, family and community” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“Our cultural practice of communal life is living in love together as a community, sharing the joy and pain together. When I talk about sharing, in the African Ibibio context sharing is very

profound. In those days and even up till now, people of the same village or community share the same farm area and the same stream. In those days when traditional African worship was popular, people of the same community shared a common shrine and spoke the same language. So you can see the people lived and shared their lives together and had a lot of things in common. Then, what affected one person affected the other. Then, the sense of being our brother's and sister's keeper was very strong. All these and many more strengthened peaceful coexistence among our people" (FGC5).(See Appendix 10.)

Mbiti (2010:7) affirms the data presented above when he states that peace has both communal and personal dimensions, based on the prayer for peace among the Kiyu of Kenya. He illustrates that the use of the pronouns "we," "us" and "our" in African prayer for rain is never an individual act, as rain is not a gift to an individual. Rain is for the community, an individual and nature and only within that framework can an individual benefit from it. Similarly, peace comes upon the community of human beings and nature, first and foremost. At the same time, there is a personal dimension to peace, as well as the appropriation and experience of peace. Taking it further, Ekong (2001:74-75) affirms the respondents' view when he explains: "Co-operation among the Ibibio is mainly in common or communal labour. Common labour exists between individuals in a small group, while communal labour involves all or most members of the village community ... in contemporary Ibibio society, co-operative activities have become even more elaborate, including the more secondary groups as well as the impersonal and symbolic forms of co-operation."

5.5.2.5 Humans as peace agents

"The agents of peace include the chiefs and elders, the age grade, and secret societies such as the Ekpo, Ekpe Obon societies" (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

"...when there is conflict in the family, it is expected that in-laws are neutral and unbiased particularly on matters of disagreement and conflict affecting the family of the in-laws. This makes in-laws agents of reconciliation and peace" (P1) (See Appendix 12.)

"I know that ayeyin (maternal grandchild) was and is still highly regarded in our tradition as such the play significant roll in reconciliation and peace building still is our society. I also feel that it is the traditional recognition given to in-laws, kinsmen and grandchildren that accord them status that can easily facilitates reconciliation and peace among grieving parties. I also know that Ibibio people have great regard for their in-law particularly if the

son in-law is perceived to be responsible. It is in this case that an in-law could become a vital element in reconciliation and peace building” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“I wish to say that some persons are agents of peace themselves in the sense that in the Ibibio culture they play some sacred roles. These people intervene when there is disagreement or conflict and they include nto aban (married daughters of the family), ayein (maternal grand child), ukod (inlaw) and iman (kinsmen). When any of these persons step in to make peace, the factious parties must listen to them. It is believed that if one refuses to listen to them one incurs the wrath of the gods upon oneself...These men and women must be people of integrity, who must be impartial in the handling of cases. Our concern for the well-being of members of the community makes for peace in our society” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

Ibibio scholars generally affirm the above data. See literature. In 3.5 and detail discussion in 6.5, 6.6, 6.6.1, 6.6.2 & 6.6.3)

Figure 14 below summarizes respondents’ views on elements of peace in the Ibibio society.

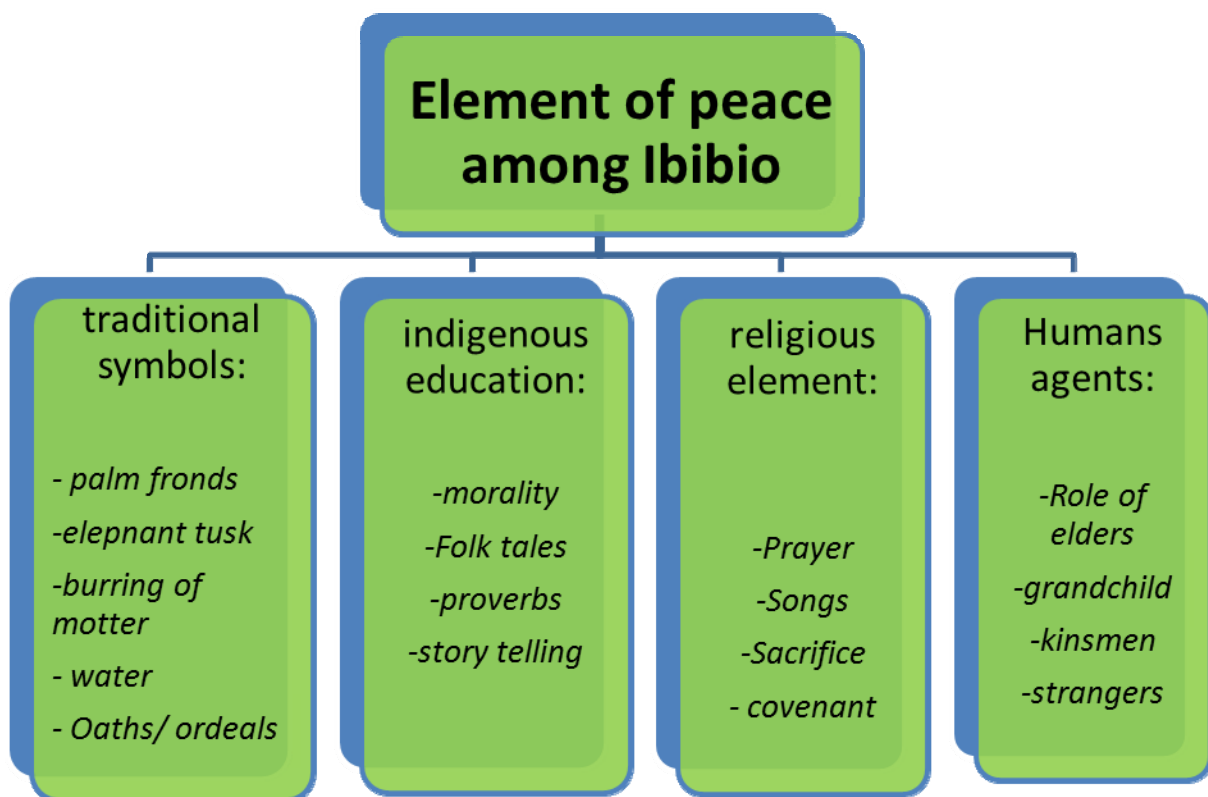


Figure 14: Indigenous elements of peace in the Ibibio society

5.5.3 Religious influence on the Ibibio people

FGD Question 3: Do you think the Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the way in which they live and act?

The question above aims to get information from respondent on their perception of religion and its influence on people's behaviour and on the moral conscience of the Ibibio society

Respondents' views:

"In my opinion the Ibibio are not just religious, but very religious. Before the advent of Christianity, Ibibio people recognized and worshipped Abasi Ibom (Almighty God) as the creator of all things visible and invisible Religion of our people was found in every area of community life and it dominated our thinking to such an extent that it shaped our culture, social life, and political life. The influence of the Ibibio religiosity made the people know that gods in their dreadfulness did not condone the actions of the wicked. Today the Ibibio people are predominantly Christian; there are numerous churches, both Orthodox and Pentecostal, yet it does not stop some people from being devotees to traditional religious practices irrespective of the restrictions placed by the church leaders" (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

"It is religious knowledge and understanding that promotes morality and moderation in the way the Ibibio people live and act. This thinking affects every aspect of their life. That is why prayers are said and sometimes sacrifices and libations are made on important occasions, such as marriages, births and funeral ceremonies, during planting seasons and harvest festivals" (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

"It is the Ibibios' religious responsibility that made parents strive to inculcate high moral values into their children right from infancy. Among the Ibibio, religious and moral upbringing go hand in hand. Parents had to indoctrinate their children on the acceptable norms and values of our people, such as truth, justice, distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong, praise and blame, decency, respect, kindness, patience, forgiveness and love, character, integrity, crime and punishment, rights and responsibility, and so on, from early life to adulthood. Although there are a few deviants, there are always traditional sanctions within the society applicable to different age groups, which are meant to check and discipline deviant behaviour. It is the sense of religiosity that helps people to live well with each other, to settle their differences and to maintain peace and harmony in society" (FGC1).(See appendix 10.)

“Yes, religiosity affects the way the Ibibio people live and act, because it becomes impossible to separate any Ibibio person from the religious practices. Religion and social relations are interwoven to the extent that the line of demarcation becomes blurred. Although there are a few deviants, there are always traditional sanctions to check that their behaviour is still in line with the religious practices of the Ibibio people” (FGS6). (See appendix 11.)

“Ibibio people are spiritual, because they have a deep sense of worship of the Supreme Being (God) and other deities. Information about God was limited to the ideas of people within one's local community, but today religious awareness is not restricted only to our traditional religion and Christianity. In Nigeria, one is free to worship, irrespective of one's religious affiliation. Religion means different things to different people, and it come with its unique culture, unlike previously when we had only traditional religion and later, Christianity. It is true that religion influences the way the Ibibio people live and act but such influence could be positive or negative, depending on one's level of commitment to one's religious beliefs. Most of the time, the majority of people are only ostensibly religious, that is why it looks as if religiosity has little or no influence in our society today” (FGC5). (See appendix 10.)

“Yes, generally speaking, the Ibibio people are very religious. Of course, religion influences people's behaviour, but when people are pushed to the wall they can do anything to defend themselves” (P4). (See appendix 15.)

Yes, Ibibio people are religious, but sometimes people forget about religious principles when they are hurt but even religion still defines the way people behave and act.” (P6). (See appendix 17.)

“Ibibio people are indeed very religious people. In fact, religion is their life in the sense that it cuts across all spheres of human endeavour” (P5). (See appendix 16.)

From respondents' responses presented above, it becomes very clear that the Ibibio are very religious people and that religion has a great influence on the way people live and act. To further validate this information, the quantitative study affirms this with 81% as the highest number of respondents who agreed. Therefore, this indicates that religiosity does influence the way members of the Ibibio society live and act (see 5.4.1). Esen (1982:46) and Faithman (1999:70) earlier confirmed this view in their argument, which inferred that the Ibibio believe that God is the controller of all things (see section 2.7). Little wonder that John Mbiti (2010:5) in his argument asserts that religion is deeply integrated into the total life of

Africans, without delineating life into religious and secular components. He (Mbiti) maintains that religion is part and parcel of traditional life. While both Christianity and Islam also influence the religious landscape of Africa today, African religion is still very present, though mainly in the background of other religions, generating an ongoing dialogue (sometimes silent) with them. To Mbiti, Africans neither dispense with their religiosity nor embrace their new faith with empty hands. In a very similar process, (Western) secularism has not squeezed out African religiosity from the people, as religion is still very much involved in the political, religious, economic, educational, historical, and communication transformation of Africa. Mbiti states categorically: “Religion plays a very dominant role in matters of peace and reconciliation” (*ibid.*).

5.5.4 The influence of peace in the Ibibio society

FGD Question 4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

The above theme is derived from question 5.5.4, and the aim of this question is to investigate if peace will have any influence on the Ibibio people. The respondents’ views presented below indicate that peace will have a positive influence on the Ibibio society. Sub-themes in this category include the following: strong, healthy society, developments, justice, freedom and prosperity.

5.5.4.1 A strong, stable and healthy society

The data stated below are some of the respondents’ views that support the fact that the condition of peace will facilitate strong, stable and healthy society.

“Of course, peace makes for a strong and healthy society which is significant for development” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

“Yes, when there is peace there is stability, as peace makes for a strong and healthy society” (FGC8). (See Appendix 15.)

“Peace makes for a strong and healthy society” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“Yes, the benefits of peace are numerous; for instance, when there is peace there is stability” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“If there is peace, it will have a positive influence in our society. But for peace and stability to have meaningful influences on a people, there must be good governance” (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

“Yes, it will definitely influence the people positively. For instance, poverty and crime will decrease and there will be stability” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

5.5.4.2 Development

The data in this category identify the condition of peace as a prerequisite for development that peace.

“I think peace promotes social interaction. In our society, there is a great deal of informal co-operation which is more or less spontaneous unifying behaviour among family members, friend and neighbours. Within these relationships, individuals render assistance to one another. Children of various compounds in a neighbourhood co-operate in their recreational activities and help each other in rotation to perform tasks, such as bush clearing and weeding” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

“I believe peace promotes socio-cultural, religious, political and even infrastructural development” (FGS7). (See Appendix 11.)

“When the society is peaceful politically, it promotes both human and infrastructural development. If our communities become more peaceful, we will definitely witness greater development than what is obtained today” (FGC10). (See Appendix 10.)

“With peace, the Ibibio people would definitely witness greater development than what is being achieved today” (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

“People could move freely to where they want to go, be it their work places, market, or farm. there will be no fear of insecurity as such, economic activities will be at its peak in a peaceful society” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“Peace enhances economic social, political and religious development of the people. People could go about their business freely, relate freely without fear. Worship and spiritual events will remain successful in a very peaceful society, but if there is war, people will become afraid and would not be able to do all these things” (FGC9). (See Appendix 10.)

“...When there is peace in a society, political leaders and chiefs will be planning programmes, events and projects that bring development to their localities, but none of this will be achieved when there is no stability” (FGS9). (See Appendix 11.)

“Yes, it will definitely influence the people positively. For instance, poverty and crime will decrease and there will be stability and meaningful development” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

In his assertion, Okoro (2010:140) affirms that peace is perceived as a precondition for human development and the fact that humanity’s fear is heading heedlessly into destruction has led to the introduction of several methods of handling peace in the modern world, especially in Africa. Taking it further, Cortright (2008: 3) asserts that unresolved political grievances and the lack of economic development have been identified as factors that contribute to violent conflicts.

5.5.4.3 Social justice and human rights

“Leaders must be sensitive to issues of justice, equity and fair play in all strata of our society. People must respect the rights of others. The injustice, corruption, crime, nepotism, tribalism, and oppression we see today, will reduce to its barest minimum.”

“I feel that true peace is a sign that there is justice and when justice and fair play are given a chance then our dream for peace in the Ibibio society will become a reality. But, as long as deprivation, oppression and injustice continue, as long as the ruling class continues to amass wealth for themselves and for their born and unborn children and refuse to listen to the plight of the poor majority in our society, peace will remain a mere illusion” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

Mary and Christopher (2006:35) affirm this position when they state that positive peace is seen in the light of non-exploitative social structures, with a substantial component of justice and social rights.

This section of data analysis indicates that the influence of peace is very significant in the Ibibio society, as it has the capacity of generating positive influence in society. This positive influence could be seen from respondents’ views presented in 5.5.4, 5.5.4.1, 5.5.4.2 and 5.5.3.3 above. The quantitative data earlier presented in Chapter 5.3.1.7 validate the above information, as 99% of respondents agree that absence of peace has a great negative influence on the life and activities of the Ibibio people. This also means that peace will definitely have

a positive influence on their lives, which could manifest in a strong, stable and healthy society, social justice, freedom, equality, human rights and political, economic and socio-cultural development. Figure 15 below summarizes the respondents' views on influence of peace in Ibibio society.

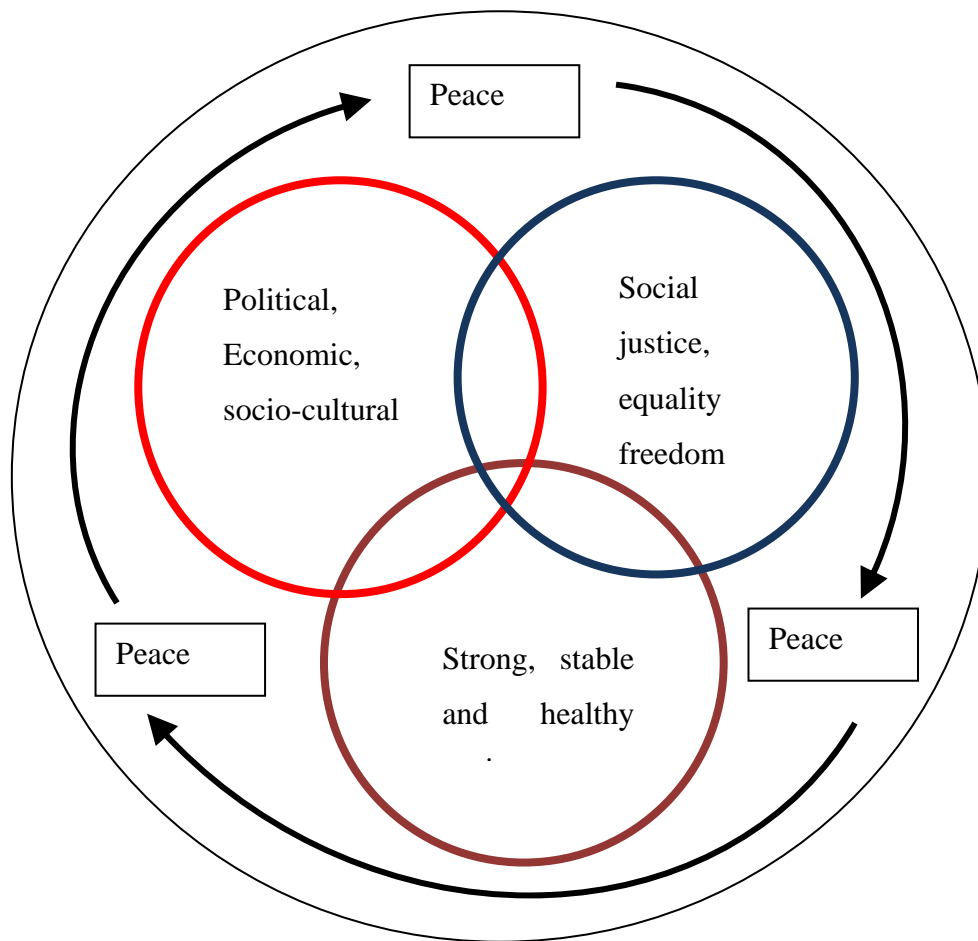


Figure 15: Influence of peace in the Ibibio Society

5.5.5 Violence in the Ibibio society

Are you aware of violent conflict in the Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think is/are the cause/s of these forms of violence?

The above question is relevant to this study because it relates to the subsidiary research question, as stated in 1.6. The aim of this question is to ascertain the respondents' awareness of violence and its consequences on people's lives in the Ibibio society. Two themes emerged from the above question. First, the respondents' awareness of violence in the Ibibio society, and the second focus is on causes of violence in their society. Respondents' views are presented and analysed under these themes.

5.5.5.1 The awareness of violence

Under the above sub theme the following are some of the views from respondents.

"You see, violence is a common phenomenon in our society and no one can deny that" (P2). (See Appendix 14.)

"I am very much aware of different forms of violent conflicts in my area. Violent behaviour is so common in our society beginning at homes" (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

"...I was a victim of violence when communal conflict occurred between my community and our neighbours. I lost ever thing. I had to run to Calabar to squat with my friend, who helped me to start afresh. In fact, it was God who saved my life..." (FGS5). (See Appendix 11.)

"I am aware of violence in our society. It has happened in my village where we had a communal clash with Ikot Offiong (our neighbours). The entire Ikot Offiong village was destroyed. Today nobody lives there" (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

"Yes, I am aware of different forms of violence in our society from witch causation, to land dispute, and a chieftaincy tussle. In most cases it always results in destruction of people's lives and properties..." (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

"My experience of violence was in the hand of my first husband who, on several occasions, subjected me to severe beatings. That was why we were divorced because I was not happy and I couldn't cope. I had to leave him before he killed me..." (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

"Cases of violent conflict is very common in contemporary Ibibio society, it comes in different forms: political violence, ethnic and communal violence" (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

“I don’t think anyone will deny that our society is full of violence. For instance, if you watch television or listen to our radio, you will not need somebody to tell you that the rate of violence in our society is quite alarming” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“We have a situation where churches and shrines and other places of worship are burnt down during communal war...” (FGS6) (See Appendix 11.)

“I have seen and heard of cases where children are subjected dehumanizing torture because they are suspected to possess a witchcraft spirit” (FGS8). (See Appendix 11.)

The above responses indicate that the respondents are fully aware of cases of violence in their society. Some of them are victims of violence and have narrated their ordeals in their responses presented above. The quantitative data in Figure 8 (see 5.3.1.8) above shows 88% as the highest number of respondents who agreed that conflicts and violence do occur in the Ibibio society. The consequences of which include the destruction of lives and properties, the displacement of people, sufferings, hurts, poverty and underdevelopment, which explains the extent of the negative influence of violence and the urgent need for peace in the Ibibio society. Akpan, a PCN pastor in a sermon titled “reconciliation” asserts “many people homes communities, churches, nations etc, are in dispute and crisis leading to killings and destruction of lives and properties. (See Appendix 18). Little wonder Udoh (2005:36), in a key note address delivered at the 7th Annual Meeting of the Akwa Synod, laments thus: “Abuse and violence seems to have taken the greater part of our youths.”

5.5.5.2 Causes of violence and lack of peace in the Ibibio society

The causes of violence and lack of peace as identified from the data include poverty, unemployment, inequitable distribution of infrastructures, greed, boundary disputes, land disputes, struggle for political office, Disputes over family inheritance, abuse of power, injustice/ oppression. Data from these sub themes are presented below.

5.5.5.2.1 Poverty

“I believe that the root cause of violence is poverty...”(P6) (See Appendix 17.)

“I think poverty,... and ignorance are the root cause of these problems.”(P5) (See Appendix 16.)

“...I think poverty..... are the root cause of violence and lack of peace. This is because most of these kidnappers are une..mployed youths who see the ungodly act of kidnapping people as a means of earning a living...” (FGC8). (See Appendix 11.)

“To me poverty is the root cause of violence and a lack of peace. Whether you look at it from a diversion of public funds, child trafficking, child labour, prostitution, and so on, all these are inhuman ways of earning income” (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

5.5.5.2.2 Unemployment

“To me, unemployment is one major cause of violence;, you see when youths are not occupied positively they release their energy through violence...” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“You see there is a high degree of unemployed people in our communities and politicians and some opinion leaders often instigate them, pay them and use them for violence” (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

“If our youths are gainfully employed, they will not become ready instruments in the hands of politicians to use and perpetrate acts of violence” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

5.5.5.2.3 Inequitable distribution of infrastructures

“I think another cause of violence and lack of peace in our society today is the inequitable distribution of infrastructures and social amenities. You see, when government engages in an unequal distribution of amenities and infrastructures, by developing a particular area, people of the underprivileged area will definitely feel cheated and oppressed. As such, they will want to struggle for power in order to have a fair share of the infrastructure...” (FGC1). (See Appendix 10.)

“...I think no community wants to be oppressed by being denied infrastructural development forever. As such, the violence we witness in our society today is a struggle for both economic and political emancipation...” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

5.5.5.2.4 Greed

“...I also think the root cause of violence and lack of peace is greed: it is common to see individuals in our society today who embezzle public funds in order to enrich themselves and

these individuals use the influence of their wealth to intimidate and oppress others..” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“To me, I think greed is the root cause of violence, because some individuals and communities who feel they are stronger, would always love to trespass either the farm boundary of others in order to enlarge theirs” (FGC4). (See Appendix 10.)

“...I think I also agree that greediness is one of the root causes of violence and lack of peace in our society today, as men and women compete for recognition, based on financial status, since the society seems to honour people with wealth and riches...” (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

5.5.5.2.5 Boundary disputes

“...I think most of the fighting and wars we witness are always caused by boundary disputes...” (FGC3).(See Appendix 10.)

“I think another reason why communities engage in war is as a result of lingering boundary disputes which are due to court delays in the administration of justice...” (FGS5). (See Appendix 11.)

5.5.5.2.6 Land disputes

“...Farm boundary disputes is one of the causes of violence in our society today...” (P2).(See Appendix 13.)

“...Sometimes individuals, families or communities claim ownership of a parcel of land for one reason or the other. Such a claim always calls for disagreements and conflict which is capable of throwing the entire community into confusion or bloodshed” (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think in our society today it is common to see people struggle over rights of inheritance, land for farming, community boundaries...” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

Like in many African cultures, land has held a central place, as it was a hub of economic activities and survival for many local farmers. The Ibibio pre-colonial economy depended to a large extent on land (Udo 1983:194-196). Ownership of land was through deforestation of virgin forest. The earliest occupants were the owners of the land so occupied; new occupants had to negotiate for settlement from the original occupants. Other forms of ownership

included outright purchases, as settlements for unredeemed pledges, gifts, exchange and victory in wars (Esema 2002:12-13). It is an Ibibio belief that land was given to them in trust by their ancestors. No Ibibio man or woman would allow encroachment on his or her piece of land, no matter how small. Scholars hold that this emanates from land/boundary disputes (Udo 1983:197; Ekong 2001:77).

The significance of land to the Ibibio could be seen in Udo's (1983:195) following statement: "The Ibibio also believe that, without their land, they would be dead men, women and children. Land has become the very centre of their communities. They will do nothing to profane it and if this happens, they immediately expiate the sin by offering sacrifices."

Land disputes cut across all strata of the Ibibio society, beginning with individuals, families, villages or clans (Ekong 2001:77). It was, and still is, a major source of disagreement, hurts, bitterness, violent conflicts and war among the Ibibio people and their neighbours. (See figure 17 in 5.5.5.3.2)

5.5.5.2.7 The struggle for political office

"I think I agree that the struggle for political appointment is another cause of violence as people from areas that feel marginalized always would want to fight for political and other governmental appointments" (FGC8). (See Appendix 10.)

"I think some politicians do use their party followers to instigate society for violence" (FGS7). (See Appendix 11.)

"To support what she (FGS7) said earlier, I think the incident that occurred between the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in this state serves as a case in point..." (FGS8). (See Appendix 11.)

"In most cases, those who are politically ambitious, do instigate or manipulate people and in some cases, the entire community or clan into conflicts and violence especially when their demands are denied over a period of time" (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

5.5.5.2.8 Disputes over family inheritance

"I think struggle over rights of inheritance is a common cause of violence among family members..." (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

“...I think in most cases interpersonal violence among members of the family stems from disputes over rights of inheritance...” (P1). (See Appendix 12.)

“...People struggling over rights of inheritance, land for farming...” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

5.5.5.2.9 The abuse of power

“...it is common to see individuals in our society today who emblazed public funds in order to enrich themselves and these individuals use the influence of their wealth to intimidate and oppress others...” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“...We all know that political office holders are not interested in the plight of the poor masses all what we see is open demonstration of unfair treatment, materialism, nepotism, corruption...” (FGS9). (See Appendix 11.)

“...What I have observed over the years is that the rich and wealthy politicians use the influence of their positions and their wealth to buy votes or manipulate political processes in order to perpetuate them in office, thereby depriving others who may even be better qualified for leadership positions; this always leads to violence...(P3). (See Appendix 14.)

5.5.5.2.10 Injustice/oppression

“I think the feeling of injustice and oppression is the basic motivation of the oppressed to fight against the dominant power; this always raped the society of peace...”(FGC9). (See Appendix 10.)

“...whether we look at injustice from the individual’s point of view as in how the individual feels treated in the society, or in his family, or from the collective angle in terms of how a community, clan, or area feels marginalized over time. When the people no longer endure injustice, they will definitely want to fight for liberation and in most cases through violence...” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

5.5.5.3 Common forms of violence in the Ibibio society

Question 5: What forms of violence do you think are common within the Ibibio society?
What are the consequences of violence in the Ibibio society?

From the above questions, two main themes stood out from the data with subsidiary themes: Firstly, it indicates the common forms of violence in the Ibibio society and the second theme

reveals the consequences of violence among the Ibibio people. Below is the presentation of respondents' responses in this category.

5.5.5.3.1 Economic violence

"...Economic marginalization of the minority is another source of violence in our society. When communities, states, and even regional government feel oppressed or marginalized some opinion leaders often instigate the youth to fight for survival. A typical example is the Niger Delta militant attacks, which, in the past years have taken lives of thousands of people, paralyzing economic activities in certain parts of our Niger Delta region..." (FGS9). (See Appendix 11.)

"The most common include ... economic violence ... and the causes are injustice and poverty: a situation where people feel oppressed for too long" (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

"Most of our violence and communal wars we have here are economically motivated. People struggle over rights of inheritance, land for farming, community boundaries" (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

The PCN (2005) Peace committee report validates the data presented above as it states:

...Although Ikot Ema is one of the 5 villages comprising Mbak Atai community, there is a clear dichotomy between Ikot Ema and others with respect to the land use...every contact and consultations the committee had with the other villages. They have blountly refused to sit with the other villages on the land issue and they have sworn never to sit with them on it except pheraphs in a neutral ground. Part of the ground is that the land was a share of property of that big family called Mbak Attai, and these other villages never joined them to pursue the case in court...

The report presented above and others indicates that the central economic concern is poverty, exacerbated by the near absence of infrastructure and a large-scale population of unemployed youth in the zone. The research further reveals that oil exploration and gas flaring has destroyed fishing and farming activities in the area. Moreover, oil companies in the South-South region (which, to the Ibibio people, is an integral part) have refused to employ indigenes from host communities. The figure 16 below tells the story as it shows the impact

of oil spillage that is just one aspect amid many other forms of economic violence that the indigenous Ibibio people of Nigeria have suffered.



Figure 16: Impact of oil spillage in the Ibibio land.

(<http://intergritynigeria.org/mobil-neglect-oil-spil-at-qua-iboe-oil-fiel-in-akwa-ibom-state>)

Consequently, the people are left with not even a minimal viable option of sustenance. Some of the youths have devised unscrupulous means of living, such as illegal oil bunkering and the abduction of oil workers for ransom. Cases of oil bunkering happen to be the most notorious economic crime in the South-South (Ndiyo *et al.* 2008:181).

5.5.5.3.2 Communal conflict

“... land is one form of violence that has been with our people for a long time. In the olden days, the Ibibio people were predominantly farmers and even today most Ibibio rural dweller are peasant farmers who depend mostly on land use for various purposes: they build their houses on land, cultivate crops for food consumption and even sell some to earn a living. Therefore, for an Ibibio man, land has a very high economic value. Sometimes, individuals, families or communities claim ownership of a parcel of land for one reason or other. Such a claim always calls for disagreements and conflict which is capable of throwing the entire community into confusion or bloodshed...” (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

“...I wish to say that individual families and neighbouring communities often engage in boundary disputes that lead to the destruction of lives and property, and in some extreme

cases, it can even lead to the extinction of an entire village or community...”(P6). (see Appendix 17.)

“Violence comes in a variety of forms, but all are violent whether communal or ethnic war originating from boundary or land dispute.” (P2) (See Appendix 13.)

“...Most of our violence and communal wars People struggling over rights of inheritance, land for farming, community boundaries...” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

The above views agreed with the SCAN research report, which states that claims of land ownership between neighbouring communities are inevitably accounted for along the ethnic divide. For instance, in Ikot Umo Essien in the Akwa Ibom State (that shares a common boundary with Ngwa people of the Abia State) there has been a long-standing conflict over rights and access to land resources (Ndiyo 2008:183). To support Ndiyo’s position the photo news captioned “Mystery: Chaos in Akwa Ibom community,”³³ tells the story of the menace of communal/ethnic violence, which has become a common phenomenon in many parts of Ibibio society. The picture below is an example of such destructions on lives as well as properties.



Figure 17: Photo of houses destroyed during communal violence

<https://news.naij.com/44507.html>

³³ <https://news.naij.com/44507.html> of 21/8/2013, accessed 29 October 2013

The significance of land to the Ibibio can be seen in Udo's (1983:195) expression: "The Ibibio also believe that, without their land, they would be dead men, women and children. Land has become the very centre of their communities. They will do nothing to profane it and if this happens, they immediately expiate the sin by offering sacrifices."

Land disputes cut across all the strata of the Ibibio society, beginning with individuals, families, villages or clans (Ekong 2001:77). It was, and still is, a major source of disagreement, hurts, bitterness, violent conflicts and war among the Ibibio people and their neighbours.

5.5.5.3.3 Political violence

"...Recently politically oriented conflict has become the bane of our society. It comes in various forms: post-election violence between members of the ruling political party and the opposition party, chieftaincy tussles, and so on. All these forms of conflict plunge our society into wanton destruction of lives and property..."(P6). (See Appendix 17.)

"Most of our violence and communal wars we have here are politically motivated. People struggle over political positions" (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

"The most common include: political violence, and the causes are injustice and poverty - a situation where people feel oppressed for too long" (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

The above respondents' view is validated by Ndiyo *et al.* (2008:179), thus, political conflict emanates from power struggles within the political parties and often involve the use and manipulation of youth groups. The transition to democracy in 1999 exacerbated youth militancy in the South-South as corrupt politicians used hired "thugs" to carry out violence to ensure their victory at the polls. In line with Ndiyo's argument, the report and the picture captured below by Sahara reporters³⁴ reveal that the violence between PDP and ACN started from Ikot Ekpene and snow-balled into the Uyo metropolis. Efforts of PDP supporters to stop the campaign train of the ACN gubernatorial candidate from penetrating Ikot Ekpene town. "The clash between Akpabio's supporters and Udoedehe's followers resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of schools and cars in the state secretariats."

