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Table of Contents

Sacred Scripture, Church Fathers, Magisterium and *Laudato Si'*

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Introduction

Deeply rooted in the ecological crisis is the dysfunctional relationship of human beings with God. Ecotheology envisions creation as comprising mutually interrelated beings, each with intrinsic value. In the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis draws from sacred scripture, patristics, and the magisterium to articulate a theology of care for creation. In this encyclical, the first on ecology in the history of Roman Catholicism, the pope inaugurates an eco-Pentecost that signals a paradigm shift from an anthropocentric vision of the earth to seeing it as "our common home." With this theological novelty, the encyclical sets out to foster human ecological responsibility for the well-being of all creation.

The title of the encyclical, which stems from the *Canticle of Creation* by Saint Francis of Assisi, accentuates the place of creation in divine revelation. Pope Francis expresses his profound indebtedness to Saint Francis thus: "I do not want to write this encyclical without turning to that attractive and compelling figure whose name I took as my guide and inspiration when I was elected Bishop of Rome."[1] The pope describes Saint Francis as an "example par excellence" of how humans must joyfully live on earth, and responsibly care for creation. He affirms the insights from Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who has been a consistent voice in calling humanity to ecological conversion. The pope also harvests from Catholic Tradition, in advocating for stemming the tide of the exploitation and degradation of the earth, calling for the protection of the earth, and promoting solidarity with the poor.[2]

This article considers *Laudato Si'* in light of selected scriptural and patristic texts, the magisterium, and key Catholic social principles. This research offers a theological rereading and thus understanding of the teachings of *Laudato Si'* as being grounded in sacred scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers and the magisterium. It is a modest attempt toward promoting the teachings of Pope Francis for ecological education. The article has four parts. The first investigates how the ecotheology of Pope Francis is rooted in biblical and patristic teachings. The second examines the hermeneutic of continuity between Pope Francis and

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[1] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), no.10. Henceforth cited in the text with the abbreviation *LS*.

[2] Sean McDonagh, *The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment with Commentary* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016), xiii.

previous magisterial teachings. The third presents selected Catholic social principles, as appropriated by Pope Francis to enunciate an eco-theology. The fourth briefly offers means of domesticating *Laudato Si'* for ecological education by particular churches. In summary, the article argues that *Laudato Si'* shares a hermeneutic of ecological continuity with biblical texts and studies, patristic writings, and Catholic social teaching.

Biblical and Patristic Intimations

With encyclicals, popes through their teachings often sow seeds of the gospel in the hearts of the faithful. Such seeds need to be further watered by theologians, in communion with the magisterium. With *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis has provided an ecological blueprint for caring for creation. This is rooted in the creation narratives, and calls for more research on the ecological crisis, and the interdependence of all species (*LS* 42). [3] Pope Francis dedicates the encyclical's second chapter to affirming the fundamental dogma of the Church, that God is the creator of all that exist. Creation is not the outcome of "arbitrary omnipotence, a show of force, or a desire for self-assertion" (*LS* 77). The earth our common home— "is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us"—created by a loving God (*LS* 1). With this theistic cosmological vision, the pope writes: "Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of things is the object of his love, in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection" (*LS* 77).

Drawing from the book of Genesis (Gen 1–2), Pope Francis affirms that the creation narratives communicate that God is the creator of the earth, that God created a good earth, and that God delights in creation (*LS* 65). Creation owes its existence to God, and is not a product of random cosmic evolution or mutation. Pope Francis views the creation narratives as situating human life at a triple-level relationship: God, neighbour, and the earth (*LS* 66). All creatures are intrinsically related, and thus form an earth community in which the well-being of each creature is connected to the other. It is the failure of humans to recognise the interconnectedness and interdependence of all species that has largely contributed to the misunderstanding of the place of humans in creation. Stan Ilo argues that the fundamental principle of ecotheology is the "relationality and interconnectedness of creation modelled by

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[3] Peter Knox, "Our Common Home: An African Cry of the Earth, Our Home," in *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 21.

God, who is revealed in history as a Trinity."[4] This resonates with the theology of *Ubuntu*, which emphasises participation, communion, solidarity, and interdependence in creation.[5]

An anthropocentric view of the earth can be precipitated by eisegesis of the creation narratives, especially Genesis 1:28. Misinterpreted and misunderstood, this verse promotes a "dominion theology" of creation, and can drive the despoliation of material resources and degradation of the earth. Pope Francis succinctly writes: "This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church" (*LS* 67). He explains that the term "dominion" ought to be interpreted within the context of Genesis 2:15, in which God urges Adam and Eve to "till and keep the garden of the world." As Pope Francis enunciates: "'Tilling' refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while 'keeping' means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving" (*LS* 67). The pope's exegesis of Genesis 2:15 is a call to Christians to jettison the justification of any anthropogenic vision of the earth that supports dominion, and instead view creation "as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion" (*LS* 76). He sees the restoration of the flooded earth through Noah (Gen 5–6) as God calling humanity to care for the earth by respecting nature's rhythms (*LS* 71). This echoes biblical teaching on the observance of the Sabbath Day (Gen 2:2–3). Hence, humans are to respect integrity of creation, and relate to earth in the same way as the loving creator (*LS* 77).

The aforementioned biblical basis concurs with the writings of the certain Church Fathers, whose works support the ecotheology of Pope Francis. Notable is the creation theology of Irenaeus of Lyons (130–202) which shows a connection with *Laudato Si'*. Irenaeus affirms God as the creator of the world and that God created a good world. Considered as a theologian of creation, he contested against the teachings of the Gnostics that the material world as evil. They argued that since God is goodness in Himself, evil cannot emanate from God. Thus, God was not the creator of the world.[6] Irenaeus explains that God is the maker of heaven and earth, and creation is essentially beautiful and the world reveals God as creator.[7] As such the fall of man does not erode these fundamental character of

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[4] Stan Chu Ilo, "The Gospel of New Creation: An African Ecotheological Ethics for Human and Cosmic Flourishing," in *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2022), 44.

[5] Idara Otu, *Communion Ecclesiology and Social Transformation: Between Vatican Council II and African Synod II* (Eugene, Oregon. Pickwick, 2020), 9.

[6] Irenaeus, *Adversus Haeresis*, Book III, 24.2.

[7] *Adversus Haeresis*, Book IV, 6.4; 6.6.

creation.[8] Irenaeus further argues that the divine creative power is an intrinsic attribute of God, and any god incapable of creating is not a "Supreme God."[9]

Pope Francis echoes this teaching with emphasis on God's supremacy as creator: "A spirituality which forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable . . . to restore men and women to their rightful place, putting an end to claim to absolute dominion over the earth, is to speak more of the figure of a Father who creates and who alone owns the world" (*LS* 75). Despite human giftedness, God remains the creator of the world. Commenting on this teaching, Ilo explains that it is an invitation to all human beings to humility in light of an all-powerful Creator, to treat nature and creation with love and respect, as well preserve creation for future generation.[10]

Another Church Father that sheds light on *Laudato Si*' is Tertullian (155–240). In some of his works, Tertullian focuses on the relationship between animals and God. He maintains that creation prays to God, and animals pray to God the Creator through different behaviours that are peculiar to them, and different from humans. Tertullian asserts: "Cattle and wild beasts pray, and bend their knees, and in coming forth from their stalls and lairs look up to heaven, their mouth not idle, making the spirit move in their own fashion."[11] Pope Francis explains that humans recognise "other living beings have a value in God's eyes: 'by their mere existence they bless him and give him glory,' and indeed, 'the Lord rejoices in all his works' (Ps 104:31)" (*LS* 69). This means humanity must move away from "a distorted anthropocentrism," to seeing that every creature, "willed in its own being, reflects in its own way a ray of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. Man must therefore respect the particular goodness of every creature, to avoid any disordered use of things" (*LS* 69).

The encyclical concurs with the creation theology of John Damascene (675–749) and Ambrose of Milan (340–97). Their understanding stresses man as *Imago Dei*, and calls humanity to care and love creation, as God loves and cares for the earth. John Damascene explains that God created man, bestowing "His own divine grace to him, thus putting him in communion with Himself. . . . For, since he had been made in the image of God rational, understanding, and free, it was reasonable that he should be entrusted by the common

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[8] See Emeka Nwosuh, "Irenaeus of Lyons' Doctrine of Creation: The Patristic Theological Foundations of Laudato Si'," *The Nigerian Journal of Theology* Vol. 30 (2016): 27.
[9] *Adversus Haeresis*, Book IV, 6.2.
[10] Ilo, "The Gospel of New Creation," 46.
[11] *Tertullian's Tract on Prayer*, trans., Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1953), 24.

Creator and Lord of all with the government over the things on earth."[12] Similarly, Ambrose argues that God calls humans to till and keep the earth: "In tilling there is a certain exercise of man's virtue, while in keeping it is understood that the work is accomplished, for protection implies something completed."[13] These two Fathers conceive the earth as a gift of God to be cared for, and not to be exploited. Conceiving the earth as a sacred can inspire humanity to care, protect and preserve the earth rather than exploit and destroy the earth. Consequently, Pope Francis "discourages a literary exegesis of the creation narratives regarding asserting dominion of humans over creation" (*LS* 67) and calls for an integral ecology that includes humanity and promote all aspects of creation (*LS* 137).

Even though not categorize as belonging to the Patristic era, suufice it to mention that Pope Francis draws inspiration from the life and teachings of Saint Francis of Asissi (*LS* 10-12). He draws insights from Saint Francis in promoting the earth as our "common home" (*LS* 1) and advocating for and integral ecology. In promoting an integral ecology, Pope Francis acksnowledges Saint Francis as moved to "communed with all creation, even preaching to the flowers, inviting them 'to praise the Lord, just as if they were endowed with reason.'" (*LS* 11).[14] This experience impacts his relationship with other creatures (*LS* 11) and praise for creation (*LS* 87). Saint Francis promotes an ecological kinship between humanity and the rest of creation which is suggestive of Martin Buber's metaphor—"I-Thou" relationship. According to Youngmin Song, "in an "I-Thou" relationship, the rest of creation is more than a natural phenomenon vulnerable to anthropocentric objectification; other creatures are affirmed as ends in themselves, and not merely a means to an end." [15] With this understanding, the "I-Thou" metaphor accentuates an appreciation of each being as intrinsically mutually related and interdependent such that we are not mere objects but unique beings with value.

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[12]John of Damascus, "Writings II.30," in *Fathers of the Church,* vol. 37, trans. Frederic Chase, ed. Roy J. Deferrari *et al* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc, 1985), 264.

[13]Ambrose of Milan, "Paradise, 4.25," in *Fathers of the Church,* vol. 37, trans. Frederic Chase, ed. Roy J.

Deferrari *et al* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc, 1961), 302.

[14] See "The Major Legend of Saint Francis," VIII, 6, in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 2 (New York-London-Manila, 2000), 590.

[15] Youngming Song, "Toward an Ecological Conversion: Ecospiritual Literacy for Developing Roman Catholic Ecological Education" (Doctoral Thesis, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto, 2018), 193.

Consequently, Pope Francis affirms humans as created in the image and likeness of God, with a capacity for self-knowledge, which places a duty to care for the earth. However, this does not confer on humans the exploitation of creation, but a responsibility to protect, care for, and preserve the earth (*LS* 65). Humans have an ecological task to use earth's resources at a pace that can support the regeneration of the earth. Without a proper interpretation of the biblical creation narratives, humans may continue to assume ecological supremacy over all species in a way that degrades the integrity of creation. The creation stories are to be understood from the basis of a relational and integral ecology that promotes consciousness in preserving the bonds of life for sustainable human and cosmic flourishing.

Magisterial Teaching: From John XXIII to Benedict XVI

Grounded in the biblical creation narratives, Pope Francis builds upon previous social teaching to articulate an ecotheology. A dialogue with the teachings of previous popes is an affirmation of their contributions in promoting ecological education, including John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI.

In particular, Pope Francis follows the tradition of John XXIII in addressing *Laudato Si'* not only to the "Catholic world" but "to all men and women of good will" (*LS* 3). Pope Francis builds on Paul VI's designation of the ecological crisis as "'a tragic consequence' of unchecked human activity," and an "ecological catastrophe" due to anthropogenic actions.[16] This designation remains ever relevant, as Paul VI speaks against the exploitation of nature; this exploitation continues today, despite international ecological legislation. He argues that the modern industrialisation project pays minimal attention to integral ecology and cosmological laws (*LS* 4). Referring to John Paul's encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* of 1979, Pope Francis recounts how this saintly pope cautions that humanity apparently sees nothing in nature other than its utilitarian value, and a reservoir of resources to be exploited (*LS* 5). Within this context, John Paul II calls the world to an "ecological conversion," which demands a *metanoia* that changes human lifestyles, and means of production and consumption.[17]

Such an ecological conversion encourages humans to adopt eco-friendly economic and technological models. Pope Francis states that ecological conversion is not optional or a addendum, but is a moral imperative intrinsic to the faith; all the faithful and people of

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[16]Paul VI, "Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*," AAS 63 (1971): 416-417.
[17]See John Paul II encyclicals: *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), *Centesimus Annus* (1991), and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995); "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation," Message of the World Day of Peace (January 1, 1990).

goodwill are called to an inner change of heart and reconciliation with creation (*LS* 217–19). The pope maintains that ecological conversion would inspire humans to "greater creativity and enthusiasm in resolving the world's problems and in offering ourselves to God" (*LS* 220). For an authentic and transformative ecological conversion, humanity must be open to living in a mutually-enhancing manner with creation.

Maintaining a rightful relationship with creation demands a new way of seeing nature. Pope Francis affirms the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI, known as the Green Pope: "Pope Benedict XVI asked us to recognise that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour and that the social environment has also suffered damage" (*LS* 6).[18] Pope Benedict himself notes that creation embodies a "grammar" that is given by God—this grammar means that creation has its own "inbuilt order" that determines how humanity should interact and relate to the world.[19] This points to the intrinsic laws governing creation. For Pope Benedict XVI, the Grammar of Creation signifies that nature is not a raw material to be exploited at the whims and caprices of humans. He invites theologians to evaluate the implications of a stewardship model in the light of humans' task to care for creation. Pope Francis further develops the Grammar of Creation by insisting that humanity fulfil its duty to care for creation by learning and following "the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world" (*LS* 68). It implies that the Creator allows creation to communicate God's love and omnipotence (*LS* 80-84) as well as the "intrinsic dignity of the world." (*LS* 115). Simply put, humans are to respect and preserve the "inherent laws" of creation by living in accordance with the rhymes and rhythms of the earth, rather than "impose their own laws and interest on reality" (*LS* 69, 75). For Pope Francis, all creatures have an intrinsic value and purpose independent of their usefulness, and thus creation is not an "insensate order" nor an "object of utility" (*LS* 69, 83–84, 115).

The review and integration of the teachings of previous popes by Pope Francis show that *Laudato Si'* forms a continuum with the previous papal magisterium. A close reading of the footnotes also reveals the pope's attentiveness to the pastoral action of particular churches around the world in responding to the ecological crisis. Pope Francis affirms the

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[18]See Benedict XVI, "Address to the Bundestag, Berlin" (22 September 2011): AAS 103 (2011), 664; Benedict XVI, "Address to the Clergy of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone" (6 August 2008): AAS 100 (2008), 634.

[19]Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no. 48.

voices of episcopal conferences, including the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Australia Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Mexican Bishops' Conference, the Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, the Bolivian Bishops' Conference, the Conference of Dominican Bishops, the Portuguese Bishops' Conference, the Bishops of the Patagonia-Comahue Region, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, the Paraguayan Bishops Conference, the German Bishops' Conference, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. This shows pastoral solidarity and episcopal collegiality between the pope and local churches. It can also be seen as an affirmation that the earth as our common home is the responsibility of the entire Church. The universal Church is called to ecological conversion, ecological responsibility, solidarity with the poor, and the proper use of earth's resources and the care of creation (*LS* 14, 38, 52, 69, 116).

Of particular note is the inclusion by Pope Francis of a pastoral letter of the bishops of South Africa, namely: "Everyone's talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God's creation" (*LS* 14). This affirmation calls upon particular churches to offer effective pastoral responses to the ecological crisis. This is especially so in Africa, which is struggling to develop sustainable ecological models for its economies.[20]

Principles of Catholic Social Thought

Catholic social teaching articulates Christian responsibilities in the temporal order. As such, its principles are an integral dimension of ecotheology. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis domesticates these principles in articulating an ecotheology. He grounds these principles in the dignity of the human person. In turn, human dignity is grounded in humans having been created in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and that they are at the apex of divine creation.[21] The pope writes: "every man and woman is created out of love and made in God's image and likeness" (Gen 1:26). Human dignity reveals that "*the likeness with God shows that the essence and existence of man are constitutively related to God in the most profound manner.*[22] For Pope Francis, this demonstrates the immense dignity of each person, 'who is not just something,

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[20] Knox, "Our Common Home," 21.

[21] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), no.108.

[22] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 109.

but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons'" (*LS* 65). Human's ability for self-reflection comes with a duty for humanity "*in the presence of all other creatures. They can and are obliged to put them at their own service and to enjoy them, but their dominion over the world requires the exercise of responsibility, it is not a freedom of arbitrary selfish exploitation.*"[23] The pope further alludes to this fundamental responsibility in line with the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and quotes from its declaration: "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development" (*LS* 167).

Since Genesis 2:7 states that man (Adam) was formed from the earth (*adamah*), this means humans are connected to the earth. John Paul II makes this clear, "If an appreciation of the value of human person and human life is lacking, we will also lose interest in others and the earth itself."[24] Hence, human life is a precious gift of God. Pope Francis maintains that "we cannot fail to consider the effects on people's lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture" (*LS* 43). Human dignity is at the foreground all social principles. The five sub-sections that follow enunciate these principles.

The Principle of the Common Good

The principle of the common good is geared toward upholding the sanctity and dignity of the human person. A respect for human rights is a fundamental criterion for fostering the common good. The Second Vatican Council envisions the common good as, "the sum total of social conditions which allow people… to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily."[25] Hence, "God intended the Earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings… under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner."[26] The purpose of both society and the

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[23] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 113.

[24] John Paul II, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation," no.13 https://www.vatican.va/content /john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html (accessed November2, 2022).

[25] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*," in *The Basic Sixteen Documents: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations,* ed. Augustine Flannery (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1996), no. 26. Subsequently, Vatican II documents will be referenced from this edition.

[26] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 69.

state are pivoted on the principle of the common good, which stresses that the individual good subsists in the good of the community—the basis for humans to care for creation.[27]

Pope Francis evaluates the condition of global society, wherein a growing number of persons are deprived of their fundamental rights, and suffer injustices (*LS* 158). These experiences of abuse and injustice are related to the misuse of the earth's goods. As such, the ecological crisis adversely affects the poor and the most vulnerable. Pope Francis argues that a rightful use of the world's goods "demands all else an appreciation of the immense dignity of the poor in the light of our deepest convictions as believers" (*LS* 158). The pope draws attention to how any human activity that degrades the earth affects the poor, who totally depend on the fruits of the earth for sustenance. He contends that the common good entails respect for the human person, the welfare of society, and the well-being of the earth (*LS* 157). When the common good is absent in society, there are bound to exist injustices and abuses of human rights. The common good promotes care for the earth, for the benefit of the present and future generations. Francis affirms the significance of this principle in light of climate change: "the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all" (*LS* 23). Elsewhere, the pope further stresses the indispensability of the common good: "Every aspect of social, political and economic life achieves its fullest end when placed at the service of the common good," and thus "our plans and projects should always take into account their effects on the entire human family, and consider their consequences for the present and for coming generations."[28]

The Principle of Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity holds pride of place in the organisation of human society. This principle promotes the roles and functions that befit individuals and groups, according to their capacities and strengths. This pertains to decentralisation of roles and authority in human society.[29] It recognises the dignity, strength, and capacity of every person and every group. There is no room for competing, usurping, or supplanting the roles of others, or of groups.

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[27] J. Milburn Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Thought* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books), 59.

[28] Pope Francis, "A Culture of Care as Path to Peace–Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace," (2021): no. 6. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20201208_messaggio-54giornatamondiale-pace2021.html (accessed October 2, 2022).

[29] Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Thought*, 61.

Subsidiarity means that "intermediate social entities can properly perform the functions that fall to them without being required to hand them over unjustly to other social entities of a higher level by which they would end up being absorbed and substituted in the end seeing themselves denied of their dignity and essential place."[30]

In *Laudato Si',* Pope Francis explains subsidiarity as that principle, "which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power" (*LS* 196). He observes that in protecting biodiversity and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, those nations that pollute the most should work more in cutting their emissions (*LS* 169). Subsidiarity emphasises the appropriate roles of the various levels of society in caring for the earth and working for the common good.[31] It means that all levels of society, experically at the grassroots, should initiate sutainable actions that would promote the integral well-being of the earth. Subsidiarity, therefore, calls on every person and community to take appropriate steps in their locality to care, proctect and preseeve the earth.