³⁴ <http://sharahreporters.com/news-page/akwa-ibom-pdpacn-clash-latest-fed-govt-throes-weight-behindgov-akpabio-gives-%E2%80%9Cshoot-sight> posted on 3/ 3/2013



Figure 18: Photograph of damaged cars during pre-election violence in Uyo metropolis, capital of Akwa Ibom State. <http://sharahreporters.com/news-page/akwa-ibom-pdpacn-clash-latest-fed-govt-throes-weight-behindgov-akpabio-gives-%E2%80%9Cshoot-sight> posted on 3/ 3/2013

The above photo shows the destruction of cars during pre-election political violence in Akwa Ibom State. Reporting on the same event, Anietie Ekong (2013) laments: “Akwa Ibom state was engulfed by political violence of unprecedented proportions ... The harmonious and peaceful relationship which had existed among the people had given way to fear and suspicion³⁵.”

***Cultism**

“...The menace of cultism in our society is worrisome. It affects development among our youths as different cult groups continuously spring up day after day, and these groups become ready instruments in the hands of politicians who equip them with dangerous weapons to fight their opponents. It is such weapons that members of cult groups use for other forms of crime and violent attacks...”(FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

The Punch metro report and photo dated 14/10/2013 affirms this, as it states: “...Residents of Udo Ikpe, Urua udofia, Udoinwang, Anderson, Akpa Ekor and Asukwo Akpan streets in the

³⁵ <http://news:niga.com44507.html>. Accessed 27/10/2013.

Uyo metropolis lamented that they had been living in fear during the past one month due to harassment from cultists³⁶. See Picture in Figure 19 below.:



Figure 19: Cultism a form of violence in the Ibibio society

5.5.5.3.4 Interpersonal violence

Domestic violence:

“My experience of violence in the hand of my first husband who on several occasions he subjected me to severe beatings, that was why we divorce because I was not happy and I couldn’t cope. I had to leave him before he kills me...”(FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

“... Violent behaviour is so common in our society beginning at homes, as some husbands have formed the habit of beating their wives at the slightest provocation...”(P3).(See Appendix 14.)

“the most common form of violence are... domestic violence; and the causes are injustice and poverty”(P4). (See Appendix 15.)

³⁶ <http://kasamola.com/seven-die-inakwa-ibio—cult-clash>

Witchcraft accusations:

“...Witchcraft accusation has always been in the Ibibio society but it has assumed a new dimension because some spiritual churches, who claim to specialize in witch exorcism, have resorted to using this medium to cause conflict in many families, between parents and children, among siblings, distant and close relations, as well as neighbours. The accused are often subjected to physical torture or other dehumanizing treatment...”(FGS7). (See Appendix 11.)

“...Again I have seen where and heard cases of children are subjected dehumanizing torture because they are suspected to be posses of witchcraft spirit...”(FGS8) (See Appendix 11.)

“... today a greater number of such victims are children who serve as domestic helps, orphans, children of one parent who are taken into a second marriage and old women. Since there is no scientific way to prove who is a witch and who is not, immediately when one is accused he or she become stigmatized and defenceless. Although the Ibibio believe that there are witches and that their activities have a negative effect on human existence, most of the people accused are innocent. Such accusations are made out of wickedness just to tarnish the image of the accused and to shy away from the responsibility of caring for the dependent infant or aged...”(P4) (See Appendix 15.)

The PCN voice, as contained in section 11 of the GAEC communiqué, validates the above data thus:

The church also commends the National Assembly for prescribing a minimum of 10 years imprisonment for persons convicted for human trafficking offences. This is a bold step in our collective effort to halt the ignominious crime of human trafficking and guarantee the sanctity of human life. The church also urges the National Assembly to make appropriate laws against the emerging ugly phenomenon of forced prostitution (“baby factories”) and child/human organ trafficking which is assuming pandemic proportions in Nigeria (Uka & Eme 2013:3).

Taking it further, the joint research by Stepping Stones Nigeria and Child Rights and Rehabilitation Network (CRARN), as highlighted by Foxcroft Paper, supports the above responses that:

The belief in child “witches” in Akwa Ibom State cuts across all facets of society – the literate and illiterate, the wealthy and poor, the law enforcement agents, social welfare workers, law makers and most specifically the leaders of revivalist

Pentecostal Churches. Such people believe that a mysterious, spiritual spell is given to a child through food and/or drink. The child who eats this spell, is then called out in the night where his soul will leave the body to be initiated in a gathering of witches and wizards. The initiated child will then have the spiritual power to cause widespread destruction, such as murdering innocent people and causing diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, hepatitis, typhoid and cancer. All accidents, drunkenness, madness, smoking of marijuana, divorce, infertility, and misfortunes are perceived to be the handiwork of these child “witches” and “wizards”. It is believed that, in recent times, children have become the target for initiation by elderly witches as they are more susceptible to their spells and are quicker in action. This belief is supported and propagated by many pastors in the local churches. Stepping Stones Nigeria and CRARN strongly feel that the pastors who promote the belief in child “witches” often do so to extract fees for “delivering” the child(ren). There have been numerous cases of groups of up to six children being incarcerated and chained up in churches for months at a time, whilst they undergo horrific exorcisms, which often involves drinking poisonous substances, severe beatings and torture. Parents of the children are told to frequently bring funds needed to carry out such deliverances. Most do so willingly in the hope that they will be able to save their children from the evils of the “witchcraft world”. Widespread violations of children’s rights are taking place on a daily basis in Akwa Ibom State due to this belief. Experience has shown that suspected “witches” are either abandoned by their parents/guardians, taken to the forest and slaughtered, bathed in acid, burned alive, poisoned to death with a local poison berry, buried alive, drowned or imprisoned and tortured in churches in order to extract a “confession”. The following have been identified as the primary contributory factors to the belief in child witches, abandonment and killings: religious profiteering, poverty, disintegration of extended family structure, ignorance and superstitious beliefs, broken marriages and dysfunctional families. These factors lead to extremely high rates of child abandonment throughout Akwa Ibom State. There are countless children sleeping in bushes, abandoned buildings or on the street. The majority of these children fit into the 8-14 age range.³⁷

However due to the current efforts of the government as well as NGOs on this dehumanizing violence on Ibibio children; the condition of the accused children is fast changing but there is need to do more. Figure 20 below; shows accused children demonstrating against witch accusations; a common form of violence against children and poor old women in the Ibibio society

³⁷ (<http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=9704>, 2006.in Foxcroft accessed 2013-08-28).



Figure 20: Children demonstrating against child witch accusations:

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandianocean/nigeria/3407882/child-witches-of-nigerian-see-refuge.html>).

However the PCN position in section 11 of GAEC communiqué of 2013 stated below validates the claim of respondents that the PCN do speak on variety of issues, including abuse of human dignity.

The church also commends the National Assembly for prescribing a minimum of 10 years for persons convicted for human trafficking offences. This is a bold step in our collective effort to halt the ignominious crime of human trafficking and guarantee the sanity of human life. The Church also urge the National Assembly to make appropriate laws against the emerging ugly phenomenon of forced prostitution (baby factories) and child/human organ trafficking which is assuming pandemic proportions in Nigeria(Uka & Eme 2013:3)

- Kidnapping:

”This is a new wave of violence in our society. This form is brought into our society through media influence, because previously we never had such things. Unemployment and poverty seem to be the root cause of it. Youths, who are involved in this act, target the wealthy class and their family members, believing that the family will pay a ransom before the kidnapped victim is set free. In most cases they kill the victim. There is much fear and a general sense of insecurity in our society because of the threat of kidnapping” (FGS1). (See Appendix11.)

The above views, expressed by respondents, are supported by the Consolidated and Zonal report of Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) of Nigeria published by IPCR³⁸ which states that:

In the last 10 decades, increasing agitation for resource control, environmental and social injustice has characterized the struggle of peoples of the South-South. This agitation has degenerated to communal conflicts, incidences of kidnapping of foreign oil company staff, violence and wide-spread destruction of lives and properties in the region. Social and local institutions which should arbitrate and resolve disputes have virtually collapsed and, in most cases, do not exist. Social stability and cohesion rely upon informal group relationships that cannot turn to impartial judges when disputes occur. The South-south zone has become the confluence of insecurity aided by a proliferation of arms and ethnic militia groups (Ndiyo *et al.* 2008:176)

“... even chieftaincy tussles sometimes plunge the community and even a neighbouring community into a violent crisis that leads to destruction of lives and property...” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

The above response agrees with the SCA report, which reveals that social manifestations of conflicts are linked with the resource competition and contest for leadership positions in communities (Ndiyo 2008:182).

Respondent P5 also identified other forms of violence which people hardly talk about in the Ibibio society. His response is presented below:

“...But there are other aspects of violence which people hardly talk about: the aspect of violation of human rights, child abuse, gender inequality, deprivation, corruption, oppression and injustice which have eaten deep into the fabric and structures of our society. I think poverty, greed and ignorance are the root cause of these problems” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

³⁸ Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution.



Figure 21: Summary of violence in Ibibio society

5.5.5.4 Consequences of violence

Several consequences of violence emerged from the data. However, the consequences are grouped under the following sub-themes that include: physical, psychological, economic, social and political consequences.

5.5.5.4.1 Physical consequences

Below are some respondents' views on physical consequences of violence.

"...Many people have lost their lives, property and means of livelihood, some communities are completely destroyed, the people are squatting in other places, and some villages have been razed..." (FGC7). (see Appendix 10.)

"...people losing their lives and property..." (FGC6). (see Appendix 10.)

"Apart from the destruction of lives and property (such as houses, schools, churches, farms), government departments (such as school and health service centres) are always closed down."(FGS5). (see Appendix 11.)

"...Some families may lose their breadwinner; wives may lose their husbands. As a result of conflict and violence, many people lose their lives, property and means of livelihood. In some

cases, communities are destroyed completely, so that people end up squatting in other places, while some communities are completely eradicated...”(FGS4). (see Appendix 11.)

“...Most women have been raped while squatting in people's homes...”(FGS 2). (See Appendix 11.)

“Its consequences include destruction of many lives and property, hunger as a result of displacement of people” (P5). (see Appendix 16.)

“The consequences are basically destruction, both the destruction of lives and of property” (P3). (see Appendix 14.)



Figure 22: Christians burnt to death, a consequence of religious violence in Northern Nigeria. (<http://www.loonwatch.com/tag/africa/>accessed/3013/09)

To validate the above data, the World Health Organization reports, Paho-violence-women-fs-hq (1).pdf-Adobe Reader. (Online accessed 27/10/2013 affirms that physical consequences of violence include acute or immediate injuries, such as bruises, abrasions, lacerations, punches,

burns, injuries which can lead to disabilities, including gastro-intestinal conditions, long-term health problems and a poor health status, including chronic pain syndromes, deaths including femicide and Aids-related deaths. The gruesome picture in Figure 22 above shows Christians burnt to death in numbers during a Muslim attack on a Christian community in Jos. Although Jos is in the the middle belt of Nigeria far away from Akwa Ibom state , the home state of Ibibio people yet this picture tells the story of the consequences of violence and how urgently peace is needed in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Again, in figure 23 presented below:

the report states that lives and properties worth millions of Naira were lost as a result of violent riot in the University of Uyo- Akwa Ibom State³⁹. This photo and the report affirms that consequences of violence is of various dimensions



Figure 23: Properties set ablaze at the University of Uyo

(<http://www.goldrushnigeria.sport.com/2013/06/riot-at-university-of-uyo-blogs>.)

5.5.5.4.2 Economic consequences

The sub themes emerging for the data under this category include poverty , illitacy and unemployment.

³⁹ <http://www.goldrushnigeria.sport.com/2013/06/riot-at-university-of-uyo-blogs>.

Poverty

In this sub category the data presented below are some of the respondents view.

“There is poverty, hunger and unemployment. Women suffer most because, in most cases, if one's husband or a son who is the breadwinner is killed, leaving a family with many children in the process, then the woman begins to struggle alone without support” (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

“The consequence of violence is more violence. It is destruction and suffering and hardship” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

“I think most victims of violence suffer poverty, hunger and unemployment” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“We have witnessed some forms of violence in our society and, what is common in all these events, is suffering and poverty ... exposing their family members to pain and hardship. Others who manage to escape death, may lose everything, including their means of livelihood” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“...In most cases, victims of violence find themselves in a situation where they cannot afford basic needs such as food, houses and health care. Indeed, life in such areas becomes paralyzed, leading to a high cost of living and suffering.” (FGC1). (See Appendix 10.)

Myers (1999:86) validates the above data when he asserts: “Poverty is a result of relationships that are fragmented, dysfunctional or oppressive - relationships that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of *shalom* in all its meanings. Again, the World Bank’s 2001 and 2005 record (cited in Kajom 2012:181) affirms the reality of wide-spread poverty in Nigeria thus: “The Nigerians’ economy struggles to leverage the country’s vast wealth in fossil fuels in order to displace the crushing poverty that affects about 57% of her total population.” Taking it further Kajom (2012:181) laments that the reality of poverty is depicted by a lack of food, clothing, education and other basic amenities. Indeed this condition indicates that the poorest of the poor lack the very basic necessities of life so that one wonders how they manage to survive.

Illiteracy:

“...I also think that illiteracy is one of the consequences of violence because children, who lost their parents as a result of war or other forms of violence, are not always able to afford quality education; others may not even be able to afford education at all due to a lack of sponsorship.”(FGS10). (See Appendix 11.)

Unemployment:

. I have also observed... employment as effects of violence and war.(FGC7). (see Appendix 10.)

“I think most victims of violence suffer...unemployment.”(FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“...most of these kidnappers are unemployed youths... FGS8. (See Appendix 11.)

... Unemployment and poverty seem to be the root cause it...(FGS1) (See Appendix 11)

Kajom (2012:182) validates the above responses when he identifies unemployment as a major contributing factor to poverty and violence. He argues that, when people are unemployed, their source of livelihood depletes over time and, as the cost of living goes up, the standard of living goes down. The formal unemployment rate in Nigeria, according to the World Bank's 2007 record,⁴⁰ stood at 4.9% and Nigeria ranked 61st in the unemployment rate of the world's countries.

5.5.5.4.3 Psychological consequences

Pain/bitterness

“Consequently, conflict and violence can hurt people deeply to the extent that they become bitter. An embittered person is like a loaded gun waiting for a trigger, then it explodes. This trigger could be information or an act of provocation. The ripple effect of violence is more and more violence” (FGC 3). (See annexure Appendix 10.)

⁴⁰ World Bank 2008 May 29 Nigeria at a glance, Washington, DC: The World Bank Accessed 30 September 2013 from <http://devdata.worldbank.org?AAG/ngaaag.pdf>

Torture

“...Again I have seen... children are subjected dehumanizing torture because they are suspected to be posses of witchcraft spirit...(FGS8). (See Appendix 11.)

Trauma

“I am speaking from my personal experience. I experienced violence that traumatized me with fear, anxiety and depression” (FGS2).(See Appendix 11.)

“People lost their loved ones as a result of war and other violent conflicts; family members are exposed to terrible pain and agony - this trauma can be very deep” (FGC5). (See annexure Appendix 10.)

Fear:

“The consequences of conflict and violence are nothing but... fear.” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

“...I have observed that political violence brings fear...”(FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

Suspicion

“...as such I always live in fear and suspicion..”(P6). (See Appendix 17.)

“...It makes me very suspicious of people around me... (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

“..I find it difficult to trust people..”(P5). (See Appendix 16.)

Ristock (1995:5)⁴¹ validates the above data when he maintains that scholars hold that victims of violence do suffer post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), the symptoms of which include increased fear/avoidance, anxiety, disturbances in self-concepts, depression and sexual dysfunction.

⁴¹ <http://www.hotpeachpages.net/Canada/air/dispersonhealth.pdf>. accessed 27/10/2013,

5.5.5.4.4 Social consequences

Increase in Crime

“...Violence and crime works together when theris violence some people use that opportunity to loot...” (P1). (See Appendix 12.)

“...To me crime is violence and violence is crime. (P2). (See Appendix 13)

HIV/AIDS/ STDs

“...These conditions subject some women to prostitution, through which they become vulnerable to all manner of diseases such as STDs and HIV/ AIDS” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

5.5.5.4.5 Political consequences

Insecurity

“...I have observed that political violence brings fear and insecurity to an area, even when law enforcement agents are drafted to sports. Yet things are not always as they used to be. A case in point is the commercial drivers’ desertion of the Ikot Ekpene Aba road due to the menace of kidnapping. Despite it being a shorter distance for business trips from Ikot Ekpene, Uyo and Calabar, they prefer to take the Ukanafun / Asumini road which is by far a longer distance - just for safety reasons...” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“...Just look at our society, the way people build their houses with high fences and strong iron gates, saying it is for security. Previously, only hunters had guns but today people buy guns, all for security. All these point to the fact that there is a high and increasing sense of insecurity and fear in our society today, which is part of the consequences of conflict and violence...” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

Underdevelopment

“...I have observed that political violence always results in destruction of lives and properties. The government will not locate any sensitive project in a violence-prone area. As such there will be no development...” (FDC6). (see Appendix 10)

Deprivations

“...I have observed that, if a community lacks prominent political representatives in government, in some cases such a community will be completely deprived of both social amenities and infrastructural development because there is no one to speak for you” (FGC8). (See Appendix 10.)

“...What I have observed over the years is that the rich and wealthy politicians will use the influence of their position and wealth to buy votes or manipulate the political process in order to promote themselves in office, thereby depriving others who may even be better qualified for the leadership positions..(P3). (see Appendix 14.)

Poor governance

“To me, I think we have suffered enough as a result of bad governance, that is the reason why a common person in our society today does not expect much any longer from government” (FGS5).(See Appendix 11.)

Injustice

“To me, one of the consequences of political violence that we experience is injustice. We all know that political office holders are not interested in the plight of the poor masses. All that we see is open demonstration of unfair treatment, materialism, nepotism, corruption” (FGS9).

Violation of human rights and human dignity

“To me the consequence of violence is basically the abuse of both the rights and dignity of the human person.”

Figure 24 presented below summarises various consequences of violence.

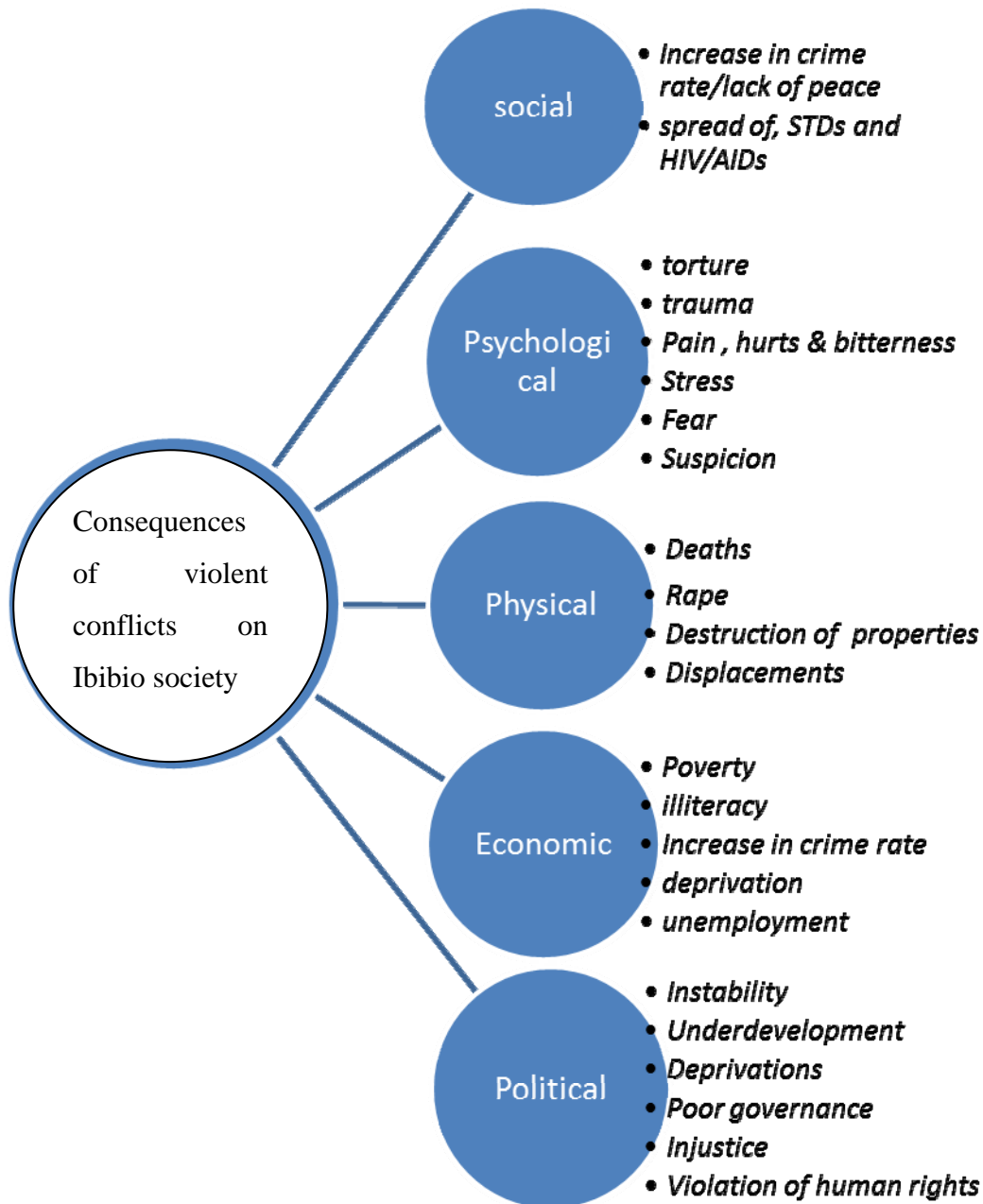


Figure 24: Summary various consequences of violence

5.5.5.5 Indigenous peace-building: A suggestion for peace among the Ibibio people

Respondents' views:

"... I think Ibibio indigenous methods of peace are the most effective peace mechanism for the people and no-one can pretend over this: we must revisit our proverbs and our folk songs. They are there even in our prayers and incantations" (FGS9). (See Appendix 11.)

“...I suggest the use of the Ibibio traditional methods of peace-making as a more effective peace mechanism. The fear is that there is no respect for traditional institutions in most of contemporary Ibibio societies but traditional peace actors can be pro-active in their approach, so that conflicts are resolved before they escalate to full-blown violence” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“I suggest we learn from our indigenous peace mechanisms irrespective of what think about them because that is and will ever remain the root of reconciliation and peace. And when I talk about indigenous peace mechanisms,” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“My suggestions are as follows: That timely intervention be made in communal and other forms of violence by government and non-governmental organizations by adopting the indigenous approach of dialogue as a first step to resolving conflicts. In most cases the legal means of justice is very slow; sometimes before judgement is given the situations are already out of control” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“I suggest we revisit our indigenous ways of finding peace in rituals, in prayers and incantations, in our covenants and sacrifices. What I say is revisit indigenous ways, I do not mean that we should practise them as they were, what I mean is that we need to carefully look at them - what is it that we can learn from each of these practices, how can we review them and use them today” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

“But what I think we can do is to revisit our indigenous ways of doing things with openness. I know we may not adopt everything but I strongly believe we may have a way forward through dialogue” (P5). (See Appendix 16.)

5.5.5.5.1 Dialogue

“What should be done is what we used to do, which is to enter into dialogue. In Ibibio we say: “Ibono itang iyung itum itang” (sit together to talk and talk properly); in other words, we use dialogue as a means to achieve peace, and aggrieved parties must be made to talk and mediators must be people who know how to talk, and talk properly in a traditional court; to talk properly is to be mindful of the choice and use of words” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“It is the Ibibio culture of dialogue, that is, to sit together to talk and to listen to one another in order to find solutions to a common problem as people of one family, because we share our humanity together” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

“I think aggrieved parties must enter into dialogue, they must shift grounds, in order to make room for reconciliation and peace. To me, this is the way toward the solution to the problem. But in a situation where one party is willing to make peace and the other unwilling, it becomes difficult. This is when a neutral mediator could come in and I think the church and other NGOs can come in but the church and NGOs must be neutral if they hope to make a meaningful contribution” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

Offiong (1997:388) supports the above responses in his argument that traditional conflict resolution among the Ibibio is more satisfying and holistic than formal court decisions, as resolution in the traditional court is not imposed by a judge but is the result of consensus decisions. The sympathizers of the loser being part of that decision, and the guilty verdict is presented in a manner that mitigates the pain and anger that normally follow a formal court decision, followed by a threat of supernatural powers of the ancestors and other threats, so losers almost always accept verdicts with equanimity.

5.5.5.5.2 Collaboration by peace actors/stakeholders

“In order to resolve conflicts and to reduce government’s violence, the church and other NGOs should collaborate with community leaders towards resolution and to achieve peace. By ‘community leaders’ I do not refer to local chiefs alone, it includes opinion makers, women leaders, youth leaders, top educated men, people holding political offices and positions in government, religious leaders from both Christian and other religious groups. All must take part in seeking peace collectively for themselves and for the community” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

5.5.5.5.3 Education

“In order to bring about peace in the Ibibio society, government must use every available means to educate people and to create an awareness of the menace of violence and its effects on the Ibibio people” (FGC5). (See Appendix 10.)

“The church must continue to pray for peace, the PCN’s Akwa Synod must continue to preach and teach peace, but beyond preaching we suggest that the PCN organizes seminars and workshops to educate members on the need for peaceful co-existence. Such seminars should be open to PCN members and the general public; it should be extended to schools and other public places such as local government councils” (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2002:2) support the above view when they assert that education is a process of transmitting one's culture from one generation to another, thereby bringing about a relatively permanent change in human behaviour. However, Kajom (2012:186) identifies poor education as one of the phenomena that sustain violence in Nigeria. He maintains that education has been denied most Nigerians, causing most of them to engage in violent activities.

5.5.5.5.4 Peace campaigns

“To me, I think there should be a campaign for peace in our media because the media's influence on especially young people is so incredible; this medium should be used positively” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10..)

“I think journalists must be sensitive in reporting violent conflict, especially when it has to do with images and videos of victims of violence, as careless presentations are capable of generating further escalation of the situation, thereby compounding more problems” (FGS5). (See Appendix 11.)

“I think in some cases media reports of court judgement fuel violent conflicts” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

The above responses affirm Sen's argument (Sen 55-99 in Kajom2012:1850) that, in some cases, the mass media and other forms of communication technology have become instruments for the dissemination of false and inflammatory messages and values. Enunciating further, Huber affirms that the television or video movies, as well as other media commercials, indicate that we are confronted with a new “culture of violence” - violence even in its most sadistic, dehumanising form is shown openly and used as a means of entertainment. It is important to point out that, although conflict reporting borders on human interest, which attracts good patronage for the media, the media could however also play a positive role by inspiring government to take action on social problems that face the citizenry by also addressing issues such as corruption and injustice

Figure 25 below summarizes respondents' views.

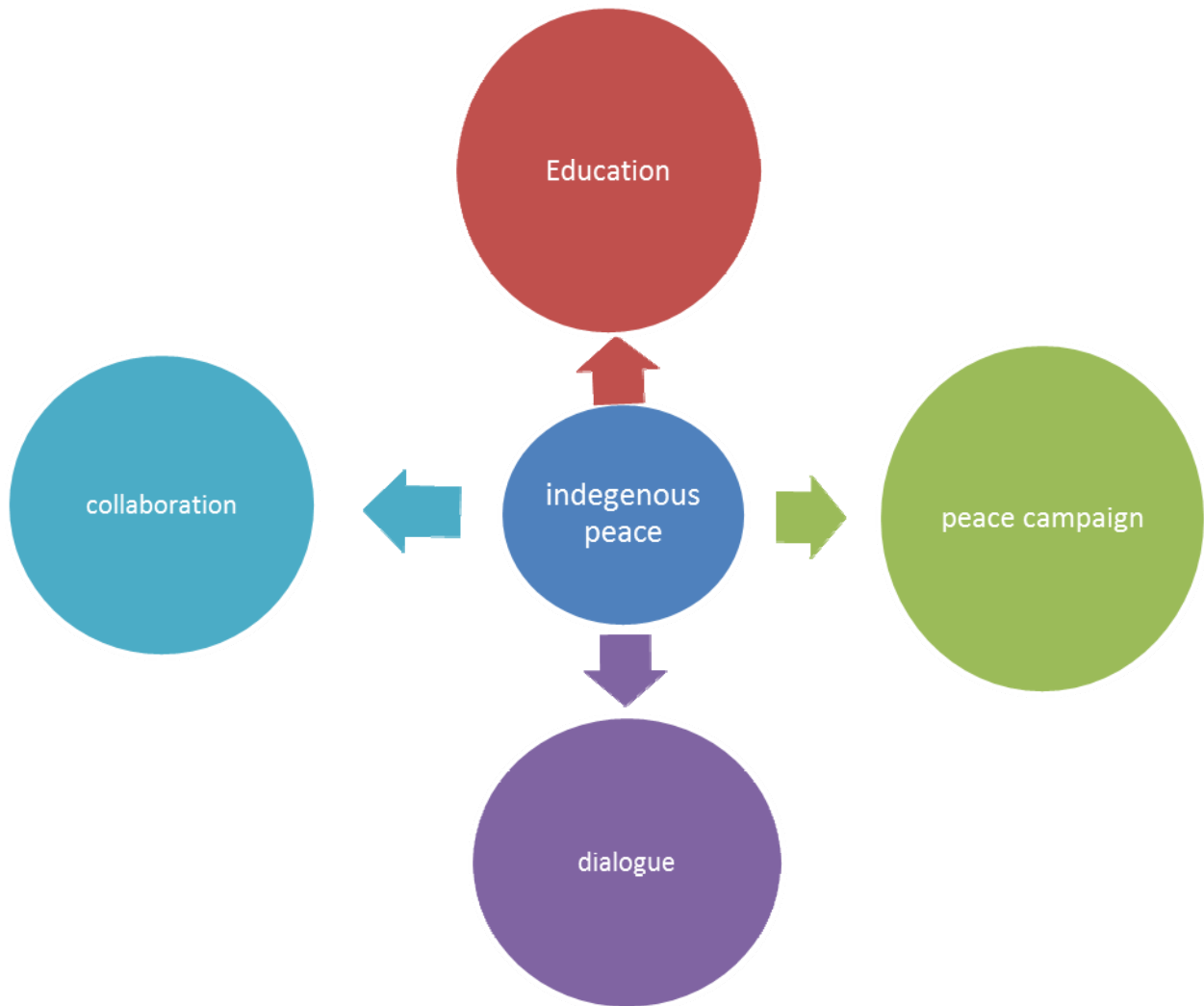


Figure 25: Summary respondents' views

5.5.6 PCN peace initiatives

FGD Question 7: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better, which could promote justice, security and development?

FGD Question 8: Does the PCN strive towards peace among the Ibibio people who live in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

Rationale for questions 7 and 8

Questions 7 and 8 are relevant to this study in the sense that these questions seek to uncover both past and present peace initiatives of the PCN and the Akwa Synod. Themes that emerge

in this category include the following: pronouncements, visitations, donations, counselling, prayer, preaching, teaching, developmental projects and the inauguration of peace and social work committees.

According to respondents' views, the Synod's peace initiatives are grouped under two major themes. The first dimension of the Synod's support of peace among the Ibibio people is by addressing the physical needs of victims of violent conflicts by means of visitations, pronouncements, donation of relief materials, developmental projects and the inauguration of a conflict resolution/peace committee and a social works committee. The second dimension addresses the spiritual needs of victims through prayer, counselling, preaching and teaching. The data is presented below:

5.5.6.1 Physical care

5.5.6.1.1 The PCN Peace Committee

“To me, I think by constituting a peace and conflict resolution committee saddled with the responsibility of peaceful mediation among communities, the PCN demonstrates it has strong passion and willingness to be an agent of peace and social transformation in the Nigerian society.”

“I speak as a member and a one-time member of Conflict Resolution Committee of the PCN. We have done some work within the Itam community in Itu local government area of Akwa Ibom State, which is within the Akwa Synod and in the Abia state” (FGC2).

“But I think our Church in this Synod should be more actively involved in social work, especially in actions that could promote justice, security and development if it hopes to be relevant to people living within the context of violent conflicts” (FGC3). (See Appendix10.)

“The Church identifies with victims of violence; in some cases, the Church tries its best to mediate among aggrieved parties” (FGS1).(see Appendix11.)