The Principle of Solidarity

From an ecological perspective, the principle of solidarity is shaped by the dignity of the human person and the mutual interdependence of all creatures. Solidarity expresses "the need to recognise the composite ties that unite men and social groups among themselves, the space given to human freedom for common growth in which they participate."[32] This requires the willingness to give of oneself and work for the global common good, without any self- interest. Pope Francis relates this understanding to the common origin and identity of the person as created by God (*LS* 31). Every individual, as a social being, shares a substantial identity and dignity. In the words of Milburn Thompson: "Solidarity is rooted in the oneness of human family with God as our common parent. Thus, we are theologically and physically brothers and sisters."[33] It is this common origin, identity and destiny that inspire humanity to care for the earth. Thus, solidarity acknowledges the interdependence and interconnectedness of all creatures as well as the common good and integral development

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[30] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 186.
[31] Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Social Thought*, 61.
[32] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 194.
[33] Milburn Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Thought*, 59.

of all creation. [34] Hence, solidarity necessitates a consciousness in human actions and decisions —knowing full well that humans do not exist independently, and that human decisions and actions affect the lives of other creatures.[35] This should contributes toward overcoming all the "structure of sin" that permeates interpersonal relationships and interdependency in society.[36]

Pope Francis relates the common good to "intergenerational solidarity" as a means to promote justice between present and future generations: "The global economic crises have made painfully obvious the detrimental effects of disregarding our common destiny, which cannot exclude those who come after us. We can no longer speak of sustainable development apart from intergenerational solidarity" (*LS* 159). When humans view the world as a precious gift, they will not consider nature as merely utilitarian. For the pope, solidarity is an invitation to humans to use the resources of the earth in a responsible manner that allows for the earth's regeneration and the common good of future generations. Hence, if all species are related, then "[E]very violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment" (*LS* 142).

The Universal Destination of Goods

The principle of the universal destination of goods is grounded in the understanding that the earth and all that it contains are God's gift to all humanity. The Second Vatican Council explains in *Gaudium et Spes* that, "God destined the earth and all it contains for all people so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity."[37] The universal destination of goods bequeaths on every man and woman of all generations an inalienable right to responsibly use the goods of the earth.[38]

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reaffirms this position, "Whether believers or not, we agree(d) today that the earth is essentially a shared inheritance, whose fruits are meant to benefit everyone" (*LS* 93). The pope maintains that being conscious of this, and making efforts to put it into practice, demonstrate one's fidelity to God. The principle of the universal destination of goods reminds humanity that the goods of the earth are not meant for a few

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[34] See Otu, *Comunion Ecclesiology and Social Transforamtion,* 183*.*
[35] Thompson, *Introducing Catholic Thought,* 60.
[36] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church,* no. 194.
[37] Second Vatican Council, "*Gaudium et Spes,*" no. 69.
[38] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 172.

people (the rich alone), but for all (rich and poor), since both have equal dignity (*LS* 93–94). It is important that "every ecological approach" should factor in the "fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged" *(LS* 93). The equal right of humans to the goods of earth gives rise to the right to private property. The same right accentuates ecological responsibility as a duty for every human being (*LS* 94–95).

Closely related to the principle of the universal destination of goods is the principle of participation. Participation promotes the involvement of persons in the activities of society toward the common good,[39] and toward the promotion of human rights. The respect for human rights enables persons to participate in the community, to create a good society, and to flourish as human beings.[40] He explains that attempts to resolve the ecological crisis through "uniform regulations or technical interventions can lead to overlooking the complexities of local problems which demand the active participation of all members of the community" (*LS* 144). He notes that the participation demands every person in decision and policy making, and in effects, evaluation, execution, and monitoring of any project (*LS* 182–83).

Overcoming the ecological crisis and promoting an integral ecology cannot be left in the hands of a select few individuals or nations. Since the earth is the birthplace of humans, and the degradation of the earth affects the entire universe, the care for creation demands the participation of the global community.

The Option for the Poor

The option for the poor is another significant ecological principle. It is a preferential "option, or special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness."[41] It is a preference given to the well-being of the poor. It involves showing special love and care to the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those living on fragile environments, those without health care, and those without hope of better future. The option for the poor is founded on Jesus' ministry and teaching. Hence, the "Church's love for the poor is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, by poverty of Jesus and by his

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[39] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 190.
[40] Thompson, *Introducing the Catholic Social Thought*, 60.
[41] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 182.

attention to the poor."[42] Conscious that harm done to the environment has greater effect on the poor, Pope Francis contends that when instituting public policy, the global community must place the integral well-being of the poor and most vulnerable at the forefront. Quoting the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the pope insists that more attention should be given to "the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests" (*LS* 52). Pope Francis advocates that an "ecological approach . . . must integrate questions of justices in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and cry of the poor" (*LS* 49). He also implores poor nations of the world to work hard to eradicate poverty and promote the well-being of their citizens (*LS* 172).

This exposition on Catholic social principles shows the intricate connections among each of the principles described in this section—the common good; subsidiarity; solidarity; the universal destination of goods and the option for the poor. In promoting ecological conversion and responsibility, these principles must be integrated into the curriculum and content of ecological education, such that the faithful can understand how the despoliation and exploitation of creation affect the social conditions of humans. The principles equally serve as pathways for promoting integral ecology and integral human development as well as fostering the integral well-being of creation.

Toward Ecological Education

A fundamental dimension of this essay is to show how the ecotheological teaching of Pope Francis is rooted in sacred scripture, the Church Fathers, magisterium and Catholic Social Doctrine. More so in the words of Pope Francis, "Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it" (*LS* 19). Thus a relevant question arises: "What then should we do?" (Luke 3:10).

We are confronted with a myriad of environmental issues, affecting us all, as we live in an interconnected ecosystem. Africa is on the visibly scarred continent by the ecological crisis, with effects including pollution, gas flaring, depletion of natural resources, dumping of substandard goods, high carbon-emitting second-hand cars, toxic waste, toxic processed

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[42] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 184.

foods, desertification, and oil spillage.[43] According to Pope Francis: "The warming caused by huge consumption on the part of some rich countries has repercussions on the poorest areas of the world, especially Africa, where a rise in temperature, together with drought, has proved devastating for farming. There is also the damage caused by the export of solid waste and toxic liquids to developing countries, and by the pollution produced by companies which operate in less developed countries in ways they could never do at home, in the countries in which they raise their capital" (*LS* 51). Ilo observes that the challenges posed by crisis are "worsened by the fact that the continent lacks the capacity to mitigate and adapt to the threats of climate change and global warming" Yet Africa has contributed the least to climate change through emission of greenhouse gases and environmental degradation. [44] This situation makes the encyclical *Laudato Si'* a blueprint for ecological action in particular churches.

Amid the fifth anniversary celebration of *Laudato Si',* local churches are to further conversations directed toward ecological responsibility. In some parts of Africa, there is a pervading ignorance about environmental issues, which is coupled with a lack of verifiable data on the effects of the ecological crisis.[45] *Laudato Si'* offers a pathway to domesticate the ecotheological teaching of the Church on care for creation.[46] Given scarce ecotheologians and

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[43] Ilo, "The Gospel of New Creation: An African Ecotheological Ethics for Human and Cosmic Flourishing," 40.

[44] For the impact of the ecological crisis on the African continent, see McDonagh, *On Care of our Common Home*, 18; Ilo, "The Gospel of New Creation," 3-7; 59-63; Knox "Our Common Home," 24-36; Toussaint Murhula Kafarhire, "Lines of Approach and Action: An African Ecotheology of Justice, Praxis and Social Transformation," in *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 106-112.

[45] See Jude Osunkwo, *God and the Human Environment: Catholic principles of Environmental Stewardship as a Template for Action in Nigeria* (Bloomington: iUniverse (Universe), 2015).

[46] Some Catholic institutions and theological associations have made attempt through publications and conferences on how to domesticate the encyclical. See A publication of The National Missionary Seminary of St. Paul: "*Laudato Si'*: Views from the South," *Abuja Journal of Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 6 (2016); Raymond Olusesan Aina, "*Laudato Si'*: Reception in Africa and Decade-long Actionable Goals," *The Catholic Voyage* 19, no.1 (2022): 43-81; Luke Ijezie et al, *Theology and Ecological Issues* (Port Harcourt: Catholic Theological Association of Nigeria publications, 2017); Anthony Ikechukwu Kanu, *African Eco-Theology: Meaning, Forms and Expressions* (Maryland: Publication of the Association for the promotion of African Studies, 2021); (Stan Chu Ilo, *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2022). A Publication

environmental experts in the continent, curricula and statistical data to educate the faithful on ecological responsibility even in terms of training and catechesis.[47] Academic resources in Christian communities addresses the pastoral level and limited resources to offer ecological education for priests, religious and the laity.[48] More so, theological resources available often promote a "dominion theology" and an "anthropocentric cosmology," that describe creation as if it were something apart from humans.[49] Against this backdrop the pope emphasizes the need for ecological education as an imperative:

> Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices. All of these reflect a generous and worthy creativity which brings out the best in human beings (*LS* 210).

Such education is a prerequisite toward ecological conversion and ecological responsibility for particular churches in Africa. Ecological education will provide "an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging, and of a future to be shared with everyone… that would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life" (*LS* 202). This is an important task for particular churches toward ecological conversion and responsibility (*LS* 213, 214). A significant starting point for ecological education is the family, where one can grow in love and the virtues needed to preserve the earth's treasure.[50] According to Pope Francis:

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from the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at the DePaul University, Chicago, Illiois.

[47] knox "Our Common Home: An African Cry of the Earth, Our Home," 22-24.

[48] See Joshtrom Kureenthadam, "Ecothological Education in Laudato Si,' *Seminare* 37, no. 4 (2016): 83-96); Stan Chu Ilo, ed, *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'*(Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Publications, 2022); Luke Ijezie et al, *Theology and Ecological Issues* (Port Harcourt: CATHAN publications, 2017).

[49] See Joel Light, *A Field Guide to Christian Environmental Education: A Complete Guide to Creation Care* (Monterey, CA: Healthy Learning, 2008), 90-91.

[50] Kinikonda Okemasisi, "Ecological Education and Spirituality: An African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality," in *African Ecological Ethics and Spirituality for Cosmic Flourishing: An African Commentary on Laudato Si'* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022), 126.

In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life; we are taught the proper use of things, order and cleanliness, respect for the local ecosystem and care for all creatures. In the family we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity. In the family we learn to ask without demanding, to say "thank you" as an expression of genuine gratitude for what we have been given, to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm. These simple gestures of heartfelt courtesy help to create a culture of shared life and respect for our surroundings (*LS* 213).

The pope also affirms the need for an ecological education that promotes covenant relations between human and the earth and fosters a change in mindset and behaviour (*LS* 215). For the family, as a domestic Church to assume this task, particular churches should provide means for the faithful to be educated in ecotheological teaching of the Church. Particular churches in Africa needs to assume its responsibility as an agent for educating Africans to care for the earth. Significantly, the inclusion of courses on ecological ethics and ecotheology in seminaries, houses of formation, and lay ecclesiastical institutes would be paramount. Such courses should provide biblical, patristic, and magisterial teachings and cultural ecological wisdom in light of reliable scientific data on the climate and ecological crisis. A significant goal is to expose students to the import of these crisis and inspire them to become agents of eco-education. In addition, particular churches could consider organizing seminars and workshops in parishes to enlighten the laity on care for creation. A fundamental means would be to include the Church's ecological teaching in catechetical and moral instructions as well as sacred liturgy. The Justice, Peace and Development Commission can become an agency for this proposal. In the words of John Paul II: "An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others and for the earth."[51] Ecological education is imperative as a means to engender meaningful ecological conversation and ecological responsibility, which in turn could drive beneficial changes in human lifestyles and attitudes.

Conclusion

The roots of the ecological crisis are multifaceted. This article calls for education of the minds and hearts of all peoples of goodwill toward ecological conversion and ecological responsibility. Unfortunately, the global community cannot legislate its way out of this crisis

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[51] John Paul, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation*, no. 13.

through constitutional laws and conventional treaties. The unprecedented changes in climate with its attendant adverse impact on human lives, especially of poor nations places onerous task for particular churches to contribute towards educating the faithful to care for creation. Without ecological education, how would the faithful become aware of the ecological crisis and redress their steps in change of lifestyle and attitudes.

In light of the aforementioned thesis, this research presented a theological re-reading of *Laudato Si'*, examining the teachings of Pope Francis alongside the teachings of sacred scripture, the Fathers, magisterial teachings, and Catholic social principles. This theological approach reveals a hermeneutic of continuity between the ecotheology of Pope Francis and past teachings of the Church in light of changing context. Considering the African ecological context, we have argued for an ecological education through the investment of local churches in educating the clergy, religious, and laity as a means of fostering ecological conversion and ecological responsibility. We contend that until humans become aware of their inextricable interconnectedness and interdependence with creation, the earth will remain in crisis.

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THE ECCLESIAL RECEPTION OF *FRATELLI TUTTI* IN NIGERIAN CATHOLICISM

Raymond Aina

ABSTRACT

While *Fratelli Tutti* adheres to recent magisterial teachings on Catholic social morals, this contribution makes the case that the encyclical is related to the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace*. This essay, relying on the critical rhetorical communication theory, concludes that several stated tasks outlined in the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace* and *Fratelli Tutti* have not been realised in Nigerian Catholicism. The article argues that *Fratelli Tutti*'s contact rhetorical symbolism must be domesticated and allowed to challenge Nigerian Catholicism if the Catholic Church in Nigeria is to demonstrate its fidelity to Catholic social imagination and thought. There are many choices, but not all of them need to be hierarchy-driven.

Keywords: Catholic Social Thought, Civil Friendship, *Abu Dhabi Document*, *Fratelli Tutti*,

Globalisation, Moral Imagination, Rhetorical Criticism

INTRODUCTION

This essay analyses Pope Francis' Catholic social imagination in *Fratelli Tutti* about

contemporary human fraternity from the standpoint of Catholic Social Thought about

social solidarity. His intervention urges all human persons to share a common concern for

the common good and the well-being of each individual. Importantly, this article pinpoints

the moral illumination informing the various stances in the encyclical. On the heels of this

moral illumination, the article concludes with how *Fratelli Tutti* has been received by the

Catholic Church in Nigeria. Though the Catholic hierarchy has engaged *Fratelli Tutti*, there

are crucial tasks yet to be accomplished. All tasks that these two documents put forward

need meticulous preparation and the provision of resources. A Google search on "*Fratelli*

Tutti and Nigeria" leaves the message that the strategic reception of *Fratelli Tutti* and the Abu Dhabi Document has yet to commence in Nigeria. *Fratelli Tutti*'s contact rhetorical symbolism must challenge Nigerian Catholicism if the Catholic Church in Nigeria wishes to lay claim to fidelity to Catholic social imagination and thought.

HUMAN FRATERNITY FOR WORLD PEACE AND LIVING TOGETHER

Some may be forgiven if they thought that Pope Francis issued *Fratelli Tutti* because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the race for vaccines against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).[52] *Fratelli Tutti* refers to the virus just three times.[53] Pope Francis states that he had started writing the encyclical when COVID-19 came upon the world suddenly.[54] Hence, the coronavirus pandemic could not have been a motivation for the encyclical. The pandemic only confirms the thesis that motivated the encyclical in the first place. The fragmentation that characterises today's "hyper-connectivity" is a contradiction.[55] The panorama of contradictions does not guarantee "a more humane future."[56] If we will experience a more humane future in the face of growing polarisation, interfaith dialogue is crucial. Dialogue offers one of the best means for rebuilding trust among different people.

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[52] The novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 is responsible for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). SARS-CoV-2 belongs to the family of human coronaviruses (HCoVs). Thamina Acter *et al.*, "Evolution of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic: A global health emergency," *Science of the Total Environment* 7, no. 30 (2020): 1-19,https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.138996.

[53] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti on Fraternity and Social Friendship* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2020), nos. 7, 19, and 32.

[54] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 7.

[55] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 22, 26.

[56] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 29.

The promise of interfaith dialogue led Pope Francis, the Roman Pontiff and Sheikh Ahmad

al-Tayyib, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Egypt,[57] to jointly sign *Abu Dhabi Document,*[58] at

Abu Dhabi, on February 4, 2019, during Pope Francis' Apostolic trip to the United Arab

Emirates. It is a milestone that the leading authorities in Catholicism and Sunni Islam (the

most popular Islamic tradition in the world), issued a joint statement committing to the

pursuit of peace in an increasingly fragile and polarised world. According to Pope Francis,

"there is only one great danger at this moment: destruction, war, hatred among us. And if

we believers are not able to shake hands, embrace, kiss one another and pray, then our

faith will be defeated."[59] It is only through conversion to a culture of care, responsibility,

and listening that the human family can emerge stronger and safer from the world's

panorama of contradictions.

Despite some misgivings about the Abu Dhabi Document, the interfaith initiative bears the

imprint of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. So, the initiative is a step forward from

Vatican II, after 50 years.[60] The Abu Dhabi Document concretely builds on key theological

ideas of some conciliar and post-conciliar documents. It is important to underscore this

point because of some Catholic alt-right commentators, who criticise Pope Francis for

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[57] Al-Azhar is the foremost and largest Sunni Islamic university in the world. As the head of Al-Azhar, the Grand Imam, currently held by Sheikh Ahamad al-Tayyib, is "an extraordinarily powerful and influential person." He is "the highest scholarly authority for the majority of Sunni Muslims." "His Eminence Sheik Dr Ahmad Muhammad Al-Tayyeb," in *The Muslim 500: The World's Most Influential Muslims, 2021*, ed. S. Abdallah Schleifer, Tarek Elgawhary, and Afrab Ahmed (Amman: The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre, 2020), 93.

[58] His Holiness Pope Francis and The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahamad al-Tayyib, "A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," news release, February 4, 2019, https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/02/04/190204f.html. Henceforth, called the Abu Dhabi Document.

[59] "Press Conference on the return flight from Abu Dhabi to Rome, Papal Flight, 5 February 2019," *Pro Dialogo* 162, no. 2 (2019): 52.

[60] "Press Conference on the return flight," 53.

allowing himself to be exploited by Muslims, thus leading the Church into error.[61] The

contents of the Abu Dhabi Document and *Fratelli Tutti* are in sync with post-conciliar

magisterial teachings on interreligious dialogue. In the post-conciliar period, for instance,

the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) issued a set of guidelines for

dialogue between Christians and Muslims.[62] The guidelines include the important values in

Islam that Christians in dialogue should bear in mind.[63] Yet, some obstacles to

interreligious dialogue persist, and interfaith dialogue cannot gloss over these.[64] Despite

the obstacles, however, there are notable areas of cooperation.[65]

We can situate Pope Francis and Sheik al-Tayyib's initiative under the rubric of promoting

an all-inclusive human society as an area of cooperation in Christian-Muslim relations.

Promoting this all-inclusive society, which is most important today, includes the

commitment to fraternity, so that conflicts will be finally resolved,[66] as humanity moves

towards a "'new human family'(GS 39)" in that "'excellent city' (*al-madina al-fadila*)"[67]

where God's will prevails. Also, Pope Francis and Sheik al-Tayyib's initiative is a

contemporary example of interfaith cooperation for political harmony. Both religions extol

social virtues to inculcate civic responsibility, concern for the common good, full protection

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[61] "Press Conference on the return flight," 53.

[62] Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, *Interreligious Documents I: Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims*, ed. Maurice Borrmans, trans. R. Martson Speight (New York, NY; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981). Henceforth, PCID.

[63] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 45-66.

[64] These obstacles are mostly "customs, regulations, conditions which carry much weight." Explicitly, these obstacles include dietary restrictions in relation acting in freedom of conscience and respect of each other's choices, mixed marriages, the duty of the apostolate versus opposition to proselytism, and the mutual incomprehension around religious minorities as they seek "a balance in a pluralistic society." PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 84-86, quotations on 84 and 86.

[65] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 45-88.

[66] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 93.

[67] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 93.

of human rights, the Promotion of democratic participation in public affairs, and defending liberty rights.[68] Believers must lead by example in the commitment to a sense of civic duty and promotion of the common good and authentic exercise of authority.[69] At the international community level, both religions must act together for "justice, equality, and brotherhood."[70] The two religious communities should also work for global peace and reconciliation, working against all "'total war' and terrorism."[71] They should jointly help human beings to experience liberation from ancient bondage to war, by promoting non-violent conflict resolution culture and traditions/initiatives.[72]

BETWEEN THE ABU DHABI DOCUMENT AND *FRATELLI TUTTI*

The encyclical is a testament of Pope Francis on the things on his mind, which he had shared in bits and pieces in about a decade. It is on issues related to fraternity and social friendship. We already showed one of *Fratelli Tutti*'s immediate context—the Abu Dhabi Document.[73] Pope Francis mentions this document eight times. It is unprecedented in Church history that in an encyclical, a pope states that he draws inspiration from a Muslim.[74] It appears the document offers a hermeneutic lens for appreciating *Fratelli Tutti,* especially the first chapter on the dark clouds against human fraternity today, and the eighth chapter on the role of religions in fostering fraternity in the world today.[75]

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[68] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 96.
[69] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 96-97.
[70] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 97.
[71] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 97.
[72] PCID, *Interreligious Documents I*, 97.
[73] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 5.
[74] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 5.
[75] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 9-54, and 271-286.

Significantly, the Abu Dhabi Document invokes some premises for the necessity of working to spread "the culture of tolerance and of living together in peace..."[76] These premises are that religions place a high value on reciprocity, fraternity, justice, and love; that everyone has the right to freedom and that diversity does not invalidate this right; that a life lived with dignity depends on merciful justice; that dialogue generally fosters a culture of interpersonal harmony; and that dialogue between religions, in particular, creates space for both spiritual and universal shared social values. Other obligations include guarding places of worship, denouncing terrorism on both sides, including that committed in the name of God, extending citizenship to protect minorities in the community, and upholding gender equality, children's rights, and the rights of vulnerable adults as social obligations.[77] Solidarity is at the base of the document's premises and a clarion call for "the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard."[78]

The Abu Dhabi Document concludes by pledging that both the Catholic Church and Al-Azhar shall ensure that the document becomes an object of research in all schools to help "educate new generations" that will "bring goodness and peace to others."[79] *Fratelli Tutti* is Pope Francis' way of making the Catholic Church receive this Document. The encyclical attests to this, "The present Encyclical takes up and develops some of the great themes raised in the Document that we both signed."[80] As we shall see, we may not fully understand the social teaching in *Fratelli Tutti* without going back to the Abu Dhabi

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[76] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[77] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[78] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[79] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[80] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 5.

Document. For instance, when one reads the first, fourth, and eighth chapters, one will recognise that these are partly profound elaborations on the premises and axioms of the Abu Dhabi Document.

FRATELLI TUTTI AND THE THREATS TO UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY

In his social critique of today's world as inspired by Catholic social imagination,[81] Pope Francis states clearly that there are dark shadows over a closed world. These are "shadows of neglect and violence in the service of petty interests of power, gain, and division."[82]Pope Francis establishes his premise of 'dark clouds over a closed world' by highlighting "certain trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity."[83] Ancient primordial conflicts among peoples and nations are now resurfacing, egged on by populist ideologies that are "creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense under the guise of defending national interests."[84] This nationalist selfishness demonstrates a paradoxical 'closing up' and 'opening up'. On the one hand, this populist selfishness 'closes up' nations, preventing the 'other' whose coming will 'dilute' the purity and wealth of their nations. On the other hand, the same populist selfishness promotes the mantra of 'opening up to the world'. Consequently, we need to appreciate the growing politics of exclusion, which Pope Francis highlights in his first Apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.[85] Unfortunately, as already noted, this 'open up the world' globalism has led to the massive

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[81] This refers to "the distinctive way Catholics express the social demands of their faith." We can also refer to it as "the Catholic way of engaging social questions and imagining social possibilities." Godswill Agbagwa, "History and Development of Catholic Social Imagination," in *Handbook of African Catholicism*, ed. Stan Chu Ilo (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2022), 329-339, at 330.

[82] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 72.

[83] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 9.

[84] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 11.

[85] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2013), no. 53.

exclusion of those without political and economic power. This has given rise to "a globalization of indifference."[86] This kind of globalised indifference inoculates us against "the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own."[87] An economy of exclusion and indifference deadens, even if it leads to prosperity.

We appear today to be living in a more advanced Hobbesian state of nature, where life is characterised by "continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[88] Pope Francis captures this current state aptly. Some people believe that finding ways to dominate and control others is the only way to secure a monopoly on the resources of the planet. Hence, they deploy the tools of "despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values."[89] The structure of the world today does not have space for everybody, even though we inhabit the same world. We are building more walls than bridges.[90]

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[86] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 54.

[87] Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 54.

[88] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, with an Introduction and Notes*, ed. C. A. Gaskin, Oxford World's Classics Series, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 84 (Part I, no. 9).

[89] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 15.

[90] Severally, *Fratelli Tutti* refers to the phenomenon of erecting walls among human beings. As it was during ancient times, where people built walls and defensive towers as response to the ancient urge of self-preservation against the 'barbarian' who must be kept out (cf. nos. **4** and **27**), contemporary men and women erect walls due to local narcissism (no. **146**). Yet, we cannot overcome notable grave dangers threatening the world today, especially public health emergencies like COVID-19 pandemic without moving beyond our walls (no. **34**). 'Commanded love' in politics calls for the breaking down of physical and metaphorical walls, if the vocation of the politician shall be realised (no. **195**). The Body of Christ must be a place where walls break down (no. **276**). Hence, religious leaders should open vistas for dialogue, and not erect new walls among the People of God (no. **284**).

Therefore, we are becoming increasingly distant from one another.[91] We are just fellow inhabitants of the world, but we do not see one another as neighbours. The other is not a neighbour, to be cared for and respected from birth to natural death. If we see another human person as just an inhabitant, the person is primarily seen from the perspective of utility. This 'throw-away' mentality has even crept into family life.[92] The throwaway culture has contributed to poverty growth, unjust labour practices, and egregious enemies of humanity that some rather naively thought we had transcended. Some of these, according to Pope Francis, are cultural colonisation,[93] racism,[94] tribalism, and gender and class discrimination. All of these are, in fact, forms of "'ontological imperialism'."[95]

Pope Francis turns to another 'dark cloud' over a closed world, which he calls the illusion of communication.[96] This becomes more pertinent in the wake of the '*infodemic.*' Infodemic refers to "outbreaks of misinformation...rumors, (and) falsehoods."[97] Infodemic is a public emergency like an epidemic or pandemic because this misinformation and rumours are widely disseminated through the internet,[98] yet they rank low on "*accuracy, facts*, and *truth.*"[99]This is why infodemic is a grave social moral issue. When we neglect infodemic or pay inadequate attention to it, we are left with some negative impacts that affect society.

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[91] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 16.
[92] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. ., nos. 18-19.
[93] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 14.
[94] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 20.
[95] Raymond Olusesan Aina, "Levinas' Post-Holocaust Ethic, Responsibility Ethic, and Catholic Social Thought," *The Nigerian Journal of Theology* 32 (June 2018): 21-42, at 32.
[96] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 42-50.
[97] Gunther Eysenbach, "How to Fight an Infodemic: The Four Pillars of Infodemic Management," *Journal of Medical Internet Research* 22, no. 6 (2020): e21820,https://doi.org/10.2196/21820.
[98] Parth Patwa *et al.*, "Fighting an infodemic: Covid-19 fake news dataset," *arXiv preprint arXiv:2011.03327* (2020): under "Related Work".
[99] Eysenbach, "How to Fight an Infodemic," under "A Brief History of Infodemiology".

Some of these consequences include "the sidelining and suppression of science in favor of political and commercial interests."[100] Furthermore, infodemic is a real threat to human society because fake news sometimes influences people to the point that they believe 'fake news' to be true.[101] Infodemic shows us that the right to freedom of speech and information now comes with a heavy price: "an increased susceptibility to infodemics."[102] This is not just a socio-political issue. It is a moral issue for any human community. According to emerging research on the impact of infodemic on society, lies spread faster today than facts.[103] Unknowingly, infodemic and purveyors of fake news are gradually re-engineering our collective brain away from the truth. Hence, it is a moral imperative to invest time and resources in our digital environment. This is the most viable way to help our collective brain "find a way back toward promoting the truth."[104] Considering the spectre of 'infodemic' and 'conspiracy theories' today, we must acknowledge rather embarrassingly that Pope Francis is spot on about our lack of wisdom today. Despite surfeit digital communication outlets, we do not necessarily possess greater wisdom.[105]

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[100] Eysenbach, "How to Fight an Infodemic," under "Conclusions".

[101] Patwa *et al.*, "Fighting an infodemic," under "Introduction".

[102] Eysenbach, "How to Fight an Infodemic," under "Conclusions".

[103] See for instance, Javad Pool, Farhad Fatehi, and Saeed Akhlaghpour, "Infodemic, misinformation and disinformation in pandemics: scientific landscape and the road ahead for public health informatics research," *Public Health and Informatics*, ed. J. Mantas et al. (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2021), 764-768; Bushuyev, Sergey, Denis Bushuiev, and Victoriia Bushuieva. "Project management during Infodemic of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Innovative Technologies and Scientific Solutions for Industries* 2, no. 12 (2020): 13-21; Antonio Sandu, "From pandemic to infodemic." *BRAIN—Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience* 11, no. 2 (2020): 277-289.

[104] Mark Buchanan, "Managing the infodemic," *Nature Physics* 16, no. 9 (2020): 894,https://doi.org/10.1038/s41567-020-01039-5.

[105] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 50.

***FRATELLI TUTTI'S* MORAL ILLUMINATION AND TWO SEASONS**

The concluding part of *Fratelli Tutti*'s first chapter reminds one of a famous passage from Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.[106]

Indeed, metaphorically speaking, *Fratelli Tutti* appeared during a harmattan season (in Africa), a period of dryness, drop in humidity, higher health risks, disruption, and discontent. Yet, as a universal pastor, Pope Francis offers a moral illumination that can lift beyond the gloom. Moral illumination refers to the introspective interpretation of reality, informed by one's spirituality, theology, and perhaps mysticism, such that one values and understands more one's reality. What manner of moral illumination does Pope Francis offer in *Fratelli Tutti*? To answer this question, perhaps, we should revisit Pope Francis' motto. It is "*Miserando atque eligendo*," meaning "choosing through the eyes of mercy, choosing through the perspective of mercy."[107]

As a religious leader constantly looking at the world through the eyes of mercy, Pope Francis helps us see that a season of darkness, in a closed world, can also birth a spring of hope, even if that hope is in a state of a chrysalis – a tender liminal state, and far from a perceptible reality. Instead of being sucked in by globalisation that has been tainted by

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[106] Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*, with Introduction and Notes, by Gillen D'Arcy Wood (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2004), under "chapter 1, The Period".

[107] John Allen Jr., "The Moral Perspectives and Policy Priorities of Pope Francis," interview by Council on Foreign Relations, *Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Calls/Webinars*, September 16, 2015, https://www.cfr.org/conference-calls/moral-perspectives-and-policy-priorities-pope-francis.

"globalized indifference" and "isolation and withdrawal,"[108] hope illumines the cloud of a

closed world, so that persons, peoples, and nations today may chart a new course. Hope is

the virtue that drives people to dream and proclaim that another world is not just possible.

It is within our power to build a movement that will realise this world of friendship and

neighbourliness. Indeed, Rebecca Solnit is spot on regarding illuminating power and drive

of hope: "'Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope.… To hope is to give

yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present

uninhabitable'."[109] The stubborn insistence on hope even if in a chrysalis state leads us to

consider the significance of the moral illumination of *Fratelli Tutti*.

FRATELLI TUTTI: A DEEPENING OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON HUMAN SOCIETY

Pope Francis, as the conscience of the world, on behalf of the forgotten peoples of the

world, has most authoritatively poked the conscience of the world on the importance of

peace, built on kinship. *Fratelli Tutti* deepens the previous papal interventions on human

solidarity like *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Populorum Progressio* (1967), *Centesimus Annus*

(1991), *Deus Caritas est* (2005), and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009). However, Pope Francis is

concerned about the rise in populism. This reactionary populism reveals the inclination

towards concupiscence.[110] According to Francis, this is "the human inclination to be

concerned only with myself, my group, my own petty interests."[111] *Fratelli Tutti* is equally

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[108]Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 30.
[109]Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark* (2016), 3. Cited in Jack Downey, "Bring Out Your Dead: Finding Hope at the End of the World," *Berkley Forum*, October 26, 2020, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/bring-out-your-dead-finding-hope-at-the-end-of-the-world.
[110] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 166.
[111] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 166.

worried about the virus of individualism, which takes its root in liberalism. Liberalism is

dangerous because it promotes a throwaway culture. Accordingly, *Fratelli Tutti* encourages

us to look at human society through the moral prism of human kinship.[112] From the

perspective of Catholic Social Teaching,[113] human society is

> . . . a network of social relations founded on justice and love for the protection
> and promotion of the human person (balancing individual liberty and multi-
> dimensional, multi-level responsibility). This society *must be permeated and
> enriched by the Gospel*; including politics, labour, economy, law, and culture. This
> society *must be renewed, in solidarity, respect and affection* for the human family,
> engaging in dialogue and mutual respect in tackling many problems challenging
> human society, to make it more human.[114]

This is why I stated above that Pope Francis reiterates CST's vision of human society and

the importance of kinship.[115] For instance, *Fratelli Tutti* reminds one of what the

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church states on civil friendship: "*Civil

Friendship*... is the most genuine actualization of the principles of fraternity, which is

inseparable from that of freedom and equality."[116] Civil friendship, like any human friend, is

not anchored on a social contract. On the contrary, friendship functions within the sphere

of 'covenant'. Covenant captures the reality that we are already in a pre-rational

relationship as human beings before our rational choice of a social contract. Authentic

friendship is not based on pan-scale love. Instead, it is based on reciprocal expressions of

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[112] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 203.

[113] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, ed., *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (London; New York: Burns & Oates, 2004), nos. 60-65.

[114] Raymond Olusesan Aina, "Good Governance and Overcoming Insecurity in Nigeria: An Agenda for Pastoral Leaders and Agents," *Journal of Inculturation Theology* 16, no. 2 (December 2019): 218-33, at 23.

[115] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 203.

[116] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of Social Doctrine*, no. 390.

gifting and care.[117] We are called to something more than just a social contract. We are

called to be people who covenant with each other because there is a prior covenant that

binds us together. A covenant is a reciprocal exchange of gifts and care. It eschews a

monolithic understanding of identity or the world and demands the realisation that

building something socially enduring requires a process of mutual learning and even a

commitment to being willing to renounce something for the common good.

We must offer realistic proposals for the actualisation of civil friendship based on the

common good. The Holy Father is aware that collaboration and networking for strategic

planning and execution of goals for civility, friendship, good governance, peace, and

development are the ways to go if his vision in *Fratelli Tutti* will see the light of day. Hence,

he outlines in chapter seven paths for a renewed encounter on the way towards

sustainable peace in various communities and around the world.[118] These paths of

renewed encounter include true reconciliation,[119] common projects that do not deny each

person's individuality,[120] and legal and constitutional safeguards protecting the inherent

dignity of all persons,[121] especially the poor, the dispossessed, and the discarded.[122] In a

world torn apart by hatred, and violence, even in God's name,[123] we must promote cultures

and practices of true forgiveness.[124] However, we must understand and appreciate the

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[117] Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*, Revised ed. (London and New York: Continuum, 2003; repr., 2004), 205-06.
[118] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 228-32.
[119] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 236.
[120] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 234-35.
[121] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 213.
[122] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 233-35.
[123] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 281-84.
[124] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 237-40.

meaning of forgiveness, which does not condone evil.[125] Forgiveness does not mean

forgetting.[126] Forgiveness includes recognising the historical truth of a painful past.[127]

Forgiveness does not contradict the inseparability of truth, justice, and mercy.[128] Pope

Francis acknowledges that whereas conflict is inevitable in life, violence is inadmissible.

Consequently, we cannot in the name of responding to a hurtful past continue to make

recourse to war, and the death penalty.

FRATELLI TUTTI'S RHETORICAL SYMBOLISM AND ITS PROMISE IN NIGERIA

From the perspective of rhetorical criticism in communication,[129] *Fratelli Tutti* uses contact

rhetoric and rhetorical symbolism. According to this rhetorical style, the target audience is

persuasively prodded into attitudes that appeal to history and one another using rhetorical

symbolism. From "flattery, sophistry, and manipulation up through honourable leadership

and sincere love," rhetorical symbolism employs a variety of expressive techniques.[130] The

goal of rhetorical symbolism is to influence the listener to adopt particular character traits,

such as developing affection towards others or withdrawing from some interactions.[131] To

achieve its aim, *Fratelli Tutti* adopts contact rhetoric, instead of the discursive rhetoric

approach. The discursive rhetoric approach communicates its aim through symbolic and

abstract speech. On the other hand, the contact rhetoric approach emphasises ethical

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[125] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 241.
[126] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 250-54.
[127] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 246-49.
[128] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 227.
[129] For a stimulating discussion of this communication style and its relevance to Fratelli Tutti, see Jon P. Radwan and Roger B. Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love: Interpersonal Encounter and Church–State Transitions in *Fratelli tutti*," Religions 13, no. 532 (2022): 1-20.
[130] Radwan and Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love," 3.
[131] Radwan and Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love," 3.

communication patterns through "physically embodied interaction dynamics (such as love, war, flight, etc.)."[132] *Fratelli Tutti* closely adheres to the "Christian relational narrative," which traditionally demonstrates how God tries to bridge the chasm created by Original Sin between himself and humanity as well as between humans as estranged neighbours. *Fratelli Tutti* is fighting for this justification today given the harmful trends growing the distance among human beings, as the document articulates in the first chapter. According to this traditional relational narrative, "faithful persons and organisations are justified as they try to transcend divisions and image loving connection."[133] No wonder *Fratelli Tutti* begins with the salutation "Brothers (and sisters) all". No one is excluded. The author's vision and message transcend all divisions. He demonstrates that the vision of transcending the 'culture of encounter' is not just a thing of the past (like the encounter between St Francis of Assisi and the Egyptian Sultan Malik-el-Kamil, at the peak of the Christian Crusades).[134] This transcending culture of encounter has been demonstrated again today between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, during a time when the West and the Middle East are caught in the throes of religious terrorism and mutual animosities stoked by unscrupulous religious and political opportunists. Because of "its advocate for peace and open 'culture of encounter,'" *Fratelli Tutti* has gotten positive reviews from all around the world.[135] Transcending the culture of exclusion is necessary for social cohesion.

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[132] Radwan and Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love," 3.

[133] Radwan and Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love," 5.

[134] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 3.

[135] However, the main complaint is that *Fratelli Tutti*'s "culture of encounter" is obviously gendered. Critics say *Fratelli Tutti* has "gender bias" in its title as well as the sources it uses. Cf. Radwan and Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love," 7; **Peta Goldburg,** *Fratelli Tutti: Inspiration and Challenge for Catholic Education*, *La Salle Academy Publications series, no. 10 (Australian Catholic University, February 2022), 11, citing* Lisa Cahill, "Social friendship includes women, but social change must engage women," *Berkeley Forum*, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/social-friendship-includes-women-but-social-change-must-engage-women (accessed 07.11.2022).

According to *Fratelli Tutti*, the intentional fostering of reciprocity and cooperation is necessary for social cohesion. In other words, it is impossible to claim that there is true fraternity if there are no warm feelings toward the other. We can deduce this from the discussion of Pope Francis on the deficiency of the increasing preference for digital communication over direct praxis of encounter.[136] We will get to this point when there is more trust in the land than distrust and confusion. *Fratelli tutti* acknowledges this when it states that those controlling "the invisible dictatorship of hidden interests that have gained mastery over both resources and the possibility of thinking and expressing opinions" sow seeds of "lies," "distrust and confusion," and "fear". [137] Hence, we need a culture of encounter built on trust as the antidote:

> That is why 'we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect. Patience and trust are called for in such dialogue, permitting individuals, families and communities to hand on the values of their own culture and welcome the good that comes from others' experiences'.[138]

Even impersonal forces like the market and economic systems must be intentionally crafted to function on internal mechanisms of "solidarity and mutual trust."[139] Unfortunately, this cohesive trust is in short supply today.[140] Reconciliation, which is

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[136] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 42.
[137] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 77, 75, and 127 (in that order).
[138] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 134.
[139] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 168.
[140] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 168.

rebuilt trust,[141] takes time to achieve.[142] Investing in building up a culture of rebuilt trust is far more sustainable for human beings than a militaristic culture of deterrence and balance of terror.[143] Rebuilt trust ('reconciliation') is possible, affirms *Fratelli Tutti*, "'only through dialogue that is truly directed to the common good and not to the protection of veiled or particular interests'."[144]

FRATELLI TUTTI'S RHETORICAL SYMBOLISM AND ITS CHALLENGE TO NIGERIAN CATHOLICISM

In a toxic environment dominated by ethno-religious animus and carnage, how successful is preaching transcendent love? We have already stated that Pope Francis believes it is still possible to preach and pursue transcendent love—love that transcends provincialism and embraces unconditional cosmopolitanism. But how feasible are "Francis' contact terms in evaluating complicated religiopolitical relations and their significance in furthering peace"[145] in Nigeria and other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa? Nigeria is nationally an incohesive society. Its social cohesion has dipped since 2015. Social cohesion means the "willingness of citizens of a country to cooperate and work together towards ensuring the survival and prosperity of the country."[146] In Nigeria today, as in various parts of Africa,

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[141] 'Rebuilt trust' best defines 'reconciliation' that fits all levels of human encounter, from micro to meso and macro levels of relationships. See Raymond Olúsèsan Aina, *Overcoming Toxic Emotions: A Christian Ethical Framework for Restorative Peacebuilding* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2022), 144-45, 150-55, 191.

[142] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 243.

[143] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 262.

[144] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 262.

[145] Jon P. Radwan and Roger B. Alfani, "Communicating Transcendent Love: Interpersonal Encounter and Church–State Transitions in *Fratelli tutti*," Religions 13, no. 532 (2022): 1-20, at 2, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13060532

[146] Bell Ihua, "The Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey #nscs2021: Nigeria Is Much More Divided Today Than 4 Years Ago," *Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey* (Abuja, August 27, 2021), https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/301501/the-nigeria-social-cohesion-survey-nscs2021-nigeria-is-muc.html

bridging trust is waning while bonding trust is on the increase. Bridging trust refers to a state of being at home with persons outside one's primordial group (clan, religion). Bonding trust, on the other hand, refers to the sense of security one has with one's neighbours or primordial relations. Whereas bridging trust helps social cohesion and reconciliation, bonding trust is a barrier to social cohesion. This is the state of Nigeria at the time of Fratelli Tutti's publication. Nigerian rulers and political elite have not promoted a sense of national social cohesion.[147] This class of Nigerians showed they were infected with the more serious virus of egoism. These Nigerians confirmed what Pope Francis refers to as "a manifestation of concupiscence—'the human inclination to be concerned only with myself, my group, my own petty interests'."[148]

Several towns and villages have now mounted all types of roadblocks, screening those who want to enter. There is a lot of ethnic profiling going on in Nigeria. Nigerians conveniently, or have been forced to, forget that there are social pathologies that make people leave their homestead and migrate to another part of the country. Nigerians are allowing their fears of migrants, or non-indigenes, especially those unlike us, to violate the supreme law of human fraternity. There are stories in various parts of Nigeria of some projects of domination and exclusion. Even at the national level, the current administration has been severally accused of taking Nigeria through 'divide and rule, divide and conquer'. *Fratelli Tutti* challenges us to recognise that the destruction of self-esteem is the first step to the domination of persons or peoples.[149] This current context has led to more distrust in the land. This has led to violence at various levels. At the national level, it seems there is a state of deafness to the

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[147] For a fuller discussion, see Raymond Aina, *Overcoming Toxic Emotions*, 159-60.
[148] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 166.
[149] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 52.

words of Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* that the only way to avert the tragedy coming upon a

closed world overshadowed by dark clouds is to step up towards an authentic humanism

that recognises the Other as 'Neighbour'.[150]

However, the Catholic Church in Nigeria, as some of its critical stakeholders are responding

positively. For instance, On the 8th of February 2022, The Kukah Centre organised a one-

day conversation to mark World Fraternity Day inside the Main Hall of the Catholic

Secretariat, Durumi, Abuja. The conversation, taking inspiration from the meeting between

Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb and this joint document, discussed

'Promoting Religious Fraternity and Common Humanity'. The panellists all believed that

despite the increase of bonding trust instead of bridging trust in Nigeria, this encounter and

the joint document can help Nigeria gain ground on bridging trust. All of the panellists

concurred that it is bad when religious leaders use their platforms to advance intolerance,

injustice, and prejudice.[151] To deepen our shared humanity and religious brotherhood,

however, religious leaders and organisations are essential in fostering attitudes and

behaviours that will increase bridge trust. In this way, the interreligious participants

adopted the position of the Abu Dhabi Document:

> In the name of God and of everything stated thus far; Al-Azhar al-Sharif and
> the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church and the
> Catholics of the East and West, declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue
> as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal
> understanding as the method and standard.[152]

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[150] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, chapt. 2.