“The Conflict Resolution Committee of the PCN is saddled with the responsibility for peaceful mediation among communities in violent conflict” (FGC1).(See Appendix 10.)

To validate the above data from respondents, the report of the PCN Peace Committee indicates that this Committee was inaugurated on 3 July 2004 by the Moderator of the 15th General Assembly. The term of reference of the Committee included the following:

- To study closely crises with a view to understand the issues at stake and monitor the extent of peace already established in the area;
- To hear from the aggrieved or concerned parties in the Igbere crises;
- To suggest ways of reconciling all parties involved; and
- To report to the Moderator of the General Assembly as soon as possible

(Ekpenyong & Uduma 2005:1).

This report is a typical case in point that indicates the PCN peace initiatives, particularly in communities where there is a Presbyterian presence.

5.5.6.1.2 PCN pronouncements

“From time to time the Synod makes her voice very clear to the public and Government authorities, on peace, and the PCN condemns violence in the communiqué they publish” (FGS 2). (See Appendix 11.)

“Yes, the Church does speak out through ... published communiqué” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

The following pronouncements, made by the Akwa Synod, affirm respondents’ views in this category. First, sections 3 and 5 of the communiqué issued by the PCN Akwa Synod at the end of its 6th Annual Synod Meeting on 6 June 2004, at the PCN Ediene in Ikono local government area of Akwa Ibom states:

3. That the Synod frowned at the incessant killings arising from the ethnic wars and skirmishes in the country, noting particularly Oku Iboku and Ikot Offiong; Ekim Mbuk and Ikot mbuk Idoro in Ibiono Ibom Local Government areas, plateau state, and Kano state. This level of destructive behaviour portrays the extent of a lack of righteousness in our nation. The Akwa Synod therefore calls relevant government agencies to take immediate remedial action to stop further bloodshed, loss of life and property.

5. The Synod observed the rampant political instability in our country resulting in the killing of innocent souls and therefore calls on all level of Government to nip it in the bud before the situation becomes uncontrollable (Edem & Oku 2004:41).

Second, similar pronouncements made by the Akwa Synod on May 30th 2008 at the end of the 10th Annual Synod Meeting held at PCN Ikpe Ikot Nkon; section 3, read as follows:

Crime and Security: the Church is worried with the increasing kidnapping and blowing of pipelines in the Niger Delta. The Church implores Church leaders to do more by teaching sound Christian values in order to return the nation to God (Edem & Oku 2008:3).

And, in June 2009, the Synod still condemned violence in section 5 of its communiqué thus:

The plight of the Niger Delta region is deplorable, yet we strongly condemn the militancy as a response. We call on them to heed the olive branch of the Federal Government and give peace a chance. We also appeal to the Federal Government to minimize the use of counter force in order to minimize losses to the civilian population (Inwang & Okon 2009:3).

The sermons on peace and reconciliation preached by Presbyterian pastors within the Synod affirm respondents' views. (See Appendix 18 & 19.)

However, some respondents also observed that pronouncements of the Church are not restricted to peace issues, as may be seen in the respondents' views present below.

“The pronouncements of the Church are not restricted only to the issue of peace and violent conflict but addresses a wide range of contemporary local and global issues” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

To validate the respondent view above, the Akwa synod annual report of 2009 echoes: The Church commends the Federal Government for the measure put in place to check the impending food crisis in the country; however the Church call on government to go beyond those measures and make elaborate plans for sufficient development of the agricultural sector.

5.5.6.1.3 Visitation to victims of violence

Visitation to victims is identified as part of the PCN's peace initiative as indicated in the data presented below.

“In some cases ministers and members have visited victims of violent conflicts with gifts of some relief materials, such as clothing, sleeping materials and food” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“I can remember that when Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku fought the PCN ministers and some members visited victims who sought refuge at Iffiyong” (FGC7).(See Appendix 10.)

“I can remember that victims of the war between Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku who squatted in our Church hall at Iffiayong were visited, given gifts and prayed for by PCN pastors and members” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“I know that the Church does visit victims of violence with relief materials, such as clothing and food items and sleeping materials” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

5.5.6.1.4 Donation of relief materials to victims

“I will also like to mention that, in my congregation, we do collect offerings and other relief materials, such as clothing, food stuffs and so on to the Synod office for onward delivery to victims of violence” (FGS5). (See Appendix 11.)

“In our congregation materials are often collected from all the congregations within the Synod’s area for onward delivery to victims of violence” (FGS10). (See Appendix 11.)

“But the Church can do more than what it has done now if she will be more open to indigenous Ibibio peace practices” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“I know that the Church does visit victims of violence with relief materials, such as clothing and food items and sleeping materials” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

5.5.6.1.5 Developmental projects

“The Church owns institutions, such as schools, hospitals and farms, and social services on HIV/AIDS are part of the Church's social actions that are capable of introducing social transformation in our contemporary society” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

5.5.6.2 Spiritual care

The sub themes which emerge from the data in this segment of the study include Church sermons, prayer and counselling.

5.5.6.2.1 Church sermons

“Yes, the Church does speak out through preaching and teaching, through a published communiqué” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“Yes, the preaching and teaching of the PCN centres on Jesus Christ, and the love of God for humankind gives peace; the real peace” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“Yes. But I know that the Church's preaching, teaching and counselling do promote peace among congregants who are involved in interpersonal conflicts. We have many such cases in my local congregation. But it's difficult when it has to do with communal violence, but I believe if members of the Church are truly transformed they will become agents of transformation to the society” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

“Yes. They do speak to condemn violence, from the pulpit, preaching and teaching and through the publication of communiqués. But more needs to be done” (P3). (See Appendix 14.)

To validate data presented above which holds that presbyterian pastors do preach peace related sermons in PCN congregations within the Akwa Synod. See appendix 18 and 19.

5.5.6.2.2 Prayer

“I know several in our congregation do pray fervently for peace and for victims of violent conflicts and war” (FGS9). (See Appendix 11.)

“The PCN does not relent in offering prayers constantly for victims of violence (FGC10). (See Appendix 10.)

“Yes, I know as a member of this Synod, that we do pray for victims of conflict within our society and in other parts of the world” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

5.5.6.2.3 Counselling

“We often engage in counselling people who are traumatized or depressed as a result of violence”(FGC 4) (See Appendix 10.)

“I know that our church leaders do provide counselling for victims of different forms of violence”(FGS). (See Appendix 11.)

“...the...counselling they received from their church leaders was very comforting as it gave us hope to face life.”(FGC9).(See Appendix 10.)

Figure 26 below summarizes respondents' views on the Akwa Synod's peace initiatives.

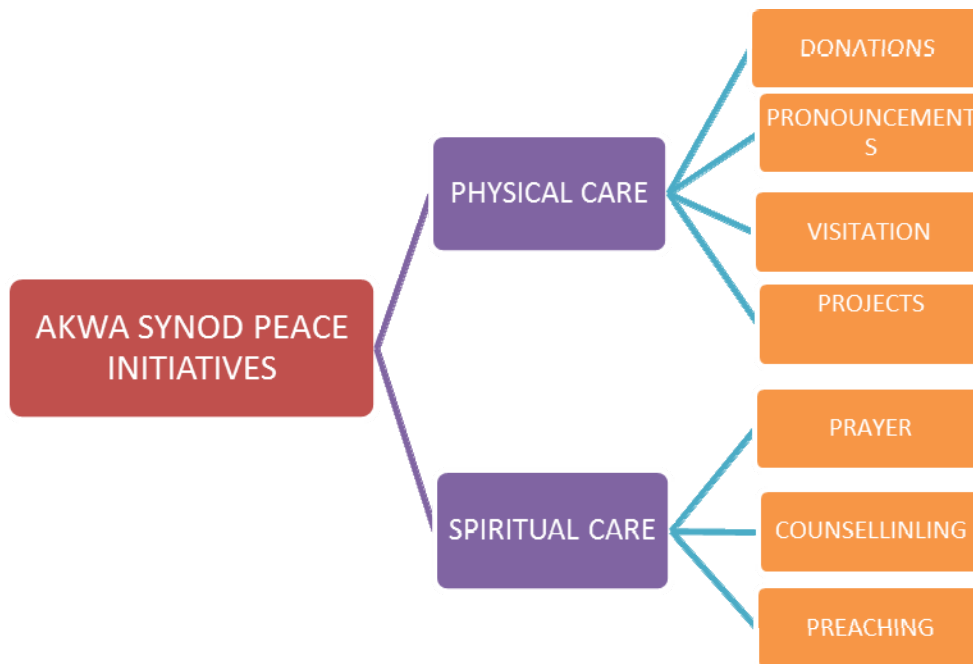


Figure 26: Respondents' views on the Akwa Synod's peace initiatives

5.5.6.3 The Akwa Synod needs to improve its peace initiatives

In this section, views that were slightly different are presented below:

“I am convinced that the Church can do more than what it has done now in terms of its response to the plight of victims of violent conflict” (FGS2). (See appendix 11.)

“It is believed that the PCN's voice is not loud enough. The PCN must be bold enough to condemn all manners of violence” (FGC3). (See appendix 10.)

5.5.6.4 The Akwa Synod has been insensitive

“I think the Church has been complacent and insensitive to the plight of victims of violence, even though they preach occasionally of love, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness, and sometimes respond by giving gifts, however insignificant. I feel that the Church can do much more than what it has done up to now” (FGS7). (See appendix 11..)

“The PCN's Akwa Synod has not been very passionate in the pursuit of peace for a community living in violence” (FGC8). (See appendix 10.)

Although most of the respondents in the qualitative research were of the opinion that the PCN does speak against violence and does things that promote peace, as indicated in above, some

respondents felt that the Church does strive among victims of violence, or that its voice is not loud enough, or it has not done enough, which validates the quantitative data's earlier analysis in figure 9; with 53% of respondents as the highest percentage, which indicates that the Akwa Synod does speak and do things against violence. (See 5.3.1.9).

Similarly, some respondents maintained that the PCN's Akwa Synod does strive for peace among victims of violence in the Ibibio society through preaching, teaching, prayer, by visitations and donating relief items to victims of violence. The above responses in 5.5.6.3 and 5.5.6.4 indicate that some respondents feel the Church has not done enough, while others expect the Church to also identify with communities where there is no PCN presence. These disagree with the quantitative data analysed earlier in 5.3.1.10, which indicate that 43% of respondents disagreed with the statement that the Synod does strive for peace among the Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty, as a result of injustice, conflict and violence.

Annan (2008:20) agrees with these respondents' views that hold that the church is insensitive or it has not done enough in terms of striving for peace within Ibibio context; when he asserts that, by not averting violent conflicts (a colossal human tragedy), African leaders have failed the people of Africa by not adequately addressing the causes of conflict; by not doing enough to ensure peace; and by their repeated inability to create the conditions for sustainable development. This remains a reality that must be confronted honestly and constructively by all concerned, if Africans are to enjoy the human security and economic opportunities that they seek and deserve.

5.5.7 The Akwa Synod and the Ibibio notion of peace

FGD Question 9: Do the leaders of the PCN's Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

The above question is relevant to this study, because it is directly linked to the main research question that intended to investigate the Church's understanding of the Ibibio notion of peace and how such an understanding could help the PCN's Akwa Synod to locate a point of departure which could make it become more effective in the preaching of the gospel of Christ among the Ibibio. In this category, the researcher has derived two main themes from the above question. First, to investigate if the Akwa Synod leaders do understand the Ibibio

notion of peace and the second is to investigate possible points of departure for effective preaching of peace.

5.5.7.1 The Akwa Synod leaders do understand the Ibibio notion of peace

In this sub-category, views of respondents are presented below:

“I think the PCN leaders in the Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio notion of peace because it is interwoven within the religious, socio-cultural particles, the thinking and way of life of every the Ibibio person. As such, the Ibibio understanding of peace is accessible to all the Ibibio people. That is why every Ibibio person or group, when in need of peace and reconciliation, follows the legal way of the law court, or through the indigenous approach which may involve dialogue, divination, an oath, ordeals and blood covenants or the Christian way through Church counselling” (FGS1).(See Appendix 11 .)

“Let me say that the Ibibio members of the PCN are first Ibibio before they later decided on their religious affiliations. As such, it is believed that the Church, such as the PCN, having existed on the Ibibio soil for a number of years, its leaders should understands the Ibibio practices and way of life. It is this understanding that makes the Church set acceptable standards between the culture and what would be acceptable in the Church. In other words, what practice is Christian and what is not? Some Church leaders double as elders in the Church as well as chiefs, village heads and clan heads. The pioneer Ibibio indigenous Presbyterian Late Rev. Effiong Utitt was a minister and later he was made the clan head of Ibiono communities. So, I am sure leaders of the Church understand the Ibibio peace and peace-building processes very well” (FGC4). (See Appendix 10 .)

“When we talk of the Church's understanding, I think we need to look at it in two ways: if we refer to the official stance of the Church, as articulated in its policy document, it may be difficult to say whether the Church fully understands the Ibibio notion of peace, because it is not mentioned explicitly in its documents. However, the Church is made up of members; and in the Akwa Synod, since inception, most of its members have been Ibibio indigents. Therefore, both the leaders and members of the PCN's Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio notion of peace very well, and some of the Church members and elders may have been patronizing indigenous methods of peace privately, especially when there is disagreement and conflict and the aggrieved parties want to find out ‘the truth.’ Some Church leaders, who

double as community leaders, have either used it or witnessed its use within the community on various occasions” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11 .)

The respondents’ views presented above affirm that the leaders of PCN’s Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio concept of peace and indigenous peace-building approaches. This is further affirmed by quantitative data presented in figure 5.3.1.12, which indicates that 60% of the respondents sampled agreed that leaders of the PCN’s Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio peace and peace-making mechanisms and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ.

5.5.7.2 The Ibibio notion of peace is inconsistent with church preaching

“I believe irrespective of the level of the Synod’s understanding of the Ibibio peace, we are not sure of how such understanding could help the Church communicate the peace messages effectively to the understanding of people through preaching since some elements of the peace process may not correlate with the Church’s practices” (FGS2). (See Appendix 11.)

“We are not sure of the level of the Church's (the PCN’s Akwa Synod’s) understanding of Ibibio peace and how that could help them communicate the peace messages effectively for the understanding of the Ibibio people through preaching” (FGC1). (See Appendix 10 .)

“I am not sure that the Ibibio notion of peace is well understood by the whole Church. The Church cannot consider it, because traditional ways of doing things are often considered “unChristian” (P6).(See Appendix 17.)

“It is clear that our society is so confused because we are trying to be Western while we are Africans. This is the reason why I strongly believe that, although the Church may know the Ibibio notion of peace to some extent, it may be of use for the purpose of preaching” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

The above data indicates that some respondents still hold that the Church does not understand the indigenous Ibibio peace. Others maintain that certain aspects of the Ibibio peace practice are not in line with the Church teaching, which calls for caution.

5.5.8 Possible points of departure for effective peace preaching in the Akwa Synod

The respondents’ views could provide a possible point of departure which could engage the Akwa Synod; its preaching and indigenous concept of peace is presented below:

“It is believed that, if the Church looks carefully, it may discover some positive aspects in our indigenous peace practices, such as dialogue, truth, covenant, forgiveness, and reconciliation that are emphasised in the Ibibio peace process and these are possible themes which can be used for effective communication of the message of reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ” (FG3). (See Appendix.)

“To me, in the Ibibio peace process, there is room for prayer, sacrifice and rituals. These are common themes one could find in our indigenous method of peaceful reconciliation. As a whole, the Church can explore new ways of reaching the people with the gospel using these themes and other similar practices” (FGC9).(See Appendix 10.)

“To me, dialogue and the use of persons of integrity is one viable option that can facilitate peace reconciliation and I am sure the people are familiar with it” (FGS8).(See Appendix 11.)

“To me, I think it is love for peace in the society and justice for every member of society that always drive peace actors, in our context, to call for dialogue. To me, love is a good point of departure that creates space for the Church to preach peace and do things that will promote justice and social transformation in our present society” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“Being the first Church on Ibibio soil, the Church may think it understands the Ibibio notion of peace, but I think the Church needs to carefully revisit the Ibibio concept of peace. Because politicians and the government have failed us, today, people look up to God and the Church, but it seems even the Church has also failed. But, I think if the Church rises and takes its prophetic responsibility seriously, it can become an agent of peace among the Ibibio people” (P3).(See Appendix 14.)

“I think they must dialogue with the Ibibio culture if it must effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching within the Ibibio context” (P5).(See Appendix 16.)

The above responses indicate that the PCN’s Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio notion of peace and could locate a point of departure that can make her become effective in communicating the Gospel through preaching. The quantitative data analysed earlier in figure 12.(See 5.3.1.12) of this study also indicate that 60% of the total respondents’ population agree that the members of the PCN Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio notion of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching of

the gospel of Christ among the people. The below summarizes possible points of departure for peace preaching among the Ibibio people.

5.6 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

This chapter's empirical data, derived from both the quantitative and qualitative data, are presented, analysed and interpreted. The following findings emerged:

First, the Ibibio people's understanding of peace and the absence of both physical and structural violence, agrees with Galtung's concept of negative and positive peace.

Second, there are elements of peace in the indigenous Ibibio peace culture and practices, that these elements are embaded in traditional proverbs, wise sayings, folklores, religious rituals and prayers, values, symbolism as well as social relations.

Third, through informal education and social interactions, virtues of the peace initiative were transmitted from elders to the younger generations.

Fourth, humans were the main agents of peace, particularly the elders and chiefs, diviners, priests, the age grade, as well as secret societies.

Fifth, other instruments of justice that engender peace in society include ordeals, oaths, taboos as well as stiff sanctions.

Sixth, there were elements of violence in traditional society and, in some cases; violence was used as instruments to fight injustice and peace. And the consequences of violence include the physical, economic, social, and political dimensions.

Seventh, the Ibibio concept of peace was based on a fear factor, as traditional laws were put in place to deal with deviants and offenders.

Eighth, the PCN's Akwa Synod does speak out in favour of victims of violence.

Ninth, the Akwa Synod's peace initiatives include both spiritual and physical dimensions.

Tenth, the PCN does understand the Ibibio notion of peace and can locate a point of departure for preaching peace for social transformation within the Ibibio context.

Eleventh, data that emerges indicates a possible point of departure in which the Church can dialogue with indigenous peace initiatives. This includes the principles of love, obedience,

dialogue, truth, justice, covenant, rituals and prayer, as well as the use of symbolism. Peace-building, is the summary of themes that could provide a possible point of departure for peace-preaching within the Akwa Synod of the PCN.

The next chapter discusses the Ibibio concept of peace as an expression of indigenous knowledge.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IBIBIO CONCEPT OF PEACE: AN EXPRESSION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter of this study, the focus was on presentation, analysis and interpretation of empirical data. This chapter therefore will discuss research findings in line with literature and will engage in *the normative task* and the *pragmatic task* of Practical Theology.

Looking at the *normative task*, it addresses, on the one hand, the question: *What ought to be going on?* In other words, what form ought the current religious praxis within this social context take? Osmer's (2008:4) emphasis here is that the normative task of Practical Theology involves exploring past and present practices of the Christian tradition that provide normative guidance in shaping the pattern of the Christian life.

And, on the other hand, *the pragmatic task*, the main focus of which is on *how Christians might respond* to religious praxis in effective ethical and faithful ways. In other words, how can a particular area of praxis be shaped to fully embody the normative commitment of religious traditions in a given context of experience?

Drawing from data emerging for empirical research and literature, this chapter will therefore resume discussing the Ibibio concept of peace as an expression of the indigenous knowledge system (IKS) within the context of injustice, oppression, hurts, and various forms of conflict and violence.

The need for this discussion arose for two fundamental reasons. First, the understanding that accentuates indigenous knowledge as being a community-, site- and role-specific epistemology governing the community and its members in relation to a specific world's life (Crossman & Devish 2002:108 in Simon 2012). Second, the fact that peace is an indispensable need for any meaningful life and development, and every violent act is a direct violation of the dignity of the human person.

Galtung, Jacobsen and Brand-Jacobsen (2002:xi) assert: "To work for peace is to work against violence ... since peace relates to violence much as health relates to illness." Mbiti

(2010:6-7) affirms: “Where there is peace, there is abundance of life. The absence of peace is a threat to life, a reduction of life and a destruction of life; its suffering leads to annihilation.” It may be derived from the above arguments that there cannot be any social transformation in human society without peace. Therefore, the Church’s understanding of the Ibibio concept of peace becomes crucial if its ministry is to be relevant within its context. Here, a multidisciplinary approach will be employed in order to understand better and explain why these partners and dynamics occur (Osmer 2008:4). Discussion in this chapter will move in six waves. Which include:

- The Ibibio peace indigenous knowledge
- The meaning of peace in Ibibio
- The nature of the Ibibio principles of peace
- Sources of violent conflicts among the Ibibio people
- Sources of the Ibibio notion of peace
- Symbols and agents of peace in the Ibibio society
- The peace initiatives of the PCN’s Akwa Synod and the Ibibio indigenous peace mechanisms.

6.2 THE IBIBIO PEACE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

The fact that knowledge not only exists in its objective forms, but is intimately connected to specific issues and people living within a specific socio-cultural context and its objective forms, is very relevant for the Ibibio people and Africans in general. Mapara (2009:139) succinctly states: “Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) are bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that have survived for a very long time.” Again Viergever (1999:335) simply argues that indigenous knowledge is interpreted as the knowledge of indigenous people. Hence, indigenous knowledge is seen by the indigenous peoples as an inherent part of, on the one hand, their physical environment and, on the other hand, their social structures. Rohman (1993:45) maintains that there is a need to recognize and develop local people’s knowledge in order to identify with their struggle with a growing sense of direction and to enhance their capacity for self management of political, social and economic tasks which they encounter. Sillitoe (2005:17) clearly explains that indigenous knowledge (IK) research sets out explicitly to make connections between local people’s understanding and practice and those of scientific researchers and development practitioners. Unlike Rohman, who constantly uses the term “local knowledge,” the researcher prefers the

term “indigenous knowledge” to “local knowledge” in his arguments. Grenier (1998 in Chilsa 2012:99) summarizes the characteristics of indigenous knowledge as follows:

Indigenous knowledge is accumulative and represents generations of experiences, careful observations, and trial and error experiments.

It is dynamic, with new knowledge continuously being added and external knowledge adapted to suit local situations.

All members of a community, that is elders, men, women, and children, have indigenous knowledge.

The quantity and quality of indigenous knowledge that an individual possesses varies according to age, gender, socio-economic status, daily experiences, roles, responsibilities in the home and the community, and so on.

Indigenous knowledge is stored in people’s memories and activities and is expressed in stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, dances, myths, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, cultural community, laws, local language, artefacts, forms of communication and organizations.

Indigenous knowledge is shared and communicated orally and by specific example through cultural practices, such as dance and rituals.

Sillitoe (*ibid.*:17-18) observes that assumptions underlying research in indigenous knowledge (IK) are unexceptionable; consequently, understanding and appreciating indigenous ideas and practices will further develop new works; paying attention to local perceptions and practices creates the awareness that development initiatives are more likely to be relevant to people’s needs and could generate sustainable interventions. Examples of indigenous interpretation of concepts provide information which further emphasizes differences in forms of knowledge production and epistemological context (McGovern1999:165).

From a foundational principle of post-modern theories, Kincheloe (1993 in McGovern 1999:17) argues: “There is no universal knowledge beyond that which is developed within political, ideological and economic conditions of particular cultural and social formations.” Post-modernist tendencies and globalization discourses, now pervasive in academic debates and research circles, have made it imperative to question the dichotomy between indigenous knowledge and scientific/‘universal’ knowledge (Mudege 2008:38). It separates indigenous knowledge as culture-specific and difficult to apply beyond a particular time, and Western scientific knowledge as valid. However, some scholars argue that, to conflate others’

knowledge traditions into an indigenous category and contrast it with scientific perspectives (Sillitoe *et al.* 2005:4), to them, this distinction has an unpleasant political edge, with connotations of superiority and inferiority. Given the fact that there are substantial undeniable similarities and overlaps in the content of various knowledge systems, they may use certain similar equally objective methods to investigate reality.

In the light of the above arguments, the study on Ibibio peace practices calls for a critical re-evaluation in order to find a space for nonviolent options for peace reconciliation and social transformation. History is replete with records of violent conflicts at various strata of human relations. Whether at the inter-personal, inter-group, intra-group, intra-national or international arenas, conflict has been found recurring in social relations (Fayemi 2009:1). Little wonder that Huber (1996: xv) maintains that violence permeates our societies and, indeed, our whole life. In the recent past, Africa has witnessed wanton waves of bloody conflicts that have taken millions of innocent lives and other inestimable valuables. While many are currently displaced and suddenly turned into refugees, others are subjected to untold suffering, hardship and even death. The fact that violence itself, in whatever form, is a direct violation of human dignity makes this study very relevant and timely as millions of victims of violence lose the human person's very dignity. Desjardins (1997:13) affirms: "Violence is an overt physical destructive act carried out by individuals or countenanced by institutions." Among the Ibibio people and elsewhere in the world, violent conflicts have disastrous consequences upon social stability, peace, harmonious human existence and development.

The consolidated and zonal report published by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) Nigeria, on Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) of Nigeria; reveals that, in the last decade, increasing agitation for resource control, environmental and social justice has characterized the struggle of the peoples of the South-South geo-political zone, where the Ibibio people of Akwa Ibom State belong. These agitations have degenerated into communal conflicts, incidences of kidnapping of the foreign oil company's staff, violence and widespread destruction of lives and properties in the region (Oluyemi-Kusa 2003-2008:176)

The (IPCR) Nigeria maintains that the South-South geo-political zone has become a confluence of insecurity aided by the proliferation of arms and ethnic militia groups (*ibid.*). This, and other related reasons, has raised scholastic concerns in understudying the origin,

nature, rates, causes, and effects of conflicts, as well as understanding the efficient modes of resolving conflicts and engendering peace in the Ibibio society.

In view of the sensitivity of the phenomenon of conflict, scholastic concerns have been multidisciplinary in approach, vis-à-vis legal, political, economic, sociological, anthropological, historical and statistical approaches. Fayemi 2009 maintains:

The conclusions stressed in these approaches have, for the most part, been on the need for political restructuring, promoting good political, economic and corporate governance, respect for and observance of human rights, peace education, promoting dialogue, peace negotiation and agreement, stopping of proliferation of arms and granting amnesty.

6.2.2.1 The meaning of peace in the Ibibio world-view

According to FGC2 in 5.5.1.1, the word “peace” in the Ibibio translation means *emem*. It describes a condition or state free from physical conflict and war. The Ibibio understanding of the term *emem* (peace) can be even deeper than the surface meaning, which seems to be restricted to physical conflicts and violence. Other words used to further discuss peace in the Ibibio context include words such as *Ifure* (tranquillity and calmness), *Eduok/Uforo*, (prosperity). *Emen*, in the Ibibio world-view, speaks of the general well-being of an individual person or group of persons (see 5.5.1.1.3). Etymologically, the word *emem* comes from the root word *meem* which means “to calm a situation” or “to soften” or “to make soft” or “to make simple”/“to make easy” (see *ibid.*). Findings from empirical data indicated earlier that most Ibibio people understand peace generally as the absence of physical violence (negative peace), a few others hold that peace goes beyond physical violence to issues of injustice and structural violence (positive peace) (see 5.3.1.4, 5.5.1.2 & 5.5.1.3). However, Galtung’s peace theory validates Ibibio peace (see 2.4.2).

From facts emerging from the literature, as well as the further empirical data, it can be argued that the challenge of peace or lack of peace can be an individual challenge; it can also involve two or a group of people. A situation, where there is pain, hurts and oppression among people, family members, neighbouring communities, inter-tribal conflict and wars, means that there is a breakdown of peace, hence violence. However, when there is disagreement, strife, conflict, violence and war, there automatically is a need for peace. This need cuts across all strata of human society, beginning from individual life, family, community to the larger human society be it at local, national and international level. Ibibio indigenous peace

mechanisms therefore serve as a means of reducing both physical and structural violence. These approaches have been weakened by Western alternatives, which cannot address issues of violent conflict. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the Ibibio indigenous practices of peace reconciliation may provide a space for a paradigm shift in praxis and social transformation. In order to bring this to the centre, and for the purpose of this study, the natural principle of Ibibio peace will now be discussed, while examining the nature of Ibibio peace as a point of departure.

6.2.2 The nature of the Ibibio principles of peace

If peace is understood as freedom from aggression, oppression, calamities and misfortunes, it therefore holds that, from an indigenous perspective of peace, poor harvests that result in famine, call for great concern and anxiety. Similarly, miscarriages and the death of children can also lead to the loss of peace in a family. An aggression from a neighbouring community constitutes a breach of peace which may result in violent conflict, war and a loss of human lives and properties.

The theoretical basis for resolving conflicts in the Ibibio society, like in any other traditional African society, was couched in the existence of some rules fundamental to the comprehension of a peace process (Fayemi 2009:1). Arguably, one of the fundamental challenges that have confronted man in social history is that of the inevitability of disagreement and conflict in human relations. However, the reality posed by the challenge of conflicts has, more often than not, resulted in social problems, especially, when it is not properly managed before it degenerates into violent confrontations (*ibid.*).

The nature of the principles of these peace processes and conflict resolutions in indigenous African societies was anchored on the flexibility and elasticity of the rules and guidelines of peace in the society. Anifowose (2010:22) maintains that the divine ordering which backed up the operational model of the principles of conflict resolution characterized the dynamism of the peace process in traditional African societies. The general understanding was that the supernatural forces propelled the operation of conflict resolution and peace-reconciliation which permeated the essences of peace-making and peace-keeping incentives (*ibid.*). If Anifowose's above argument holds, it means that the concept of the supernatural provides a space for faith-based peace-building (Church peace-building) to dialogue with the Ibibio indigenous approaches. Particularly, a lack of peace, as revealed in the study results in an increase in the crime rate, and the spread of, STDs and HIV/AIDS, torture, trauma, pain,

hurts, bitterness, stress, fear, suspicion, rape, displacements, injustice, poverty, destruction of lives and properties, and underdevelopment (See 5.5.5.4 - 5.5.5.4.5).

6.2.2.1 Violence and the need for peace in the Ibibio society

The fact that we cannot discuss peace without violence is a general axiom that cannot be disputed. From the above premise, the study reflected on conflicts and violence within the Ibibio society. The quantitative data as well as the qualitative data (from 5.5.5 to 5.5.5.4.5) reveal respondents' awareness of different forms of violence, various causes of violence as consequences of this violence among the Ibibio people. Udoh asserts: "During the pre-colonial days, the Ibibio people's history, like the history of other people elsewhere, was punctuated by war and peace (Udo 1983:154). These wars were either inter-village or inter-ethnic wars (*ibid.*). According to Esen (1982:71), the Ibibio were quick to note that, as far as human life is concerned, the proper functioning of nature implies the proper balancing of the elements of forces that affect the life and well-being of people. Ibibio scholars generally hold that, during the pre-colonial days, the main sources of conflict include deviant behaviour, jealousy, theft, adultery, land disputes and accusation of witchcraft. But, in contemporary Ibibio society, violent conflicts have become the order of the day. Respondents' suggest an indigenous peace-building approach (as could be seen in 5.5.5.5.5) as a possible way towards the achievement of sustainable peace and social transformation in the Ibibio society. The researcher argues that the Ibibio indigenous peace mechanisms have great potential to provide the missing link in the current search for peace among the Ibibio people. This option could only be a viable option if the violent elements within the Ibibio peace mechanism are done away with. For instance, fear must be replaced with love, again, coercion and the use of force must be replaced with respect for human rights and dignity. Little wonder, David Morberg (1984:131) argues, and the researcher agrees, that the Church, through its teachings and character-forming influence, could also help to socialize a large proportion of the society, thereby contributing to an on-going integration of the society. The next section of this discussion will therefore focus on sources of peace within the Ibibio cultural context.

6.2.3 Sources of the Ibibio notion of peace

This study reveals a number of sources of peace among the Ibibio people, as reflected in the discussions below.

6.2.3.1 The Ibibio proverbs as a source of peace

From the data presented in 5.5, the Ibibio proverbs were identified by respondents as one of the great sources of peace among Ibibio people (see FGC4 and P6):

“Our proverbs are our fountain of peace as a wide range of resources used in peace-building and our elders make use of these rich resources to bring about reconciliation, peace and justice” (FGC4). (See Appendix 10.)

“... proverbs are, and will always be, the richest source of peace. That is why, during dialogue for peace, lots of proverbs are used” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

“In my opinion, Ibibio proverbs and wise sayings remain the richest resource of peace” (P6). (See Appendix 17.)