[151] The Kukah Centre, "Communique Issued at the End of a Panel Discussion marking World Fraternity Day Celebration" on the 8th of February 2022, under "Preamble," https://www.thekukahcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Frat-Day-C-1.pdf (accessed 15.11.2022).

[152] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".

The participants resolved to champion the building of "a society where common humanity

and fraternity are valued and practised through their sermons and engagements in

society."[153] So, religious practitioners still commit themselves, in principle to the dialogue

the Abu Dhabi Document espouses,[154] which *Fratelli Tutti* takes up and expounds in the

fifth chapter.

> Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of
> view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns.
> Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make,
> and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a
> more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in
> their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their
> arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent
> that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others.[155]

Interreligious dialogue is a crucial dimension of this social dialogue. Hence, the eighth

chapter focuses on the dialogue among religions. According to Pope Francis, religions are

significant contributors to a culture of equality and justice in society based on their respect

for each individual as a being called to be a child of God. Discussions between adherents of

various religions do not just occur for the sake of diplomacy, consideration, or tolerance.

Dialogue aims to forge friendship, peace, and harmony as well as to exchange spiritual and

moral principles and experiences in a spirit of truth and love.[156] Nigeria's predicament

about interreligious dialogue tempers the optimism of these two documents—the Abu

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[153] The Kukah Centre, "Communique," under "Religious Leaders/Insititutions".

[154] "Dialogue, understanding and the widespread promotion of a culture of tolerance, acceptance of others and of living together peacefully would contribute significantly to reducing many economic, social, political and environmental problems that weigh so heavily on a large part of humanity; Dialogue among believers means coming together in the vast space of spiritual, human and shared social values and, from here, transmitting the highest moral virtues that religions aim for. It also means avoiding unproductive discussions. . . ." *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".

[155] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 203.

[156] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 271.

Dhabi Document on Fraternity and Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti*. For instance, the

religionization of politics and politicization of religion has negatively impacted the main

body charged with driving interreligious dialogue in Nigeria. The Nigeria Inter-Religious

Council (NIREC) has lost its steam and commanding respect in recent years. So, chapters

six, seven, and eight serve as strong challenges to NIREC as much as the Abu Dhabi

Document. In fact, in one of the earliest acts of the reception of *Fratelli Tutti*, the Catholic

Secretariat of Nigeria reviewed the document.[157] According to this Nigerian ecclesial

review of Fratelli Tutti, NIREC has to improve its commitment to work for the culture of

"cooperation for the common good among adherents of the various religions in our dear

country."[158]

There is another area the Abu Dhabi document and *Fratelli Tutti* mentioned that the

Catholic Church in Nigeria has responded to positively. Both documents address social

injustice, migrant assistance, and political civility. Due to various humanitarian crises in

Nigeria, the country has about 2 million in camps for Internally Displaced Persons, and

about 7 million citizens urgently needing "life-saving assistance, including food, health

care, and water. The health situation in the camps is dire, with acute malnutrition and high

mortality rates."[159] Considering what *Fratelli Tutti* teaches about a humane response to

migrants and internally displaced persons, based on the four-action words of welcome,

protect, promote and integrate.[160] The Abu Dhabi Document and *Fratelli Tutti* inspired the

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[157] Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, *The Encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti", of Pope Francis: A Summary and a Review in the Light of the Nigerian Situation* (Abuja: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2020).
[158] Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, *The Encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti"*, 16 [no. 2].
[159] Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: COVID-19 Cases On the Rise," news release, March 25, 2020, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/25/nigeria-covid-19-cases-rise.
[160] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 129.

first plenary session and pastoral plan of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria for

2022, with the theme "*Fratelli Tutti*: Path to Building Human Fraternity and Sustainable

Peace in Nigeria". The Conference issued a six-point communique was issued after the

inaugural plenary meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. The bishops

resolved to continue advocating for international harmony and civil discourse because,

without it, the world's grave divisions cannot be healed. They urged the advancement of

fraternity through wise political and governmental practices.[161]

Nigerian Catholics as a Family of God are still in the early days of the reception of *Fratelli*

Tutti. Perhaps the same applies to African Catholicism, There are lots of issues about the

upheaval against social friendship within the Church in Nigeria and beyond, for instance,

that are begging for structured and strategic proactive responses beyond conferences and

communique. The March 2022 CBCN's communique ends with Pope Francis' exhortation of

dreaming together as one family.[162] However, the diverse Family of God cannot dream as

one if the members do not see themselves as one. Some months before the CBCN plenary,

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in an op-ed in the *L'Osservatore Romano* newspaper raised the

issue of dreaming as one in the Church Nigeria building upon a prior warm sense of social

friendship within the Church: ". . . 'dream, then, as a single human family.' But this beautiful

sentence brought darker questions about the church itself, because of my own personal

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[161] "Human Fraternity: Path to Building Sustainable Peace in Nigeria: Communiqué issued at the end of the First Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN)" (At the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja, 5 – 11 March 2022), https://guardian.ng/apo-press-releases/human-fraternity-path-to-building-sustainable-peace-in-nigeria-catholic-bishops-conference-of-nigeria/ (accessed 20.11.2022).
[162] Cf. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 8.

experience. Does the Catholic Church, especially the Nigerian Church, see itself as a single family? For it must first see itself as a single family before it is able to dream as one."[163]

When drawing broad conclusions, one must proceed with caution. Accept that there are numerous instances of social friendliness, exceptional compassion, and opposition to provincialism all over Nigeria. This is acknowledged by Adichie in her writing as well. However, Fratelli Tutti is pressuring the Nigerian Church to reconsider what it means to be a church and to live as dignified members of the Church.

> we can use the human imagination to create a vision of how things can be, and that vision becomes a propelling force, an icon of possibility. I am struck by an overriding theme in Fratelli Tutti, which is the centrality of the human imagination. Pope Francis suggests that we must re-think and re-imagine and re-envision, and that this work of the imagination must be courageous and step outside of the established norm.[164]

Fratelli Tutti calls all its readers to be embodiments of the stubborn hope in human fraternity. It calls all to teach, and accompany people who have lost hope to believe again in hope. The task of "re-thinking, re-imagining, and re-envisioning" necessitates multipolar strategies, from catechesis, intra-ecclesial focused on *Fratelli Tutti* and formal pedagogy in all Catholic educational institutions to media education and cooperative initiatives among inter-ethnic groups or churches. This is a pivotal way of receiving the Abu Dhabi Document and *Fratelli Tutti*. Both documents emphasise the necessity of education and the pedagogical reception of their messages.

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[163] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "Dreaming as a single family: A reflection on the Pope's Encyclical," *The Vanguard newspaper* (July 11, 2021), https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/dreaming-as-a-single-family-a-reflection-on-the-popes-encyclical/ (accessed 20.11.2022). Originally published in the Italian edition of *L'Ossevatore Romano* of July 5, 2021.

[164] Adichie, "Dreaming as a single family" (accessed).

First, the Abu Dhabi Document states that "Al-Azhar and the Catholic Church ask that this Document become the object of research and reflection in all schools, universities and institutes of formation, thus helping to educate new generations to bring goodness and peace to others, and to be defenders everywhere of the rights of the oppressed and the least of our brothers and sisters."[165] It also affirms the importance of sound education and moral formation as well as faithfulness to religious teachings as antidotes to radicalization and extremism.[166]

Second, one can say Pope Francis has these resolutions in mind when he turns his gaze to education in human fraternity. He affirms the imperativeness of education and formation in virtue, especially solidarity, which is crucial for realising the dream of universal fraternity.[167] Pope Francis equally mandates "a process of education that promotes the value of love for one's neighbour, the first indispensable step towards attaining a healthy universal integration."[168] Furthermore, *Fratelli Tutti* envisions an educational process that anchors itself on the twin principles of solidarity and subsidiarity.[169] Hence, interdisciplinary education and research on fraternity and authentic social dialogue.[170] He singles out education and formation on communication, especially the new media, with its dangers to fraternity, despite its promises.[171] On a note of caution, *Fratelli Tutti* underscores the dangers when there is a lack of political will to offer processes of

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[165] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[166] *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, under "Document".
[167] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 114, 167.
[168] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 151.
[169] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 187.
[170] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 204.
[171] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 114.

"education in fraternity…"[172] Pope Francis recognizes that the dreams in *Fratelli Tutti* will come to pass if one is determined. He says formation in fraternity is "'a demanding and even tiring process, yet one that will gradually contribute to the formation of consciences capable of acknowledging each individual as a unique and unrepeatable person…'"[173]

All the tasks and processes that both documents put forward call for careful planning and the allocation of resources. From the indications above about the tasks put forward, one can say the deliberate and organised reception of *Fratelli Tutti*, and the Abu Dhabi Document before it, has not yet started in Nigeria, according to online searches for "*Fratelli Tutti* and Nigeria" as of November 20, 2022—two years and one month after the publication of *Fratelli Tutti*. The Church in Nigeria cannot trade these outstanding tasks for anything. If the Catholic Church in Nigeria wants to assert its faithfulness to Catholic social imagination and thought, *Fratelli Tutti*'s contact rhetorical symbolism must be domesticated and permitted to challenge Nigerian Catholicism. There are many options, but they don't all have to be centralised or controlled by the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria. Growing Catholic think tanks and Catholic social movements can be assigned the task of developing blueprints for practical protocols for the reception, dissemination, and concretization of the Abu Dhabi Document and *Fratelli Tutti* to create a culture of sincere encounter that will re-imagine the provincialism that is currently pervasive in both society and the Church, per their respective specialities.

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[172] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 103.
[173] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 98.

CONCLUSION

Beyond the polemics against postmodernity and its negativities, Pope Francis, firmly set in the footpaths of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI shows us another way characterized by mercy, courage, humility, and hope. In a sense, *Fratelli Tutti*'s Catholic social imagination and its new paths of hope can be understood against the backdrop of the postcolonial ambivalence towards religions and the renewed interest in religions as valuable in the modern state. Hence, in chapter eight, Pope Francis mentions various interfaith initiatives that can serve fraternity in our world. Invoking and referencing a document co-authored by a prominent Muslim leader in *Fratelli Tutti* is a teaching moment that Pope Francis intends to demonstrate what this article has identified as his contact rhetorical symbolism. He concludes with a prayer, which we all should make our own: "May we not be content with being enclosed in one fragment of reality."[174] May we work towards realising it. The Church in Nigeria is still in the early days of embracing Pope Francis' rhetorical criticism in communication. The reception of Fratelli Tutti goes beyond and beneath roundtable conferences and communique. The Church that dreams to be one has to strategically work for the cultivation of social friendship in the Church in Nigeria. That is when we can truthfully say we are "*Fratelli tutti*."

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[174] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 191.

CLERGY TRANSFER, INFLUENCING FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Transfer is a part of life of workers in every establishment. In faith-based organisations such as the Anglican Church, clergy transfer is a rich heritage of her tradition. It flows from a constitutional assembly and involves the movement of ministers and their families from one location to another for the purpose of spreading the Gospel within the Diocese of ordination or secondment. The most significant part of transfer is the inconveniences associated with it for the clergy and their families. However, there is dearth of literature related to transfer of clergy; the few available are often kept in church policy documents. This study aimed at closing this academic lacuna by examining the influencing factors and implications of clergy transfer in the Anglican Church, a principal mainline Church in Nigeria. The study focused on the Niger Delta mission area, collected data through participant observation, interviews and literature study including ecclesiastical documents. It provided answer to such questions as; what are the fundamentals of transfer, factors that influences it, and its implications? The study revealed that ecclesiastical transfer are diverse in nature, a fundamental practice of the church and is multi-dimensionally influenced. It affects positively and negatively on the church leadership, congregation, ministry of the clergy and his family. We therefore opined that the exercise should be standardised to minimise its effect and promote church growth.
Key words: Anglican Church, clergy, constitution, implication, and transfer.

Introduction

In every organisation, transfer is part of worker's life. Transfer of clergy (pastors and ministers of the gospel) and other church workers is a rich heritage of the Anglican Church. It is also a feature in other faith based organisations -Episcopal and Pentecostal. Clergy transfer is an inevitable constitutional responsibility of a Diocese and it is associated with inconveniences; at the centre is the clergy (transferee) and his family. However, there is

paucity of academic literature on the subject, the few are often kept in church policy documents.

This study aimed at closing this academic gap by examining the implications of clergy transfer in the Anglican Church, a principal mainline Church in Nigeria. The data for the study came through three main sources. First is from participant observation, the author being an Anglican insider. Second is formal and informal conversations (interviews) with key actors on issues related to transfer such as serving and retired clergy families, officials of the Dioceses and lay leaders of the church at the various levels. The next is information gleaned from literature including ecclesiastical documents such as synod reports. The study clarified such concepts as clergy, transfer, and clergy transfer. It highlighted the advent of Anglicanism in Nigeria, the nature and fundamentals of ecclesiastical transfer. Detailed discussion of the subject matter was based on the Niger Delta area. And it exposed the nature and factors that influences transfer as well as its implications on stakeholders especially the family and ministry of the clergy. The result will among other things serve as a platform for further studies.

Conceptual Clarifications

Clergy

The word clergy is used for all believers in Christ Jesus who are ordained by the church to lead the people of God in worship, mission and evangelism. The *Constitution and Canons of Church of Nigeria* (2020: 52) defined clergy as "all Priests and Deacons who ….exercise spiritual functions under the authority and spiritual jurisdiction of any Bishop of the Church of Nigeria". Clergy is "a member of the community of faith who is called of God and ordained by the Church to minister the word and sacrament and lead the people of God in the work of

the Kingdom" (Onu, 2014: 4). The word clergy, priest, pastor, or minister means a servant of God, and are used interchangeably.

Transfer

Transfer is part of life of every worker in any organization including the Church. The *dictionary* defined transfer as "to convey from one person, place, or situation to another". *Webster's* (2004: 1333) defined it as "the exchange of a person from one organization to another". It is the movement of a worker from one office or location to another by lawful authority. Transfer means "a lateral shift causing movement of individuals from one position or geographical area to another usually without involving change in duties, responsibilities, skills needed or compensation" (Murugesan, 2011: 144). It is a "horizontal move from one job to another within a company; the transferred employee essentially remains at the same wage and job level" (Ferrell and Hirt, 1989: 292). Transfer is different from separation, the departure of the employee from the organization that occurs because of resignation (voluntary giving up one's job), discharge (initiated by the employer for various reasons), layoff (suspension of employment), and retirement (due to age or length of service).

Ecclesiastically, transfer, relocation, posting, disposition, reshuffling, or deployment is a constitutional administrative responsibility. It is the "movement of an officer from one duty station to the other, or from a department to the other. It may or may not involve a change of designation or duties" (White, 2017: 132). It is the process whereby a worker is directed to move from one ministerial location to another on a long or short term basis for new experiences in the accomplishment of the person's calling. It means the official movement of an appointed worker from one service location to another. Transfer is a natural, necessary and inevitable rich heritage of the Anglican Church; the process by which

church authority moves clergy and other church workers from one station to another by filling vacated and new stations.

Clergy Transfer

The transfer of clergy is a pastoral constitutional responsibility of a Diocesan Bishop with principal officers of the Diocese and congregational representatives. Thus, clergy transfer is the movement of ordained and commissioned ministers from one mission station to another for the purpose of spreading the Gospel and nurturing of converts within an ecclesiastical area. The clergy is the transferee while the Bishop is the transferor. At ordination, the clergy is empowered with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands of the Bishop and serving priests to continue in the work of the Great Commission.

Nature of Transfer

Transfer is an integral part of human existence and a natural phenomenon as everyone moved from the womb via birth into the family. At death, the person relocates from the physical to the spiritual world.

The second is internal transfer also referred to as 'reshuffling' or 'trans-near' wherein a worker changes his ministerial location within an immediate ecclesiastical area like District or an Archdeaconry. There is external transfer or 'dislodgement' wherein a minister is relocated outside his context to a distant station within the Diocese.

Standard transfer is when the relocation is within a constitutional period. In the Diocese of Niger Delta for instance, "the appointment of a clergyman or catechist shall normally be for a period not exceeding five years". In his address at the All Anglican Clergy Conference held at Port Harcourt, Primate Henry C. Ndukwuba stated that, "The Anglican Church is orderly. It is good to follow the right channel for clergy movement and transfer. It

is unacceptable for any clergy to scheme in order to get transfer to a financially strong Diocese" (2021: 11).

The other is instantaneous or frequent transfer that involves the movement of a worker at the volition of the church authority, whereby a Diocesan Bishop can pronounce the transfer of a clergy with or without formal consultation. It is simply as the "need arises" and may be referred to as 'rapture'. Transfer is also sacramental in nature as it reminds believers of the eternal relocation of all humans to a place of either rest in heaven or damnation in hell.

Fundamentals of Ecclesiastical Transfer

Ecclesiastical transfer can take different forms at different times and places. God called Abraham to transfer from Haran into the Promised Land (Gen 12). Joseph was posted by his father, Jacob from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem (Gen 37:14) which commenced his mission to the royal palace in Egypt. Moses led the children of Israel as they relocated from Egypt *via* the wilderness towards Canaan. Jesus said to his disciples; "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The early church effected the transfer of Barnabas and Paul from Antioch for missions; "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2-3).

The Rev Thomas Birch Freeman of the Methodist church was relocated from Gold Coast (Ghana) to begin Christianisation of the entity known today as Nigeria in 1842. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Samuel Ajayi Crowther and other native catechists and clergy were

moved from one mission field to another as agents of the CMS in witnessing the love of God

in Christ Jesus, planting and nurturing Anglican churches in different parts of Nigeria. The

missionary postings of Samuel Y. Chukuigwe, first Ikwerre Anglican clergy for instance,

started from Isiokpo (home church) through Etche, Omoku to Aba in present Abia state

(Chukuigwe, 2001: 31). The process for transfer of ministers in Roman Catholicism is that:

> If the growth of souls or the necessity or advantage of the church demands that a
> pastor (a canonical parish priest) be transferred from a parish which he is governing
> usefully to another parish or another office, the bishop is to propose the transfer to
> him in writing and persuade him to concept to it out of love of God and souls (*A
> dictionary of canon law*, 2006: 643).

The Church of Pentecost, Ghana "reserves the right to transfer a minister to any region/area,

district or outside the country in accordance with the exigencies of the work, either

permanently or temporarily" (White, 2017: 132).

In classical Anglican Canon law, the Diocesan Bishop has the function to appoint and

license ordained and lay persons for ministry in the Diocese (Doe, 2003). In the English

model of a benefice, admission of a clergy to an office for the cure of souls is by presentation

or nomination, admission or institution, and induction. The right to present vests in the

patron, excisable only when the benefice is vacant. It must be approved by the bishop and

representatives of the parish chosen by the church council. In Irish church law, the normal

method of appointing incumbents is by a Board of Nomination. Moreover, the "Board cannot

be summoned until the diocesan council has certified to the bishop that the approved

stipend, expenses and free residence of the incumbent will be available" (Doe, 2003: 138).

> In English canon law, the Bishop may refuse in writing the admission or institution of
> a presentee if there is no evidence of ordination as priest or of sufficient learning; if
> not more than three years have elapsed since the presentee's ordination as deacon; if
> the priest is unfit by reason of mental or physical infirmity or incapacity; if there is

evidence of pecuniary embarrassment of a serious character, grave misconduct or neglect of duty in an ecclesiastical office, or evil life (having caused grave scandal since ordination concerning his moral character); and if, in the case of those who have not previously held a benefice, there is an absence of experience (or less than three years' experience) as a full-time assistant curate or curate-in-charge of a parish (Doe, 2003: 139).

In Nigeria, the Bishop shall faithfully ordain and commission those he believes God has called and constantly guide, support and encourage them in their ministries (*CoN BCP,* 2017). Clergy transfer in the Diocese of Niger Delta (DNN) is a constitutional responsibility of a Diocesan Appointments' Board or Appointment and Location Board. The board comprises of the Diocesan Bishop, Suffragan/Assistant bishop (if any), legal officers, Synod Secretaries, Archdeacons, and lay representatives from the Cathedral, Archdeaconries, Deaneries, and Chaplaincy. The Board shall be convened by the Bishop (chair) at least once a year to appoint clergy to Districts and Parishes and institutions; and Catechists to each District, and each District shall determine the locations within the District of such Catechists subject to any directions of the appointments' Board.

> The appointment shall be determined by a majority of votes and shall normally be for a period not exceeding five years. Every clergyman so appointed shall be inducted by the Archdeacon, under mandate from the Bishop; Nothing herein contained shall prevent the Bishop from exercising his right to refuse the induction of any clergyman so appointed; It shall be lawful for the Bishop with the approval of the Diocesan Board, to terminate the appointment of any clergyman or catechist who shall in the opinion of the Diocesan Board be mentally or physically incapacitated for the performance of his duties and to grant to such clergyman or catechist such sums of money as a retiring allowance, with the consent of the Diocesan Board; If the Bishop shall be of the opinion that the continuance of any duly instituted or licensed clergyman in his care is likely from any case not conducive to the welfare and progress of the Church, it shall be lawful for him with the approval of the Diocesan Board to issue a Commission to report upon the fact and on such report to remove such clergyman to another sphere or to relieve such clergyman of his appointment on payment of six months' salary in advance; To take into account existing vacancies and

to take necessary action to fill them; To post divinity students and Catechists located to the Diocese (*Constitution and Regulations of Diocese of Niger Delta,* 2004:57-58).

In Diocese of Niger Delta North (DNDN), the Location and Appointment Board is to:

> to review and approve the list of all the clergy of the Diocese and the offices which they hold and to effect transfer as shall appear to the Board to be in the interest of the Diocese; Notwithstanding the above, the Bishop may of his own volition or at the request of the Board, effect the immediate transfer of a clergy or the filling of a vacancy occurring in a parish as matter of emergency and an order so issued by him shall be complied with forthwith (*Constitution and Canons of Diocese of Niger Delta North*, 2012:15-16).

Factors that Influence Clergy Transfer

Transfer of clergy is a constitutional responsibility of a Diocesan Bishop through prayers and careful considerations of congregational needs and pastors' capabilities. When and where a clergy is posted to may be influenced by the following factors.

Mission Need

The principal purpose for transfer is the need for mission work. The mission of twelve disciples to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10: 5-7) was because they needed revival. The primary reason for involving the donkey for the triumphant entry mission into Jerusalem was that "The Lord has need of them" (Matt 21:3). Emmanuel O. Oko-Jaja (2011: 49) emphasised that; "nothing stops the Bishop from transferring any pastor from his station anytime the need arises. Pastors are reminded that we are called to serve in any part of the diocese and nobody is a 'sacred cow' or 'untouchable'". It implies that every clergy transferred to a church stand as an asset to the growth and development of that parish and by extension the Diocese. Most of those interviewed affirmed that clergy transferred is primarily for missional development, sustenance of the successes and growth of the parish,

and based on the spiritual needs of the church. In addition, that it is to prepare a congregation for higher service, prepare a growing congregation for parish, deanery or archdeaconry status as the case may be.

New Vacancy

The vacancy in the Apostolic band occasioned by death of Judas Iscariot, "who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus"; brought Matthias into the Apostolic ministry (Acts 1: 15-25). The Constitution empowers the leadership "to take into account existing vacancies and to take necessary action to fill them". When vacancies are occasioned by death of an incumbent, withdrawal or creation of new ecclesiastical of new ecclesiastical entity, transfer becomes inevitable as suitable ministers will be posted to the new areas. The death of Venerable F. Onuchuku within one year of his posting as Archdeacon of Evo occasioned the movement of Innocent W. Wopara to All Saints Rumukowurusi (headquarters) in 1996. Many are of the view that suitability in a new vacancy is a factor for transfer and clergy responsibility to higher service could create need for transfer. In his maiden address to Niger Delta North Diocesan Board meeting on June 23, 2000, Bishop Ignatius C. O. Kattey said:

> As a result of the vacancy created in Evo Archdeaconry by our elevation to the position of Bishop and Diocesan of the Diocese of Niger Delta North, together with the graduation of our students from theological institutions and in compliance with the Constitutional provisions… we have constituted an ad hoc Committee to advise us on the disposition of the clergy. Consequently, some clergy postings and adjustments affecting about forty clergymen have been carried out (Akah, 2000, p. 28 citing Kattey, 2000).

The election of Kattey as Bishop within his first year as Archdeacon of Evo led to the transfer of Reverend Canon Solomon S. Gberegbara then Administrator of Akpor Archdeaconry (six months) to Evo.

When clergy is seconded or appointed to certain positions in the church or the church's affiliates that require them to live closer to such duty stations, some other clergy would be relocated to fill the vacant office. This was the case in DNDN when Rev Anga Fred Nyanabo (2001) and Rev Ben Idume were seconded to the Diocese of Abuja. Again, the election, consecration and enthronement of Clement N. Ekpeye, Solomon S. Gberegbara, Isaac E. Orama, Sosthenese I. Eze, Okechukwu P. Nwala, Blessing C. Enyindah, Chidi C. Oparaojiaku, Innocent U. Ordu and Emmanuel O. Oko-Jaja as Bishops of Ahoada (2004), Ogoni (2005), Uyo (2006), Enugu North (2007), Etche (2007), Ikwerre (2007), Ohaji/Egbema (2008), Evo (2009), and Niger Delta West (2010) respectively, were all greeted with some relocation. In 2010 particularly, some clergy among those relinquished to the new Diocese of Evo stayed without a station for months until Bishop Kattey out of magnanimity re-absorbed them.

Standard

Diocesan Constitutions defines the period for transfer. In DND for instance, "the appointment of a clergyman or catechist shall normally be for a period not exceeding five years" (*Constitution & Regulations*, 2004). DNDN resolved that, "a pastor should not be in a station continuously for more than three years, except in exceptional cases" (*Synod Report*, 2000: 89). It implied that clergy in the former would experience some stability in their posting. For instance, under DNN, the first Archdeacon of Port Harcourt Archdeaconry cum Superintendent of Apara District, Venerable Samuel Y. Chukuigwe served for eleven years (1972-1983) at St Paul's church Diobu, Port Harcourt. His successor, Venerable Alexander O. Enyindah stayed for another ten years (1984-1994). The situation is different in DNDN, where it was ruled in 1998 that, "Archdeacons are to rotate like other class of priests".

Postulants

It is a constitutional duty of the Bishop to post "divinity students and Catechists located to the Diocese" and "clergy returning from Institutions after further training".

SN	Deacons Ordained in DNN	Year	Deacons Ordained in DNDN	Year
1	24	1992	56	1997
2	14	1995	40	2005
3	12	1979	35	2004
4	7	1960	30	1996
5	6	1962,1972, 1973	25	2009
6	5	1957,1974	22	2003,2013
7	4	1976	14	2006
8	3	1978	12	2007
9	2	1958, 1959, 1977	11	1998, 1999, 2016
10	1	1971	10	2010

Table showing highest number of deacons ordained in the Dioceses of Niger Delta (1957-1995) and Niger Delta North (1996-2016).

Increase in number of postulants from Theological Colleges annually, their ordination and posting affects serving clergy. The above data revealed that in DNN highest number of postulants ordained between 1957 and 1995 was 24 while least was one. Only in 1979, 1992 and 1995 that the Diocese had above 10 postulants ordained into the Holy Order. In DNDN highest ordination was 56 (1997) while least 10 (2010) with over 10 persons ordained each year. Thus, frequent transfer significantly featured in DNDN.

Worker Balance

A major objective for clergy transfer is to balance workers and infrastructural development of the Diocese by making every parish benefit from the diversity of gifts and talents that various clergy have. Our respondents emphasised that church authority considers the ministerial gifts of the clergy, their capabilities, and experience during transfer. Authorities may decide to move certain clergy from urban to rural churches for instance and vice versa to balance evangelization and general development of the area. When asked why a priest within one year of his stay in a parish was among those for transfer, a Bishop simply replied, "I know why". The immediate past Primate, Nicholas D. Okoh, said during a question and answer session on his maiden visit to Niger Delta Province at Saint Paul's Cathedral Diobu, Port Harcourt on May 28, 2010 that, "there is only one person who can see the vision on transfer, and that person is the Bishop". The DNDN synod resolved in 1998, that,

> Pastors should not be allowed to scramble for posting to churches within Port Harcourt and its environs. They should be posted to stations outside Port Harcourt where the churches are dying and where their services might be mostly needed" (*Synod Report*: 71).

Consequently, in 2002 about 43 clergy were transferred which affected movement of some vibrant clergy from city to rural churches. Reflecting on the effect of the transfer carried out in September 2002, Bishop Ignatius C.O. Kattey stated thus,

> The last clergy disposition generated a lot of emotions in the Diocese and it is proper we evaluate the progress or otherwise made as a result. God has vindicated us and we shall remain grateful to Him. In the said posting, most pastors who had served for very long period in the cities were relocated to the rural areas and those who were for a long time serving in rural areas were posted to city churches. Today we receive heart-warming reports from Omuma, Ogoni, Gokana, Ahoada, Omoku, Ikwerre North and other Archdeaconries. We have received congratulatory messages both in writing and verbally from various Parishes and Archdeaconries for the calibre of pastors posted to them (*DNDN Synod Report*, 2003: 87).

Mentorship

The *dictionary* defines a mentor as "a trusted counsellor or guide". Mentorship is a relationship between two people where the individual with more experience, knowledge, and connections (mentor) is able to pass along what he has learned to a more junior individual (mentee) within a certain field for which the person is mentored (Ibe, 2021: 1). Jesus mentored the twelve disciples and Paul did it to Timothy. Mentorship affects posting of pastors as it promotes discipleship whereby young ones understudy senior clergy. Thus, DNDN resolved in 1998 that, "Young pastors should be posted to work under senior pastors before they are posted out to be [on] their own" (*Synod Report*: 71). Deacons and priests seconded from other Dioceses were to serve in parishes where they have opportunity to learn from the experiences, teachings, and guidance of senior clergy. As clergy moved from one church to another, they mentor members of their congregation especially the leadership of each parish, which gives opportunity for development, and application of the diverse gifts and talents in affected churches for missional purposes.

Security

The security of either or both the clergy and congregation occasions relocation. We discovered that where the relationship between an incumbent and the congregation is not helping church growth, transfer might occur. Where some actions of an incumbent becomes a threat to the leadership, relocation takes place. Transfer becomes inevitable where it becomes obvious that an incumbent is greedy and selfish in his relationship with other workers in the parish as prolonged conflict could weaken the vitality of a church. Transfer was instant when a principal officer of a church said, if you want the women to leave the

church allow the incumbent to remain. In the Diocese of Ikwerre for instance, there was an appeal for the transfer of a curate "so that the vicar will work without difficulties" (*Synod Report*, 2013: 171). A plea was once made to allow a clergy remain in a parish because "he just wedded". A pastor was not allowed to remain in a parish after the parish had refused his senior colleagues from functioning. The authority said it was necessary to move him to prevent possible unhealthy relationship with in-coming priests. Transfer may be effected to avoid straining an established cordial relationship that could frustrate the work in the church. Hence, the safety and ministerial development of the clergy affects his posting. Recently, the Diocese of Ikwerre ruled that clergy disposition will not be based on economic or security reason (*Synod Report*, 2021).

A clergy experiencing personal or family health challenge may be posted to a parish where he could receive support. This will enable such clergy to easily access medical treatment. Some parishes had voluntarily sponsored their ailing clergy for medical tourism outside the country.

Eminent Laity Demand

There are cases where some eminent lay members who have access to the Bishop influence transfer. Where there is "misunderstanding" of the actions and intentions of an incumbent such individuals may demand for relocation of the clergy. Rejection of clergy should be done decently and politely, using dialogue and constitutional approaches. Response of authorities to such demands may promote conspiracy against any clergy who do not dance to the "personal" ideology of such personalities. It may also cause division among congregants. Indeed, conspiracy by some eminent laity affects clergy transfer.

Divine Orchestration

Transfer can be a divine arrangement. A clergy confessed that few months in a station, his little daughter talked of their relocating to a community she knew not its location; not long he was relocated to the said parish. Another priest informed that God visited him in a dream within few months of stay in a parish and revealed that he would be transferred. The next week, he received transfer letter to that very church (Orluogwo, 2017). Many of those who shared similar stories affirmed that their transfer to the new parish brought positive developments to their ministerial lives as well as the church in the areas of 'divine supplies', 'soul winning', church planting, and the peace of God.

Implications of Clergy Transfer to Church Leadership

A critical function of clergy transfer is balance of manpower and infrastructural development. Generally, transfers are done in the best interest of the diocese and with utmost sincerity. However, Bishops fret to carry out transfer; its necessity and inevitability make them to exercise that aspect of their leadership responsibility (Oriji, 2020). Again, "posting of Pastors is also tedious because it has to do with assessment of each Church's needs and state of affairs. It involves the assessment of human talents, I.Q., Spiritual gifts and abilities of Pastors" (Orluogwo, 2002: 283). A Bishop once said, making choice on stations to serve the Lord by clergy shall no longer be condoned. Addressing members of the Location and Appointment Board, Bishop Kattey said:

> You will agree with us that clergy disposition in the Diocese has been delayed for some time. This is due to obvious reasons; most significant of which is the inconveniences associated with it for our clergy and their families. Of course, disposition comes with it movement from one place to the other, and that affects many things including children relocation from one school to the other. However, bearing the inevitability of this Diocesan assignment, we have no alternative than to convene this Board meeting today (2017).

Bishop Wisdom Budu Ihunwo of DNDN expressing worry about the penchant of some clergy to monitor and or influence activities in their former stations said the process of changing of bank signatory should commence as a clergy is enlisted for transfer (*Synod Report*, 2019). Bishops are sometimes confronted with protest from churches and individuals including pastors after transfer. To control these pressures, some have adopted the principle of travelling outside their Diocese after relocation.

Implications of Clergy Transfer on the Congregation

Transfer offers opportunity for a congregation to share and benefit from the ministries, gifts, talents, experiences, and leadership styles of different ministers posted to them. The length of stay of a clergy in a parish affects the growth and expansion of the church. When it is frequent, "it affects the missional culture of the congregation since every new pastor comes with a new idea and style of leadership" (White, 2017:11).

It is the responsibility of officers of the parish, especially the churchwardens to "ensure that their clergy have a safe environment in which to live and work" (*Guidelines… conduct of the clergy*, 2003:10). Hence, some churches use the period of transfer to fix essential infrastructures and renovate existing ones. However, frequent transfer destabilises consolidation of church on-going projects and programmes resulting to uncompleted projects as some clergy would prefer to commence a new project rather completing existing ones initiated by their predecessor.

Certain policies of the church on transfer has affected clergy and congregation. In the DNDN, it was ruled that where the church a clergy is clergy is "serving clergy is indebted to the Diocese in quota payment at the period of his transfer shall not be eligible for a send-forth". Again, that "no person in the DNDN shall be held responsible to pay a clergyman any

stipend and allowance which he could not pay himself before proceeding on transfer" (Onu, 2014: 141, 157). Such policies has made some congregations who could not meet their financial responsibility then to feel guilty whenever they meet with their former ministers. Others hide under the policy to escape from responsibility towards their spiritual fathers who had laboured on their behalf. The implementation of these polices have caused many clergy who served in churches that are not financially buoyant to count their losses. Those who are 'fortunate' to serve in a congregation that had 'influential and rich people' had their financial status improved as they usually received 'a good send-off'. On the other hand, pastors transferred to less endowed churches experience financial difficulties. Thus, transfer is "a sad time for many priests and their parishioners, but also an exciting time for priests and parishes, a new beginning" (https://thetablet.org/the-transfer-of-a-priest).

The traditional policy remains that "the cost of transportation of their personal effects (clergy and church workers on transfer) shall be borne by their new station" (*DNDN Financial Instructions*, 2012:24). Thus, clergy transfer increases the expenses of a parish in their response to the demands of accommodation, send-forth and reception.

When it is impromptu, transfer is capable of producing half-baked converts. When a clergy preparing candidates for confirmation informed the class of his sudden transfer; one of the candidates remarked, "Sir, you want to leave us half-baked". The Bishop heard of it and graciously brought the confirmation earlier before his relocation. Psychologically, transfer makes some parishioners to be withdrawn and distanced from their ministers. Some have vowed not to relate closely with any clergy and wife to avoid the trauma. Peter White (2017:133) rightly argued that, "frequent changes are not healthy for the growth of churches and pastoral relationship with their congregants". It causes diverse pains to the laity due to

sharp or sudden break in a developing cordial relationship. Bishop Emmanuel Oko-Jaja once decried that annual movement of clergy will not yield any positive result and eternal productivity because of un-accomplished dreams and visions. He therefore opined that "pastors should stay a minimum of three (3) years in a station to enable him prove his ministerial ability or otherwise" (2011: 49).

Implications of Transfer on the Clergy and his Family

In business, transfer "allow workers to obtain new skills or to find a new position within an organization when their old position has been eliminated because of automation, decreased sales, or some other factors" (Ferrell and Hirt, 1989: 293). It is a way to help an employee gain a wider and broader experience within an organization (White, 2017: 129). Clergy transfer is "one effective way to afford a worker opportunity to perform the task of evangelism" (Kattey, 2001: 88). It enriches the experience of the worker in his divine calling and challenges him to work harder and faster in his place of disposition.

Transfer have implications for the clergy family as the character of a pastor's family affects his posting. A good number of clergy in the Niger Delta area become apprehensive whenever there is transfer especially when they consider the payment of their stipends alongside care of their family in relation with the financial resources of the new church. Many clergy have lost or/and misplaced their essential documents and valuables in the cause of their movements.

Frequent transfer causes pastors to suffer from lack of stability in their personal lives and roles. It may weaken their commitment in a new parish as they would prefer to wait (occasional relaxation) for few months to ascertain if another letter will not come before they commence effective ministrations. Their instability often affects their output in a station

and it may give an indication of his unacceptability, create psychological and even spiritual instability for the clergy and his family. Transfer could be a "kind of death" for some clergy as they have made roots in the parish through sacramental, evangelism, and welfare ministries in the church and community over the years of their stay in a station.

Some experience culture shock, "a relatively short-term feeling of disorientation, of discomfort due to the unfamiliarity of surroundings and the lack of familiar cues in the environment" (Martin and Nakayama, 2005: 105). The adaptation to the prevailing parish life especially in cross-cultural (ethnicity and location) differs from clergy to clergy. Frequent transfer may deny a clergy the opportunity for objective study of a congregation, initiate meaningful programmes and projects as well as consolidate the work in that parish.

Greater percentage of our interviewees avowed that frequent transfer is responsible for the loss of personal effects of the clergy and family members. Incessant packing has led to the misplacement of vital documents and their other valuables. The son of an Archdeacon lamented at the father's funeral that he:

> was never heard to complain, and like a sacrificial lamb being led to the slaughter, he received every blow occasioned by his untimely transfers, with deep pains *but* yet with patience...The experience.., in his last days as an Archdeacon is nothing to write home about... he felt denied, relegated, abandoned and frustrated by his fellow man but fortunately not by God. This is so when as a senior Archdeacon he was.... tossed here and there through untimely transfers like a canoe without chains being carried by waves having been abandoned to its fate (Onu, 2007: 12-13).

The effect of transfer on clergy children education has been a perennial problem with their programmes disrupted. Timing of transfer is greatly criticised as authorities seem not to align the exercise with school calendar and many times it comes after school fees have been paid and new books bought. The DNDN recognised this and resolved thus:

Safe for the occasional adjustment and filling of vacancies which our constitution allows, the annual meeting of Board of Location and Transfers shall henceforth hold in August/September every year. This is designed to specifically ensure that posting coincide with the Government School Academic year as to enable our clergy who are on transfer to register their children and wards in schools/colleges nearest to their stations (*DNDN Synod Report*, 2000: 66).

However, this is not religiously applied as there exists cases of emergency response.

Conclusion

We have examined the subject of clergy transfer in contemporary Nigeria Anglicanism. The concepts, nature and fundamentals ecclesiastical transfers were heighted for proper understanding of our discourse. Clergy transfer is a constitutional demand of the Anglican Church; the movement of clergy through the instrumentality of a Diocesan Bishop for the congregation. A faithful is made a clergy taken from the congregation through ordination; through transfer, he is returned to the congregation for ministry.

The study revealed that transfer is diverse in nature and clergy relocation could be influenced by mission need, new vacancy, standard practice, accommodation of postulants, workers balance, mentorship, security, demand by some eminent laity, and divine orchestration. The practice is a necessary inconvenience for the leadership and affects positively and negatively on the congregation, clergy and his family. It increases clergy public relationship, improves his operational standard, and enriches his experience in his divine calling; thus his desire should always be "send me here I am". It helps to balance the manpower and physical development of an ecclesiastical area.

However, transfer may cause a church to lose her spiritual, numerical and financial strength where the new person cannot sustain the tempo and not competent to handle issues relating to females and finances. Frequent transfer causes psychological and emotional

trauma for both the congregation, the clergy and his family. The social and emotional stability of clergy children are affected due to pressure of always moving, changing environment and schools.

We therefore recommend that:

1. Stakeholders should approach transfer with a Christocentric spirit. The clergy who is at its centre should accept it as part of his vocational demands.

2. Like the Son of Man who has no place to lay his head, the clergy should be willing to minister to wherever the Holy Spirit through the Bishop needs him to go.

3. Clergy transfer should be standardised to reduce its negative effect on the church leadership, congregation, clergy and his family.

4. When it becomes imperative for impromptu movement, the leadership could dialogue with the affected clergy as partners in the Kingdom mission.