Turning to the literature, Esen (1982:21) clarifies that the Ibibio word “*nke*”(proverb) is a generic name for all types of verbal expressions with more than one meaning, a literal or surface meaning and a hidden and more profound meaning.

It is believed that *nke*(proverb) in Ibibio is as old as the Ibibio itself, as no one could know the exact origin of sayings that have come down over centuries; and possibly over millennia. No doubt, the Ibibio proverbs must have had some alterations and embellishments here and there, but the fact remains that no one can say for sure where they originated, or who coined them (Esen 1982:32).

Esen (*ibid.*) holds that a large number of the Ibibio proverbs seem to have derived from the everyday human experiences of the Ibibio people, beginning in family life, agriculture, hunting, animal husbandry, daily social interaction, health and disease, religious life festivals, and other experiences provided settings from which the raw materials of the Ibibio proverbs were obtained.

The Ibibio proverbs (*mee nke the Ibibio*) are loaded with genuine indications of scientific and philosophical thought patterns. This does not make the Ibibio a race of scientists and philosophers. It does, however, indicate a natural potential and inclination that cannot be ignored (*ibid.*).

The ancient Ibibio were shrewd observers of nature and of the laws that governed the operation of its many facets. Their minds were analytical and scientific.

They were able to perceive order in nature, and to think of events in terms of cause and effect. They noted the balance and regularities in the natural systems, but were also very much aware of conflicts, contradictions and uncertainties inherent in those systems (Esen 1982:75).

A look at a few proverbs common to the Ibibio and also other Africans:

Awana awan odo iba omum oyoho ita (When two people fight, the third is a peacemaker).

Ama emem idoho idek (He loves peace does not mean he is timid). In Malawi it says: Abstaining from fighting is not timidity.

Oduok ntong ken tong ekene (Ashes follow him who throws it).

Similar to other Africans elsewhere, the Ibibios' idea of peace is strongly communicated in the proverbs stated above.

The Ibibio, like the Yoruba of Nigeria, accord great respect for the intelligent and expert use of language. Especially, the appropriate use of proverbs is not based on age, as there are some youths who are witty in the genre of proverbial communication and use of language (Fayemi 2009:63). Hence, the Ibibio popular saying: *ata Ayin akane eden ase atang iko ke nke* (a real son of an elderly Ibibio man speaks proverbially).

Among traditional Ibibio people, the reciting of some types of "*mee nke*" (proverbs) was a regular form of entertainment in Ibibio homes between the evening meal and bed-time. According to Esen (1982:75-76): "Their easy pleasantness is however the sweet coating of a pill. Their coating or therapeutic essence, that is to say, their didactic or moral message, lies below the outer coat of sweet sounds and exciting word-images. The outer sweetness is intended merely to help the listener to swallow the hidden ingredients and to internalise without the behaviour norms, folk attitude and societal value they convey."

In the past, one of the various uses of Ibibio proverbs was as a teaching, learning device. It was a process where the younger generation had to learn from the older generation and then transfer the same to the next generation; thus the folk wisdom, moral codes. Social skills of the community were transferred in easily digestible doses from one generation to another, and they learnt informally what constitutes acceptable forms of conduct and patterns of behaviour in a pleasant playful way (*ibid.*). Ibibio proverbs were generously used by traditional priests

in the administration of rituals and the use of another language was a taboo (Fayemi 2009:61-620; Esen 1982:75-76).

In the next section of this study, we will take a look at the Ibibio indigenous knowledge of peace-reconciliation, which is expressed through sacrificial and ritual formulae.

6.2.3.2 Sacrifice, covenant and ritual formulae as sources of peace

Based on the empirical data presented and analysed in 5.5, the Ibibio sacrifice was identified by respondents as one of the great sources of peace among Ibibio people (e.g., FGC2 and FGS).

“I will also like to mention that religious rituals were usually performed when there was any threat to peace in order to appease God, other deities and ancestors” (PGC2). (See Appendix.)

“I know that in our traditional context, rituals, sacrifice and covenant are sometimes part and parcel of a peace process and example of it is Ubuk Udung (sacrificial act, which is a deep traditional covenant that seals a peace agreement. This is so because it will involve a few drops of blood from individuals selected as representatives from the affected communities as a seal of the peace agreement” (FGC2). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think the practice of sacrifice was usually carried out as a means of restoring peace and in this process we can rediscover the rich meaning of peace from the pronouncement of the priest and from the rituals performed” (FGS1). (See Appendix. 11.)

Furthermore, Sherk (1983:70) enunciates that a covenant can recreate the broken ties and, through a covenant, human fellowships and relationships are ontologically established. Mbiti (1975:126) asserts: “Covenant and rituals generate a sense of certainty and familiarity and provide continuity and unity among those who perform or attend them.” From the foregoing, it holds that the Ibibio people, like other Africans elsewhere, understand rituals and rites as a means of expressing the supersensible world and the supernatural beings. Otherwise, as Adewole (*ibid.*) simply puts it: “They are acts and forms of worship or communion and communication between one and one’s objects of worship.” Through a ritual action and word, people feel able to exercise a certain amount of control over the invisible world and the forces of nature (Mbiti 1975:126). For the purpose of ritual, humans use almost everything at their disposal, including symbols and colours, incantations, oral formulas – especially invocations

and prayer - and the help of mystical powers if necessary (*ibid.*). Udo (1983:254) explains that worship in the Ibibio indigenous context embraces ritual offerings and sacrifices, as well as covenants, the pouring of the blood of victims, the pouring of libations, and invocations and prayers. Its external manifestations include shrines, altars and such cultic objects as vessels, vestments and sacrificial victims, like goats, hens, sheep, dogs and so on. Shenk (1983:71-72) affirms that, sometimes, covenants require the shedding of blood which is essential for the preservation of the life of the community. Again, a covenant is celebrated by feasting together usually on the roasted flesh of the sacrificial victim. Hence, a covenant may be profound, serious, or even sombre, yet it remains a joyous, life-affirming fellowship and feasting. The question here is: What are the practical theological implications of the Ibibio experience of the covenant and peace? To what extent does the traditional Ibibio understanding have implications on a Christian understanding of community, of Church, of reconciliation, of justice, of humanity, of peace? What could be the nature of the Christian theology of peace? These will form part of the discussion in 6.7.

6.2.3.3 The Ibibio folklore: A source of peace

From the data presented in 5.5.2.1, the Ibibio folklore was identified by respondents as one of the great sources of peace among Ibibio people (see FGS5 and P5 below):

“To me, the wise sayings from our elders, our proverbs, our folk tales, folk songs and riddles remain the greatest source of the Ibibio notion of peace” (FGS5). (See Appendix 11.)

“To me, our folk tales proverbs and riddles of our people is a rich source of peace in our context” (P5).(See Appendix 16.)

Folk tales are found in all cultures (Esen 1982:30). The Ibibio folklore performances provide a veritable means of both ethnographic (communal) communication, and linguistic practice (Akwang 2005:63). On the one hand, these types of social exchanges easily manifest as intimations of humility, love, obedience, self-control, kindness, goodness, good character and descent behaviour. On the other hand, they also provide explication for the Ibibio self-distinction from greed and gluttony, hatred and maliciousness, adultery, thievery, and similar unfitting social misdemeanours. It would not be wrong to link these virtues with the indigenous religious experience of the people. Amaku (1952:84) recalls, when he writes:

Ke kpukpuru, nke, Obio Etiyin Abasi, ke usem nyin, oworo ererimbot emi. Ke idem ata eset oro, ekese owo ke idut nnyin ema ediongo ata Abasi ke usunng mmo. Mmo ema ediongo enye nte andibot ye nte Ete kpukpuru nkpo.

A translation by Umo-Faithman (1999:76) reads as follows:

In every Ibibio folk tale, the city of our Father God in our language means this world. Even in that very ancient time, many people in our nation had known the real God in their ways. They had known him as the father of all creation.

The Ibibio folk tales related to everything (*ibid.*:77). The basic format of a typical Ibibio folk tale is the short story with some moral lesson attached to it. It is the other meaning, the moral lesson, that accord folk tales the status of *nke* (Esen 1982:30). From these stories, the Ibibio informally instil in their children great virtues of truth, fair-play, justice, peace and harmony, as peace was the core value that held the traditional society together (Okoro 2010:154). Therefore, the main instrument for building peace was in the indigenous educational system which was designed to ingrain a peace tradition in the hearts and minds of their progenies (*ibid.*).

Ibibio scholars see folklore as a potent courier of ontological and cosmological intuitions and intelligence, as it imbues the Ibibio with their universe, which is peculiar and distinct. Akwang (2005:63-64) asserts:

It is a universe with corporeal and incorporeal, physical and metaphysical essences. Its visible, tangible, bio-physical and psycho-spiritual existence and progress depend on and are ordered by these fictive propulsions of the Ibibio mind known as folklore ... Thus folktales, myths legends, rituals masks and masquerades in Ibibio land derive their materiality (that is both nature and appearance), their resource and their relevance from the immense and intricate embroidery or interpretations of the Ibibio folklore - with its cosmological cycles and rhythms.

The main objective of the Ibibio folklore was to effectively communicate meaning of a moral lesson in an informal way. When the story is told, and all the singing, drumming and the dancing are over and the drums, rattles, gongs, xylophones, *Obodoms* and *ntakrok* (wooden gongs) are put away, no one bothers to state or restate the central lesson of the tale. Everyone recognizes it as it lies intertwined in the web of the narrative itself and the individual has to disentangle it for his- or herself, and goes to bed with it (Udo 1982:31).

Umo-Faithman (1999:74) was quick to observe that the Ibibio traditional practitioners would always invoke *Abasi enyong* (the Supreme God) first in their ritualistic prayers, before they turn to mention *mme abasi isong* (the gods of the earth) and pour libations to them. These moral lessons, embedded in the Ibibio folk stories, if adhered to, taught lessons that would encourage various people in the society to acknowledge God and deities through prayer and the pouring of libation in order to live in harmony and peace. Huber (1996:19)

summarizes it thus: “An oral culture learns reality by listening to stories where experiences are narrated with listeners participating. Hence, the culture of oral tradition is ruled by the public form of story telling.”

6.2.3.4 Prayer/libation: As the Ibibio source of peace

From the data presented in 5.5.2.1, the following views emerged as sources of peace among Ibibio people:

“I think the Ibibio rituals and prayers was an important source of peace to which the young people easily adapted themselves, both religious and cultural values facilitate peaceful co-existence in our society in a very significant way” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think the Ibibio notion of peace can be derived from both traditional prayers/libations but most of them are transported somehow into Christian Church prayers, as well as Church rituals” (FGC3). (See Appendix 10.)

“Our culture places a high moral value on virtues, such as obedience and respect for parents and elders, respect for traditions, laws and taboos, respect for God and deities. All this training helps to regulate the behaviour of members of the society in ways that promote peaceful co-existence” (FGS4). (See Appendix 11.)

“I believe our source of peace is in God, that is why our people pray to God for peace before embarking on any project, a journey, or before the commencement of important events” (P6). (See Appendix 16.)

Prayer has always been a major need in society, be it at family, communal, national or international level. Through various means, African religion has addressd itself to this need, one way of which is through the making of prayers (Mbiti 2010:6). Turaki (1999:175) explains:

Sacrifices, prayers and worship are accorded to deities and gods for blessing and protection... These gods or deities are personal in the sense that they are the protectors or the benefactors of households, clans or tribes.They usually guard over the total welfare of the home and the respective members of the household, clan or tribe.

Among the Ibibio of Nigeria, libation (*uduok ukot ntot Ikpa- Isong*) means pouring out of palm wine or other liquid drink in honour of a deity and ancestors (Antia 2005:126; Udo 1983:252). In most cases, this ritualistic act follows prayer; in some cases, prayer and libation go hand in hand (*ibid.*).

The moment of libation was always very solemn and everyone present maintained absolute silence, except the libator who was expected to stand at a strategic place to make colourful incantations with well-selected weighty words (Antia 2005:127). While the solemn ritual continued, every mention of God, gods or ancestors by name was accompanied by the sprinkling of wine on the ground (Esen 1982:55-56) as an offering to God, the deities and the ancestors (Udo 183:252). Scholars generally agree that the act of pouring libation was usually performed by the oldest man in the group but, during worship, this role was performed by the priest. Antia (2005:127) argues that a younger person could also pour libation only when and where the express permission and authority to do so was granted by the oldest person, because of some or other reason. Libation was an important ritual that had to be done at the beginning of any important Ibibio gathering, be it family or public meeting or ceremony (Esen 1982:55). In fact, it was a very important part of the opening of a great occasion, as no important occasion was conducted without libation (Antia 2005:126).

Unlike the Bangwato and the Bakwena people of Botswana during the “*dikgafela*” (harvest) festivals where, after drinking of traditional beer and eating, the chief prays for rain as the coming of the rains was a symbol of peace and good harvest (Amanze 2002:340-341). The reverse is the case among the Ibibio, as they must first pray, and pour libation before they can settle down to drink and eat (Esen 1982:55).

The Ibibio not only pour libation during planting and harvest seasons, they pour libation and pray for peace, long life and prosperity during every gathering. But recently, Usanga (1975:8 in Antia 2005:301) cautioned that libation should be done only on important occasions, not at all occasions and for insubstantial reasons. From the Ibibio ritual practice presented above, it is firstly obvious that the need for peace is very crucial for the well-being of the Ibibio society. Secondly, the act of libation suggests that the Ibibio people believe in the divine as a source of true peace. Much as the Ibibio believe in the divine source of peace, in most cases conflict was inevitable as the truth was difficult to ascertain during disputes. One of the indigenous ways of knowing the truth was through the administration of the *mbiam* (oath).

6.3 THE IBIBIO SYMBOLISM OF PEACE

This study reveals some symbolisms of peace from the primary data and also from the secondary data. The discussions on various symbols of peace in indigenous Ibibio perspective will be on the following:

6.3.1 *Ayei/eyei* (palm fronds): As an Ibibio symbol of peace

From the data presented in 5.5.2.3, the following views emerged as sources of peace among Ibibio people:

“Ibibio cultural symbols and traditional ways of settlement of disputes promote peaceful co-existence. One such symbol is the Ayei (palm frond): for instance, if there is a quarrel or conflict among people, when the ayei is raised, the parties were expected to stop the fight” (FGS1). (See Appendix 11.)

“I feel our respect for cultural symbols of peace such as ayei ... these practices help regulate attitudes and behaviour of people in our society” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“I think our people had high respect for our traditional symbols of peace. For instance in those days, if there is conflict or war among parties and someone raised a palm frond, the warring parties must stop fighting and give peace a chance” (FGC1). (See Appendix.10)

Prominence was given to special days, special places, special seasons, special objects, including special leaves, in the Ibibio pre-colonial society. *Ayei/Eyei* (a young palm frond) was a special leaf and played a significant role within the traditional Ibibio context. It was generally used in various ways, each with a symbolic meaning.

Udo (1984:148), Essien (2001:92) and Antia (2005:95) all agree that *Ayei* was a notice of “no trespass” or a symbol of peace. In a situation where two villages engaged in conflict, another village, well disposed towards them, or the clan council, could arbitrate by first sending *aye/eyei* to them to call for a ceasefire. Looking at the symbolic use of *aye/eyei* in the circumstance above, one can infer that *aye/eyei* served as an injunction in traditional Ibibio society.

Antia (2005:95) states: “When *aye/eyei* is tied on the head, hands, legs or bodies, it shows happiness and victory; tied in a special manner it was used for sending special messages, for example when tied across the road or path, it means that non-qualified persons should keep off it.” Similarly, when placed on objects or tied on buildings, or fruit trees, it was a warning that people should keep off, in other words it was used to place a ban on objects and properties. When carried in the mouth, it implied that the carrier was on a special assignment and must not talk to anybody except the person to whom the message was rightly sent (*ibid.*). In other words, the carrier must keep all secrets. *Aye/eyei* itself was used as *mbiam* or to grace or solemnize and protect *mbiam* from contamination. Herbalists use *aye/eyei* as an antidote against stubborn ghosts and charms (*ibid.*). Today, every vehicle carrying a corpse or corpses is

decorated with *ayei* to protect it from the power of the ghosts and to protect it from a breakdown (*ibid.*).

Complex, as the uses of *ayei* may be as presented in the discussion above, every Ibibio person was able to decode and understand its coded symbolic meaning/s and respond accordingly. The central aim of all the numerous uses of *Ayei* was to guarantee peace and the well-being of the Ibibio society and to prevent or transform different forms of conflicts. As such, *ayei* was, and still is, a strong symbolic instrument of peace in the Ibibio world-view. The literature also reveals that a number of plant and animal materials were used within the Ibibio context to communicate in a symbolic way to the general public. Apart from the palm frond which the researcher has extensively discussed earlier; other materials include *nnoonuung* (life tree) *mbritem* (ginger lily or bush cane); *mkpatat* (ferns; *selaginella*), *okono* tree (*dracaena fragans*) *oboro* plant, and *Nkang* (charcoal). Animal material includes *Nkwa unen* (egg) and *mkpok ekwong* (snail shell). Scholars hold that these plants and animal materials were symbolically used to warn trespassers. Consequently, if the above-mentioned materials were placed on any item or property, it implies that the owner has invoked the wrath of gods or *juju* on whomever tampers with such property or item (Ekong 2001:135; Antia 2005:105-106). Apart from symbolic instruments of peace, social relations were even more significant as these symbolic elements were useless without intervention of a third party in Ibibio peace arbitrations. In some cases, *ayei* could be used together with *nuuk enin* (elephant tusk) as a symbol of peace.

6.3.2 *Nnuk enin* (elephant tusk): As an Ibibio symbol of peace

Among Ibibio people, the elephant tusk was another significant symbol of peace as could be seen from data emerging from the study.

*“I will like to add that *nnuk enin* (elephant tusk) was another significant symbol of peace, although its use was restricted to only village or clan heads” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)*

“In our tradition, when there is conflict or war between two communities, a neutral village head or clan head sends an elephant tusk to the warring community then both communities will stop fighting immediately and peace talks begins thereafter” (FGC2).(See Appendix 10.)

“In our tradition, an elephant tusk was recognized and respected by all as a peace symbol. But nowadays, such practices are fast disappearing because only the court action has legal backing from government” (FGS7). (See Appendix 11.)

The pre-colonial Ibibio used various forms of artefacts as symbols and instruments of peace. Prominent among such artefacts is the elephant tusk (*nnuk enin*). Scholars hold that an elephant tusk was used as an instrument of peace in two different ways. Essien (2001:92) and Udo (1983:148) agree that it was used to stop feuds among warring communities. Antia (2005:97) affirms: “*Nnuk enin* (elephant tusk) was used to call for a ceasefire where and when a war raged between one or more communities.”

Udo (1983:148) explains that it was *Obong Ikpa Isong's* (the clan head's) instrument for peace and was kept by the clan head in his throne. Whenever there was inter-communal conflict, the clan head, in council with an elder of the clan, would send the elephant tusk to the warring communities and order them to declare a ceasefire. In other words, Antia (2005:97) states that the clan head would send an emissary to blow the *nnuk enin* and give *ayei* and that served as a warning to each group against further bickering, after which a date and venue was fixed for the hearing of the case.

The *nnuk enin* not only stopped hostilities, it also provided its messenger, the bearer, with a safe pass throughout the clan and beyond (Udo 1983:148). According to Essien (2001:92), an accused person was asked to swear on it to prove his or her innocence. Any disregard or disrespect for the Obong's elephant tusk then amounted to rebellion and the culprit would have to face serious consequences. As far as the Ibibio people were concerned, the use of this instrument, and others, helped in the dispensation of justice, maintain peace and order among the Ibibio in the pre-colonial era.

6.3.3 *Ndom* (white chalk): As an Ibibio symbol of peace

The data and discussion below indicates that Ibibio people understand *ndom* as a symbolism of peace.

“From time immemorial and even up till now, ndom (white chalk) was, and is still a symbol of peace, happiness, joy and blessing. When one obtains justice, one could celebrate by rubbing white chalk on parts of the body” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11.)

“When an accused is vindicated, he/she and close relatives and friends rub native chalk on the face, neck or legs to openly communicate their joy, victory and peace.”

Ndom is white clay excavated from the ground, otherwise known as native chalk. In most cases, this substance (*ndom*) is dissolved in water, applied on the face, neck and the entire

body as a make-up. In most cases, nursing mothers do not only rub it, but they use it to massage their bodies, as it is generally believed among the Ibibio that the substance makes women's bodies look more polished and beautiful. Apart from using it for beautifying purposes, the most significant use of *ndom* (white local chalk) is as a symbol of peace.

According to Okon (2004:40), the application of this substance (*ndom*) on parts or the whole of the body signifies a happy event. It also symbolizes innocence and peace. He explains: "Anybody accused of any sacrilegious offences such as witchcraft, adultery and theft and later found to be innocent of the allegation was painted with *ndom* and sited in the village square or paraded round the village to signify his or her innocence" (*ibid.*:40-41). On the other hand, a thief was painted with *nkang* (charcoal) and was beaten and paraded round the village.

Ukpong (2001:104) and Esen (1982:111) agree that the usual penalty for petty theft was *uyet nkang* (smearing the body with charcoal). When a thief was caught red-handed, he was either stripped naked or most scantily dressed, his body was smeared all over with charcoal and was paraded along the streets of a number of villages while being flogged occasionally. In each village along which he passed, the most ridiculous and ribald songs were hurriedly composed and the thief was forced to dance to the tune of the music, amidst jeers and boos. Sometimes, the stolen article was tied around his neck. For this reason Esen asserts: "As for the thief himself, his mind could not focus on anything at all, it would probably be on the well-known Ibibio proverb: '*Asanga Isang ibukko mbuk ino ibukko ntim*' (the traveller cannot recount all his experiences, nor can a thief describe all the floggings he has received)" (*ibid.*).

Ukpong (2001:104) summarizes it thus: "Just as *nodm*, in its use among the Ibibio was symbolic of peace, purity, beauty and innocence; *nkang* (charcoal) was symbolic of guilt, shame, fear and woe."

6.3.4 *Mmong* (water): As an Ibibio symbolic expression of peace

From the data presented in 5.5.2.3, the following views emerged as sources of peace among Ibibio people:

"When the warring parties are finally reconciled, they are given water to drink from the same cup, as a symbol of reconciliation and peace."

“Our elders always end peace dialogue by giving water or palm wine to the parties to drink from the same cup; if they accept the drink, it means they have agreed to reconcile and have accepted peace as well.”

In the traditional Ibibio world-view, water has a great symbolic meaning (Antia 2005:105). Water is seen as a free gift from God. First and foremost, water represents life; to deny somebody, an animal, or plant water simply means a death wish. In Ibibio, the cheapest yet most significant gift is water. No one buys water, yet no one may drink water from an enemy.

According to Antia (2005:105), water could be given to anybody as a sign of peace. Water symbolizes cleansing and purity; the popular Ibibio proverb says, *moog moog aye idiok mkpo idiok mkpo iyetke moong* (only water can wash, dirt can never wash water). The real meaning is that, with water, we are purified, refreshed and made whole. Antia (*ibid.*) asserts that, at the end of libation, water was poured last to confirm the libation. Therefore, the shared water of peace is believed to cool anger, soften hearts, refresh and restore broken relationships.

Offiong (2001:436-437) and Antia (2005:105) agree that, among the Ibibio, when warring factions engage in a peace dialogue, and when a peace agreement is finally reached, a cup of water is shared between them. By drinking from the same cup, the Ibibio believe they have shared their blood or saliva, and so it becomes a covenant. As such, they can never harm themselves or their relatives (Offiong 2001:436-437). This was as a sign of the peace settlement (Antia 2005:105).

To purify fighting men of the blood they had shed during a war, sacrifices had to be made to the gods, after which water was thrown to the rooftop and each of the fighting men had to stand under the dripping water (Ekong 2001:8). This ritual was meant to purify warriors ceremonially, but this practice is no longer common in contemporary Ibibio society.

6.4 INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE

The data also reveal that indigenous Ibibio people used, and are still using, certain instruments for justice and peace. These instruments include traditional oaths, ordeals, and divination.

The next section of this study focuses on a detailed discussion of a traditional Ibibio instrument for justice and peace.

6.4.1 *Mbiam* (oath): The Ibibio instrument of justice and peace

The data presented in identify *Mbiam* as one of the agents of peace within the Ibibio context. Views presented in the discussion below support this position.

“To me I think mbiam (traditional oath) was an important agent of peace since mbiam was used as the last resort for knowing the truth and for the fact that every Ibibio adult knew that if he or she swore on it deceitfully, he or she was bound to die; therefore elders and chiefs always used it in administering justice among disputing parties. But, because of their fear of death, culprits pleaded guilty even before the oath was administered” (FGC7).

“In my opinion mbiam was a powerful instrument of peace because if it was brought in, the culprit was forced to tell the truth for fear of dying” (P1).

From the literature, the above data agrees with scholars' views from different angles. Ukpong asserts that in the traditional Ibibio society, *mbiam* (oath) was an instrument of justice, especially when capital offences were committed and if it became difficult to know the truth, then *mbiam* was used as a last resort; but foreign scholars wrongly refer to *mbiam* as *juju* (Ukpong 2001:106).

Antia (2005:124) describes *mbiam* as a potent liquid used in swearing oaths; it was more or less a magic liquid which could cause anyone, who swore falsely, to fall ill, swell up, and die. In other words, Ukpong (2001:106-107) maintains that *mbiam* could be defined as any object used for personal protection, for the guarding of personal property or for swearing.

It was believed to have the power of detecting culprits and punishing them accordingly, unless the curse was removed (Noah 1980:13). According to Essien (2001:92), an accused person was asked to swear on *mbiam* to declare him- or herself innocent of a crime, and it was believed that the accused would not tell lies and get away without being killed after swearing on the *juju*. A typical *mbiam* (oath) taking was captured by Antia (2005:124) when he wrote: “Usually the form of oath was: If I have done, or if I do or if I will do such and such, *mbiam* kill me, if not so, *mbiam* protect and bless me and my whole house this and next generation and for ever.”

Udo, Essien and Antia agree that the Ibibio believed that if one lied, the power of *mbiam* would kill such an individual. In pre-colonial days, the Ibibio society and every Ibibio person believed in the potency of *mbiam*. Even today, many Ibibio people still adopt this method in settling various cases and conflicts. Ukpong

(2001:107) explains that, in the olden days, parents inculcated in their children the habit of speaking the truth for fear of being victims of *mbiam* in their adult life.

Udo (1983:144) asserts:

Before the advent of Christianity, as we have noticed, every Ibibio person believed in *mbiam*. Miscarriages of justice were very rare because, besides asking the accused to declare himself innocent of the crime of which he was accused, the members of his family (*ekpuk*) were asked, in case of doubt, to swear in such a way that the penalty inflicted by *mbiam* might extend to the whole family (*Ekpuk*) if they swore falsely.

From the above arguments, one could clearly see that the killing power of *mbiam*, in some cases, was not only restricted to the offender, as it was capable of exterminating the whole family and/or the entire community. For this reason, *mbiam* was regarded as an important Ibibio indigenous anti-crime measure; coupled with a certainty of nemesis which awaited the guilty. This measure was combined with many others to keep the Ibibio communities relatively crime free. One Ibibio proverb summarizes this approach to the administration of justice thus: “*mbiam emi odo edue ukot akpa itong*” (by this oath, he who misses a step his neck goes for it).

Esen (1982:110) explains:

The symbolism preserved in the expression of the proverb above is that of a whole people marching together in step along the path of life, with every member of the group keeping in step. As long as this rhythm is kept by everyone, there is harmony, peace, order and progress in the community.

Little wonder that Udo (1983:143) identifies *mbiam* as one important Ibibio judicial instrument among others. Ekere (1944:103 in Udo 1983:144) affirms: “*Mbiam* (*juju*), on which people swore, was one of the most important Ibibio judicial instruments. The success of the Ibibio indigenous judicial system depended to a great extent on belief in the potency of *Mbiam*.”

Therefore, from all indications, there is no doubt that the fear of an individual’s death, or the entire family being extinct, by *mbiam* therefore gave *mbiam* a crucial and even central role in the Ibibio justice and peace practice. It was Esen (1982:110) who asked the question: Was *mbiam* more astute than his wigged Lordship on today’s bench? This crucial question is yet to be answered. Since there are people who will not tell the truth, even to the point of death,

the Ibibio people prefer to search the truth from *ukang* especially when it involves family members.

6.4.2 *Ukang/afia* (ordeal) as an Ibibio instrument of justice and peace

According to the field data and the literature presented below, the Ibibio people regarded *Ukang* as an instrument of justice and peace (see Appendix....., FGC8 and FGS6).

“Like mbiam (traditional oath), ukang (ordeal) was another method of knowing the truth as it was used, and is still used, to detect who tells a lie and who speaks the truth” (FGC8).

“I think ukang declares the truth instantly and many people prefer ukang because it will not kill a culprit but will subject him/her to torture until the culprit tells the truth, and once truth is made known, appropriate steps for peace are followed” (FSC6).

Ukpong (2001:109) affirms that the Ibibio word for ordeal is *Ukang*. Udoh (1983:146) explicates that *Ukang* was another indigenous way of determining who was telling the truth. In the Ibibio culture, an ordeal was a direct appeal to the Supreme God, gods, and ancestors to show, miraculously, where the right lay. The Ibibio believe that one cannot tell a lie and get away with it. Therefore, the only way of saving a liar’s life was to make him endure some or other ordeal (*ibid.*).

In Ibibio, *Ukang* (ordeal) and *Mbiam* (oath) was not the same thing, Ukpong (2001:108) makes a clear distinction between the two when he writes:

Unknown to some people there are differences between *mbiam* and *ukang*. In the case of *mbiam*, only a party to a dispute took the oath. The *mbiam* (oath) did not exhibit or have automatic or immediate effect on the person or persons taking it. If the effect became visible or ascertainable within the stipulated time, generally one year, then he was deemed to have sworn falsely on *mbiam*. In such a case, the perjurer developed many sicknesses such as the swelling of part of the body or the entire body and eventually died. If the *mbiam* had no ill effect whatsoever on the person taking the oath over a stipulated period of time, then, he was adjudged guiltless or innocent. On the other hand, the *Ukang* (ordeal) had immediate and automatic effect on persons undergoing it. Also both parties to a matter could undergo the *ukang* (ordeal).

Ibibio people had different types of ordeals (*ibid.*), which included *ukang Esere* (ordeal of beans), *ukang nsen unen* (ordeal of egg), *ukangufiop aran* (an ordeal of boiling oil), *ukang Ikpa unam* (ordeal of leather), and *ukang ntib enyin* (ordeal that temporarily blinds) (Udo 1983:146-147). Even today, sometimes the people still use these mediums to establish what is right or wrong, true or false.

From the foregoing, the researcher agrees with the view stated earlier that the Ibibio only use these ordeals as he thinks ukang declares the truth instantly and many people prefer ukang because it will not kill the culprit but will subject him/her to torturing until the culprit tells the truth, and once the truth is made known, appropriate steps for peace are followed.

6.4.3 *Idiong* (divination), the Ibibio instrument of justice and peace

As indicted in the data presented in divination is identified as instruments of justice and peace among Ibibio people.

“...I think divination was believed to be one of the instruments of justice and peace because it was believe to be a means of knowing the truth, as truth was the only basis on which elders and chiefs could base their judgements...” (P4). (See Appendix 15.)

Among the Ibibio people, the *Idiong* society was more or less a society of sorcerers and visionaries (Ekong 2001:153). Being a strong religious organization, the *Idiong* society was very deeply involved in the social and political life of the Ibibio community as a whole. Udoh (1983:146) holds that members of the *Idiong* society, like the Old Testament prophets, were divinely called to prophesy by *Abasi eyong* (the God of the sky), *Abasi Isong* (God of the earth), *mee ndem* (deities), and *mee Ikan* (ancestors) to the membership of the *Idiong* society. People who had problems or misfortunes, consulted the *Idiong* society in order to know what caused their misfortunes and who was responsible for them. An accused person had to prove his or her innocence through the *Idiong* society (*ibid.*). For example, if people were accused of being witches, they had to prove their innocence before they could be received back into the society as responsible people (Ukpong 2001:102). Ekong (2001:155) observes that *Idiong*, as a traditional society, is likely to fade to out in future due to a lack of new initiates, as its social functions are being taken over by prophets and visionaries in the mushrooming “spiritual churches.”