5. Issues of clergy transfer in the Church in Nigeria and Africa in general deserves further research.

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Understanding The Nature and Complexities of Religious Conflicts and Christian Persecution in sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

To say that Sub-Saharan Africa is a region susceptible to religiously motivated conflicts is not far from the truth. The region is highly religious and pluralistic. The problems of religious diversity are compounded by weaknesses in infrastructural provision, uneven distribution of resources and unavailability of other basic social amenities which make recruitment for militant endeavours easy and rewarding. Through the use of secondary sources, the paper discusses the religious, socio-economic and political issues which are triggers of conflicts, even religious in sub-Saharan Africa. It also contends that 'radical' groups in the region such as Islamic movements often capitalize on local or internal struggles of sub-Saharan African nations to ascend to power and gain influence. The paper further discusses the implications of religious conflicts and Islamic terrorism for practice of Christianity and Christian-Muslim encounters in some African countries.

Key words:
Conflict, religion, sub-Saharan Africa, Islamic Terrorism, Christian persecution

Introduction

Religion has several features that make it possible to be used for violent activities. Its doctrines and belief systems, spiritualities, interpretations of scripture and missionary activities can be invoked in any situation, good or bad. Therefore, it is common to encounter moments of exploitation of religion to satisfy selfish interests.

Almost all religions have been subjected to this utility role, as in the long drawn-out conflict in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants or until recently, the conflict in the Sudan between Muslims in the North, and Christians and followers of African Indigenous Religion in the South.[175] In Ghana, we have been witnessing the confrontation between Christians and adherents of Indigenous Religion relating to the ban on drumming before the Ga Homowo festival.

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[175] Florence Dolphyne, "Chairperson's Opening Address", in *Conflict: What has Religion got to do with it?* (Accra: Goethe Institut & Woeli Publishing Services, 2004), 10 & 11.

Nevertheless, Islam has been the most affected religion in contemporary times. This could largely be attributed to the doctrine of jihād which has been subjected to various forms of interpretations. Hassan Juma Ndzovu contends that the major Islamic militant activities in the eighteen century AD which have been carried out in contemporary times in Africa have all been based on the doctrine of jihād[176] Islamic militant or terrorist organisation, Al-Shabāb of Somalia, claimed responsibility for explosion of bombs in Kampala, which took the lives of over 70 residents in July, 2010. Around the same period in Mali, a French citizen was murdered by Islamic armed group which was a known branch of Al-Qaida in North Africa. The armed conflicts which started and spread in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan could be linked, in many ways, to religion.[177]

Furthermore, sub-Saharan Africa's unique condition--in terms of its religiously pluralistic environment and in the international community-- makes the continent particularly susceptible to violence and conflicts, including religious ones. One cannot downplay the role of the political and economic issues in conflicts, be they religious. The infrastructural weaknesses of sub-Saharan African countries, the disparity in distribution of wealth, and other factors make mobilization for militant activities easy and rewarding.[178]

It is worth noting that despite the evidence of religious conflicts across Africa, majority of studies on religion and conflicts are undertaken in single case bases.[179] In other words, although scholars such as Marta Reynal-Querol and Jose G. Montalvo in their paper *A Theory of Religious Conflict and its Effect on Growth* focussed on the importance of religious

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[176] Hassan Juma Ndzovu, "The Rise of Jihad, Killing of 'Apostate Imams' and Non-Combatant Christian Civilians in Kenya: Al-Shabaab's Re-Definition of the Enemy on Religious Lines", in *Journal for the Study of the Religions of Africa and its Diaspora* Vol 3, No. 1 (October 2017), 6.

[177] Bjørn Møller, "Religion and Conflict Africa: With A Special Focus on East Africa" in *Danish Institute for International Studies Report* (2006), 19.

[178] Joyce A.M. Ejukonemu & Akintola E. Olusola, "Insurgency and National Development: An Analysis of the Effect of Boko Haram Activities on the Economy of Northern Nigeria in *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Economics and Public Sector Management* Vol. 3 No. 1, (May 2015), 36.

[179] Matthias Basedau & Alexander De Juan, "The Ambivalence of the Sacred in Africa: The Impact of Religion in sub-Saharan Civil Conflicts," GIGA Working Paper no. 70 (2008), 20.

polarisation in economic growth and contended that available empirical evidence points to the direct effect of religious conflict on growth potentials, researches which actually attempted to bring religion and conflict together are almost non-existent. Matthias Basedau & Johannes Vüllers, foremost researchers in sub-Saharan Africa, have argued to the effect that "comprehensive comparative studies on religion and conflict are virtually non-existent."[180] Since religion is of much social and economic relevance in sub-Saharan Africa, students must be encouraged to undertake research in religion and conflict.

This paper deliberates on the concept and nature of religious conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. It discusses in detail, the socio-economic and even political factors that give rise to religious militancy and conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. More importantly, attempts are made to give a meaning to Islamic militancy and religious terrorism, its historical roots, formations and continual survival in sub-Saharan Africa. There is enough evidence to show that countries in Africa where Islamic insurgencies have succeeded in acceding to political power, have their Christian population subjected to persecution and maltreatment. This is in spite of the fact that freedom of religion and its practice is entrenched in their national constitutions. The paper, further, discusses the implication of religious conflicts and Islamic militancy or terrorism for Christian-Muslim encounters and dialogue in sub-Saharan Africa.

What Makes Some Conflicts Religious?

Available data on global conflicts from 1945 to 2007, reveal that 11% of conflicts across the world were religious. The same data reveal that 11% of conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa have religious undertones.[181] For the period 1989–2003, Isak Svensson, a researcher at Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (2007) analysed 218 conflict dyads across the world and identified that dyads with different religious identities could be found in 68 cases, constituting 31.3%. He also found out that a religious

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[180] Matthias Basedau & Johannes Vüllers, "Religion and Armed Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990 to 2008 – Results from a New Database." Paper prepared for presentation at the SGIR 7th Pan-European Conference on IR, Stockholm, 9-11 (September 2010), 7; Also see The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2010), *Tolerance and Tension. Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa* (http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Belief_and_Practices/sub-saharan-africa- full-report.pdf, 45.
[181] Basedau & Vüllers, "Religion and Armed Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa", 23.

component in the incompatibility of the conflict in 43 cases, is 19.8%.[182] Out of 87 conflict dyads in Africa only 11 cases (12.6%) show divergent religious identities between the conflict parties. In 13 cases, a religious component in the conflict incompatibility is 14.9%. 23 out of 48 sub-Saharan Africa have encountered one civil war or another. Approximately seven out of the 23 war countries had a religious dimension.[183]

A conflict, generally, is a battle, war, fight, struggle, skirmish, or clash between two or more parties. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary* (Cambridge University Press 2020) "a conflict is an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles." It is also a fight between two or more groups of people or countries. This means that a conflict could, either, be armed or not, depending on its intensity and/or objectives. The question is: what makes a conflict religious? The relationship between religion and conflict is, in fact, a complex one which is very difficult to define. For the sake of this paper a conflict is religious when religious elements or dimensions feature prominently in it.

Matthias Basedau & Johannes Vüllers have identified three essential features of religious conflicts. All the three features need not be identified with a particular conflict. In the first place, a conflict could be classified as religious when there is a clear religious difference between the conflict parties. In other words, a religious conflict involves parties which differ with regards to their religious identity.[184] For instance, a religious conflict is said to occur when one side is entirely Christian while the other side is primarily Muslim. In this case, the two warring parties differ mainly by their religious affiliations. Since 1999 Muslims (mostly from the Hausa–Fulani ethnic group) and Christians (the minority Christian population) have been involved in persistent communal violence in northern Nigeria. Muslim traders and herders consistently preyed on other groups for slaves. The indigenous people preyed upon found various Christian denominations an attractive alternative to their oppressor's religion, and the suspicion and mistrust engendered still exists today.[185] Though the violence was caused, initially, by historical antecedent (slavery)

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[182] Isak Svensson, "Fighting with Faith: Religion and Conflict Resolution in Civil Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 51, No. 6, (2007), 930-949.
[183] Ibid
[184] Ibid
[185] Louis Brenner, *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993),

which had nothing to do with religion, it has eventually become religious in every sense of the word. In southern Ghana, Muslim communities of Wangara, Kotokoli, and Fulani are usually found in the Zangos that are located on the outskirts of mainly Christian and indigenous Akan, Ewe, and Ga villages and towns. The failure of Muslims to integrate and become involved in local politics and socio-religious affairs has also created long-standing and worsening tension between Christians and Muslims.[186] As a result, Ghanaians have seen eruptions of violence between Christians and Muslims and among Muslims in towns like Agona Nyakrom, Takoradi, Kumasi, Oda and Wenchi.[187]

Secondly, a conflict could be classified as religious when it is largely driven by religious ideas or values that are incompatibilities. Such religious incompatibilities relate to issues and the role of religion within the society. Often, the majority and dominant religious tradition impose their religious ideas and values on the nation that is religiously pluralistic society. In Niger and Mauritania, for instance, conflicts between moderate and conservative Muslim groups over the role of Islam in politics emerged. In Ghana could also be found occasions when the Tijāniyya Muslims clash with either their Ahmadiyya or Ahlus Sunna counterparts over doctrinal issues in the regional Mosques. It is observed that religious incompatibilities feature in eight cases with armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. The introduction of the *Sharia* in some parts of Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia contribute significantly to the violence and later armed conflicts.

Thirdly, a conflict could also be described as religious when the parties are armed religious groups that are known to be engaged in violence. This armed group must also have made a self-declaration about their religious goals. Often, the use of religious terms in the names of the conflict parties though insufficient indicator is also significant. In sub-Saharan Africa, the Al-Qaïda au Maghreb Islamique in the Sahel from Mauritania and Chad is an example of such groups. Mention could also be made of the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement which

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[186] Enid Schildkrout, *The People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge, U.K., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 69.

[187] Elizabeth Amoah, "African Indigenous Religions and Interreligious Relationship," paper presented at Westminster College, Oxford, autumnal IIC2 lecture, October 22, 1998), 4.

operates from safe-haven in Sudan and Christian movements such as *Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA) in Uganda and the *Mouvement Nsilulu* of the Republic of Congo which was led by Pasteur Ntoumi. The Christian movement not only criticized but also fought against the government of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso in 1998 until 2003.

General Causes of Religious Conflicts in Africa

One cannot rule out socio-economic and political issues in religious conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa. It is not farfetched to mention weak and bad governments, high poverty rates, worsening unemployment conditions, poor educational opportunities, and unavailability of essential social amenities such as poor road networks across sub-Saharan Africa as remote but critical issues in religious tensions and conflicts generation.[188] These socio-economic conditions eventually side-line significant number of the population from actively engaging in nation building. It is in line with this that Bolaji Kehinde and Ojakorotu (2018) have identified four critical factors for the generation and sustenance of conflicts in the sub region: (1) the availability of small arms and light weapons, (2) management problems in the extractive industries, (3) across-border criminal networks (4), and activities of external interests.[189]

On their part, James J.F. Forest and Jennifer Giroux (2011) have also argued that interethnic challenges and interregional tensions, local disagreements in critical resource areas such as oil and land have led to conflicts. Chieftaincy disputes and lack of basic socio-economic amenities and political issues are essential conflict triggers in sub-Saharan Africa. Often, terrorist organizations or groups pounce on the intra-regional tensions in Africa as much needed opportunities for their domestic and international attacks.[190] Toeing the line of

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[188] Isaac Terwase Sampson, "Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities, (2012), 113. Accessed on January 13, 2020. https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajcr/article/viewFile/78703/69042

[189] Bolaji A. Kehinde, "Preventing Terrorism in West Africa: Good Governance or Collective security," *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa,* 12, no.1 (2010); Also see Victor Ojakorotu, "The Paradox of Terrorism, Armed Conflict and Natural Resources: An Analysis of Cabinda in Angola," *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2018).

[190] James J.F. Forest & Jennifer Giroux, "Terrorism and Political Violence in Africa: Contemporary Trends in a Shifting Terrain". In *Perspectives on Terrorism* Vol. 5, No. 3-4 (2011).

Forest and Giroux, Manni (2012) notes that the activities of Boko Haram of Nigeria have transformed from being solely intrastate conflict to regional terrorist organisation.[191]

It is important to note that the predisposition of sub-Saharan Africa to unbounded access to the internet is critical for the formation and organisation of radical organizations. The internet assists them particularly in the recruitment of members, especially the unemployed youth from various countries. In line with this, Gabriel Weimann (2006) contends that the vulnerability of sub-Saharan African countries to violent attacks from terrorist groups goes beyond "physical borders."[192] Such organisation have assembled together young men and women whose expertise in use of the internet-mass media, social media, email, chat rooms, websites, e-learning is often superior to the national security apparatus. This continuous access to unbounded internet by such organizations continues to be the greatest national and international security threat confronting sub-Saharan African countries.

Apart from the remote socio-economic and political causes described above, there are other salient religious causes of tensions and violence in Africa.[193] Religious causes are often immediate causes of the conflicts. They emanate largely from religion itself. Often, religious people resort to their religious beliefs, ideas, spirituality and other practices such as methods of dissemination of the truths to instigate tension and conflicts. Isaac Terwase Sampson, a fellow at the African Centre for Strategic Research, argues that religious fundamentalism or extremism is the most critical of all religious factors with regard to the emergence of tensions and conflicts in Africa. Extremism, first and foremost, is the application of extreme interpretation of faith or beliefs for the resolution of certain pressing issues. Religious extremist position also asserts or claims the supremacy of one's

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[191]Nathaniel Manni, "Boko Haram: A Threat to African and Global Security," *Global Security Studies*, 3, no. 4 (2012).

[192] Gabriel Weimann, "Terror on the Internet: The New Arena," in *The New Challenges*. (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press 2006), 21.

[193] Sampson, "Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities", 114

faith but rejects entirely the claim of others even in a religiously pluralistic society with enshrined constitutional provision for religious freedom.

Thus, Sampson[194] indicates, further, that reproachful or aggressive negative pronouncements that often accompany efforts at conversion into either Islam or Christianity are also common causes of religious violence in some African countries. In this case, both Christians and Muslims resort to religious propaganda, stereotyping and half-truth stories in order to defend their claim of monopoly of religious truths and total right to eternal salvation. This, Sampson argues, manifests in public preaching of some religious leaders. Religious violence in Kafanchan (Kaduna state, Nigeria) in March 1987 was allegedly caused by a Christian preacher who used some verses from the Qur'ān to attack Islam. In addition, Muslims in Kaduna also alleged that one Reverend Minister Abubakar Bako publicly sought to interpret the Qur'ān in a manner that discredited Islam and made derogatory comments about Prophet Mohammad."[195] The pronouncements of the pastor instigated tensions and conflict between the two religious groups.

However, Sampson believes that religious factors in conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa are still remote and considers government handling of religious conflicts and general political climate as the sole immediate cause and continual survival of insurgents. He argues that "…government neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimisation, discrimination, marginalisation, nepotism and bigotry are some of the critical and predisposing factors."[196]

Islamic Terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa

In spite of the socio-economic and religious factors often noted by some religious commentators as the main reasons for the phenomenon of trans-national terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa, one cannot play down the significance of historical antecedence in the formation and continual survival of Islamic terrorism on the continent. As far back as the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries AD, Islam took on a fractured nature in Northern

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[194] https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajcr/article/viewFile/78703/69042. Accessed on 13th Jan 2020
[195] Ibid.
[196] Sampson, "Religious Violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities", 113.

Nigeria and the Sahel region. The several splinter reformist and radical groups have compounded the issue of religious conflict in Africa. It is in connection with this that Murray Last and later John Azumah have argued in favour of historical antecedence. In his work, Last, a leading specialist on Islam in Nigeria, contends that "The Boko Haram incident follow[s] a pattern that goes back at least 200 years in Northern Nigeria, and has a logic to it" (2009, 11).[197] John Azumah, following Last's lead, attempts to locate *Boko Haram* within what Last calls "the pattern of dissent" and endemic factionalism within the historical context of West Africa.[198] His paper, further explores and suggests the nineteenth-century jihadist legacy as contributory factors to factionalism that gave rise to Boko Haram and the jihadist or militant movements in West Africa.

Origins of Islamic Militancy in sub-Saharan Africa

Referring essentially to eighteenth and nineteenth centuries AD the Islamic militancy in Africa, Joseph Kenny (2001, 9), a leading Roman Catholic specialist on Islam in Nigeria, noted that: "Northern [Nigerian] Islam has been firmly reformist and separatist with regards to anything non-Islamic."[199] The militancy in Islam began, basically, as a response to a certain disregard for non-Islamic elements. It was grounded on the puritan values of Wahhābī of Saudi Arabia and the teachings of the Salafīyyah movement. Agreeing with Kenny, Terje Østebø in his paper *African Salafism: Religious Purity and the Politicization of Purity* states that puritan values preached a return to original and authentic sources (the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet) and to Islam conceived as a religion in perfect harmony with the aspirations of the modern Man.[200] In view of these values, the reformists/revivalists set out to eliminate all elements that, in their view, adulterated pure

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[197] Murray Last, "The Pattern of Dissent: Boko Haram in Nigeria 2009." in *Annual Review of Islam in Africa,* Vol.10 (2009), 7–11.

[198] John Azumah, "Boko Haram in Retrospect," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, 2015 Vol. 26, No. 1 (2015), 33–52.

[199] Joseph Kenny. "The Spread of Islam in Nigeria: A Historical Survey," (2001). Accessed on September 12, 2014. http://www.dhspriory.org/kenny/Sist.htm

[200] *Terje Østebø,* "African Salafism: Religious Purity and the Politicization of Purity," in *Islamic Africa* 6 (2015), 18.

Islamic beliefs. They, therefore, embarked on reforms to sanctify the religion and bring it back to its purest state.

It must be noted that all the successful militant movements eventually ended up with the establishment of Islamic states in West Africa. The biggest and the first of these states is the Sokoto Caliphate which arose in the Hausa states of modern northern Nigeria. The Caliphate was established by Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) who began a religious movement, and accused the Hausa ruling class of *bid'a* (heretical innovation). He further, declared *takfir* and accused fellow Muslims of unbelief, worthy only of death. Many elements of the religious system in that region of Africa were eventually declared un-Islamic.[201] Years after, the Sokoto Caliphate inspired the founding of Macina Islamic State under the leadership of Hamad Bari in the 19th century. The Macina Empire (Caliphate of Hamdullahi) was an early nineteenth-century Fulbe Jihad state centred in the Inner Niger Delta area of what is now the Mopti and Ségou Regions of Mali. The Macina Islamic State flourished but eventually collapsed in 1862. Another revolution and state, the Tokolor Empire, was began and established by Islamic cleric Al Hajj 'Umar (1795-1864). The empire, which stretched from present day Senegal eastward to Timbuktu in the Western Region of Africa, was established to conform to the stringent moral requirements of his austere Tijaniyya brotherhood. The Tokolor Empire became the second largest in West Africa in the early nineteenth century AD.[202] It is, however, worthy of note that the movements did nothing to purify or rid Islam of indigenous influences when they were at the helms of affairs.

The Quest for Islamic States in Contemporary Africa

The contemporary jihadist militancy in sub-Saharan Africa has been following the pattern of early jihadists. They have been embarking on attacks on contemporary Africa cities and villages, seeking to establish Islamic states in those countries. An Islamic state is, basically,

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[201] John Azumah, *Boko Haram in Retrospect*, 44.
[202] J.A. Andrea & J.H. Overfield, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Renewal in West Africa," in *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, Retrieved from https://www2.stetson.edu/secure/history/hy10430/usmanintro. Accessed on May 20, 2020.

a territory or nation run by a notable extremist Islamic rule or by the Shariah law. Notable among those militant organisations are Boko Haram in Nigeria, Ansar al-Din in Mali, the Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), which are strong forces in West Africa, and the Al-Shabāb of Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya in East Africa.[203]

Some of these Islamic militant groups have developed links with international Islamic terrorist organisations. It must be stated that although African Salafism is African in every sense of being founded by Africans and grounded on African realities, yet it obviously does not exist in isolation of other Salafist movements across the world. It constantly remains in dialogue with broader ideological discourses. It is, thus, affected by various ideological currents, while also reciprocally contributing to shaping the same currents. It is thus global by the same token as it is African.

Overall, Al-Qaeda's known presence in Africa has been strongest in a handful of Northern and Eastern countries, and weakest in the West, Central and Southern regions of the continent.[204] The Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) affiliated itself to the networks associated with Osama bin Laden in 2007 in order to get financial assistance and global recognition. Later on in late 2011, Iyad ag Ghaly, a leader of Tuareg rebellion of 1990-1995 formed the Islamist Ansar al-Din of Mali. Already related by virtue of the slogan of defenders of religion, Ansar al-Din and AQIM joined forces to push forward the agenda of implementing the ideologies of an Islamic State in Mali. On March 21, 2012, Ansar al-Din began to implement a *sharī'ah* government in the northern parts of Mali, promising to destroy the advocates of the creation of a Democratic Republic of Azawad. To demonstrate their seriousness in implementing a Salafi Islamist dispensation, Ansar al-Din reformers desecrated the shrine dedicated to a venerable medieval saint, Sidi Mahmoud Ben Amar of Timbuktu, claiming that *sufi* spirituality, practices and rituals of the area were un-Islamic.

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[203] Bjørn Møller, "Religion and Conflict Africa: With A Special Focus on East Africa" in *Danish Institute for International Studies Report,* 2006:39

[204] James J.F. Forest, "Al-Qaeda's Influence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Myths, Realities and Possibilities," in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 71.