6.4.4 *Abia idiong* (diviner), as an agent of justice and peace

The data presented in 5.5.2.5 identify *Abia idiong* as one of the agents of peace within the Ibibio context. The Ibibio believe that the *abia idiong* (diviner) was divinely endowed with power to see the unseen, know the unknown, and was able to communicate effectively with the spirits and with the ancestors (Ekong 2001:153; Udo 1983:146). *Mbia idiong* (diviners) played a leading judicial role in pre-colonial Ibibio society. They were consulted before major decisions were taken (*ibid.*), or whenever illness, death, pestilence or any form of

catastrophe occurred, as misfortunes were usually linked to unknown forces and evil powers (Ekong 2001:153; Essen 1982:47). Ekong (2001:153) asserts that *Abia Idiong* played a vital role in the revelation of wrongdoers. In some cases, it was the responsibility of the *Abia Idiong* to administer ordeals (*ukang*) or native oaths (*mbiam*) in order to establish the truth (*ibid.*). According to Ekong (2001:153), in some parts of Ibibio, the *Abia Idiong* had a say in the selection of the village and clan's head. It is obvious therefore that the *Abia Idiong* played a major role in the administration of justice and the search for peace among the Ibibio people.

6.5 THE ROLE OF THE ELDERS IN IBIBIO PEACE-BUILDING

The data presented in 5.5.2.5 identify elders as agents of peace within the Ibibio context. Views presented in the discussion below support this position.

"I think elders were agents of reconciliation and peace, because of their well of wisdom and unbiased sense of judgement, people trusted and depended on them in matters of justice equity and fair-play..." (P1). (See Appendix 12.)

"...in traditional Ibibio peace-building the elders and chiefs played a central role in peace-building as they were custodians of the tradition of the people; they were there to guide and direct in ways that suited the customs of the people."(FGC8). (See Appendix 10.)

Among the Ibibio of Nigeria, elders played a very sensitive judicial role in different strata of the society. According to Esen (1982:83), the elders/chiefs were very powerful. After the gods and the ancestors, chiefs (*mee Mboong*) were at the summit of the social hierarchy in the Ibibio society. As already discussed earlier in this study (see 3.4.4 - 3.4.6), chiefs were selected among their peers, based on age, wisdom, integrity and leadership qualities. The main responsibility of the chieftaincy office was the maintenance of peace, law and order, encouragement, defence and the general welfare of the people (Antia 2005:135). To validate Antia's argument Udofia wrote:

The power of indigenous peace mechanism of Ayei and *mbiam* were invoked by elders in Ibibio oil bearing communities in 1993 after youths demonstration against oil multinationals and serving companies that staled Exxon mobil production in Akwa Ibom state for four days which led to wanton destruction of lives and properties(2011:104-199).

An Ibibio village had a village council and a traditional council of chiefs (*Essop isong*). Members of the council of chiefs were the most senior chiefs drawn from all the *Ekpuks* in the village. These elders were the custodians of the people's customs and traditions (Essien

2001:91-92). In most cases, the political chief was the head priest of the village or clan, as the case may be. The Ibibio society was republican in its attitude; chieftaincy was conceptualized, not in terms of the divine right of kings, but in terms of an effective leadership of men (Esen 1982:83). The village or clan's head administers the village or clan together with other chiefs. Hence, the Ibibio proverb which says, *Obong isi boongo ikpong* (a chief does not rule all by himself). This means that a chief cannot successfully fulfil all the expected roles of his office alone (*ibid.*).

In pre-colonial Ibibio cases of violent conflicts and other serious criminal offences, such as cases of murder and witchcraft, accusations were settled by the *Esop isong* / *Esop Ikpaisong* as it was the highest court in the land. When a case was reported to the *Esop isong*, the village or clan's head was to consult with other chiefs to set a day for the hearing of the case. Elders from *nuung mee eka* (maternal extended family, village or clan) were also invited. On the appointed day, all were to assemble at *Esop isiong*, which would be the village square or any other venue chosen by the chiefs. The head of the clan or village was to wait until supporters of the litigants were seated, then he would choose a presiding chief for the case. As the case progressed, all present were free to ask questions or provide information. At *Esop isong*, elders searched for the truth and made, what they called, *atta emem* (real peace) (Offiong 1997:346).

In the Ibibio society, during communal wars like with the Luo and Masai people of Kenya, the elders arranged for peace parleys, and after both sides had agreed on the need and satisfactory terms for peace, a great inter-societal rally was convened at the border where the battles had been fought (Mbiti 2010:12).

Ibibio scholars agree that the judicial instrument of the chiefs in the search for the truth, apart from hearing and questioning the plaintiff and the accuser, include the following: *Mbiam* (oaths), *Idiong* (divination), *Nuuk enin* (elephant tusk), *Afia/Ukang* (ordeal), *Ayei* (palm frond), *Ayeyin* (grandchild/children from a female child), *ukod* (in-law), *Iman* (ally), *nka* (age grades/club), in some cases *Ekpe/Ekpo* (masquerades), *Iban Isong* and *Ebre* (women's groups). Later in this study, how these instruments of peace function in Ibibio traditional society will be discussed (Udo 1983:143).

In modern Ibibio society, most of these judicial functions of the *Esop isong* are carried out by the law court. Offiong (1997:436) observes that a decision in a magistrate's court does not necessarily end conflict because, even though it may determine a winner, it does not restore

harmony or equilibrium in the group. This is so, because of the people's general belief that whoever has enough money to hire a good lawyer, bribes the police, fabricates the best lies, and easily wins in the magistrate's court, since corruption has become the bane of our society.

It is common to find people, who have gone to court, withdrawing their cases to settle at home with the help of elders and chiefs. Others return to the village council for peace settlement even after they have received judgement from the law court (*ibid.*). To make final peace in the Ibibio context, the chiefs and/or elders, as the case may be, make both parties swear on oath. Thereafter, a glass of water or palm wine is shared between both parties of the conflict, a prayer of peace is offered, and that ends the conflict.

6.6 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL RELATIONS IN PEACE-BUILDING

As could be seen in 5, the empirical data show that, apart from the elders and chiefs of the area, other persons were also respected in the culture as agents of peace. Some respondents strongly believe that grandchildren are agents of peace in their respective maternal family or community; others have identified *Ukot/d* (in-laws), kinsmen, as well as strangers as agents of peace-reconciliation in the Ibibio context.

"Ibibio our culture provides several ways in which people seek peace... the sacred roles of Ayeyin (grandchild), Ukod (inlaw), iman (kinsman), and esenowo (Visitor/strangers), are maintained in peace reconciliation process. (FGC4). (See Appendix 10)

"I feel that is the traditional recognition given to in-laws, kinsmen and grandchildren that accord them status that can easily facilitate reconciliation and peace among grieving parties." (FGS6). (See Appendix 11)

The above data are affirmed in the literature, as Ibibio indigenous scholars generally hold that the Ibibio have three "gods" whom they invoke frequently or as the occasion demands. They include *Abasi Ayeyin* (the god of ancestral derivation), *Abasi Ukod* (the god of marriage relationships), and *Abasi imaan* (the god of inter-community alliances). According to Essen (1982:133), these are not gods in the same sense as *Abasi Enyong*, the Supreme God, the controller of the universe, nor in a general sense of a superhuman or spiritual entity; rather, they are abstract principles that the Ibibio have personified and have become so highly respected to be raised in people's minds to the status of deities.

Charles (2005: 343-344) maintains that this cultural practice has remained relatively stable in the face of social change and constant contact and interaction with neighbouring peoples on the one hand, and the influence of Western civilization on the other hand. Despite these changes, traditional Ibibio people still recognize three gods which unite all, including the god of *ayeyin*, the god of *ukod* and the god of *imaan*. In other words, the centrepiece of the Ibibio indigenous social relations and intergroup interactions is governed by a sacred trinity. As such, participants in these relationships constitute *nkpo ibet* (sacred objects) to one another (*ibid.*). In this section of the study, the researcher will therefore unpack, both from empirical data and literature, how Ibibio indigenous knowledge of the Ibibio kinship and social relations were used as agents of peace and reconciliation, beginning from the role of the grandchild.

6.6.1 Ayeyin as an agent of peace

Among the Ibibio, the offspring of a married woman automatically became *ayeyin* (a grandchild) not only to the woman's family, also to the lineage, village and clan of her origin, as the case may be. The *ayeyin* enjoys some special privileges from the mother's family, lineage, village and even clan of origin, particularly, if the woman was married to another lineage, village and clan (Udo 1983:149). This is because *ayeyin* is believed to have the blood of his mother's lineage in his veins and therefore was regarded as sacred to his mother's family, lineage and village (*ibid.*). It was a taboo for one to hurt this *ayeyin*. It was a general belief among the Ibibio people that *ayeyin* could neither be punished nor killed for any reason and neither could any member of his maternal family, lineage or village be a party to him being killed (*ibid.*). The *ayeyin* is also considered a fountain of prosperity for the mother's lineage (Charles 2005:344).

From the foregoing, one can clearly see the reason behind the respondents' following responses:

"I know that ayeyin (maternal grandchild) was, and is still, highly regarded in our tradition. As such, they play a significant role in reconciliation and peace-building (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)"

"...where there are disputes, in most cases the best persons to initiate and mediate peace is ayeyin (grandchildren from one's daughter/s, sister/s, aunt/s). This so because, in our culture, to treat ayeyin badly was a taboo" (FGC4). (See Appendix 11.)"

“I have seen, in some cases in our community, that the maternal grandchildren were able to mediate in difficult cases, resolving violent conflict amicably” (FGC5). (See Appendix 11.)

Charles(2005:344) asserts that the Ibibio viewed *ayeyin* as one of their justices of peace. Putting it differently, Udo (1983:150) affirms that *ayeyin* was one of the instruments of reconciliation and peace, because their decisions were final. An Ibibio popular saying holds that *ayeyin ebire iko edem eka* (the grandchild adjudicates in its mother’s patrilineage). When there is conflict, *ayeyin* can step in to make peace. Efang (1989:30 in Charles 2005:344) states:

If two people were fighting, the easiest way to separate them is to bring in an *Ayeyin* to intervene. Or, if a quarrel engulfed the mother’s people and settle the quarrel for them without fear or favour. He can impose fines ranging from drinks, fowl, or goats, but he does not participate in consuming them for they are taboos to him.

Charles argues that the items collected as fines were taboos to the *ayeyin* because he is not a member of his mother’s family and, as such, he does not share a common ancestral shrine (*iso ekpo*). These rules were strictly observed and transgressors were supernaturally punished; and some would even die unless propitiation rituals were performed immediately (*ibid.*).

The researcher on the one hand agrees with Ibibio scholars that, even with the modern judicial system of handling criminal cases, yet, to a great extent the Ibibio people still hold strongly to these religious practices and beliefs in *Abasi ayeyin* (God of ancestral derivation) today. The challenge now is how the church in Ibibio can develop this indigenous knowledge of the ancestral god in a new way that can bring about a change in the paradigm against violent conflicts in modern Ibibio society.

6.6.2 *Ukod/Ukot* as agent of peace

The data presented in 5.5.2.5 identify *Ukod/Ukot* as one of the agents of peace within the Ibibio context. Views presented in the discussion below support this position.

“I know that the Ibibio people have great regard for their in-laws, particularly if the son-in-law is perceived to be responsible. In this case, an in-law could become a vital element in reconciliation and peace-building.”(FGS6). (See Appendix 11)

The Ibibio society, like other African societies, had a very strong communal life. This life consisted of a web of social relations; *ukod* (in-law) was prominent among such numerous relationships. When a man married a woman from another family, all the members of both

families were automatically united in a relationship known as *ukod* (Esen 1983:134). The marriage institution in the Ibibio custom therefore creates both *ukod* and *ayeyin* kinship relations (Charles 2005:346), since marriage was regarded as a sacred bond in the Ibibio culture (Esen 1982:134).

The wife-giving and the wife-receiving groups become partners in the marriage relationship and are bound by rights and obligations of this kinship bond (Charles 2005:346). This bond makes both families and lineage sacred to them, according each other full mutual respect (Udo 1983:150), and an in-law may not be poisoned, harmed, injured, violently attacked, and killed. Hence, the popular Ibibio saying, “*Adue Ukod ase akpa nte unen*” (He who commits an unwholesome act against an in-law dies like chicken) (Charles 2005:346).

The Ibibio were very conscious of “*Abasi ukod*” (the deity of marriage relationships) who was always there to punish offenders (Esen 1982:346). Charles was quick to clarify that, yes, there may be some misunderstandings that bring disagreements or quarrels between in-laws but, in the event of fights arising from extreme provocation, the rule is that none of them must inflict injury on the other as the Ibibio maintain, “*Anwan ukod ese ewana ke ekung ubok*” (in-laws fight using elbows). Unlike the Nuer tribe of Sudan, who are free to use clubs in a fight between affines, the Ibibio abhors the use of weapons in such encounters knowing that they may end with injuries and, in the event of an injury, a ritual sacrifice must be performed to appease the *Abasi ukod* (Charles 2005:346). The taboos against harming an *ukod* in any way were strictly observed. Esen (1982:134) explains:

If for instance several persons were caught in a forbidden activity and were to be punished, if they involved *Abasi ukod* ... and proved that they were covered by such relationships, they were immediately released or their case was treated differently in the way that did not violate the spirit of the alliance.

In the Ibibio custom, *ukod* (in-law) is both a peace-maker and arbitrator in disputes involving the in-law’s family, lineage or village (Charles 2005:346). Udoh (1983:150) affirms: “In cases of dispute, no matter how serious, the decision of in-laws was final and immutable.”

6.6.3 *Imaan* as an agent of peace

The data presented in 5.5.2.5 identify *Imaan* as one of the agents of peace within the Ibibio context. Views presented in the discussion below support this position.

“Another important agent of peace in our tradition is the understanding of *imaan* relationship as it was and is still a taboo for one to harm his kinsman” (FGC4). (See Appendix 11.)

“If I may add to what he has just said, the practice also allows those considered as kinsmen to initiate peace actions and be part of peace negotiations among parties in conflict” (FGC7). (See Appendix 11.)

The *Imaan* (pact) is a peculiar Ibibio word used to describe a peculiar relationship entered into by villages or clans for mutual protection and the preservation of peace (Esen 1982:133). In other words, Charles (2005:346) maintains that the *imaan* kinship tie is a peace pact entered into by two hitherto acrimonious or belligerent communities. Udo (1983:1520) succinctly states: “*Imaan* helps in promoting peace and unity in the Ibibio land.”

In the event of violent communal conflict and war in the Ibibio traditional society, the *Imaan* (pact) was one viable means of peace and reconciliation. Ibibio scholars generally hold that an *imaan* pact always follows after dialogue, and such dialogue was often initiated by a neutral village chiefs or by the head of the clan (paramount ruler) and members of the clan council of chiefs who must have earlier sent an emissary with *ayei* or and *nuuk enin* to each of the warring villages as an injunction for a ceasefire.

After the parties had accepted going into *imaan*, they appointed a day and place for the ceremony that went with such a pact (Udo 1983:151). Esen (1982:134) describes the ritual process this way:

When the dispute was finally settled and the bloodshed was brought to an end, the two warring communities came together and bound themselves under an oath (*mbiam*) never again to shed each others blood. The ceremony solemnizing this bond involved, among other things, the mixing together of small quantities of blood drawn from the veins of selected representatives of the two communities in a complex series of symbolic rites ... The gods and the ancestors of both communities were called upon to watch over and enforce the observance of the oath, and to visit with calamities, dreadful disease or death, any member of the community or their descendants, who ever broke the oath or defaulted in its strict observance, either openly, secretly or by proxy.

Udo (1983:151) describes this process further:

The parties concerned brought *mbiam* and some drinks. All the palm wine and *mbiam* brought were put together in a pot. Each member cut his hand and put his blood into the mixture. The oldest man in the parent’s village of the group to be joined in *imaan* poured libation, after which libation was shared out to all present to show that they

had accepted the union. From that time on they had one totem, to indicate that they were indissolubly one. *Imaan* was also entered into after concluding a treaty that ended a war or wars between villages.

Such oaths, acting as a seal, normally foster lasting peace and terminate acrimonious behaviour unconditionally between warring communities (Charles 2005:346). Rather, members of both communities became *Imaan*, or allies and avoided any form of hostility towards each other (Esen 1982:134). Although *Imaan* may quarrel, they must not fight to avoid injuries that may lead to bloodshed. They were not to harbour evil plans against each other or fail to divulge such information to each other, if privileged to know about this (Charles 2005:346).

In the Ibibio culture, an *Imaan* pact was a socio-political alliance that demanded partners to become allies and support each other against external aggression and attack. Charles (2005:146) argues that the political aspect of an *imaan* pact seems to have diminished in modern Ibibio society because, now, inter-community warfare is rare. The researcher quite agrees with Charles that the *imaan* pact is diminishing and inter-community warfare is rare, but that does not eliminate conflict in contemporary Ibibio society, as there have been many cases of violent communal conflicts in the last two decades in various parts of Ibibio land. Even to date, many Ibibio villages are in conflict, though such conflicts have not resulted in war, but there are bitter grievances against each other and such cases are heard in the law court.

Eka (2008:33) states (and the researcher agrees with him) that conflict is a pertinent part of human existence, and, wherever human beings exist, conflicts also exist. Eka (2008:33) argues as follows:

Conflict occurs in linear progression of varying intensities. The lowest intensity signifies differences which may be in views or interest. However, if differences are not de-escalated, the conflict process will escalate to the next stage which is opposition.

Umana (2003:67 in Eka 2008:33) echoes: “If opposition is not ceased and de-escalated, it has the propensity to intensify into antagonism, from antagonism to conflict and then it may escalate to tension and thereafter war.” If Eka and Umana are to be taken seriously, then there is an urgent need for us, as Ibibio people, to find a lasting solution to the many cases of conflict which are common in our contemporary society, in order to avert the loss of lives and properties, and provide a good atmosphere for democracy and sustainable development.

6.6.4 Esenowo (stranger/visitor), as an agent of peace

In this segment of the study, the data also reveal that strangers were also regarded as agent of peace and reconciliation

“I agree with the view of others but I want to add that Ibibio also recognize strangers (essenowo) also as agent of reconciliation and peace. (FGS10.) (See Appendix 11.)

“...most cases in our culture it is strangers, especially visitors to the family or visitors to the community that easily facilitate peace during conflict. Our people are very hospitable, and the love and respect we have for strangers make strangers good agent of peace..” (FGC 6). (See Appendix 10.)

6.6.5 Utomo owo (seeking protection), as a means of peace

The data presented in. identifies *Utomo owo* as one of the process of peace within the Ibibio context particularly in minor conflicts. Views presented in the discussion below support this position.

“In minor conflicts, utomo owo was the most common ways of seeking protection from elders and it engenders peace” (FGC6). (See Appendix 10.)

“...To me, utomo owo (seeking protection) engenders peace in the sense that ... the elder is expected to provide protection and would do everything to make sure there is reconciliation and peace. If the party angered, insists on carrying out his or her violent act against the other, then it becomes an act of disrespect to the elder who intervened” (FGC7). (See Appendix 10.)

The Ibibio cultural respect for elders was taken very seriously. To be disrespectful, especially to an elderly person, was considered as deviant behaviour. Ibibio scholars hold that, to some extent, injustice was handled informally. An accused person could seek protection from an elderly person, or a chief, especially a person of influence outside his area of jurisdiction (Ukpong 2001:101). This practice was called *editimo owo/Utomo owo* (seeking protection from a third party) (Esema 2002:26; Ukpong 2001:101). Symbolically, the meaning of *editimo owo* means finding protection from a stronger person in the community or neighbouring community, who would immediately intervene by ensuring that both parties reconcile. (Esema 2002:26). In the same way, if a murderer runs to another village, then that village was bound to protect him, grant him “asylum” (Ukpong 2001:101). This act was the

most common way of settling fights and minor conflicts, especially among the youth and, for them, it was the easiest way to resolve their conflicts.

6.7 THE ROLE OF IBIBIO WOMEN IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

The discussion below is derived from respondents' views as indicated in 5.5.2.5 which reveal that women were also agents of peace in the Ibibio society. For instance, FGS3 and FGC8 have this to say:

"...Although women were, and still are, the worst victims of violence, yet, in traditional Ibibio society women were agents of peace" (FGS3).(See Appendix 11.)

"...You see, among the Ibibio, Nto aban (married daughters of the family) were highly respected and cherished by their families and communities. As such, in the unfortunate event of conflict and war, their voices for peace were usually regarded and, in some cases, could bring peace" (FGC8).(See Appendix 10)

Validating the above views further, Abaraonye (1997:2005) asserts that most African societies were patriarchal societies; yet, women exercised considerable power through their membership of secret societies and title organizations, which were the actual power behind the government in Ibibio land. Prominent among such secret societies were *Iban Isong* and *Ebre, Assian Ubo Ikpa, Nyama or Ndom* (Ekong 2001:159) (societies which the researcher mentioned earlier in Chapter 2). For want of time and space, the researcher discusses the role of *Iban Isong*, as it was the only women's institution that could fight for justice, peace and the dignity of women within the Ibibio context.

6.7.1 *Iban isong* (women of the land) as Ibibio agents of justice

The data presented in 5.5.2 identify *Iban Isong* as one of the agents of peace within the Ibibio context. The data presented below and the literatures support this position.

"I know, as a woman, that the activities of Iban isong (women of the land) caused the Ibibio men to be afraid of abusing women ... but these days most communities no longer practice it because of the influence of the Christian religion" (FGS2).(See Appendix 11.)

“...I have participated in this before and I know that in those days, when *Iban isong* was a strong women pressure group in our land the incantation and causes of *Iban isong* used to bring terrible misfortunes upon culprits, even death...” (FGS4).(See Appendix11.)

Iban Isong (women of the land) was a predominant women’s organization which constituted a system of women’s government parallel to the village council which effectively employed group solidarity and organized pressure methods in projecting the interests of women as daughters, wives, mothers, farmers, traders, and members of the Ibibio community (Abaraonye 1997:206) The objective of *Iban Isong* was/is to protect all females from all forms of violence. According to Ekong (2001:159), the *Iban Isong* group sometimes constituted itself into a judicial body.

Ibibio scholars generally hold that, when *Iban Isong* assume the name *Iban Isong esit* (strong-willed or hard-hearted women), their actions were directed against men. Then they could impose any form of sanction against men who spoke rudely about women’s reproductive organs and/or engaged in other forms of violence against women; the village head acceded to such sanctions (Abaraony 1997:206). Udo 1993:152-153) argues that it was *Ekpa Iban Isong* and such functions were *Ekpo Nsabok* exacted judicial decisions on behalf of *Iban Isong* because of the traditions that surround the two secret cults.

However, if the culprit showed adequate remorse, he/she was asked to pay a fine (Ekong 2001:159; Abaraonye 1997:213). But, if the culprit became recalcitrant and stubborn, then the *Iban Isong* ritualistic action was applied against the culprit (*ibid.*). They left no stone unturned until they had brought an offender to complete humiliation and sometimes to death (Udo 1983:153). Apart from a heavy fine for the destruction of properties, the culprit was forced to sit in a circle drawn on the ground by *Iban Isong*, while in a ritual dance round him, they heaped curses on him, poured libations to the gods and ancestors, and also invoked the Supreme God to annihilate him any time he attempted to have sexual intercourse with a woman. They washed their private parts and forced him to drink the washed water and then threw the remaining water on the culprit (Udo 1983:153; Abaraonye1997:213-214). In the light of the above discussion, one could argue that the fear of disgrace, humiliation, shame and even death meted out by *Iban Isong* to their offenders, helped to regulate social behaviour among men and women in pre-colonial days. To some extent, it served as a deterrent to those who tended to engage in violence against women. The data presented above indicates that, when pushed to a wall, the Ibibio women also had a way of using violent

means to react against the abuse of the dignity of women folk. However, to some extent, certain actions taken by these women can be described as a violent approach. Consequently, it can be argued that, due to the way men oppress women, the women sometimes, with the help of *Iban isong*, also resort to the use of violence as a means to find peace.

6.8 EKPO/EKPE SOCIETIES: A MEANS OF PEACE AND JUSTICE IN PRE-COLONIAL IBIBIO SOCIETY

“In our culture, Ekpo and Ekpe societies performed judicial functions as they ensured that the decisions of the elders and chiefs of the land were carried out” (FGC9).(See Appendix 10.)

“ in my opinion, it is because humans are naturally stubborn, that the secret societies and masquerades of the land used various means to intimidate and force people to keep to acceptable standards of the society” (FGS3). (See Appendix 11)

“... secret societies and some masquerades do threaten people, beat people, impose heavy fines on such “deviants.” For fear of beating and being asked to pay heavy fines, people comply with the rules and laws of the land” (P4).(See Appendix15)

Among the Ibibio, the village or clan council chiefs made laws to govern their communities. Such laws were made for the protection of the lives and property of all the inhabitants and were strictly and rigidly enforced and were strictly obeyed for fear of punishment (Noah 2002:12). Essien (2001:92) affirms that laws were usually enforced by using appropriate secret societies according to need. The secret societies enforced laws through physical coercion (Noah 2001:12) and, prominent among these law enforcement agencies, were the *Ekpo* and *Ekpe* secret societies (Udo 1983:136-140). Udo argues that these societies were in no way different in their aims and organization from the Freemasons of England (*ibid.*). The *Ekpo* society was an exceedingly awe-inspiring secret society (Noah 2001:12). Udo (1983:136-137) explains that *Ekpo Nyoho* (masquerade) always dressed in terrifying ways so that the mere sight of them frighten new members, women and children. Punishment was promptly inflicted on the disobedient and the deviant.

The *Ekpe* society was utilised for the collection of debts (Essien 2001:92). These societies exercise a great stabilizing influence upon the Ibibio society (Udoh 1983:137). However, in contemporary Ibibio society, though the judicial functions of these secret societies have been supplanted by modern instruments of government, their ritualistic and entertainment

functions still survive among the people (Ekong 2001:147). From the above discussion, it therefore follows that the Ibibio secret societies served as indigenous judicial instruments for the maintenance of peace and order in local communities (Akwaowo 1993:13). The fear of public punishment, exclusion and disgrace, which the Ibibio secret societies meted out on those who were deviant and disobedient, were indigenous methods which served as deterrents on the lawless. All these measures helped in maintaining some kind of balance in the society.

6.9 THE PCN AKWA SYNOD AND INDIGENOUS IBIBIO PEACE-BUILDING

Based on this study's data presented and analysed in 5.3.9-5.3.11, 5.5.6 and 5.5.7, it indicates that the PCN and the Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace. For instance, data in 5.3.11 specifically indicate that 60%, the highest percentage from the quantitative segment of this study, affirms that the PCN's Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ among the people. From the qualitative strand of the study, most of the respondents also agreed with this view. However, very few respondents maintained that the Church could improve upon its peace-building initiatives. Again, the study also reveals that the PCN peace initiatives have two main dimensions - the physical and spiritual needs of victims (see 5.5.61 and 5.5.62.) However, there is a need for the PCN's Akwa Synod to move beyond pacifism to non-violent resistance to all forms of violence within the Ibibio society. As such, the suggestions of respondents in 5.5.5.5 have to be taken into consideration. Again, in 5.5.8, the study reveals possible points of departure for effective preaching of peace within the Akwa Synod of the PCN, as could be seen in the responses from FGC9, (Appendix 10) , (FGS3, FGS6 and FGS8 Appendix 11), and P5 (Appendix 16).

".... if the Church looks carefully, it may discover some positive aspects in our indigenous peace practices, such as that dialogue, covenant, forgiveness, and reconciliation are emphasized in the Ibibio peace process and these are possible themes which can be used in a new way for effective communication of the message of peace-reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ" (FGC 3). (See Appendix 10.)

"To me, in the Ibibio peace process, there is room for prayer sacrifice and rituals. These are common themes one could find in our indigenous method of peaceful reconciliation. As a whole, the Church can explore new ways of reaching the people with the Gospel using these themes and other similar practices" (FGC9). (See Appendix 10).

“To me, dialogue and the use of persons of integrity is one viable option that can facilitate peace reconciliation and I am sure the people are familiar with it” (FGS8). (See Appendix 11).

“To me, Love is a good point of departure that could create a space for the Church to preach peace and do things that will promote justice and social transformation in our society today” (FGS6). (See Appendix 11.)

“To me dialougue and the use of persons of intergrity is one viable option that can facilitate peace reconciliationand i am sure the people are familier with it”(FGC9). See Appendix 10)

“I think the Church must dialogue with the Ibibio culture if it must effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching within the Ibibio context” (P5).(See Appendix 16)

The above responses indicate that the PCN’s Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace and could locate a point of departure that can make her effective in the communication of the Gospel through preaching. The quantitative data analysed earlier in 6. of this study, also indicate that 60% of the total respondents’ population agreed that the members of the PCN Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio notion of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ among the people. The table below indicates and summarizes possible points of departure for peace-preaching among the Ibibio people.

6.9.1 Towards a contextual hermeneutics of peace in the Akwa Synod

The term “inculturation” might be described as an integration of Christian experience of a local church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience expresses itself in elements of its culture and becomes a force that animates, originates, and innovates the culture for the purpose of creating unity and communion within the concerned church and the enrichment of the universal church (Roest Crollius 1984:15-16 in Riggs 2004:101). A field research report presented by Magesa (2004) supports Riggs’s positions as it indicates that most Africans understand that inculturation implies integrating Christian doctrines with useful African values, and the modern way of life with the goal of making Christianity a religion that is acceptable to all. In other words, it is an effort to bring together various aspects of our indigenous culture into the Christian context, so as to construct a more Christian life. Magesa argues that true inculturation is a profound experience that occurs in

the life of an individual or community due to a search for identification between the Gospel and culture, when there is mutual correction between the two. However, the challenge of inculturation remains unavoidable (Hilman 1993:48). Widjaja suggests that understanding peace as a continuum may help Christian believers and the church to become involved with peace-building, because then individuals could decide about the level on which they are and strive for the next level. But, the continuum starts from human peace with God and external to peace with their enemies because, without peace with God, we cannot talk about peace-building, not to mention doing it. According to Widjaja (2007:39) peace is not something that is built outside and only then comes inside; rather, it starts from within and ripens outside. He recommends Jesus' model of peace which, to him, started with God, also with families, with neighbours and sons and moved to the most difficult part: peace with the enemies. He outlines the following forms of peace-building that exist between peace with God and peace with one's enemies to include peace within oneself. Here, the core question is, Are we satisfied and content with ourselves and peace with our families; peace in the local church, peace among church denominations, peace with people of other faiths, peace with our neighbours, peace with colleagues in our place of work or business, peace with other citizens of the country, as well as peace with citizens of other countries - irrespective of race, tribe and status (*ibid.*)? From the foregoing, the challenge of peace-building is enormous, but the church must start from somewhere; it must take the challenge by first looking inward, addressing issues of conflict and violence within, before it can do any meaningful peace-building in the society.

Love

The African philosophy of peace, which was articulated earlier, is symbiotic with love. According to Oord (2010:195) love is theologically understood as the primary characteristic of God and emphasizes the self-giving love as an essential attribute of God's nature. To Oord, love is intentional acts in sympathetic or empathetic response to God and others who exist in a relationship and is concerned with promoting the overall well-being. St. John (1John 4:19) puts it this way: "We love because he first loved us." Taking it further, Jeanrond (2010:292) argues that the politics of love should be worked out in church as a local and global community in dialogue with the world's religious traditions as critical correctives.

Wink (1987:48) proposes a pragmatic approach to nonviolence - resistance with love of the enemy being the central part of this approach. He maintains that love of enemies is the litmus

test of authentic Christian faith that manifests in one's commitment to the cause of justice and liberation, which leads to the overthrow of oppression. Enunciating further, Wink (1987:49) explicates:

Love of enemies is the recognition that the enemy, too, is a child of God ... when we demonize our enemies, calling them names and identifying with them with absolute evil, we deny that they have that God within them which still makes transformation possible. Love of enemies is seeing one's oppressors through the prism of the reign of God—not only as they now are but also as they can become transformed by the power of God.

From the above arguments, it is clearly evident that nonviolence presupposes a level of humanness in every human being, however low he/she may be. Little wonder that Niebuhr (1996:263-264) argues that, when Jesus admonished his disciples to forgive seventy times seven, and his followers to go a second mile, this was not meant to buy their favour and freedom, neither was it an approach towards converting their enemies, but because he viewed them from an inner and transcendent perspective.

6.10 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

The above discussion was made based on data gathered from literature. However, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn as the available literature reveals that *first*; the Ibibio people see and understand peace as absence of violence. *Second*, that, in the Ibibio traditional society, there were various indigenous peace mechanisms and symbolisms which helped the people to maintain order in the society. *Third*, that, although the people claimed to see and understand peace as absence of violence, in practical terms, there were some elements of force and violence which were also involved in some Ibibio peace-building mechanisms. *Fourth*, peace initiatives were built around a fear factor, as people kept to traditional laws primarily, because they were afraid of death.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, the researcher begins with a brief summary of previous chapters covered in this work. Aims and purposes of the research are revisited in line with research questions, and recommendations are made to the PCN's Akwa Synod for consideration and implementation; and suggestions are also made for possible areas for further research.