In 2012, AQIM capitalised on internal political crisis in northern Mali to take power and strengthened its base in that country. The group worked with the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA) to secure independence in Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu for the ethnic Tuaregs. Again in 2012, a dissident group of AQIM members separated from the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) to support Ansar al-Din and its activities. It is a popular knowledge that AQIM independently financed training of members of Boko Haram of Nigeria.[205] But for the timely intervention of French forces in January 2013 in Mali its northern towns would have still been territories of Islamist militants. Ansar al-Din and its allies however pose a threat to Mali as they have resorted to suicide attacks against the government and its agents.[206] Another group worthy of mention is Boko Haram of Nigeria. The Islamic movement began as a peaceful religious movement in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri in Borno State. Since then, it has introduced a new dimension of religious tension and conflict in Nigeria.[207] In 2011, the group masterminded and took responsibility for the suicide car bombing of the United Nations building, killing eighteen people in Abuja, an attack on the police headquarters also in Abuja, and a bomb attack at Christmas on St. Theresa Catholic Church, Madalla, Niger State, which killed more than forty, including about thirty worshippers.[208] Often, we hear that the members of Boko Haram are not Muslim, which means that the group has transformed itself over time from a religious movement to a political one.

However, the threat of terrorism seems to be exaggerated in East Africa, even though it cannot be ruled out completely. Bjørn Møller argues that threat from the terrorism, including Islamic terrorism, is "blown completely out of proportion." He argues that East Africa governments often exaggerate the threat in order to gain some advantages, including positioning themselves as allies of the United States in its global "war on terror."

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[205] Sampson, 16.

[206] J. A. Andrea & J. H. Overfield, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Renewal in West Africa," in *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, Retrieved from https://www2.stetson.edu/secure/history/hy10430/usmanintro.html on January 20, 2020

[207] Joyce A.M. Ejukonemu & Akintola E. Olusola, "Insurgency and National Development: An Analysis of the Effect of Boko Haram Activities on the Economy of Northern Nigeria**,** 40.

[208] John Cardinal O. Onaiyekan, *Seeking Common Grounds: Inter-Religious Dialogue in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013), 91.

Furthermore, the governments are able to receive support from the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) pool, e.g. for military or police upgrading programmes. It also allows governments to label their opponents terrorists, thereby allowing them to resort to "extraordinary measures" to defeat them to perpetuate their stay in power.[209]

Persecutions of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa

Although most sub-Saharan African countries have adopted democratic dispensations with freedom of religion as a central provision in the national constitutions and in spite of the many examples of peaceful encounters between Christians and Muslims there are still some areas in Africa where religious persecution still exists. There are countries where some Christian communities are under threat. In other countries, Christians are not permitted often by law to practice their religion freely. In her work, *The Situation of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa* Maria Zandt, a fellow in the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung's Regional Programme for Political Dialogue in West Africa, gives evidence to buttress her claim that Christians in Nigeria, Eritrea, the Sudan, Somalia and Mauritania are the most discriminated and persecuted in 2011 in sub-Saharan Africa.[210]

In 2019, the Catholic organisation, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), presented the findings of its research on the Christian persecution worldwide between 2017-2019. The report not only confirmed Zandt's findings that Christians are the most persecuted of all religious groups in Africa but also detailed the systematic violence perpetuated against Christians that still occurs throughout the world.[211] The 2019 ACN report, entitled "Persecuted more than ever: Focus on anti-Christian Persecution," also gave a systematic account of nature and form of Christian persecution. The report, further, noted that the situation of Christians is getting worse by the day in some countries such as India, China, North Korea, Sri Lanka and Africa particularly, Burkina Faso. The report cited Africa as a new front for

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[209] Bjørn Møller, *Religion and Conflict Africa*, 44.

[210] Maria Zandt, "The Situation of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa," *KAS INTERNATIONAL REPORTS*, 2011.

[211] https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-10/persecution-of-christians-report-of-aid-to-the-church-in-need.html

Islamic fundamentalism and targeted Christian persecutions, as evidenced in the killing of as many as fourteen clergymen in 2019.

A closer look at the activities in these countries indicate that Christian persecutions are taking place in countries where some radical Islamic movements have managed to carry through their objective of either taking over governments or introducing the Sharia law. The persecution ranges from brutal attacks on Christians to more subtle forms, such as blatant discrimination and open threats to the religious other. It also involves kidnapping for monetary gains and forcefully induced conversion often for employment avenues, violation of basic human rights as well as limitation of religious freedoms.[212]

However, it must be noted that persecution for religious reasons in contemporary times takes different form than in the past. In the days of the Islamic invasions and Christian crusades religious persecutions were orchestrated blatantly and vociferously. They were staged to conquer and capture lands and force people to convert or be killed. But today, persecution occurs in a subtle and clandestine manner often to the blind side of the media and the rest of the world. Religious persecution is the result of several integrating factors which include not only religious but also importantly socio-economic and political failures of nations. Thus, any honest observation of the persecution of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa must not ignore such difficult realities.

The Case of Nigeria and Eritrea

Even though Burkina Faso is the latest country in sub-Saharan Africa to appear in recent reports of Christian persecutions, Nigeria and Eritrea could be mentioned as countries with the worst records in various ways and forms. Following the end of General Sani Abacha' regime and the return to constitutional governance in 1998, twelve states in northern Nigeria succeeded in introducing some form of the Sharia law by 2002. The Sharia law, however, was fully implemented in only two of these states which have Muslim majority populations. Thus, the religious freedom of minority Christians in these states is only

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[212] https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2019-10/persecution-of-christians-report-of-aid-to-the-church-in-need.html

safeguarded in the federal constitution but not in state laws. Christians have been rampantly discriminated and persecuted in the form of targeted attacks on Christian establishments such as churches, seminaries and private properties. In some cases, Muslims who associate with Christians have also been victims of these attacks and conflicts.[213]

The capital city of Jos (Plateau State) is a border town between the Christian south and the Muslim north. It has been at the centre of Christian-Muslim tensions in Nigeria for more than a decade. Since 2001 there has been continuous clashes between Christians and Muslims in the city which have seen over thousand inhabitants killed. The reports of the commission of enquiries into the series of events have remained unpublished till date.[214] Furthermore, the local elections in 2008 turned political battle (the two main political parties-Christian People's Democratic Party and the Muslim representatives of the All Nigeria People's Party) into religious battle. The Christian-Muslim riots and clashes which ensued claimed the lives of hundreds of Christians and Muslims.[215] The Boko Haram, a notorious radical Muslim organization claimed responsibility for 2010 series of bomb attacks on Christian churches. This generated into incidence of conflicts between Muslims and Christians which the Human Rights Watch reported the death of over 200 residents in December 2010.[216]

Furthermore, despite the fact that freedom of thoughts, conscience, religion is enshrined in the 1997 Eritrean Constitution, the reality on the ground is that for some years now the Christian community in Eritrea have been subjected to open discrimination and threats. In 2002, the Eritrean one-party regime issued a decree which required the state registration of religious groups. In the end, only four religious communities (the Eritrean Coptic Orthodox Church, Sunni Islam, the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church) were accepted as legal religious groups and came under strict government

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[213] Maria Zandt, "The Situation of Christians in Sub-Saharan Africa", 28.
[214] "Muslims Riots in Northern Nigeria," *BBC*, May 11, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3703775.stm (accessed April 4, 2019).
[215] Ibid
[216] Human Rights Watch, "New Wave of Violence leaves 200 dead," January 27, 2011, http://www.hrw.org/en/news/ 2011/01/27/nigeria-new-wave-violence-leaves-200-dead (accessed on April 4, 2019).

regulations. All other Christian denominations such as Pentecostals, Adventists and the Buddhists then were not allowed to operate. These unregistered religious groups were deprived of essential privileges reserved for registered groups. As 'illegal' religious groups, they were constantly discriminated against and subtly persecuted. They also regularly found themselves victims of discrimination and persecution. Their members are often subjected to further scrutiny by the security agencies. A ban issued by the regime has prevented all religious groups and media from expressing their opinions on matters of the state. The NGO (Open Doors) has since 2002 named Eritrea as number 12 on its list of countries where religious persecution persists.[217]

According to 2018 Annual report published by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, even the officially recognized religious groups in Eritrea have not escaped state scrutiny which makes free religious practice extremely difficult. Even though a provisional regime was put in place in 1993 with President Isaias Af-werki as its head, which drafted and eventually adopted in 1997 a formally democratic constitution, it is yet to be implemented. In actual fact, Eritrea quickly developed into a one-party state ruled by the EPLF, renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), in quite a dictatorial manner.[218]

Consequently, Eritrean government regulates and interferes in the affairs of religious organizations and ensures that they do its bidding.[219] For instance, leadership of the Christian Community and the Muslim Community is appointed by the government of Eritrea. The state, through the Office of Religious Affairs, ensures that all activities of religious groups, including their financial and personnel affairs are sanctioned by the state. In 2007, the state authorities ordered the Catholic Church of Eritrea to hand over the administration of its schools, hospitals and pastoral centres to the Labour and Social Welfare Ministry. The rejection of the order by some bishops was met by immediate

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[217] OpenDoors, "Länderprofil Eritrea," http://opendoors-de.org/ verfolgung/laenderprofile/eritrea (accessed April 5, 2011).

[218] Bjørn Møller, *Religion and Conflict Africa*, 54.

[219] https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ERITREA-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf

expulsion of eleven missionaries from the country.[220] The government has made life unbearable to the Coptic Orthodox Church which constitutes over 40 per cent of Eritrean Christian population. The Patriarch, Abune Antonios was put under house arrest in 2006, for rebelling against the capricious detention of three of his priests and the government's unreasonable interest in the finances of the Orthodox Church.[221]

Conclusion

Most African nations have adopted constitutional rule in which is entrenched the freedom of religion or belief in accordance with their religiously pluralistic societies. These constitutions are underpinned by secular ideologies. The principles of secularism advocate that governments and their agencies stay neutral and ensure that freedom of thought, conscience and religion is enforced to the latter. In practice, these freedoms often elude a significant number of the citizens in sub-Saharan African countries. Many governments are not as neutral in relation to religious practices as they ought to be in Africa.

Neutrality of governments means that their agencies ensure impartiality in governance and administration. It creates a fertile political climate for all religious communities to thrive. Eritrea is one of the religiously pluralistic countries in Africa whose government's neutrality in recent times has been questionable and somehow skewed to the advantage of the political establishment. The government has been dealing with religious organizations, particularly the two major religions in the country (Christianity and Islam) with brutal hands. It is still not clear the real intention of the government as it pursues such aggressive policies. These two religious traditions constitute almost 98% of the total population; the population of each is almost balanced. Various censuses give varying figures. Two most important of the censuses are: first, the United States Department of State reported in 2010 that 50% of Eritrean population was Christian and just about 48% was Muslim. Second, The ACS-Italia estimated in 2017 that the Muslims make up 49.6% of the Eritrean population. Christians are 48.4%. The 2% are left for the other religions which include practitioners of

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[220] Kirche in Not, "Länderbericht Eritrea," in: *Religionsfreiheit weltweit – Bericht 2008*, http://www.kirche-in-not.de/was- wir-tun/laenderschwerpunkte/afrika/eritrea (accessed April 5, 2019).
[221] Ibid

indigenous faiths and animism. All religious communities in Eritrea have co-existed peacefully and in harmony alongside each other for a long time. Furthermore, the state of Eritrea exhibited significant plural features over the years; there is no state religion. There has also not been a noticeable religious extremist group in the country. As a result, the country stands alone in a region of countries like Somalia and Ethiopia which are grappling with considerable fundamentalist and extremist groups. The State did not proscribe or support one religious tradition over others; and all religions were equally treated and operate independently from the State. Consequently, attempt by the current regime to control religion and its practices is a cause for concern. This is all the more important when it is difficult to decipher the motivations of the ruling government, which though non-religious is vehement and tough on the practice of religion in that country.

An African country that, until recently, has succeeded in managing well her religiously diverse society is Burkina Faso. The most recent census conducted by the Department of Statistics of Burkina Faso in 2019 estimated that 60.5% of Burkinabe are Muslims. Muslims in Burkina Faso are largely Maliki Sunnis, who are deeply rooted sufists. However, many Sunni Muslims are also influenced by other Tijaniyya sufi orders. The Shi'a Muslim groups of Islam have a recent presence in the country. The Government estimates also indicate that 23.2% of the population are Christian. Though Islam is the dominant religion in Burkina Faso, the minority religious communities such as Christianity have played significant and high-ranking roles in the country. Some influential former and current leaders of the country have been Christian (presidents Thomas Sankara and Christian Kabore).

Burkina Faso until recently has been one of the most tolerant countries in sub-Saharan Africa despite the dominant religion being Islam; significant number of their political leaders have been from minority Christian community. This tolerant situation could be attributed not only to the unyielding strength of indigenous kin relations but also the presence of the moderate Sunni Islam and the restraint of the minority Christian groups. It is distressing to hear that Christians are persecuted in that country which until recently was touted as model for peaceful co-existence in sub-Saharan Africa. Burkina Faso has

become a base for violent Islamist movements making lives unbearable for Christians. On Christmas Eve 2018, 30 people, largely women, were cold bloodedly massacred in an attack perpetuated by jihadist.[222] The situation in Burkina Faso is a pointer to the fact that positive engagement with religious organisations ought to be a permanent feature of society.

Consequently, sub-Saharan African governments have been struggling to establish and maintain neutrality in governance. The lack of political neutrality in countries where Christian and Muslim population is almost at par is problematic and a cause for concern. A case in point is Nigeria which has a relatively equal population of Christians and Muslims and poses serious challenge for national security. *The World Factbook* by CIA indicates in 2001 that about 50% of Nigerians is Muslim, Christians constitute 40% and the 10% left are indigenous religious believers. The American Pew Research Centre stated in 2012 that its research conducted in 2010 reveals that 48.3% of Population of Nigeria was Christian, 48.9 % was Muslim, and 2.8 % were other religions made up of unaffiliated and the largely indigenous religious believers. However, the same Pew Research Centre reported in 2019 that as at 2015 Muslims in Nigeria were approximately 50% and projected that Nigerian Muslims will be 60% of the country's population by 2060. The data mentioned here indicate that, presently, Nigeria's Muslim and Christian populations are almost at par. These figures often worsen the tense religious environment because of the significant but irreconcilable differences the project. In the already heightened religious tensions and widespread socio-ethnic conflicts, politicians often take sides with particular religious traditions in order to exploit the tensions and conflicts for their political interest.

On the other hand, in Ghana, politics and multi-party democracy have so far not been a problem for inter-religious engagement and encounters.[223] All political parties find it expedient to be a-religious to ensure that adherents of all religious traditions are welcome into their folds. The ruling party of the New Patriotic Party has the practice, backed by its constitution, of ensuring that both presidential candidate and his or her vice belong to

[222] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50892314
[223] Mustapha Abdul-Hamid, "Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana: A Model for World Dialogue and Peace", *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June, 2011), 28.

different religious communities. This inclusive practice, it is believed, could deal with the tendency of politically marginalising certain religious group in nation building.

Apart from taking steps to ensure that political parties are not organised along religious and ethnic lines, sub-Saharan African governments and even the civil society and religious establishments must make sure that natural resources are equitably distributed among the citizens. Policies must incorporate educational system broad and comprehensive enough to rake in the children of all citizens irrespective of religious background. In particular, curriculum, syllables and all activities of public, mission and private schools must be monitored for inclusive education in line with the religiously pluralistic terrain. In this case, it will be in the right direction for the leadership of the religious communities to come together, in the spirit of freedom of religion, cooperation and peaceful co-existence, to assist political regimes in addressing the common but necessary concerns of citizenry.

Often, agencies of governments are not neutral enough; though their neutrality is highly essential for trust and respect as well as maintenance of law and order. Government agencies are often compromised or are perceived to be partial. As a result, an intervention from the military and the police to quell a riot in Jos in 2011 was met with hostility, accusations of partisanship and bias amongst the security forces. Many were those who believed, strongly, that the military acted in favour of Muslims while the police backed Christians. An ill treatment by the police of a motorbike thief in the city of Kano in February 2011 was enough to renew interreligious (mainly between Christians and Muslims) clashes which led to the desecration of churches and the killing of over 60 people.[224]

That the United States Department of States has designated Boko Haram, Ansar al-Dine, al-Shaba'ab in Kenya and Somalia, AQIM and MUJAO as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) is also a cause for concern for all meaning Africans. This is because this action has enormous implication for the continent. In June 2013, the Department of States even went a step further to offer $23 million as a reward for information that would lead to the capture of kingpins of the four main Jihadist militant groups operating in Africa (Boko

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[224] "Riot in Kano over Police killing," A*llAfrica*, February 27, 2011, http://allafrica.com/stories/201102211164.html Aaccessed on April 4, 2019.

Haram in Nigeria, Al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the Sahel region, Ansar Dine in Mali, al-Shaba'ab in Kenya and Somalia, and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). This designation by the USA and the actions that followed not only gave negative publicity but also branded African states as insecure which had dire consequences on investments and holistic development.

As noted in the discussions above, the early Islamic revolutions led by Dan Fodio and his colleagues have a lot in common with contemporary militant jihadists of Africa with a particular leaning to Salafist ideologies and values. Both phases aroused religious spiritualities and emotions in building up support for the course of Islam on the continent. The religious motivation of riding Islam of adulteration by elements of indigenous practices is closely linked with a complex mix of political and economic interests which become very difficult to separate. We cannot also ignore the significance of the political motive of establishment of Islamic states in both phases of jihads. This obviously means that the military jihads and even other conflicts in Africa have to be understood and dealt with or resolved in their political and economic contexts.

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A Marriage of Incompatible Civilisation: The Birthing of Enduring Ethno-religious Violence in Nigeria

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Abstract
Over the past six millennia, a wide diversity of religious expressions have developed around the globe, affecting the lives of millions of people. The twin-ideology of religion and ethnicity have caused upheavals, revolutions and genocides in world history. In Nigeria, the merging of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914 described as a marriage of incompatible civilisation heralded the birthing of unending ethno-religious conflict. The aim was to analyse how the amalgamation was a fundamental cause of ethno-religious and political violence till date. The study specifically investigated pre-1914 amalgamation latent issues, discussed nature of the amalgamation, the evolution of minority splinter groups and effects of the 1914 amalgamation on peaceful co-existence of the Nigerian state. The paper adopted the historical-cum-analytical method, with primary and secondary sources of qualitative approach, hinged on Gurr Ted's Relative Deprivation and the Manifest Destiny Theories. The study found that Goldie officially handed over a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and heterogeneous Nigeria to Lugard in 1900, sustained until the mega amalgamation of 1914; and that the marriage of incompatible civilisation has left culturally knitted kinsmen delineated along state and international borders. The roots of ethno-religious and other identity conflicts were identified as the coercive amalgamation, colonialism, effects of the cold war, bad governance, as well as politicisation of ethnic and religious identities. The study recommended *inter alia,* government policies and practice devoid of religious and ethnic affiliation, but gives equal access to political, economic and social resources to all Nigerians; and a total re-orientation of people's mindsets, to foster peaceful co-existence among ethno-religious groups.

Key words: Ethno-religious, Incompatible Civilisation, Nigeria, Violence.

Introduction

World history leaves us with much to wonder and ponder on about what underlining principles of cause and effect apply in the incessant wars that have plagued mankind and caused untold sufferings upon the inhabitants of our planet. Over the past six millennia or so, a wide diversity of religious expressions have developed around the globe, and we all have, no doubt, seen how religion affects the lives of millions of people the world over, with the proliferation of religions in a globalised society, sometimes leading to conflict. Religious conflict includes intolerance of other religions and discrimination against members of other religions, religious war, intellectual conflict, and such conflicts are harmful to the overall credibility of religion and may cause religious apathy or disintegration, (Encyclopeadia of World Problems and Human Potential, 2020). As such, the twin-ideology of religion and ethnicity, in all plausibility, are among the cranky monsters that have caused the gravest upheavals, revolutions and genocides in world history, thereby turning our God-given haven of tranquillity into the habitation of qualm and cruelty that it is today. Religious and ethnic sentiments particularly, have manifested their ugly nature on the local, national, regional, international and even global scale in a manner that makes right-thinking people raise questions about religious beliefs and ethics. The following quotes aptly explain why religion has been dubbed the 'opium of the masses':

> "Religious wars tend to be extra furious. When people fight over territory for economic advantage, they reach the point where the battle isn't worth the cost and so compromise. When the cause is religious, compromise and conciliation seem to be evil." Roger Shinn, Professor of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

> "Men will wrangle for religion, write for it, fight for it, die for it; anything but live for it… Where true religion has prevented one crime, false religions have afforded a pretext for a thousand." Charles Caleb Colton (1825).

"We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another." Jonathan Swift (1667-1745).

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction". Blaise Pascal (1623-62).

 Today, one cannot but wonder why people tend to react so violently in matters of religion. In Nigeria, the merging of the Southern and Northern Protectorates in 1914 of people with different cultures and religions has contributed to the enduring ethno-religious conflict in the country. Observably, in the name of religion, millions have killed, have been killed and are being killed, thus drawing our attention to the volatility often accorded religion. From the foregoing, one understands better that these endless outrages are basically rooted in religious and ethnic plurality as well as intolerance of our religious multiplicity. The aim of this study, therefore, is to analyse how the merging of the incompatible Northern and Southern Protectorates as Nigeria in 1914 was a fundamental cause of ethno-religious and political violence till date. The study specifically investigates pre-1914 amalgamation latent issues, examines the causes and nature of the British amalgamation of Nigeria, traces the evolution of Minority Splinter Groups and assesses the effects of the 1914 amalgamation on peaceful co-existence of the Nigeria state.