7.2 SUMMARY

The first chapter of this dissertation, being the introductory chapter, includes discussions on the background of the research, the motivation, and the problem statement, aim of the study, research paradigm, research methodology and research design, as well as delimitations and definitions of key terms used in the study.

In Chapter 2, various concepts and understandings of peace were explored and presented. In an attempt to answer the questions: What is going on here? And, why is it going on? According to Osmer, a practical theological framework includes the descriptive empirical task and the interpretive task. This Chapter succeeded in revealing various meanings of peace available in the public domain, which later helped in the proper grounding of the Ibibio notion of peace within the scope of scholarship.

In Chapters 3 and 4, the historical background of the Ibibio people of Nigeria and the history of Presbyterianism among the Ibibio was briefly surveyed as part of the descriptive empirical task and interpretive task of Practical Theology, mainly in order to facilitate a better understanding of the context and the phenomenon of peace and why a lack of peace is of great concern among the Ibibio people of Nigeria.

Chapter 5 of the study focuses on empirical research. Field data collected from respondents were presented, analysed and interpreted, using triangulation. Literature was also used to validate field data. Major findings include the following: that the Ibibio people understand peace basically as an absence of violent conflicts and war. Again, that the Akwa Synod does

understand the Ibibio notion of peace and that integration of certain aspects of indigenous peace-building into the church peace-building approach will make the PCN's peace-preaching and its peace-building initiatives more relevant and effective within the Ibibio social context.

Chapter 6 focuses mainly on the Ibibio notion of peace as an expression of an indigenous knowledge system in the globalized world. Respondents' views on various peace-building mechanisms, symbolisms, as well as the Ibibio peace initiatives, were brought to the fore. A detailed discussion included the following: the meaning of peace, symbolisms of peace, peace mechanisms, instruments of justice and peace, as well as the PCN's peace-building initiatives. The research discussed the Ibibio peace as an expression of indigenous knowledge, which serves as a pragmatic contribution to operationalizing the preaching of peace in order to promote forgiveness, justice, reconciliation, peaceful coexistence, transformation, as well as development - both within the Ibibio society and in Nigeria at large. Contextualizing the message of peace through inculturation was proposed as a possible way forward towards sustainable peace and social transformation.

In this chapter, the researcher retrospectively revisits the aim and purpose of this study, which is to examine the Ibibio concept of peace in relation to the physical, relational, moral and spiritual dimensions of humankind, with the hope that, if the PCN's Akwa Synod deeply understands the Ibibio notion of peace in its entirety, it might become more effective in her prophetic responsibility of preaching peace in the Ibibio society. This chapter therefore fits into the pragmatic task of Practical Theology, which has to do with the process of determining strategies of actions in desirable ways and engaging in a reflective conversation with 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted (Osmer 2008:4). Since it is not possible for any researcher to capture every aspect of a phenomenon in a single study, the Ibibio concept of peace and PCN preaching in this study has areas that were not covered. Consequently, this chapter also makes a suggestion for further research in order to help future researchers to capture indigenous approaches more fully. The study will end with a final conclusion.

7.3 REVISITING THE AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Does the PCN deeply understand the Ibibio notion of peace, in order to locate a point of departure for prophetic theological preaching of peace-reconciliation among the Ibibio people?

* What is the general understanding of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria?

- * What socio-religious and cultural principles underpin the ethics of peaceful co-existence among the Ibibio people?
- * If there is a sense of religiosity among the Ibibio people, to what extent has this religiosity reflected positively or negatively in the moral conscience of the Ibibio society?
- * Does the PCN have a prophetic and lucid vision for reconciliation, peace and social transformation to promote social justice, security and development?
- * To what extent does the Presbyterian Church, as a faith-based organization, serve as an agent of peace-reconciliation among the Ibibio people living in pain, hurts, deprivation and poverty as a result of injustice and violence?

In the light of the above questions, it becomes necessary for the researcher to reflect back on the aim and purpose of the study.

First: The socio-theological understanding of the notion of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria

This study reveals that the general understanding of peace among the Ibibio people is that peace means the absence of violent conflicts and war. Although the Ibibio concept of peace seems to emphasize physical violence more, structural violence remains a crucial phenomenon that must be addressed as well. This explains why respondents described peace in different ways, which include the following: that peace means to be violent free, a state of tranquillity and calm, a condition of well-being, a condition of happiness, to be or live in agreement, freedom from all forms of injustice, to live in harmony with others, some hold that true peace emanates from the fear of God; however the data also indicate that few respondents maintained that peace goes beyond absence of physical violence to include structural violence which to them is more dehumanizing. These understandings confirm what is found in literature in Chapter 2 and fits into Galtung's description of negative and positive peace. With the above findings, the first aim of this study has been achieved.

The study examined socio-religious and cultural principles that underpin the ethics of peaceful co-existence among the Ibibio people and the extent to which Ibibio religiosity reflected positively or negatively in the moral conscience of the Ibibio society.

This study reveals that the Ibibio people are very religious and, to a great extent, religiosity and culture are somehow interwoven in such a way that sometimes it becomes difficult to

separate the two. Culture that underpins the ethics of peaceful co-existence, as could be seen in Chapter 5, include the African sense of community, where all members of society are interconnected in some way. The Ibibio people enjoy this communal life by the sharing of: food, water, farm work, shrines and, in some cases, the sharing of common ancestors. Another cultural principle is the respect for elders and constituted authority, the cultural value and norms, as well as the society's traditional symbolisms. These core aspects of morality have helped the traditional Ibibio people in achieving social cohesion and peace.

Second: The study will examine the extent to which a lack of peace has led to the violation of human dignity of persons in the Ibibio context

The study reveals that violent conflicts and wars rape the Ibibio society of peace. The majority of respondents admit that they were aware of violent conflicts in the Ibibio society. Empirical research data presentation and analysis also affirm this claim. The quantitative data in 5.3.1.8 indicates this, and the qualitative data in 5.5.5 further validates findings in details, while the data in 5.5.5.2 reveal the root causes of violence and lack of peace in the Ibibio society, as identified by respondents. In 5.5.5.3 the data reveal that economic, communal, interpersonal and political violence are forms of violence common within the Ibibio society. Furthermore, the qualitative data in 5.5.5.4 reveal that respondents identified different consequences of violent conflicts and lack of peace, which, in broad terms, include the social, physical, psychological, economic and political dimensions. Prominent among these consequences are deaths, rape, injustice, displacements, hunger, corruption, an increase in the crime rate, unemployment, poverty, the abuse of human rights, and so on. These vices are a direct violation of the human person's dignity within the Ibibio context. To validate this further, the literature, summarized in 1.13.5, highlighted the central concept of human dignity.

Third: The study will investigate the contribution which the PCN and the Akwa Synod has made, and is making, toward the search for peace and reconciliation among the Ibibio people who are living in pain, hurts and poverty as a result of violence.

The data in 5.5.6 reveal the PCN and its Akwa Synod's peace-preaching to include pronouncements in the form of its published communiqués that focus on the plight of victims of violent conflicts, preaching (sermons) and teaching that could influence congregants against the use of violent resistance in the fight for peace, consistent prayers for peace for warring communities and victims of various forms of violence, counselling to traumatized

victims of conflicts, visits and the presentation of relief items to victims of communal violence, and pre-conflict mediation, particularly in communities with a Presbyterian presence. It is important to mention that, although both the qualitative and quantitative data affirm that the PCN render peace initiatives among the Ibibio people who live in the context of various forms of violent conflicts, it is the researcher's conviction that the opinion of the minority who hold that the PCN could do better than what they have done in the past, should not be ignored, as the Church could actually improved upon its past peace-building efforts.

Fourth: it will look at how the Ibibio understanding of peace could help the Church within the contemporary Ibibio society to rediscover value in the communication of the gospel of Christ through prophetic preaching and teaching, and through its caring ministry of healing and reconciliation, with a view to building sustainable peace and transformation among the Ibibio people.

This was address in the study as data emanating from the study affirms that the leaders of PCN's Akwa Synod do strive for peace in Ibibo society. See 5.3, and 5.5.6-5.5.6.2.3. Data in 6.9 also affirm that the Ibibio concept of peace is well understood by the Church. As such, if revisited, it could help both the Church and society to become more effective in its peace-building initiatives within the Nigerian context. However, certain indigenous aspects of peace-building that seem to promote violence, which include the concept of sacrifice, ordeals and the exclusion of women, could be addressed in a new way by the use of contextual theological interpretation of Scripture, through preaching and teaching as well as the caring ministry of the Church. Consequently, *Ubuntu*, the African indigenous peace paradigm, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 6, reveal that the concept of being human is based on a web of interconnectivity of persons within a community, "I am because you are." Members of the Church, as a family/community of God's people, are connected through the one body of Christ. And the love of Christ, which brings peace, must be shared within the family as well as with "one's enemy," in obedience to the divine command "love your neighbour as you love your self." Wink (48-52) holds that the test of one's love for God manifests in one's ability to see God in one's enemy (Matt 5:45).

The Church cannot continue to be timid and weak by hiding under the cover of pacifism, but must rise to the challenge of resisting violence with non-violent options by turning "turning the other cheek" according to the teaching of Jesus, particularly within a context that indigenous people would understand. Again, the Church must engage in dialogue with the

Ibibio indigenous non-violent peace initiatives, as suggested by respondents in Chapter 5. As such, it becomes imperative that both government and non-governmental organizations, such as the church and civil societies, search for ways of incorporating indigenous non-violent peace-building initiatives within the framework of a peace-building practice in their respective context; by integrating indigenous peace symbols as well as other desirable non-violent peace-building practices into the academic curriculum to be taught in PCN secondary schools and in theological institutions, as practical steps toward achieving sustainable peace among indigenous Ibibio people.

Fifth: As a way forward, the research hopes to suggest an alternative theoretical framework for meaningful preaching among the Ibibio, as well as in other indigenous African contexts.

This was done from the beginning by clarifying the understanding of preaching within the framework of this study in Chapter 1. Consequently, the researcher strongly argues that, if the Church could view preaching holistically by understanding preaching as being central to Church life and ministry in word as well as in action, as being a prophetic responsibility that focuses both within (as in transforming congregants' lives) and without (with regard to transforming society through exemplary living as the salt of the earth, by sharing the love of Christ throughout the world), not just in terms of the oral proclamation of sermons. This the Church could do so by sharing the love of God to both humankind and other creations, by speaking out against all forms of violence against humankind and environment, by resisting violence with non-violent actions, by carrying out peace campaigns, and by incorporating indigenous non-violent peace-building ideals within a given context as part of its standard peace-building framework. As such, the PCN's Akwa Synod must carefully revisit the Ibibio peace-building mechanism with a theological lens in order to locate issues that could relate to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and interpret them in new ways in order to enact a fresh understanding of peace within the people's context, without losing the true message of the Gospel. These issues include the following: (the researcher's) use of traditional peace symbols such as:

- i) a palm frond, water, wine and so on;
- (ii) the dynamics of Ibibio language and other expressions as a strong medium for peace negotiation among the people;
- (iii) the significant role of the elder in peace dialogue among Africans;

(iv) the significance of prayer, communal fellowship, sacrificial service and other rituals.

Although all these elements could be found in different traditional African ways of worship, there is a need to teach these again and again in catechism, Bible study, in workshops, seminars and during conferences in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of how indigenous peace concepts could help one to be peaceful, thereby reducing violent conflicts to the barest minimum and promoting peaceful-coexistence and social transformation as well.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the arguments put forward in this study, it will be problematic for the PCN's Akwa Synod to completely fulfil its prophetic responsibility to the Ibibio society who live in hurt, pain, hunger and poverty as a result of various brutal violence. As such, the following recommendations are suggested in order for the Akwa Synod to effectively carry out its task of preaching peace-reconciliation within the Ibibio context, based on the results of this study.

7.4.1 That the PCN's Akwa Synod should hear the groans of the victims of violence and poverty in order to make preferential options for the poor by working uncompromisingly for justice and the improvement of the people's living conditions. The voices of the poor and of victims of violence include: the voices of children who are abused and accused of witchcraft, children who are forced into child labour and slavery, children who are left in the streets to fend for themselves; the sigh and cry of women suffering from exclusion, as well as inequality due to gender discrimination; the cry of the youth suffering from illiteracy, as well as unemployment; the voice of young girls who are forced into prostitution due to poverty, as well as other girls who are forcefully subjected to genital mutilation under the so-called "tradition"; the voice of retired civil and public servants whose allowances are owed for months, the elderly in the rural areas who cannot afford a single meal as a result of poverty; the voices of individuals who are victims of communal wars, kidnapping, and other forms of physical violence that are politically or economically motivated.

7.4.2 That the Synod should articulate the Christian theology of peace and reconciliation in a truly balanced African context - never allowing culture to take precedence over Christianity, by expressing the African concept of its concrete experience of injustice, poverty, violence and abuse of human dignity, and by presenting biblical answers to these problems.

7.4.3 That the Akwa Synod engage the indigenous Ibibio concept of peace (as recommended by respondents in this study) in dialogue, with a view to integrating indigenous non-violent

peace mechanisms of the Ibibio people into its peace-building initiatives through inculturation, as this will help the Synod on the one hand to become more successful in its peace-building agenda among the Ibibio people and, on the other hand, will fulfil the agenda of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) of the World Council of Churches .

7.4.4 That the PCN's Akwa Synod should develop a comprehensive healing programme as part of her strategic long-term plan towards healing a society traumatized by various forms of violence. To start with, in a year, one week could be set aside as a week of peace where peace is emphasized. The programme may include peace talks; an enlightenment campaign, where members and others are informed of the negative impacts of war and violence on human dignity; and regular visitations to victims of various forms of violence should be intensified during, and after, such programmes.

7.4.5 That Synod should provide a trauma-healing and rehabilitation centre where care and professional counselling could be offered to traumatized victims of various forms of violence, and that the services at the centre should cater for both Church members as well as other members of the community. Such a centre should include an orphaned babies' home too.

7.4.6 That a course in peace and conflict resolution be introduced into the PCN school curriculum of both secondary schools and theological institutions, in order to train youths as well as ministerial candidates in a non-violent option for peace and conflict resolution.

7.4.7 That capacity building programmes, in the form of training and re-training programmes on non-violent conflict transformation and healing skills for victims and relatives, be provided for pastors, church elders and also other leaders.

7.4.8 That the understanding of the Ibibio indigenous part of the African concept of peace, where peace is understood based on spiritual, social, interactive and interdependent ("a person become a person through persons") dimensions, should challenge the Church in Nigeria, and the PCN's Akwa Synod in particular, to adopt the radical love of the "enemy," exemplified by Jesus' model of peace in his preaching ministry as the active non-violent approach to resist and overcome both physical and structural violence in the Ibibio society.

7.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has opened up avenues for future researchers to conduct research in areas that are covered in this study:

- a. Inculturation and the theology of peace in an African context.
- b. A practical theological study on gender inequality within the PCN.
- c. The role of the PCN in the fight against female genital mutilation in contemporary Nigerian society, a case study of the Akwa Ibom State.
- d. Church worship as a viable agent of change on the praxis of domestic violence: a practical theology within the PCN's Akwa Synod.
- e. The role of Christian women in sustainable peace-building among Ibibio people of Nigeria.
- f. The place of human dignity in contemporary church ministry: a practical theological study within the PCN.
- g. The role of the Christian Church in the fight against child witchcraft accusations among the Ibibio of Nigeria.
- h. The role of the Church's preaching in shaping character-formation of the Christian youth: a practical theological study within the PCN.

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APPENDICES



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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE AMONG THE IBIBIO PEOPLE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY WITHIN AKWA SYNOD OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NIGERIA.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by: Rev Ivan Ekong, Ph.D student in the Department of Practical Theology and Missiology, Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. The results will contribute to his Ph.D research and dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your position, membership and role in Ibibio community and in the Akwa Synod of Presbyterian Church of Nigeria.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims at coming to an understanding of the notion of peace among the Ibibio people of Nigeria with reference to the physical, relational, moral and spiritual dimensions of their life. It will also look at how a traditional Ibibio understanding of peace could help the church within Ibibio contemporary society to rediscover its value in the communication of the gospel of peace through preaching, teaching and caring ministry with a view to building peace, to promote reconciliation, justice and social transformation particularly among the Ibibio and in the larger Nigerian society.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

Share with the researcher your view of the meaning of peace in the Ibibio sociocultural and religious context, the different methods of promoting peace and reconciliation among Ibibio people of Nigeria and why you think we need peace in Ibibio society today. You will also be asked to share what you think the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Akwa Synod have done, is doing and should do in order to bring about lasting peace in contemporary Ibibio society. In this regard you would be asked to participate in individual and group discussions with the researcher and fellow participants for about 30 minutes twice a day for two days. This will be done in in your community at a place and venue convenient to you.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is no risk or discomfort that may occur to you for participating in this study except that fact it may take a bit of your time. Please note that you are at liberty withdraw your participation in this study at any time you experience any discomfort with such participation.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There is no material benefit for your participation, however it is hoped that this study will provide you with an opportunity to reflect and discuss on issues of peace and social justice concerning your society. The result of this research therefore will help the church its leaders, NGOs, scholars and policy maker to be more knowledgeable and more effective in peace-reconciliation mediation practice among Ibibio and in the larger Nigerian society.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no form of remuneration for your participation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping all data, be it electronic or on hard copy, will not be accessible to anyone except the researcher. Electronic data will be protected by passwords.

The result of this study will be available to Stellenbosch University and will be published in a PhD. dissertation. However, your identity will not be disclosed in result.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following people:

Prof. J H Cilliers (Supervisor)
Tel:021-808-3264
E-Mail: jcilliers@sun.ac.za
P M B, Matieland, 7602
Stellenbosch
South Africa.

Rev. Ivan Ekong(Principal investigator)
+2348037043653
E-Mail: rev.ivanekong@yahoo.com
P O Box 294, Uyo- Akwa Ibom State
Nigeria.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.] I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*English/ Ibibio*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* _____ by _____].

Signature of Investigator

Date



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Approval Notice
Response to Modifications- (New Application)

08-Mar-2013
EKONG, Ivan

Protocol #: HS857/2012

Title: The concept of peace among the Ibibio people and its implications for preaching: a practical theological research within Akwa synod of the Presbyterian church of Nigeria

Dear Mr Ivan EKONG,

The **Response to Modifications - (New Application)** received on , was reviewed by members of **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **27-Feb-2013** and was approved.
Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: **07-Feb-2013 -06-Feb-2014**

Standard provisions

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your **protocol number (HS857/2012)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

After Ethical Review:

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981). Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant parties. For approvals from the Western Cape Education Department, contact Dr AT Wyngaard (awynjaar@pgwc.gov.za, Tel: 0214769272, Fax: 0865902282, <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>).

Institutional permission from academic institutions for students, staff & alumni. This institutional permission should be obtained before submitting an application for ethics clearance to the REC.

Please note that informed consent from participants can only be obtained after ethics approval has been granted. It is your responsibility as researcher to keep signed informed consent forms for inspection for the duration of the research.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.
If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Included Documents:

APPENDIX 2

DESC Application
Interview Schedule
Proposal
Consent Form
Letter of Permission

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to verify that **Rev Ivan Ekong** is currently busy with his doctoral studies (PhD) under my guidance on the topic of Peace in Nigeria. He is on track for finishing his studies within the envisaged time, and has done important literature study, but now plans to do important empirical work during the year 2012. With this letter I am asking for consent that Rev Ekong may do this fieldwork within the Akwa Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria. I believe his work is of great importance for the work in Nigeria.

Please contact me if you need any further information.

With regards

Prof JH Cilliers

(Promoter)



3 February 2012



Fakulteit Teologie
•
Faculty of Theology





The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria AKWA SYNOD

C/o 73 Wellington Bassey Way, Uyo
P. O. Box 294, Uyo - Akwa Ibom State, Tel: 080-200515

20th February, 2013.

The REC

Through:
Prof J H Cilliers
Dept. of Practical Theology and Missiology
Stellenbosch University
South Africa.

Sir,

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT EMPIRICAL RESEARCH WITHIN AKWA SYNOD

We are glad to hear from you that the Rev. Ivan Ekong PhD candidate under your supervision is making good progress in his studies.

His Research Topic: *The concept of peace among the Ibibio people and its implications for preaching: A practical theological research within Akwa Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria* is a very relevant to both the church and society within our context. Consequently, he is hereby granted approval to conduct his research within our Synod area.

He is free to access our documents which within public domain, to conduct interview(s), hold focus group discussion(s) and to attend church services and activities such as prayer meeting and Bible study in any congregation(s) of his choice within the Synod area.

We assure you that his research will not have any negative impact on our members. However, in the case of any eventuality the following Ministers will be readily available to provide counselling: Rev. Isong Solomon Akpan (+2348063210982, +2347080114785, +2347054204558, e-mail: comradeinsolo@yahoo.com), Rev. Esiere Akpabio (+2347032753929, +2348029402866, e-mail: esiere.akpabio@yahoo.com) and Rev. Idorenyin Ekpe (+2348033262009, +2348124018836, e-mail: revidy2001@yahoo.com)

If you need further information do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Rev. Idorenyin J. Ekpe
Moderator - 08033262009

Elder E. E. Usanga
Treasurer - 08023020573

Rev. Elijah O. Inwang
Clerk - 08138952083

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NIGERIA



IKOT INYANG PARISH
BOX 16 ITU
AKWA IBOM STATE

Our Ref.....

October 8, 2012

Your Ref.....

Date.....

The REC

Through:

The Faculty of Theology
Stellenbosch University
Stellenbosch – South Africa

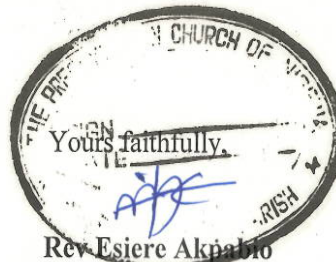
Sir,

CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I hereby declare that I have given consent to Rev. Ivan Ekong to conduct research within my Parish. He is free to attend my weekly programmes and to interview my parishioners; I have also given him consent to make use of my sermon for this research.

I will like to state that information given to him would not have any negative impact whatsoever on me and members of my Parish.

Thank you and God bless you.



Rev. Esiere Akpabio
Minister In-charge
Cell phone: 07032753929/08029402866
e-mail: esiere.akpabio@yahoo.com



The Presbyterian Church Of Nigeria
UTIT OBIO/ONO PARISH

Utiti Obio/Ono Headquarters,
Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area,
Akwa Ibom State.

6th Nov., 2012

Date:.....

Our Ref......

Your Ref......

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby grant Rev. Ivan Ekong, a PhD Student of University of Stellenbosch, South Africa my consent to carry out his research work within my parish. He is free to interact with members of my parish in the course of his research work

He is also permitted to use my sermon tagged "Reconciliation", preached on October 21st, 2012 at Utiti Obio North Congregation for his research work.

I affirm that this research will not cause any psychological or emotional damage to me and the entire membership of my church.

Yours faithfully



Rev. Isong Solomon Akpan

07080114785, 07054204558, 08063210982
comradeinsolo@yahoo.com



OFFICE OF THE PARAMOUNT RULER
Ibiono Ibom Local Government
Akwa Ibom State Of Nigeria



Local Government Headquarters
Oko Ita, Ibiono Ibom L. G. A.

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

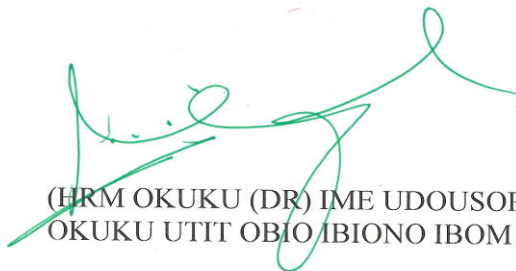
Date.....19th November, 2012

R. E. 
University of Stellenbosch,
Stellenbosch
South Africa

RE: REV. IVAN EKONG, LETTER OF CONSENT TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH IN IBIONO IBOM L.G.A

The above named had applied for consent to conduct research in
Ibiono Ibom LGA: the required consent is hereby and hereon granted, as
same will be beneficial to you, other persons as well as the Ibibio nation

I wish you very well.



(HRM OKUKU (DR) IME UDOUSORO INYANG)
OKUKU UTIT OBIO IBIONO IBOM LGA

APPENDIX 8

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

You are asked to participate in a research conducted by Rev. Ivan Ekong PhD candidate at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. This research is being conducted in partial fulfilment for the degree Doctor of philosophy in practical Theology.

You have been asked to participate in this study to enable Rev. Ekong gather the needed data to evaluate the concept of peace among Ibibio people and its implications for preaching within the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Akwa Synod.

Kindly choose any of the options that suit each of your view of the questions/ statements below. Your answers will be treated confidentially.

1. What is your gender?

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Which age bracket do you belong?

18-29	30 and above
-------	--------------

3. Where is your congregation located?

City	Urban	Rural
------	-------	-------

4. The Ibibio People of Nigeria understand peace as absent of violence.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

5. The culture and practices of Ibibio people do promote peaceful co-existence in the society.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

APPENDIX 8

6. Ibibio people are religious and religiosity influences the ways in which members of the society live and act.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

7. Absence of peace has influence on the life and activities Ibibio people.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

8. Conflicts and violence usually occur in Ibibio society and the consequences include destruction of lives and property, displacement, suffering, hurts, poverty and underdevelopment.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

9. The PCN Akwa Synod usually speak out and do things to prevent violence.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

10. The PCN have views and plans about reconciliation, peace and changing society for better which could promote justice, security and development.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

11. The PCN Akwa Synod do strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain hurts and poverty as a result of injustice, conflict and violence.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

APPENDIX 8

12. The PCN Akwa Synod understand Ibibio concept of peace and can effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ among the people.

Strongly agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly disagreed
-----------------	--------	-----------	--------------------

APPENDIX 9

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?
2. What is it, in your view, in what you believe and in your culture that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?
3. Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?
4. Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?
5. Are you aware of violent conflict in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?
6. Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?
7. Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?
8. Does the leader of PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate appoint departure for effective communication of the message of peace through preaching the gospel of Christ?

APPENDIX 10

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION 1(FGC)

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?

R:

FGC1: I think it is only when there is unity that we say there is peace, when we have division and fighting here and there that means there is no peace. Peace is also a state of harmony, and our people understand peace to be unity and harmony. Therefore to me peace in Ibibio world view can be described as the condition that is trouble-free, conflict-free, a condition of safety.

FGC2: In Ibibio thinking peace (emem), originates from the Ibibio word (meem), which is interpreted as “to calm situation” or “to soften”/ “to make soft” or “to make simple” / “to make easy. Other words used to further discuss peace in Ibibio context include words such as Ifure (tranquillity and calmness), Eduek/ Uforo, (Prosperity). Peace is also a condition or atmosphere where there is happiness and mutual understanding therefore if there is any element of violence in the society there is no peace, therefore to me peace means absence of violence. But to me peace in has to do with elimination of exploitative social structures in our society, and restoration of freedom of human rights.

FGC3: Without good health, safety and prosperity there is no peace. To me peace is the absence of violent conflict.

FGC4: I think the real peace come from God as a result of regeneration that is why Jesus said in the Bible “my peace I give unto you not as the world gives.

FGC5: I understand peace as the condition of well- being.

FGC6: Peace to me is absent of hostilities.

FGC8: I think peace in our context also means cessation of violent conflict.

FGC9: Peace means agreement to work or stay together we find out that when there is mutual agreement among people or parties there is peace.

APPENDIX 10

FGC10: To me no society can be absolutely free from conflict and violence; as the Ibibio proverb says, i) “abang ye abang odoreke kubium itreke ndutuaya (pots that are kept up together can never fail to hit each other).

ii) Mbara okpok osop se sop some iniehe se anam ukim (no matter how sharp the lizard's nails, it can do nothing to an iroko tree).in the light of the above Ibibio proverbs, I strongly believe that peace in Ibibio understanding does not mean absence of conflict or violence as human life cannot be totally free from it. As such, there could be some forms of conflict and violence in the society, and depending on its degree, if such conflict or violence does not affect the general well-being of the community, it means there is peace. For example, if an interpersonal or inter-family conflict does not disrupt the well-being of the community this need not necessarily be regarded as lack of peace. Although peace may be regarded as the absence of violence and war, but this excludes minor conflicts, annoyances or personal quarrels, because people do agree to disagree without such disagreements' disturbing the general well-being of the society as already mentioned by FGC2 above. So to me peace goes beyond absence of violence to issues of injustice, bad governance and corruption and poverty.

Q 2: What is it, in your view, in what you believe and in your culture, which makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R:

FGC1: I think our people had high respect for our traditional symbols of peace. For instance in those days, if there is conflict or war among parties and someone raised a palm frond, the warring parties must stop fighting and give peace a chance.

FGC2: I wish to say that some persons are agents of peace themselves in the sense that in the Ibibio culture they play some sacred roles. These people intervene when there is disagreement or conflict and they include nto aban (married daughters of the family), ayeyin (maternal grandchild), ukod (inlaw) and iman (kinsmen). When any of these persons step in to make peace, the factious parties must listen to them. It is believed that if one refuses to listen to them one incurs the wrath of the gods upon oneself (FGC2) “I will also like to mention that religious rituals were usually performed when there was any threat to peace in order to a peace God, other deities and ancestors PGC2”. In our tradition when there is conflict or war between two communities a neutral village head or clan head sends an

APPENDIX 10

elephants tusk to the warring community both communities will stop fighting immediately and peace talks begins there after. This is because we recognize and identify elephant tusk as one of the symbolisms of peace in our society.

FGC3: The Ibibio culture and religious values were passed on from one generation to another through informal education and in informal ways which include moonlight tales, proverbs, songs, rituals and prayers which the young people could easily adapt themselves, both religious and cultural values facilitate peaceful co-existence in our society in a very significant way. Again our strong communal life is one unique aspect of our culture that promotes peaceful co-existence. This is reflected in a common Ibibio proverb that says: “Eto isdaha ikpong ke ikot ikaapa akai” (“A tree cannot form a forest”), and “Ubok mmum ubok mmum ase atud ukpa” (many hands will push together a big log of wood). These two sayings affirm that an Ibibio person knows that one needs the support of the next person when one is in difficulties. As such one would strive to live in peace with one's neighbours both as individuals, family and community.

FGC4: To me Ibibio culture provides several ways in which people seek peace and reconciliation for instance the sacred roles of “ayeyin” (grandson), “ukod” (inlaw), “iman” (kinsman) and “esenowo” (stranger) are maintained in peace and reconciliation processes in traditional Ibibio society. This stems from the Ibibio understanding which strictly forbids harmful attacks on individuals. In other words, it is a taboo in Ibibio land to harm a grand child, an in-law, a kinsman or a stranger. This comes from the deeply-rooted Ibibio culture of peace and respect for human dignity. Every human falls within one of these four categories, whether as a grand child, in-law, kinsman or stranger. For instance where there are disputes in some families, in most cases the best persons to initiate and mediate peace are elders, in-laws. And ayeyin (grandchild: from ones daughter/s, sister/s, and aunt/s). This is so because; in our culture to treat a grandchild badly is a taboo. “Another important agent of peace in our tradition is the understanding of iman relationship as it was and is still a taboo for one to harm his kinsman.

FGC5: Communal life is one unique aspect of our cultural life that promotes peaceful co-existence. Our cultural practice of communal life, living in love together as a community: Sharing the joy and pain together, when I talk about sharing, sharing in African Ibibio context is very deep. In those days and even up till now people of the same village or community

APPENDIX 10

share the same farm area, the same stream, in those days when traditional African worship was popular people of the same community shared a common shrine and spoke the same language. So you can see the people live and share their lives together and have a lot of things in common. Then what affects one person affects the other. Then the sense of being our brother's and sister's keeper was very strong. All these and much more strengthened peaceful coexistence among our people; and to support what FGC4 said earlier, I have seen in some cases in our community where the maternal grandchildren were able to mediate in difficult cases, resolving violent conflict amicably.

FGC6: I feel our respect cultural symbols of peace such as ayei, nuuk enin, religious covenants and sacrifice this practices help regulate attitudes and behaviour of people in our society. Again most cases in our culture, it is strangers, especially visitors to the family or visitors to the community that easily facilitate peace during conflict. Because our people are very hospitable, the love and respect we have for strangers make strangers good agent of peace in our context" (FGC 6).

FGC7: In my opinion I think the cultural norms and values of our (Ibibio) people itself make for peaceful co-existence because it was a practical method of educating individuals and people were taught to respect themselves and others as well. If I may add to what he has just said, the practice also allows those considered as kinsman to initiate peace actions and be part of peace negotiations among parties in conflict. Another important peace practice was utomo owo (seeking protection, although it was commonly practice during minor conflict such as fights between siblings, parent and children as well husband and wife and between the strong and the weak this practice provide opportunity for the weak to seek help from the third party especially usually an elderly person. To me utomo owo (seeking protection) engender peace in the sense that the elder to was expected to provide protection would do everything to make sure there is reconciliation and peace. If the one angered insist on carrying out his or her violent act against the other then it became an act of disrespect to the elder who intervened.

FGC8: Tradition provided peace and order in our society for instance in traditional Ibibio peace building the elders and chiefs played central role in peace building as they were custodian of the tradition of the people, they were there to guide and direct in ways that suits the customs of the people. You see, Among Ibibio Nto aban (married daughters of the family) were highly respected and cherished by their families and communities as such in the

APPENDIX 10

unfortunate event of conflict and war their voice /voices for peace is usually regarded and in some cases could bring peace.

FGC9: You see, in the past people were mindful of doing things that could bring shame upon themselves, their–family and community; our concept of shame was strong enough to influence people’s behaviour. Again in our culture Ekpo and Ekpe societies performed judicial functions as they ensured that the decisions of the elders and chiefs of the land were carries out. People were afraid of the native laws and authorities, they were afraid of the embarrassment their actions could cause them, their families and their entire communities. This consciousness in itself promotes peaceful co-existence.

FGC10: Another very important the agent of peace in our tradition was the idiong institution, in fact it had a strong spiritual influence on the peace among our people “abia Idiong”(the diviner) had power to see and communicate with gods and the ancestors thereby revealing what could bring violence , conflicts and calamities before hand. The warning the give was taken very seriously that engenders peace and peaceful co-existence possible.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R:

FGC1: It is Ibibio religious responsibility that made parents strive to inculcate high moral values into their children right from infancy. Among Ibibio, religious and moral upbringing goes hand in hand. Parents had to indoctrinate their children on the acceptable norms and values of our people such as truth, justice, distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong, praise and blame, decency, respect, kindness, patience, forgiveness and love, character, integrity, crime and punishment, rights and responsibility and so on, from early life to adulthood. Although there are a few deviants there are always traditional sanctions within the society applicable to different age groups, which are meant to check and discipline deviant behaviour. It is the sense of religiosity that helps people to live well with each other, to settle their differences and to maintain peace and harmony in society.

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FGC2: I know that in our traditional context rituals sacrifice and covenant is sometimes part and parcel of peace process and example of it is ubuk udung (sacrificial act of burying mother) which is a deep traditional covenant that seals peace agreement. This is so because it will involve few drops of blood taken by making small cuts from individuals selected as representative from the affected communities involved in conflict as a seal of the peace agreement.

FGC4: Our proverbs is our fountain peace as a wide range of resource used in peace building and our elders make use of this rich resource to bring about reconciliation, peace and justice through dialogue.

FGC5: Ibibio people are spiritual because they have a deep sense of worship of the Supreme Being (God) and other deities. Information about God was limited to the ideas of people within one's local community, but today religious awareness is not restricted only to our traditional religion and Christianity. In Nigeria one is free to worship, irrespective of one's religious affiliation. Religion means different things to different people, and it come with its unique culture, unlike previously when we had only traditional religion and later, Christianity. It is true that religion influences the way Ibibio people live and act but such influence could be positive or negative, depending on one's level of commitment to his or her religious beliefs. Most of the time the majority of people are only ostensibly religious, that is why it looks as if religiosity has little or no influence in our society today.

FGC5: In my opinion I agree with what others have said but I will to emphasise that Ibibio proverbs and wise sayings remains one of the richest resource of peace.

FGC7: I think mbiam (traditional oath) was an important agent of peace since mbiam but it was use as the last resort in knowing the truth and for the fact that every Ibibio adult knew that if he or she swore on it deceitfully he or she was bound to die; therefore elders and chiefs always use it in administering justice aiming disputing parties. But because of fear of death culprits do plead guilty even before oath is administered.

FGC8: I agree that with the FGG7 that mbiam(traditional oath) ukang(ordeal) was a another method of knowing the truth as it was and is still use to detect who tell lie and speak the truth as such it was and is still an important traditional instrument of peace.

Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

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R:

FGC2: You see with peace in society, people could move freely to where they want to go, be it their work places, market, or farm, there will be no fear of insecurity as such, and economic activities will be at its peak in a peaceful society.

FGC3: I believe peace makes for a strong and healthy society and I feel that true peace is a sign that there is justice in society; and when justice and fair play are give chance, it is then that our dream for peace in Ibibio society will become a reality. But as long as deprivation, oppression and injustice continue, as long as the ruling class continues to amass wealth for themselves and for their born and unborn children and refuse to listen to the plight of the poor majority in our society, peace will remain a mere illusion.

FGC4: I agree with what FGC3 has just said.

FGC5 If there is peace in our land; it will have a positive influence in our society. But for peace and stability to have meaningful influences on a people there must be good governance.

FGC7: I belief peace promotes socio- cultural, religious, political and even infrastructural development.

FGC8: Yes, when there is peace there is stability, as peace makes for a strong and healthy society.

FGC9: Speaking from experience you see, we have a situation where churches and shrines and other places of worship are burnt down during communal war. When there is peace in society political leaders and chiefs will be planning programmes, events and projects that bring development to their localities but none of this will be achieved when there is no stability.

FGC10: I agree with what was said earlier that when the society is peaceful politically, it promotes both human and infrastructural development. If our communities become more peaceful we will definitely witness greater development than what is obtained today.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflict in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

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R:

FGC1: I think another cause of violence and lack of peace in our society today is inequitable distribution of infrastructures and social amenities. You see when Government engage in unequal distribution of amenities and infrastructures by developing a particular area people of the underprivileged area will definitely feel cheated and oppressed as such they will want to struggle for power in order to have a fair share of infrastructure. In most cases victims of violence find themselves in a condition where they cannot afford basic needs such as food, houses and health care. Indeed life in such area becomes paralyzed, leading to a high cost of living and suffering.

FGC2: To me unemployment is one major cause of violence, you see when youths are not occupied positively they tend to release their energy through violence. Again I wish to say that individual families and neighbouring communities often engage in boundary disputes that lead to the destruction of lives and property, and in some extreme cases it can even lead to the extinction of the entire village or community and I also think the root cause of violence and lack of peace is greed: it is common to see individuals in our society today who embezzle public funds in order to enrich themselves and these individuals use the influence of their wealth to intimidate and oppress others. In order to resolve conflicts and to reduce violence government, the church and other NGOs should collaborate with community leaders towards resolution and to achieve peace. By 'community leaders' I do not refer to local chiefs alone, it includes opinion makers, women leaders, youth leaders, top educated men, people holding political offices and positions in government, religious leaders from both Christian and other religious groups. All must take part in seeking peace collectively for themselves and for the community.

FGC3: I am aware of violence in our society; it has happened in my village where we had communal clash with Ikot Offing (our neighbouring) the entire Ikot Offing village was destroyed till today no body lives there. I think most of the fighting and wars we witness are always caused by boundary disputes, even chieftaincy tussles sometimes plunge the community and even neighbouring community into a violent crisis that leads to destruction of lives and property. Due to violent conflict many people are denied access to their ancestral homes, farmers who depended on their farms for means of livelihood always suffer economically due to deprivation. In fact consequence, conflict and violence can hurt people deeply to the extent that they become bitter all through life. An embittered person is like a

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loaded gun waiting for a trigger, and it explodes. This trigger could be information or an act of provocation. The ripple effect of violence is more and more violence. Personally I suggest we learn from our indigenous peace mechanism irrespective of what think about them because that is and will ever remain the root of reconciliation and peace. And when I talk about indigenous peace mechanisms I am referring to ways of preventing violence, ways of making peace, our indigenous ways of peace building which include: the role of chiefs and elders, the role of age grades, the role of women; the role of ayeyin(grandson) Ukot(in-law), iman(kinsmen); the symbolic role of nnuk enin(elephant tusk), eayei/akpin(palm frond), ndom(native chalk), ubuk udung (covenant pact of/act of burring motter), the role of oaths and ordeals and others. These are deep traditional practices we cannot ignore.

FGC4: To me I think greed is the root cause of violence, because some individuals and community who feel they are stronger would always love to trespass either the farm boundary of others in order to enlarge theirs. To me for us to witness peace in our society today, I think there should be a campaign for peace in our media because the media's influence especially on young people is so incredible; this medium should be used positively.

FGC5: You see, there is a high degree of unemployed people in our communities and politicians and some opinion leader often instigate them pay them and use them for violence. Again cultism has become a common phenomenon among youths and day after day cult groups keep increasing. It's common to hear that one cult group is fighting with the other and in some cases they fight and even kill themselves this is worrisome. I think also agree that greediness is one of the root cause of violence and lack of peace in our society today as men and women compete for recognition based on financial status since the society seems to honour people with wealth and riches. Some people have lost their loved ones as a result of war and other violent conflicts, to some family members are exposed to terrible pain and agony this trauma can be very deep. In order to bring about peace in Ibibio society, government must use every available means to educate people and to create an awareness of the menace of violence and its effects on Ibibio people.

FGC6: I don't think anyone will deny that our society is full of violence. For instance if you watch our television or listen to our radio, you will not need somebody to tell you that the rate of violence in our society is quite alarming. For causes of violence, I think if our youths are gainfully employed they will not become ready instrument in the hands of politicians to use and perpetrate acts of violence. As a result violent conflicts, people are loosing their lives

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and properties on daily basis. My suggestions are follows: That timely intervention be made in communal and other forms of violence by government and non-governmental organizations by adopting indigenous approach of dialogue as first step to resolving conflicts. In most cases the legal means of justice is very slow; sometimes before judgement is given the situations are already out of control.

FGC7: Cases of violent conflict is very common in contemporary Ibibio society, they come in different forms, political violence, ethnic and communal violence. To me land is one form of violence that has been with our people for a long time. In the olden days Ibibio people were predominantly farmers and even today most Ibibio rural dweller are peasant farmers who depend mostly on land use for various purposes: they build their houses on land, cultivate crops for food consumption and even sell some to earn a living. Therefore for an Ibibio man land has a very high economic value. Sometimes individuals, families or communities lay claim to ownership of a parcel of land for one reason or the other. Such a claim always calls for disagreements and conflict which is capable of throwing the entire community into confusion or bloodshed.

Again In most cases those who want political office do instigate or manipulate their people and in most cases the entire community or clan into conflicts and violence especially when their demands are denied over a period time. Apart from the fact that many people have lost their lives, properties and means of livelihood as a result of violent conflicts, some communities are completely destroyed, the people are squatting in other places, and some villages have been razed. I have also observed there is poverty, hunger, unemployment as effects of violence and war. In fact Women suffer most because in most cases if one's husband or a son who is the breadwinner is killed, leaving a family with many children in the process, then the woman begins to struggle alone without support. For me to find solution to this problem I think the church must continue to pray for peace, the PCN Akwa synod must continue to preach and teach peace, but beyond preaching we suggest that the PCN organize seminars and workshops to educate members on the need for peaceful co-existence. Such seminar should be open to PCN members and the general public; it should be extended to schools and other public places such as local government councils.

FGC8: I think I agree that the struggle for political appointment is another cause of violence as people from areas that feel marginalized always would want to fight for political and other governmental appointments. Because, I have observed that if a community lack prominent

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political representative in government, in some cases such a community will be completely deprived of both social amenities and infrastructural development because there is no one to speak for you.

FGC9: I think it is also important to mention that the feeling of injustice and oppression is the basic motivation of the oppressed to fight against the dominate power this always raped the society of peace. Another cause of physical and psychological violence is witchcraft accusation and today a greater number of such victims are children who served as house helps, orphans, children of one parent who are taken into a second marriage and old women. Since there is no scientific way to prove who a witch is and who is not, immediately when one is accused he or she become stigmatized and defenceless, and in some cases the accused is subjected to dehumanizing treatment and death. Although the Ibibio believe that there are witches and that their activities have a negative effect on human existence, most of the people accused are innocent. Such accusations are made out of wickedness just to tarnish the image of the accused and to shy away from the responsibility of caring for the dependent infant or aged.

Q 6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R:

FGC1: Yes, the Church does speak out through preaching and teaching, through a published communiqué

FGC2: Yes, the preaching and teaching of the PCN centres on Jesus Christ, and the love of God for humankind gives peace; the real peace. But the church can do more than what it has done now if she will be more open to indigenous Ibibio peace practices.

FGC 3: It is believed that the PCN's voice is not loud enough. The PCN must be bold enough to condemn all manners of violence.

FGC 4: I agree with what FGC1 & FGC2 have said. But i want to add that we often engage in counselling people who are traumatized or depressed as a result of violence.

FGC5: I also agree with what FGC1 & FGC2 have said.

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FGC6: To me I agree that the PCN Akwa Synod need to be bold in speaking against violence just as FGC3 has said.

FGC8: Yes, because the church does seek justice and peace for many whom unfortunately have found themselves victims of conflict and violence, by speaking about peace prophetically through preaching. My community is a case in point.

7. QUESTION: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

FGC1: I think the conflict resolution committee of the PCN is saddled with the responsibility for peaceful mediation among communities in violent conflict, and they committee has tried its best. To me that is part of the PCN peace building initiative.

FGC2: I am convinced that the church can do more than what it has done now in terms of its response to the plight of victims of violent conflict.

FGC3: But I think our church in this Synod should be more actively involved in social work, especially in actions that could promote justice, security and development if it hopes to be relevant to people living within the context of violent conflicts.

FGC4: To me I think the PCN Akwa Synod has not been very passionate in the pursuit of peace for a community living in violence.

FGC6: Yes I know as a member of this Synod that we do pray for victims of conflict within our society and in other part of the world.

FGC: 7 I think the Church has been complacent and insensitive to the plight of victims of violence, even though they preach occasionally of love, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness, and sometimes respond by giving gifts which are however insignificant. I feel that the church can do much more than what it has done up to now.

FGC8: I could remember that when Ikot Offiong and Oku Iboku fought the PCN misters and some members visited victims who to seek refuge at Iffiyong so to me I think the PCN Akwa Synod has been doing its best.

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FGC9 I think I agree with what FGC8 has just said because, I could remember that my niece once told me that members of the church visited them at Ifiyong community where they were squatting and the prayer and counselling they received from their church leaders was very comforting as it gave us hope to face life.

FGC10: As others have mentioned, I wish to affirm that in our congregations materials are often collected from all the congregations within the Synod area for onward delivery to victims of violence. And the PCN generally does not relent in offering prayer constantly for victims of violence.

Q 8: Does the leaders of PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate appropriate departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R:

FGC1: We are not sure of the level of the Church's (PCN Akwa Synod) understanding of Ibibio peace and how that could help them communicate the peace messages effectively for the understanding of Ibibio people through preaching.

FGC3: To me the church is church because of its members there is no church and I know that leaders of Akwa Synod do understand Ibibio peace concept, the problem is that some Christians like to distance themselves from their culture but it is not all of our traditional practices that are bad, therefore I believed that if the church looks carefully, it may discover some positive aspects in our indigenous peace practices such as dialogue, truth, covenant, forgiveness, reconciliation are emphasised in Ibibio peace process and these are possible themes which can be used for effective communication of the message of reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ.

FGC4: Let me say that Ibibio members of the PCN are first Ibibio before they later decided on their religious affiliations. As such it is believed that the Church such as PCN having existed on Ibibio soil for a number of years, leaders should understand the Ibibio practices and way of life. It is this understanding that makes the church set acceptable standards between the culture and what would be acceptable in the church in other words, what practice is Christian and what is not. Some church leaders double as elders in the church as well as chiefs, village heads and clan heads. The Pioneer Ibibio Indigenous Presbyterian Late Rev. Effiong Utitt was a Minister and later he was made the clan head of Ibiono communities. So I

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am sure leaders of the church understand Ibibio peace and peace-building processes very well.

FGC5: I feel that there are aspects of Ibibio peace which the church condemns; some of these aspects were the real element of peace in Ibibio context. The traditional oaths and ordeals were very potent in revealing culprits, even in the law courts people are made to swear and they swear and still tell lies. You see, in a traditional Ibibio setting, before you take oaths you know that you are facing life and death and this always make people the truth. I think they must dialogue with Ibibio culture if it must effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching within the Ibibio context.

FGC6: Yes, I think we do and our preachers are doing their best to impact positively on congregants. But to me for the Church to become an agent of peace and reconciliation in society, much more than preaching, it involves other social actions and responsibilities. We must be strong and bold to make advocacies to government authorities and dialogue with our culture.

FGC9: To me in Ibibio peace process there is room for prayer sacrifice and rituals these are common themes one could find in our indigenous method of peaceful reconciliation as a whole the church can explore new ways of reaching the people with the gospel using these themes of and other similar practices.

FGC10: To add to what has been said already, I think if the church could develop and make use its institutions such as schools, hospitals farms and social services on HIV/AIDS as part of its tool towards peace social transformation of society.

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Focus Group Discussion 2 (FGS)

Q 1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?

R:

FGS1: To me peace in our context is understood as the general well-being of an individual or community. I also think peace is understood as a state of tranquillity where there is no conflict and violence

FGS2: To me I see peace as happiness because there can be no happiness in the home or society if there is no peace, so to me peace is happiness. I also think it's true to say that peace is not man made and has nothing to do with war like Bible describes it as the peace that passes all human understanding because that kind of peace is God's gift, there is no human government that can offer humans that kind of peace.

FGS3: I think Ibibio people know peace to be a situation where there is no physical violence such as communal or intertribal war.

FGS4: In those days when I was a youth, through our farming culture I know that good harvest was a sign of peace and blessing from God.

When there is calmness in the land, then we can say there is peace.

FGS5: I understand Peace to be comfort peace also means co-operation that comes from mutual agreement which involves give and take.

FGS6: I believe it is when an individual or a society is healthy then we can say there is **peace**.

FGS7: To me if members of a family or community are not happy it simply means that there is no peace as such peace means happiness

FGS 8: Peace is living within the fear of God, it is the fear of God that can help us in the way we treat one another.

FGS10: Peace for me is an inward experience which humans have as a result of their relationship with their God.

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Q 2: What is it, in your view, in what you believe and in your culture, which makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio possible?

R:

FGS1: Ibibio cultural symbols and traditional ways of settlement of disputes promote peaceful co-existence. One such symbol is the Ayei (palm frond): for instance, if there is a quarrel or conflict among people, when the ayei is raised the parties were expected to stop the fight.

FGS2: In our traditional peace-making methods, it is when individuals, families or communities have disagreements, then elders and respected members of the family or community are informed about it and they get involve in the resolution of the matter. With the intension of reconciling the aggrieved parties they get them to sit together and talk over their differences. These men and women must be people of integrity, who must not be impartial in the handling of cases because their concern was to see to it that members of the family or community live in peace. Again to me our educational methods and curriculum which trains individuals from infancy, through story telling, folk tales, proverbs, prayer, music and riddles effectively trained people to embrace value of justice, fair play and peace as it consist many illustrations which demonstrates advantages and disadvantages of peaceful coexistence. If I may quickly add to what FGS4 said as regard the role of Iban isong in the fight angst gender based violence, I know as a woman that the activities of Iban isong(women of the land) made Ibibio men to be afraid of abusing women in the past but these days most communities do not practice it again because of the influence of Christianity and Western civilization.

FGS3: I think Ibibio notion peace can be derived from both traditional prayers/libations but most of them are transported somehow into Christian church prayers, as well as church rituals. I also want to point out that from time even up till now ndom(white chalk) was and is still a symbol of peace , happiness, joy and blessing when one obtains justice one could celebrates by rubbing (white chalk) on parts of the body. Our culture places a high moral value on virtues such as obedience and respect for parents and elders, respect for traditions, laws and taboos, respect for God and deities. All these training helped to regulate the behaviour of members of the society in ways that promote peaceful co-existence. It must be mentioned that Although women were and is still the worst victims of violence yet in traditional Ibibio society women were agent of peace, They supported the men in different

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way one of such ways was the activity of nto aban (the daughters of the family or the community married to other families or communities) their intervention during conflicts was instrumental to peace. Particularly if the community they are married to are directly in conflict with the family or community of their origin. Again in my opinion, it is because humans are naturally stubborn, that the secret societies and masquerades of the land used various means to intimidate and force people to keep to acceptable standards of the society. I think fear of stiff penalties, punishment and deaths made people made resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

FGS4: Our culture places a high moral value on virtues such as obedience and respect for parents and elders, respect for traditions, laws and taboos, respect for God and deities. All these training helped to regulate the behaviour of members of the society in ways that promote peaceful co-existence. To add to what FGs3 said about the role of women in peace building. The role of Iban isong (women of the land) was very instrumental in the fight against women abuse and other form of violence against women. I have participated in this before and I know that in those days when Iban Isong (iban Isong) was a strong women pressure group in our land the incantation and invocation of curses of Iban isong used to bring terrible misfortunes, sometime death upon culprits. The fear of curses, and possible death helped in minimizing violence against women and engender peace. Again, the age grade system promotes and facilitates peace and peaceful co- existence. Our communal way of living is one unique aspect of our cultural life that promotes peaceful co-existence as emphasis is not on individuals but in community.

FGS5: To me the wise sayings form our elders, our proverbs, our folk tales, folk songs and riddles remain the greatest source of Ibibio notion of peace. This is because the elders do make use of the proverbs and folk tales and song to communicate messages of peace to younger generation. And again as our regards culture of peaceful co-existence, in our culture it is only when one gets to know the sauce of ones pain, or misfortune it is then and only then can one begin the search for a possible solution this is why divination was and is still seen as a means to peace within Ibibio context. People will want to know the cause of their misfortune, such as barrenness, family problem, sickness, cause of war, famine, and death to mention but few. It is the search for these causes that the diviner and divination become relevant to the people. But these days Ibibio Christians seems to seek answers to these problems from the church leaders through “prayers and prophecies” and that is why many Ibibio people prefer to attend African independent churches.

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FGS6: I know that ayeyin(maternal grandchild) was and is still highly regard in our tradition as such the play significant roll in reconciliation and peace building still is our society. I also feel that it is the traditional recognition given to in-laws, kinsmen and grandchildren that accord them status that can easily facilitates reconciliation and peace among grieving parties. I also know that Ibibio people have great regard for their in-law particularly if the son in-law is perceived to be responsible. It is in this case that an in-law could become a vital element in reconciliation and peace building

FGS9: In our traditional elephant tusk was recognized and respected by all as a peace symbol. But nowadays such practices are fast disappearing because only the court actions has legal backing from government

FGS10: I agree with the view of others but I want to add that Ibibio also recognize strangers (essenowo) also as agent of reconciliation and peace.

Q 3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R:

FGS1 It is religious knowledge and understanding that promotes morality and moderation in the way Ibibio people live and act. This thinking affects every aspect of their life. That is why prayers are said and sometimes sacrifices and libation are made on important occasions such as marriages, births and funeral ceremonies, during planting seasons and harvest festivals.

FGS2: In my opinion Ibibio are not just religious but very religious. Before the advent of Christianity Ibibio people recognized and worshiped Abasi Ibom (Almighty God) as the creator of all things visible and invisible. Religion deeply influences every area of Ibibio community life and it dominates our thinking to such an extent that it shapes our culture, social life, and political life. In the past the influence of Ibibio religiosity made the people know that gods in their dreadfulness did not condone the actions of the wicked. Today Ibibio people are predominantly Christian; there are numerous churches, both Orthodox and Pentecostal, yet it does not stop some people from being devotees to traditional religious practices irrespective of the restrictions place by the church leaders.

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FGS6: Yes, I believe religiosity affects the way Ibibio people live and act because it becomes impossible to separate any Ibibio person from the religious practices. Religion and social relations are interwoven to the extent that the line of demarcation becomes blurred. Although there are a few deviants, there are always traditional sanctions to check that their behaviour is still in line with the religious practices of the Ibibio people.

Q 4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R:

FGS1: I think the practice of sacrifice was usually carried out as a means of restoring peace and in this process we can rediscover the rich meaning of peace from the pronouncement of the priest and from the rituals performed.

FGS3: I think peace promotes social interaction, in our society there is a great deal of informal co-operation which is more or less spontaneous unifying behaviour among family members, friend and neighbours. Within these relationships individuals render assistance to one another. Children of various compounds in a neighbourhood co-operate in their recreational activities and help themselves to perform task such as bush clearing, weeding in rotation, this form cooperation and others are part of positive influence of peace in our society.

FGS4: Yes, the benefits of peace are numerous; for instance, when there is peace there is stability.

FGS6 : In our traditional way I think ukang (ordeal) declare the truth instantly and many people prefer ukang because it will not kill culprit but will subject it to torturing until culprit tell the truth and once truth is made known, appropriate steps for peace are followed so to me ukang(ordeal) was an important instrument of justice and peace.

Q 5: Are you aware of violent conflict in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R:

FGS 1: Yes, I am aware of different forms of violence in our society from witch causation, to land dispute, chieftaincy tussle in most it always result in destruction of people's lives and

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properties. Again kidnapping is a new wave of violence in our society. I think this form of violence this is a new wave of violence in our society. This form is brought into our society through media influence because previously we never had such things. Unemployment and poverty seem to be the root cause of it. Youths who are involved in this act target the wealthy class and their family members, believing that the family will pay a ransom before the kidnapped victim is set free. In most cases they kill the victim. There is much fear and a general sense of insecurity in our society because of the threat of kidnapping. With all these I can say that the consequences of conflict and violence are nothing but destruction and fear. Just look at our society, the way people build their houses with high fences and strong iron gates, saying it is for security. Previously only hunters had guns but today people buy guns, all for security. All these point to the fact that there is a high and increasing sense of insecurity and fear in our society today, which is part of the consequences of conflict and violence

FGS2: My experience of violence in the hand of my first husband who on several occasions he subjected me to severe beatings, that was why we divorce because I was not happy and I couldn't cope. I had to leave him before he kills me. I am speaking from my personal experience I experienced violence that traumatized me with fear, anxiety and depression. To me poverty is the root cause of violence and lack of peace whether you look at it from diversion of public fund, child trafficking, child labour, prostitution and so on, all these inhuman ways of earning income.

FGS3: I think struggle over rights of inheritance in a common cause of violence among family members. Again, the menace of cultism in our society is worrisome. It affects development among our youths as different cult groups keep springing up day after day, and these groups become ready instruments in the hands of politicians who equip them with dangerous weapons to fight their opponents. It is such weapons those members of cult groups' use for other forms of crimes and violent attacks. I suggest the media must engage in responsible reporting because sometimes reports of court judgement as well as conflicts do fuels violent conflicts.

FGS4: Many Ibibio believe that their ill-fortune is caused by others. Therefore when things are not working well, some people become suspicious. In most cases they consult the traditional priest, diviners, church pastors and prophets who may "reveal" to them the cause of their misfortune. It is often either children or old women who are accused. However when

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there is violent conflict or war people normally run for safety. Men and mostly youths are always at the forefront of most violent conflicts. Some families may lose their breadwinner. Wives may lose their husbands. As a result of conflict and violence, many people lose their lives, property and means of livelihood. In some cases communities are destroyed completely, so that people end up squatting in other places, while some communities are completely eradicated. After all said and done, I think most victims of violence suffer poverty, hunger, unemployment.

Again I have observed that Political violence brings fear and insecurity to an area. Even when law enforcement agent is drafted to such sports yet things are not always as it used to be. A case in point the commercial drivers desertion of Ikot Ekpene Aba road due to the menace of kidnapping which is shorter distance for business trip from Ikot Ekpene , Uyo and Calabar, they preferred to take Ukanafun / Asumini road which is by far a longer distance just for safety reasons. I suggest the use of Ibibio traditional methods of peace-making as a more effective complement to other peace mechanisms. The fear is that there is no respect for traditional institutions in most of contemporary Ibibio society but traditional peace actors can also be pro-active in their approach, so that conflicts are resolved before they escalate to full-blown violence.

FGS5: I think another reason why communities engage in war is as a result of lingering boundary disputes which is due to court delays in administration of justice. I was a victim of Violence when communal conflict occurred between my community and our neighbours I lost every thing I had to run to Calabar to squat with my friend, who helped me to start afresh in fact it was God that saved my life. Apart from the destruction of lives and property (such as houses, schools, churches, farms); government departments (such as school and health service centres) are always closed down. Again today we hear of kidnapping, rapes, and ritual killings by cult groups I don't think there is any adult who will deny that there is violence in our society even children are aware of it. I believe that poverty is one of the root causes of violence because people who have no means of income are paid and use as instrument of violence. To me this is the result of bad governance and I think we have suffered enough as a result of bad governance that is the reason why a common in our society today does not expect much any longer for government. To reduce violence, I think Journalist must be sensitive in reporting violent conflict, especially when it has to do with images and videos of victims of violence, as careless presentations are capable of generating further escalation of the situation, thereby compounding more problems.

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FGS6: We have witness some forms of violence in our society one may not be able to count all of them but what is common in all these violent events, is suffering and poverty people are exposing their family members to pain and hardship, others who manage to escape death may lose everything including their means of livelihood to find peace in our society, I what should be done is what we use to do and which is to enter into dialogue. In Ibibio we say: “Ibono itang iyung itum itang (“sitting together to talk and talking properly/ talk wisely”); in other words, we use dialogue as a means to achieving peace, and aggrieved parties must be made to talk and mediators must be people know how to talk and talk properly in a traditional court; to talk properly is to be mindful of the choice and use of words.

FGS7: I think some politicians do use their party followers to instigate society for violence. Again as we all know, the problem of witchcraft and witchcraft accusation has always been in the Ibibio society but it has assumed a new dimension because some spiritual churches, who claim to specialize in witch exorcism, have resorted to using this medium to cause conflict in many families, between parents and children, among siblings, distant and close relations, as well as neighbours. The accused are often subjected to physical torture or other dehumanizing treatment. I thank God for the effort of Akpabio’s administration for fighting against witchcraft accusation as this fight has helped in saving many innocent children. I suggest that Government and NGOs double their efforts in the fight against this form of violence.

FGS8: To support what she (FGS7) said earlier I think the incident that occurred between the Peoples’ Democratic party (PDP) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) in the state serves as a case in point. Again I have seen where and heard cases of children are subjected dehumanizing torture because they are suspected to be posses of witchcraft spirit. I also think ignorance, fear and poverty are the root cause of violence and lack peace this is because most of these kidnapers are unemployed youths who see the ungodly act of kidnapping people as a means of earning a living..

FGS9: I want to add that economic marginalization of the minority is another source of violence in our society. When communities, states, and even regional government feel oppressed or marginalized some opinion leaders often instigate youth to fights for survival. A typical example is the Niger Delta militant attacks, which in the past years has taken lives thousands of people, paralyzing economic activities in certain parts of our Niger Delta region. To me one of the consequences of political and economic violence we experience is injustice. We all know that political office holders are not interested in the plight of the poor masses all

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what we see is open demonstration of unfair treatment, materialism, nepotism, corruption. These conditions subject some women to prostitution, through which they become vulnerable to all manner of diseases such as HIV/ AIDS. For a way forward, I think Ibibio indigenous methods of peace are the most effective peace mechanism for the people and no-one can pretend over this: we must revisit our proverbs, our folk songs they are there even in our prayers and incantations

FGS10: To add to what others have already said. I also think that illiteracy is one of the consequences of violence because for children lost their parents as a result of war or other forms of violence are not always able to afford quality education, others may not even be able to afford education at all due to lack of sponsorship.

Q 6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R:

FGS1: The pronouncements of the church are not restricted only to the issue of peace and violent conflict but address a wide range of contemporary local and global issues.

FGS2: From time to time the synod makes her voice very clear to the public and Government authorities, on peace, and the PCN condemns violence in the communiqué they publish.

FGS 3 to 10 all agreed to FGS 1&2

Q 7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R:

FGS1: The church identifies with victims of violence; in some cases the church tries its best to mediate among aggrieved parties. Again by establishing the church owns institutions such as schools, hospitals and farms, and social services on HIV/AIDS are part of the church's social actions that are capable of introducing social transformation in our contemporary society.

FGS4: In some cases ministers and members have visited victim of violent conflicts with gifts of some relief materials such as clothing, sleeping materials and food.

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FGS5: I will also like to mention that in my congregation we do collect offerings and other relief materials such as clothing, food stuffs and so on end to Synod office for onward delivery to victims of violence.

FGS6 Yes, I agree the church do speak against violence and, I know that our church leaders do provide counselling for victims of different forms of violence.

FGS9: I know severally in our congregation we do pray fervently for peace and for victims of violent conflicts and war.

FGS10: To me I think by constituting peace and conflict resolution committee saddled with the responsibility of peaceful mediation among communities, the PCN demonstrates it has strong passion and willingness to be an agent of peace and social transformation in the Nigerian society.

Q 8: Does the leader of PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate appoint departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R:

FGS1: I think the PCN leaders in Akwa Synod do understand Ibibio notion of peace because it is interwoven within the religious, socio-cultural particles, the thinking and way of life of every Ibibio person. As such, the Ibibio understanding of peace is accessible to all Ibibio people. That is why every Ibibio person or group, when in need of peace and reconciliation, follows the legal way of the law court or through the indigenous approach which may involve, dialogue, divination, oath, ordeals and blood covenants or Christian way through church counselling.

FGS2: I believe irrespective the level of the synods understanding of Ibibio peace, we are not sure of how such understanding could help the church communicate the peace messages effectively to the understanding of people through preaching as since some element of peace process may not correlate with church practices.

FGS3: When we talk of the church's understanding, I think we need to look at it in two ways: if we refer to the official stance of the church as articulated in its policy document, it may be difficult to say-whether the church fully understands the Ibibio notion of peace, because it is not mentioned explicitly in its documents. However, the Church is made up of members; and

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in Akwa Synod since inception most of its members have been Ibibio indigents. Therefore both the leaders and members of the PCN Akwa Synod do understand the Ibibio notion of peace very well, and some of the church members and elders may have been patronizing indigenous methods of peace privately, especially when there is disagreement and conflict and the aggrieved parties want to find out “the truth”. Some Church leaders who double as community leaders have either used it or witnessed its use within the community on various occasions.

FGS 4: I agree with what FGS3 said

FGS6: To me I think it is love for peace in the society and love to justice to every member of society that always drive peace actors, in our context to call for dialogue. To me Love is a good point of departure that creates space for the church to preach peace and do things that will promote justice and social transformation in our today society.

FGS8: To me dialogue and use of persons of integrity is one viable option that can facilitate peace reconciliation and I am sure the people are familiar with it.

FGS 9: I agree with what FGS8 has just said.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P 1

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?

R: I think our people simply understand peace as a state of calm. Peace is like an agreement made to end all forms of hostilities.

Q2: What, in your view, is it in what you believe and in your culture that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: In my opinion mbian (oaths) were a powerful instrument of peace because, once, they were implemented when a culprit was made to tell the truth for fear of dying. Again, in our tradition, when there is conflict in the family, it is expected that in-laws are neutral and unbiased particularly on matters of disagreement and conflict affecting the family of the in-laws. This makes in-laws agents of reconciliation and peace.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the way in which they live and act?

R: Yes. Our people are religious and to a great extent religiosity influences how people live and act, but, being human and full of imperfections, sometimes, people act in ways that deviate from their religious principles, especially when there are hurts. The reason why we have so much conflict in our society is because people often forget their religious principles when they are hurt.

Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: If there is no peace, this will affect Ibibio people negatively, as people will experience fear and insecurity. With peace, Ibibio people would definitely witness greater development than what is being achieved today.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflicts in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person what do you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: I am very much aware of violent conflicts and wars in our land. I think, in most cases, interpersonal violence among members of the family stems from disputes over rights of inheritance. Other forms of violence are politically and economically motivated and I think,

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in most cases, war and violent conflicts always result in a high rate of unemployment as a result of disruption of commercial activities in violent conflict zones. You see Violence and crime works together when there is violence some people use that opportunity to loot. To me, neutral peace actors must engage parties of conflict in dialogue, and resolve conflicts before violence ensues.

Q6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R: Yes. The PCN and Akwa Synod do that very well by appealing to Government at all levels; by constituting conflict resolution committees, the main responsibility of which is to mediate in conflicts, thereby promoting forgiveness, justice, reconciliation and peace. I have served on that committee of the Church and we were able to resolve conflicts in some areas in Ibibio land and even beyond.

Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R: Yes, in various ways, the PCN Akwa Synod has done its best to identify itself with the plight of victims of various forms of violence.

Q8: Does the leaders of the PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: Yes, I wish to say that the PCN Akwa Synod understands the Ibibio concept of peace since it has to do with the culture and traditions of the people. That is why themes such as love, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice are common in both our Church teachings and preaching. But the PCN, being part of the ecumenical community, cannot stand alone; it needs to work with other denominations and with the government for effective peace-building within Ibibio land. Themes, such as love, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice, which I have already mentioned, are possible points of departure for effective communication of the message of peace within our context.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P2

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?

R: In my language I understand peace as absence of conflicts and violence. When there is no interference in individual, family or community inheritance there is peace. This is because a typical Ibibio man treasures his right of inheritance and is prepared to defend it at all cost. Secondly Ibibio people believe that right of inheritance does not belong to one person but to many persons, even to generations yet unborn. Peace can also mean denial in order to move forward. Summarily in the Ibibio world view peace means absence of conflicts and violence.

Q2: What is it, in your view, in what you believe and in your culture, which makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: I think elders were agents of reconciliation and peace because their well of wisdom and unbiased sense of judgement people trusted and depended on them in matters of justice equity and fare play. Again, I think the traditional belief that if one fails to respond positively to certain persons such as ones grandchildren, and in-laws or treat them with disdain one is liable to be punished or meet some kid of misfortunes in the basic reason why our people generally are willing to dialogue for peace especially when invited by any of the two (in-law or grandchild/children. In Ibibio tradition respect is given to in-laws it is this respect that makes one in-law agent of peace.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R: Yes, I believe Ibibio people are very religious and religion affects every aspect of Ibibio life and behaviour.

Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: Yes, there will be prosperity, stability and development. This is what we have been praying for.

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Q5: Are you aware of violent conflict in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: You see, violence is a common phenomenon and no one can deny that, violence comes in a variety of forms, but all are violence whether it is communal or ethnic war originating from boundary or land dispute. And I believe that farm boundary disputes are one of the causes of violence in our society today especially in rural communities. Most women have been raped while squatting in people's homes in neighbouring communities during communal wars. Again Witchcraft accusation has always been in Ibibio society but it has assumed a new dimension because some spiritual churches who claim to specialize in witch exorcism, resorted to using this medium to cause conflict in many families, between parents and children, among siblings, distant and close relations, as well as neighbours. The accused are often subjected to physical torture or other dehumanizing treatment; to me the consequence of violence witchcraft accusation is basically the abuse of both the rights and dignity of the human person and this is a very serious form of violence that must be urgently addressed through dialogue. Because to me crime is violence and violence is crime.

Q6 : Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R: Yes, but often times the church waits for government to handle situations legally. It is when they fail that the church and other bodies try to intervene but due to denominational differences the church in most cases cannot speak with one voice. But the PCN Akwa Synod does try its best, to speak to government and all concerned from time to time, through the communiqué we publish.

Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty; as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

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R: Yes, and I speak as a member and a one time Chairman of the PCN conflict resolution committee, we have done some work within the Itam community in Itu local government area of Akwa Ibom State, which is within the Akwa synod and in Abia state.

Q8: Does the leader of PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate appoint departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: Yes, they do but the church only preaches peace when it becomes necessary. For instance, if people are living in peace and there is no conflict, no violence, it may not be too necessary to be preaching peace to the people, but some clergy who are non-Ibibio may not really understand. The possible point of departure which no one can deny is that both our tradition and the church tradition preach love. I suggest that the leaders of Akwa synod should take indigenous Ibibio peace building approach seriously, if they hope to be relevant in peace building among Ibibio people. And love should be the motivating force for the Synod to be able to do this.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P3

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? How will they describe peace?

R: Ibibio peace is simply understood as togetherness. To the Ibibio, peace means agreement and unity. In the Ibibio culture, dialogue plays a prominent role in their striving toward peace; in order to air their grievances, aggrieved parties are brought together to talk in the presence of both their opponents and the elders of the community. It is expected of elders, who mediate in all such cases, to be impartial. In some serious cases, elders/chiefs, who mediate, must swear an oath to be fair and just in their judgements. Secondly, they know how to do so, and also talk wisely. As they follow matters with wisdom and truth, they resolve disputes fairly, and the culprits are punished appropriately.

Q2: In your view, what is in what you believe and in your culture, that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: You see, Ndom (traditional chalk) is one substance used symbolically by the Ibibio people to indicate peace, joy, victory, blessings and happiness. When an accused is vindicated, he/she, as well as close relations and friends, rub native chalk on the face, neck or legs to openly communicate their joy, victory and peace. Some even dissolve it with water to drink it, others just chew it and it gives inner calmness. So, to Ibibio people, ndom is a source of peace. If you join your neighbour to rub chalk or powder, you demonstrate that you are sharing in celebrating joy and peace with him or her.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R: Yes, I know that religiosity influences people a lot. It unites Ibibio people even today. In the cities, some Ibibio Christians prefer to attend indigenous churches, where worship is conducted in the Ibibio language.

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Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: Of course yes, but our leaders must be sensitive to issues of justice, equity and fair play in all strata of our society. People must respect the rights of others. The injustices we see today - corruption, crime, nepotism, tribalism and oppression - will reduce to the barest minimum if our society were peaceful.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflicts in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think is/are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: I am very much aware of different forms of violent conflicts in my area. Violent behaviour is so common in our society beginning at homes, as some husbands have formed the habit of beating their wives at the slightest provocation. In terms of communal violence, I think no community wants to be oppressed by being denied infrastructural development for ever. As such, the violence we witness in our society today is a struggle for both economic and political emancipation. What I have observed over the years is that the rich and wealthy politicians use the influence of their positions and their wealth to buy votes or manipulate political processes in order to perpetuate them in office, thereby depriving others who may even be better qualified for leadership positions; this always leads to violence. The consequences of this violence is basically destruction - both of lives and of property. I think most victims of violence do not have the means, or livelihood, or employment due to mass destruction and looting that always occur during wars. To find lasting peace in our society today, I think aggrieved parties must enter into dialogue; they must shift grounds in order to make room for reconciliation and peace. To me, this is the way toward the solution of the problem. But, in a situation where one party is willing to make peace and the other is unwilling, it becomes difficult. This is when a neutral mediator could come in, and I think the Church and other NGOs can come in, but they must be neutral if they hope to make a meaningful contribution.

Q6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing the society for the better that could promote justice, security and development?

R: Yes. They do speak to condemn violence from the pulpit - preaching and teaching - and through the publication of communiqués. But more needs to be done.

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Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people who live in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R: I know that the Church does visit victims of violence with relief materials, such as clothing, food items and sleeping materials. So, to me I believe the PCN does its best in striving for peace among people living in the context of violence.

Q8: Does the leader of the PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: Being the first Church on Ibibio soil, the Church may think it understands the Ibibio notion of peace, but I think the Church needs to carefully revisit the Ibibio concept of peace. This is because politicians and the government have failed us. Today, people look up to God and the Church, but it seems that even the Church has also failed. But, I think if the Church rises and takes its prophetic responsibility seriously, it can become an agent of peace among the Ibibio people. My suggestion is simply that we all know ourselves and our ways of doing things, so, I think the time has come for us to respect our traditions, especially those practices that promote peaceful co-existence.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P4

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? How will they describe peace?

R: The Ibibio think of peace as a state of tranquillity and comfort, a situation free from disturbances. These disturbances could be as a result of violent attacks, like war, it could be the outbreak of an epidemic in the community; anything that threatens the existence of the community threatens the peace of the people. Therefore, peace can be likened to a state of calm, a condition free from violence and other vices that threaten communal life.

Q2: In your view, what is in what you believe and in your culture that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: The agents of peace include the chiefs and elders, the age grade, and secret societies such as the Ekpo, Ekpe Obon societies. I would like to add that nnuk enin (elephant) was another significant symbol of peace, although its use was restricted to only village or clan heads. Again, I think divination was believed to be one of the agents of peace because it was a means to find the truth, as truth was the only basis on which elders and chiefs could base their judgements for peace negotiations. I must mention that, sometimes, violent means are used to achieve peace. For instance, the secret societies and some masquerades do threaten people, beat people, and imposed heavy fines on “deviants.” As such, because of fear of beating and being asked to pay heavy fines, people comply to the rules and laws of the land. To me, this is a way of seeking peace by violent means.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R: Yes, generally speaking, Ibibio people are very religious. Of course, religion influences people’s behaviour but, when people are pushed to the wall, they can do anything to defend themselves.

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Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: Of course, peace makes for a strong and healthy society which is significant for development.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflicts in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think is/are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: Yes, I am quite aware of violent conflicts in our society, the most common form of violence are. economic, political and domestic violence; and the causes are injustice and poverty. In the situation, where people feel oppressed for too long, they are bound to react one day. And, whether we look at injustice from an individual point of view or from a general point of view, the truth is: when an individual or group feel that they are badly treated in the society, if a family or community, feel marginalized, when the people over time can no longer endure injustice, they will definitely want to fight for liberation and, in most cases, through violence. Another form of violence is witchcraft accusation, infact today a greater number of victims are children who serve as domestic helps, orphans, children of one parent who are taken into a second marriage and old women. Since there is no scientific way to prove who is a witch and who is not, immediately when one is accused he or she become stigmatized and defenceless. Although the Ibibio believe that there are witches and that their activities have a negative effect on human existence, most of the people accused are innocent. Such accusations are made out of wickedness just to tarnish the image of the accused and to shy away from the responsibility of caring for the dependent infant or aged. I have observed that the consequence of violence is more violence. It is destruction, suffering and hardship. It makes me very suspicious of people around me. I suggest we revisit our indigenous ways of finding peace in rituals, in prayers, and incantations, in our covenants and sacrifices. What I say is: revisit indigenous ways, I do not mean that we should practice them as they were, what I mean is that we need to carefully look at them; what can we learn from each of these practices; how can we review and use them today?

Q6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better that could promote justice, security and development?

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R: Yes. They do speak to condemn violence from the pulpit - preaching and teaching - and through the publication of communiqués. But to be honest, I am not aware of clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing the society for the better by promoting justice, security and development.

Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people who live in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R: Yes. But I know that the Church's preaching, teaching and counselling do promote peace among congregants who are involved in interpersonal conflicts. We have many such cases in my local congregations. But it's difficult when it has to do with communal violence, but I believe that, if members of the Church are truly transformed, they will become agents of transformation to the society.

It is clear that our society is so confused because we are trying to be Western, while we are Africans. These are the reasons why I strongly believe that, although the Church may know what, to some extent, the Ibibio notion of peace is; it may be of little or no use for the purpose of preaching.

Q8: Does the leader of PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: I believe the Church does understand the Ibibio notion of peace. But, I think there is a need for revisiting our indigenous peace mediation methods to see what we can gain from them. This will help the Church to become more effective in communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the Gospel among the Ibibio people.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P5

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? How would they describe peace?

R: Ibibio people understand peace to be the absence of war, a situation where there is no violent conflict; peace is also a genuine agreement to end conflict, violence and war.

Q2: In your view, what is there in what you believe and in your culture, that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: To me, our folk tales, proverbs and riddles of our people is a rich source of peace in our context.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R: Ibibio people are indeed very religious people. In fact religion is their life in the sense that it cuts across all spheres of human endeavour.

Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: Yes, it will definitely influence the people positively. For instance, poverty and crime will decrease and there will be stability.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflicts in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think is/are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: I think that, in our society today, it is common to see people struggle over rights of inheritance, land for farming, family land boundaries and community boundaries. Most of our violence and communal wars that we have here are economically and politically motivated. It is common to find people struggling over rights of inheritance, land for farming, community boundaries, as well as socio-political emancipation. But, there are other aspects of violence which people hardly talk about: the aspect of the violation of human rights, child abuse, gender inequality, deprivation, corruption, oppression and injustice, which have eaten deep into the fabric and structure of our society. I think poverty, greed and ignorance are the root cause of these problems. Consequences of violence include the destruction of many lives and property, and hunger, as a result of the displacement of people. I find it difficult to trust

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people. But, what I think we can do is to revisit our indigenous ways of doing things with openness. I know we may not adapt everything, but I strongly believe we may have a way forward through dialogue.

Q6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R: Yes, they do speak to condemn violence from the pulpit - preaching and teaching - and through the publication of communiqués. But more needs to be done.

Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people who live in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R: Yes, but I think whatever we have done is still very insignificant compared to the volume of violence that we witness in our society today.

Q8: Does the leader of the PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: Yes we do, but I think we must dialogue with Ibibio culture if it must effectively communicate the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching within the Ibibio context. To do this, our social actions and preaching must be contextual; if not, our preaching and social actions will not be very relevant to the people.

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INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW: P6

Q1: How do you think the Ibibio people of Nigeria understand peace? What will they say peace is like?

R: To me, I think peace goes beyond the absence of violence, to issues of injustice, gender inequality and corruption which, to me, are even more serious. But most people think peace is just the absence of conflict, violence and war.

Q2: What is it, in your view, in what you believe and in your culture, that makes peaceful co-existence among Ibibio people possible?

R: I believe our real source of peace is God, that is why our people pray to God for peace before embarking on any project, a journey or before the commencement of an important event.

Q3: Do you think Ibibio people are religious? Do you think this influences the ways in which they live and act?

R: Yes, Ibibio people are religious, but sometimes people forget about religious principles when they are hurt but even religion still defines the way people behave and act.

Q4: Do you think that a condition of peace would have any influence on the Ibibio people?

R: Of course yes, it will influence our society positively, for instance all these crimes and violence will reduce and there will be harmony among members of the society.

Q5: Are you aware of violent conflicts in Ibibio society? In your own opinion, what do you think are the cause/s of these forms of violence? As an Ibibio person, what would you say could be done to bring about peace?

R: To me, the root cause of all forms of violence is poverty and the abuse of power, as it is common to see people in leadership positions involved in corrupt practices, their display of wealth, nepotism, injustice and oppression of the minority. Recently politically oriented conflict has become the bane of our society. It comes in various forms: post-election violence between members of the ruling political party and the opposition party, chieftaincy tussles, and so on. All these forms of conflict plunge our society into wanton destruction of lives and property.

APPENDIX 17

I also wish to say that individual families and neighbouring communities often engage in boundary disputes that lead to the destruction of lives and property and, in some extreme cases, it can even lead to the extinction of an entire village or community as such I always live in fear and suspicion. The only way forward is through dialogue.

Q6: Does the PCN speak out and do things to prevent violence and does it have clear plans or views about reconciliation, peace and changing society for the better which could promote justice, security and development?

R: Yes, the church speaks from time to time but, to be honest, I don't think the Synod's voice is strong enough for plans or views that could bring about social transformation and peace. I think if the PCN Akwa Synod has such plans at all for social transformation, there is a need for her to make her plans lucid so that all members, and even non-members, can clearly know her stand.

Q7: Does the PCN strive towards peace among Ibibio people living in pain, hurt and poverty as a result of injustice, conflicts and violence?

R: Yes, but I think we need to do more than what we are doing at the moment.

Q8: Do the leaders of the PCN Akwa Synod understand the Ibibio notion of peace, to locate a point of departure for effective communication of the message of peace and reconciliation through preaching the gospel of Christ?

R: I am not sure that the Ibibio notion of peace is well understood by all the Church leaders. I think the reason why the Church cannot consider it is because, often, traditional ways of doing things are often considered "unChristian." But, I think the time has come for the PCN to dialogue with indigenous peace approaches and see how it can help in the current search for peace within our context. The Church can use themes of reconciliation, forgiveness, covenant, love, and obedience, which are popular themes both in Christian circles as well as in our traditional context, as possible points of departure in its communication of the message of peace.

A SERMON BY REV. ISONG S. AKPAN

Topic: Reconciliation

Date: 14th October, 2012

Place: the PCN, Utit Obio North Congregation

Lessons: Is. 1:16-19

2nd Cor.5:16-21

Matt. 5:21-26

INTRODUCTION:

The word "Reconciliation" may appear or sound very simple to a lot of people. This is because they normally take it to be an ordinary English word like every other one; it is true that the word is an English word with meaning like every other word.

However, we must look beyond to really understand and appreciate the practical part of this word.

On way that oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines it is that it is an end to disagreement and the start of a good relationship again". Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary sees it as "Bringing together two parties that are estranged or in dispute". From the above definitions, we can see vividly that the word "reconciliation" is an abstract noun. Its existence can only be felt not touched with the hand. In spite of this fact, the demonstration of it can be very practical where peace is made to return to warring parties.

It is dispute that creates an avenue for its existence. In other word, there can be no reconciliation without problem or dispute taking effect first. It is found to be the way that leads to peace in the midst of problems.

Unfortunately, the reverse is always the case with many people. In other words, many people do allow dispute and disagreement breed problems such as quarrel, malice, war, hatred, rancor, bitterness etc. instead of reconciliation.

Obviously, many people, homes, communities, churches, nations etc. are in dispute and crisis leading to killings and destruction of lives and properties without considering the adverse effect of this act. As a matter of fact, absence of reconciliation is a menace to human lives and property in our society especially when there is problem.

So much has been said and done with a view to bringing reconciliation to bear in the entire human race just for the peace and progress of humanity. Truly Speaking, our society needs reconciliation especially now that we have so much of political and religious crises in our nation. Therefore this message is a portion of contributions for reconciliation in human race. It will reveal to us the nature of God as a God of reconciliation who has given us the ministry of reconciliation as a talk of fulfillment to this (God's) glory. It will bring to us the truth in the Gospel of God to reconcile as many relationships as possible that are stale. It will also help us to see the need for reconciliation amidst problems and conflict.

THE GOD OF RECONCILIATION

It is very clear in the word of God that God himself is a God of reconciliation. We have seen how God created man in His image and charged man to live in obedience to Him. (Gen. 1:26-27;2:15).

In Genesis Chapter 3, the Bible gives us an account of the fall of man as a result of disobedience. Man's act of disobedience brought about broken relationship between God and Man. Man was definitely punished by God due to his disobedience.

In spite of Man's disobedience and God's punishment upon him, God still demonstrated His mercy and love toward mankind by sending Jesus Christ to die for the remission of the sin of man; the result of which is salvation (Jn. 3: 16).

That is why Paul writes in Romans 5:8 that while we were yet sinners God demonstrated His love for us. As a matter of fact, reconciliation is a clear demonstration of God's Love and mercy to His people irrespective of the sin committed. We can further see this act of God's love for his people in (Isaiah 1:18) where God invites His stubborn children (Israelites) to come back to Him no matter how far they have gone in sin.

The fact is very clear here that God has always humbled Himself to initiate the act of reconciliation with His children. At this point it becomes clear that God does not really counts on their sinfulness but repentance and salvation.

This very fact also demonstrates itself in the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus used this great parable to vividly and practically demonstrate the nature of God's love for his lost children. This great parable tells us that God's mind is for reconciliation rather than concentrating on the weight or the enormity of the offence committed by the sinner (2nd Cor. 5:19). This is the point at which there is a remarkable difference between God and man. Man always counts on the enormity of how his fellow man offends him and as such would find it very difficult to forgive and reconcile with him.

God does not count on how weighty one's sins may be, but how to take away the weight of it from the person (Matt. 11:28). From the facts above we can see that God is a God of reconciliation. He demonstrates His love, Mercy and care for His people by reconciliation through Christ Jesus. This is indeed an example for us to follow it if we truly belong to Him (God).

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

Having discovered that God is a God of reconciliation, we should not forget the fact that He has called us into this ministry as partners (2nd Corinth. 5:16-21). Looking carefully at the passage, one would discover that God reconciled us to Himself through Christ so that we too could carry out his example.

He simply created a ministry necessary for the promotion of His kingdom and the totality of peace for humanity. Every believer must seek to promote this ministry in homes, Churches, communities etc.

If we must carry out this ministry accordingly, we must begin with the step of being reconciled to God through Christ. The fact become obvious that the ministry could only be carried out by those who themselves have the full experience of reconciliation through Christ. This is because this ministry is established by God to discover and bring back his lost children by way of having salvation through Christ Jesus. If indeed this is what the ministry entails, it will then be difficult for the lost to discover the lost. It is only those who have been discovered that will discover others. It is a kind of ministry that will mend broken homes, strain relationship in families, communities and even in churches etc. Truly speaking, many things have gone wrong in our society.

Many families are in malice for years, brothers and sisters fighting and killing themselves; village and communities engaging in war and killing themselves; cases of land disputes; quarrels, hatred, rancor and bitterness among brethren in the church political and religions crises etc. God is really looking for ministers of reconciliation in there places upon whom He (God) will depend for reconciliation.

In the Old Testament, a number of Judges, Prophets and kings of Israel functioned very well in this ministry on different occasions as God directed and depended on them. They stood between God and the sinful and stubborn people of Israel. The case of Joseph and his brothers is also another clear demonstration of reconciliation (Gen:45).

As earlier said, Jesus came for this purpose. Apostle Paul and other disciples of Christ carried out this great task of the ministry. Unfortunately, there seems to be lost of focus on this ministry in the church today. Many Pastors, Preachers and Church leaders rather emphasis so much on prosperity, long life motivational, psychological and philosophical messages that promote social, material and academics well being of the people instead of their spiritual well being. The best life for one to live is that of living in peace with God and fellow human being through the reconciliation power of Christ. Preachers of the Gospel should go back to this message of hope and restoration.

THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION

Having taken into consideration the fact that God has given us the great ministry of Reconciliation, we should begin to ask ourselves what we ought to do for the expansion of this ministry. As earlier said, what we should do is to preach the Gospel that will bring about reconciliation where necessary.

However, there are three clear messages to be preached to successfully carry out this great task; they include:

1. the Gospel of peace
2. the Gospel of Love
3. the Gospel of forgiveness

The Gospel of peace:

Reconciliation and peace are in inextricably intertwined. When we talk about peace, we are talking about reconciliation. As we said earlier, God himself is a God of peace. He makes peace with His sinful and stubborn children. He is the first to demonstrate this act of peace to us by sending Jesus to sacrifice for sins. The whole ministry of Jesus Christ was that of peace and reconciliation.

In the word of God it has been made clear enough for any person to understand that peace is one sure credential for any person to be accepted as a child of God (Mat. 5:9). The bible in the above mentioned passage, simply tell us that only those who make peace are called the children of God.

By this passage, we can see that the Gospel of peace is not to be treated with disdain; Individuals, churches, families, organization should preach peace tirelessly. We should not only preach or speak peace, we should practice it. This command is in the word of God. (Ps. 34:14).

In the passage, the bible enjoins us to depart from evil but to seek peace and pursue it. By this truth revealed to us, we are expected to yearn, long and desire for peace no matter what many happen. (Rom. 12: 18). Having seen this, people who are at war, quarrel and dispute should respond to God's command to ignore every problem just to give peace a chance.

The Gospel of Love:

Love is another theme that should feature prominently in our message of reconciliation. As we have already pointed out this fact, God is our example of the reconciliation. God Himself gave Jesus for the redemption of man from sin as gift of love (Jn. 3:16; 10:17) the word of God charges us to follow this example of love. Following this example means we should preach and demonstrate the love of Christ in our daily living with one another. Preaching the love of Christ will help us to live at peace with one another in spite of problems.

Looking at the word of God, one will see that Jesus himself loved us sinners and washed us from sins in His own blood. This same Jesus has given us a commandment to love one another as he loved us (Jn. 13:34). Loving one another as he loved us here implies having the mind of not hating and fighting one another but forgiving and accepting someone back not minding the gravity of offence. This simply means that misunderstanding and disagreement should not be the end of a relationship, but strengths of a relationship, because of the love of God.

The Gospel of forgiveness:

Forgiveness is another very important aspect of reconciliation. There is every need for us to begin to preach and demonstrate this great Gospel of the love Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness takes away guilt and ill feelings and rebuilds broken relationships. This was what Jesus Christ did for us. He came as a gift to be offered for our forgiveness with his forgiveness, we are reconciled to God.

As we hear this message, God expects us to have a forgiving spirit, to forgive completely those who wrong us in one way or the other. (Matt. 6:12)

Forgiving spirit here is the spirit of God in the life of a man that helps him/her let the past go without remembering it again.

If God could forgive us in Christ Jesus, what then will stop us from doing the same to others for peace to reign God wants us to forgive and reconcile every broken relationship.

The benefits of reconciliation:

Here we want to look at the benefits that are in reconciliation. One of such benefits is that it will make God answer our prayers easily (Matt. 5:24). From the passage above, Jesus tells us that no sacrifice can be accepted by God from any person who bears grudges against another person. This on the other hand suggests that when we reconcile, our prayer and sacrifice to God will be accepted.

Reconciliation with God and man also makes us live to enjoy the land we live as Gods children (Is.1:19).

It brings about peace, progress, good health and prosperity among humanity etc. It will also make us to have a place of eternity with the Lord.

Conclusion:

Reconciliation is a very serious matter that God's people should not take lightly. It is a ministry of God given to man for the promotion of unity and peace to humanity to the glory of God.

It must promote peace, love and forgiveness that will bring about complete reconciliation to our society in general.

THE SERMON PREACHED BY REV. ESIERE AKPABIO ON 21ST OCTOBER, 2012 AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IKOT INYANG PARISH, IBIONO IBOM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

1ST LESSON: Isaiah 9:1-7

2ND LESSONS: 2 Corinthian 5:11-21; John 14:25-31

TOPIC: PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION:

Peace is a comprehensive and valued gift from God to the Church. It is a condition of freedom from strife whether internal or external. The purpose of Christ coming into the world was to bring the peace of God, the peace of reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1), the peace of fellowship with God. The coming is to make the Church an instrument of peace.

Background:

What is peace? It is freedom from war or disturbance. It also conveys the idea of health, safety, soundness and completeness.

What is Reconciliation? It is an end to a disagreement and the start of a good relationship again. God brings us the gospel of reconciliation with Himself, our fellow human-kind and the entire creation thereby producing peace.

One would agree with me that peace and reconciliation walk in *pari pasu*, there are synonymous. It was on the mission of peace and reconciliation that ***Isaiah 9:6-7, Says that his name will be called, Prince of Peace.*** Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end. This is at the result of what we are passing through; pains, tribulation, frustration, humiliation, false accusation, etc.

Jesus says, ***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" Jn.14:27.*** These are great words of assurance and comfort like a flood of water from a distant land on a highly sun-scorched. These are words of Jesus, the Prince of peace to his own disciples and followers living in a peaceless and crisis-ridden world.

According to society of International Law, London, ***"the world has been at peace for less than 8 percent of its history. In the past 3,530 years, there have been only 286 years of peace, in spite of the fact that over the same period, more than 8000 peace treaties have been made and broken."***

The question is, where and how can we get peace and reconciliation? The Bible says in ***Ephesians 2:14-18, "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. And he came and preached peace to those who were near; far through him we both have access in one Spirit to the father."

Christ has brought to us the ministry of peace and reconciliation. This reconciliation which is both horizontal and vertical in nature also bears effect on all aspects of the creation. It brings us into fellowship, one with another, making us member of God's household being part of the spiritual temple wherein the spirit of God dwells. This can only be seen and experienced through Christ Jesus as one accept him as Lord of his/her life; because there is also an inner peace that passes all human understanding which is produced in the life of those reconciled. This reconciliation is what the Lord wants the Church to bring to the world, having been made Christ's ambassadors.

APPLICATION:

Beloved in the Lord, remember it was penalty for disobedience which Adam was to pay was death not only for him but for all his posterity. Hence, death reigned from the fall of Adam in the garden until Christ came with the gospel of life. He is our peace, who preached and gave the Church the gospel of peace; he died for our peace and left a legacy of peace to the Church when he said peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, I give to you.

The peace of the world can never sustain us but Christ; that is why he made us, the Church as instrument of peace in the world full of wars and rumors of wars, hatred, strife and all forms of social vices. God is the supreme peacemaker and the Church therefore has since been a holy nation within the nations of this world, a special people to combat and contend for the faith in God. As we contend for the faith, we should seek for those things that promote peace amongst us and avoid things that bring disunity, division and war. As much as it lies within our reach, let us follow peace with all men because we are God's instrument of peace in this world of sin, bitterness and strive.

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ is the prince of peace in deed; only in him shall creation find in him real and lasting peace. Let us continually yield ourselves to the one who does not only embody peace, but bring peace into all situations and circumstances of life. To the storm and waves of the sea, he bellowed: "peace, be still..." Mark 4:35-39; to beloved disciples, he firmly promises: "my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives I give you..." John 14:27; and to a weary, fallen world, he beckons: "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest..." Matt. 11:28.

The master of peace is calling on you now. He has a package of peace, social peace, ecclesiastical peace, spiritual peace. What are you waiting for?