Methodology

The paper adopts the historical-cum-analytical method, with a combination of primary and secondary sources of information which incorporates the qualitative approach, hinged on Gurr Ted's Relative Deprivation and the Manifest Destiny Theories. This research analytically examines a resemblance of the United States and European imperial conquest in the West and colonialism of Nigeria by the British as an urge for geographical and material expansions, which have grave socio- economic, ethno-religious

and cultural effects on the imperial countries till date. Specifically, in Nigeria, the merging of the Northern and Southern Protectorates as Nigeria by the British in 1914 has led to leadership problems generating ethno-religious and political violence till date. Thus, the marriage of this incompatible entities, strange bed fellows, culminating in enduring ethno-religious violence in Nigeria is the nexus of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Gurr Ted's Relative Deprivation Theory

The theory explores why people engage in political violence (riots, rebellion, coups, etc.) and how regimes respond. Gurr (1970) Book on Why Men Rebel examines the psychological frustration-aggression theory which argues that the primary source of the human capacity for violence is the frustration-aggression mechanism. Frustration does not necessarily lead to violence, but when it is sufficiently prolonged and sharply felt, it often does result in anger and eventually violence. Gurr (1970) explains this hypothesis with his term "relative deprivation," which is the discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they actually think they can get. Where there is a significant discrepancy between what people think they deserve and what they think they will get, there is a likelihood of rebellion. Gurr (1970) posits this to be the case even if there is no question that their basic needs will be met. According to him, a number of other variables influence the use of violence as well, for example the culture, the society, and the political environment.

Theory of Manifest Destiny

In discussing the pre-manifest, manifest and aggressive manifest perspectives of Manifest Destiny, History.com (2023) explains that Manifest Destiny, a phrase coined in

1845, expresses the philosophy that drove the 19th-century U.S. territorial expansion. Manifest Destiny holds that the United States was destined—by God, its advocates believed—to expand its dominion and spread democracy and capitalism across the entire North American continent. According to E-notes (2018), Manifest Destiny forms the rationale behind the American imperialism. The concept suggests that it was the responsibility of the European settlers to colonise and bring civilisation to their new environment. The belief also fuelled the Westward Expansion, which led to mass relocations of the Native Americans.

Premised on these two theories, this study draws an analogy of British colonialism of Nigeria just as the Manifest Destiny concept suggests that it was the responsibility of the European settlers to colonise and bring civilisation to their new American environment and as the insatiable demands for more territorial expansion saw the US making moves in its acquisition of more territories and merging them in one, so also was the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in Nigeria. The merging of the two incompatible civilisations eventually resulted into Civil Wars in Nigeria; and as Gurr (1970) posits, a number of variables that influence the use of violence like the culture, society, and political environment were present in the European/ American situation and also in British colonisation project in Nigeria. Political violence occurred because the leadership and the socio-economic/political system of the British were seen as illegitimate and because Nigerians consider violence to be a viable remedy to the problem of marriage of incompatible civilisation.

Ethno-religious Violence/Conflict in Nigeria
The etymology of the word 'conflict' derives from the Latin word '*confligere'*, which literally connotes 'to strike together' (Alemayo, 2017, pp.20-22). Conflicts in Nigeria often

suffer the complexity of explanations, thus making it difficult to achieve a clear-cut categorisation of them as either ethnic or religious. Analysts, in an attempt to surmount this, have chosen to dub such conflicts whose causes are traceable to social, political and economic factors simply as ethno-religious crises. Most of such violent conflicts often bother on the religious cleavages of Islam and Christianity, perceived or real. Conflict could be ethno-political or ethno-religious but ethno-religious conflict is distinguished from other forms of social conflicts because it is an identity conflict which involves ethnic groups that are predominantly of different religions (Alemayo, 2017, pp.20-22).

The north-south dichotomy in Nigeria is comprehensible when one realises that Islam penetrated through the north across the Sahara Desert and spread southwards, while Christianity made its way through the southern coast and spread northwards. This pattern of spread of both religions explains why the relationship between ethnic nationalities in Nigeria is mostly influenced by religion; particularly Islam and Christianity. It is therefore understandable that most of the ethnic nationalities in the north are Muslims while majority of the ethnic groups in the south are Christian (Lukpata, Dada & Tanko, 2016).

The Nigerian state, which we hope will one day become a nation, is known for its multi-ethnicity. While Vidal (2014) maintains that there were well over two hundred ethnic groups and about four hundred linguistic groupings, Lukpata, Dada & Tanko (2016, p.7) claim not less than 395 ethno-cultural groups. The cauldron of ethnic agitations has, most disturbingly, been subjected to sporadic threats. Compounded by palpable religious differences, regional and ethnic conflicts have repeatedly assumed ethno-religious dimensions. Nigeria is therefore being increasingly weakened every passing day by certain centrifugal forces, apparently too powerful for her to withstand. The prevalence of

religiosity and nepotism all over has undermined the secularity of the supposed secular state (National Conference 2014, p.47).

Pre-Amalgamation Latent Issues

With the British bombardment of Lagos in 1851 and the subsequent annexation in August 1861, Lagos became a British colony. It became formally ceded to the British Crown at an official ceremony after King Dosunmu of Lagos had been made to relinquish his powers and authorities to the British Crown in return for an annual salary by the British administration (Vidal, 2014). With a small troop already raised by Sir George Taubman Goldie (a business mogul and administrator who established, served as Governor of the Royal Niger Company and sold the Southern protectorate, land and people, to the British government for £865, 000 in 1899), Lugard moved swiftly to secure treaties from kings in these areas. Lugard, having successfully checked French incursion in the north, named the area 'Northern Protectorate'. Ditto for the south, which was christened 'Southern Protectorate'. It should be recalled that by 1906, Lagos, which had existed and operated as a separate colony since the 1860s, was amalgamated with the rest of the Southern Protectorate to form Southern Nigeria. Lugard placed each of the Protectorates under separate administrations, with each having its own fiscal policy (Vidal, 2014).

On 31st December, 1899, the lowering of the flag of the Royal Niger Company and hoisting of the British flag, the 'Union Jack' a historical event which re-wrote the destinies of countless number of peoples and generations took place in the Lokoja area. Official colonialism started on 1st January, 1900 in fulfilment of the requirement of the Berlin Conference's Principle of Effective Occupation. Between 1900 and 1910, Lugard conquered Nupe, Kotangora and Yola (1901), Bauchi and Borno (1902), Kano and Sokoto (1903)

(Vidal, 2014), to mention but a few. This was the situation when Goldie officially handed over a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and heterogeneous Nigeria to Lugard in 1900. This status quo was sustained until the mega amalgamation of 1914.

Causes of the 1914 British Amalgamation of Nigeria

Since the 1884-85 Berlin Conference consequent upon the scramble for and partition of Africa, the Royal Niger Company had been accredited by the British government to trade on her behalf in the Oil Rivers Protectorate under Goldie. British territorial accruals and interests in the Oil Rivers Protectorate needed to be secured. The enormous trade in palm oil and palm kernel which the British desperately relied upon for their soap factories as well as for the lubrication of their machineries made this particularly necessary. Force was therefore requisite to provide adequate security for Goldie's (or better still British) commercial interests and activities in the region in the face of the constant threat to British commercial interest. Incursion into her territorial and imperial interest by the French in the north as well as the Germans and Portuguese in the south over territories already acquired by Goldie for Britain, made Goldie to formally employ the service of a die-hard British army officer named Captain (later Sir and Lord) Friedrich Lugard. This was a breach of agreement reached by the European nations at the 1884-85 Conference in Berlin. The British thus, resorted to the use of force to protect their interest throughout the entire region. Let it be noted that prior to this time, there was no Northern Nigeria. The British however knitted these people who existed in their separate nationalities together and dubbed it Northern Nigeria. Hence, the people therefore saw themselves as northerners but hardly ever as Nigerians (Ukhueleigbe, 2018).

Amalgamation: Coercion or Consent; Choice of Force?

Although January 1, 1914 announced the official birthing of a nation out of the consummation of a marriage of inconvenience between the two Protectorates, the 1914 amalgamation was only the consummation of a long process of historical evolution in states formation. Prominent among these were the long-standing kingdoms and empires such as the Hausa states, the Kanuri Empire and the Sokoto Caliphate in the north as well as the Empires or Kingdoms of Oyo, Benin, Nupe, and numerous mini-states in Igboland, Niger-Delta and Middle-belt region, in the south, among numerous others (Fwatshak & Akinwumi, 2014).

The Lugardian creation of 1914 was therefore not the beginning of amalgamation as there had been series of amalgamations prior to 1914. Amalgamation had begun since the 1890s with the formation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate, the Niger-Coast Protectorate, among others. These earlier Protectorates (excluding Lagos, which existed as an independent colony, and Calabar) later became known as the Southern Protectorate or Southern Nigeria. By 1906, the Lagos colony became amalgamated with the Southern Protectorate, thus announcing the birthing of the Southern Protectorate. Thus, following series of colonial political permutations, the 1914 amalgamation only came as a concluding action (Fwatshak & Akinwumi, 2014).

Evolution of Minority Splinter Groups

Today, the marriage of incompatible civilisation has left culturally knitted kinsmen delineated along state and international borders (like the Yorùbá in Togo and Benin Republic; the Hausa in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger Republic, etc.). The unfair and unwholesome partitioning is a scheme which has hitherto made such apparently unfortunate ostracised minority groups to be subjected to ignominious servitude in their

acclaimed states. Freedom Charter of Igbomina People (2014, pp. 18-19) itemised the following culturally knitted sub-ethnic groups that have been divorced (internally within the shores of Nigeria) from their kith and kin:

(i) Igbomina people divided between Kwara and Osun States
(ii) Awori people divided between Ogun and Lagos States
(iii) Nupe people divided between Niger and Kwara States
(iv) Idoma people divided between Benue and Anambra States
(v) Okun people divided between Kogi, Ekiti and Ondo States
(vi) Ekiti people divided between Ekiti and Kwara States
(vii) Ijebu people divided between Lagos and Ogun States

However, despite unending protests and agitations for mergers and re-groupings as well as constitutional reappraisals, it was crystal clear that the dissident multi-ethnic cauldron coerced together in the unholy matrimony, were just unwilling to partner as strange bed-fellows. Yet, the British imperial lords went headlong to merge the disparate multi-ethnic nationalities into a mega nation. Vidal (2014) noted that:

> ...in 1904, Sapara Williams, the first Nigerian lawyer moved that the present boundary between the colony as well as protectorate of southern Nigeria and the protectorate of Northern Nigeria be readjusted by bringing the southern portion into southern Nigeria so that the entire tribes of the Yoruba-speaking people should be under one and the same administration. Sir Frederick Lugard was opposed to this proposal on the grounds of administrative convenience... Williams was overruled and Lugard had his way as people were grouped on grounds of geographical contiguity, this issue and similar ones in other parts of the country recurred over and over throughout the period of colonial administration in 1950s and is today one of the contending grounds for the restructuring of the country.

The Freedom Charter of Igbomina People, (2014), puts forth the same argument this way:

> Events from 1906 to date...have never addressed the issue of... strange bed fellowship and estrangement from the cultural and linguistic origin of the people. Unfortunately, these issues have become a national question and an albatross plaguing the development of the country. As a point of fact, it has resulted into what is called a "Minority Question" begging for an answer.

Expectedly, such a forced union could only breed enduring ethno-political-cum-religious brouhaha which has been identified as a peculiar feature of most multi-ethnic societies where ethno-political relations often breed unhealthy upheavals, naturally capable of igniting the embers of anarchy and dissensions. Osaretin & Akov (2013, p. 352) have argued that:

> ...the main cause of violent identity conflict in Nigeria is that most minority groups have remained permanent minorities, while the majority groups are permanent majority, a trend which has serious implications for inter-ethnic and religious relations among the diverse ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria.

Effects of Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates in Nigeria

Trailing after incessant ethno-religious and political crises ever since, has been the unanswered question of the peaceful coexistence and national cohesion of the disparate entities bordering on the compatibility of the dissident ethnic groups on the one hand and between the Christians and Muslims on the other hand (Ugorji, 2016). The disparate Nigerian groups never concealed their feelings of incongruity. They never ever wanted to be together. Leading nationalists did not hide their feelings as they saw the British project as a thing that did not go down well with them, their constituents and the Nigerians in general. The different reactions to the amalgamation agenda of the British came as a clear indication that, of a truth, the people were nothing but strange bed fellows, just unwilling to partner together. However, having been coerced together in the unholy matrimony of incompatibility, they began to live like cats and rats or wolves and sheep.

With the gradual implementation of the electoral process that accompanied the 1946 Constitution of Sir Arthur Richard, which came to effect on 1st January, 1947, it became evident that seeds of discord had already been sown. Northern fears of Southern domination became indeed obvious. To this backdrop, various reactions were staged

before the proclamation of independence. This provides a rationale for the series of

conferences *mid-wifed* by the British colonialists both in Nigeria and London before 1ˢᵗ

October, 1960 was formally agreed upon for Nigeria's independence (Omoiya, 2015).

But the Nigerian leading nationalists on whose hands the Lugardian project was

entrusted did not hide their feelings of unpreparedness to unite as a nation. Fwatshak &

Ayuba (2014) did not only reveal instances of verbal and intellectual discourses against the

Lugardian project; but also the manifestations of physical violence. In 1947, for instance,

Chief Obafemi Awolowo observed that the amalgamation had failed to unite Nigerians with

a sense of shared nationhood. To him, *'Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical

expression....'* (Awolowo, 1947, p. 47) and that Nigerians lacked a strong sense of citizenship

that positively compared to that of the Europeans. In his own discourse, Sir Abubakar

Tafawa Balewa, in 1948, remarked that the efforts of the British towards establishing a

united Nigeria has failed because the diverse peoples, with varying cultures and religions

were not willing to unite. In 1951 however, Balewa, who would later assume office as the

first and only Prime Minister of Nigeria, in a seemingly sudden consciousness of the fact

that Nigeria was a multi-cultural cauldron, declared Federalism as the only basis upon

which Nigeria could become and remain united (Fwatshak & Akinwumi, 2014). Sir Ahmadu

Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of Northern Nigeria, in response to an alleged ill-

treatment of northern delegates during the 1953 Lagos Legislative session, was

particularly critical of the amalgamation project, sharply describing it as a 'mistake'. In his

words:

> Lugard and his amalgamation were far from popular among us at that time.
> There were agitations in favour of secessions; we should set up on our own.
> We should cease to have any more to do with the southern people. We should
> take our own way... (Oyeyemi, 2013).

Furthermore, following the unhealthy ethnic chauvinism in the polity, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, in a rather nationalistic tone, reportedly pleaded on the need to forget their differences. To this, Sir Ahmadu Bello, reportedly reacted prestissimo saying,

> We cannot forget our differences. We can only understand our differences. You are a Christian and a Southerner. I am a Moslem and a Northerner (Aboyeji & Aboyeji, 2016, p. 211).

While one may be tempted to appreciate the sagacity in this discourse, it however unveils the spirit of divisiveness, ethno-religiousness, nepotism, sectionalism and regionalism as well as the rickety foundation upon which Nigeria was built. This was especially germane as one of the leading nationalists made case for those things that put them asunder, rather than those that bind together—namely regionalism-cum-ethnicity and religion.

Surprisingly, in spite of all this, the British yet went ahead to forcefully and insensitively consummate the incongruent entities into a nation that was designed and destined to crumble from the word go. Harold Smith, a Colonial officer and one of the architects of colonial Nigeria, in his acclaimed confession on the havoc caused by the colonial masters while they were in Africa, submitted that the British "...planted time bombs when they finally left... [and] instead of detonating the time bombs planted by the British, the north is planting mines". "Looking at the northern leaders now", Adefolaju (2014, pp.31-32) added, "...if they have any agenda at all, sadly, it is only for the north, and nothing for Nigeria".

Little wonder that many parts of Nigeria are struggling hard today with the phenomenon of peaceful coexistence, as the country's deepening ethno-religious contradictions are presently threatening the fabric of the country. But who is to blame? It is

in this regard that Omoruyi's (2002) conundrum becomes apt: "Who created Nigeria: God or the British?" He contended that while former President Obasanjo had attributed the creation of Nigeria to God, Chief Akinjide dubbed what the British did in Nigeria as nothing other than "a colossal fraud". While he declared the amalgamation as "the mistake of 1914" (Oyeyemi, 2013), Sir Ahmadu Bello further bluntly remarked that "God did not create Nigeria, the British did"! Also, as documented by Hassan-Wuyo (2022), "the British created the regions to divide us and they have succeeded in dividing us along ethnic and religious lines." Thus, ever since the formative years of Nigeria, enabling ground had been prepared for continuous animosity, overt conflicts and enduring ethno-religious violent outbursts between the Muslim-dominated north and Christian-dominated south, till date.

Commenting on the negative effects of colonialism, Ugorji (2016) maintains that colonisation destroyed some wonderful civilisations such as India's while some others, like Nigeria's, were destined to crumble at a well-calculated future date through the colonisation process which initiated a principle of ruin through the 1914 amalgamation which was enforced, devoid of the indigenous peoples' consent. While dealing with the concept of amalgamation, Ugorji (2016) identifies two forms of amalgamation—consented and coerced or forced. He posits tha forced amalgamation is a destructive strategy; draining societies of their essence, trampling cultures underfoot, undermining institutions, confiscating lands, smashing religions, destroying magnificent artistic creations and obliterating extraordinary possibilities.

At the advent of Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960, when Great Britain gave up colonial power over Nigeria forty-six years after amalgamation, three regions based on ethnic groupings were created to comprise the independent nation of Nigeria. The

Hausa/Fulani were in the north; the Yoruba were in the west; the Igbo were in the south.

These three ethnic groups were obviously incompatible in culture, ethnicity and religion,

thus causing agitation for secession. A controversial census in 1963, a disputed post-

independence election in 1964, and explosive western regional elections in 1965 worsened

hostilities, deepened secessionist agitations and triggered the first military coup on 15

January 1966. To compound the underlying ethnic hostilities, the Nigerian Civil War,

between the self-declared secessionist nation of Biafra and the independent nation of

Nigeria, began on 30 May 1967 and ended on 15 January 1970. Though there were complex

multiple causes, the primary cause was inter-ethnic domination, as reflected in a statement

made by the Igbo Eastern Military Governor, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu

Ojukwu that Gowon was not the right person to head the Army because he was a junior

officer in the Army and that he cannot take orders from him (Chukwuemeka, 2020).

All these nasty experiences ensued mainly because the indigenous peoples and their

lands were uprooted and amalgamated by force and not by choice; by coercion, and not by

consent (Ugorji, 2016). But, what exactly was amalgamated—the land or the people?

Probably the land, while the peoples' minds never ever became knitted together.

Ethno-religious Violence in Nigeria

An attempt to catalogue all cases of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria since the

1914 amalgamation till date would be overtly too ambitious under this present

circumstance. However, Beetseh (2014, pp.6-9), has decries that between 1953 and 1972

alone, over seventeen major religious vendettas were recorded between adherents of the

Christian and Islamic faiths in Nigeria. It is particularly worrisome how violence breaks

loose so easily between Christians and Muslims. It has been argued that Nigeria's religious

and socio-cultural diversity is more of a curse than blessing. Osaretin & Akov (2013, p.351)

provides an overview of identity crises in Nigeria, viz:

> Since the 1980s, identity conflicts have become a recurring decimal in
> Nigeria, especially in the country's northern region. This identity crisis...has
> caused similar problems in Modakeke/Ife, Sabongari/Kano, Sabo/Ibadan,
> Zango/Kataf, Urhobo/Itsekiri, Jukun/Tiv, Kuteb/Jukun-Chamba and
> Hausa/Shagamu (Danfulani, 2006). Others include the Chamba vs Kuteb, the
> Ogoni vs Andom in Rivers State, the Sharia crisis in Kaduna State, the Tiv vs
> Other ethnic groups in Azara of Nassarawa State in 2001, the Tarok vs
> Hausa/Fulani in Plateau State in 2004, the Geomai vs the Hausa/Fulani in
> Shandan Local Government of Plateau State in 2002, the Quan vs Pan in
> Quan'pan local government of Plateau State in 2006, the Hausa/Fulani and
> the Beron, Anaguta and Afizare in Jos North Local Government in 2001, 2002,
> 2004, 2008, and 2010 and the Boko Haram violence that has engulfed Borno,
> Yobe, Bauchi and Kano States since July 2009.

Indeed, the prevalence of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, fêted as the "Giant of

Africa" (Aghalino & Aboyeji, 2017, p.4) has plunged the country into a bedlam of crises that

have had dire consequences for the country. It is particularly worrisome that cities once

renown as peaceful and serene such as Jos once reputed as "Home of peace and tourism"

has become volatile that it is now mockingly referred to as the "Home of pieces and

terrorism" (Osaretin & Akov, 2013, p.349). Similarly, the once peaceful city of Ilorin, capital

of the (Kwara) "State of Harmony", has also been identified with sporadic brewing of

ethno-religious violence. Hence, following her protracted teething challenges bordering on

a fragile economic and socio-political internal structure, as well as the enduring ethno-

religious upheavals, she is being recently portrayed as the "crippled giant" or "a giant with

feet of clay" (Cravo, Hornsby, Nascimento, & Santos, 2014; Aghalino & Aboyeji, 2017, p.5).

Harold Smith also described Nigeria as a great nation, which was crippled not only because

of the military juntas or corrupt leaders alone but by the British and American phobia of

Nigeria's great future (Adefolaju, 2014). However, while the roots of ethno-religious and other identity conflicts may be linked to the coercive amalgamation, colonialism and the effects of the Cold War, such conflicts are basically rooted in bad governance, politicisation of ethnic and religious identities, the competition and conflict for political power by the ethnic and religious communities (Osaretin & Akov, 2013, p.352).

Above all, conflicts arising from the activities of Boko Haram in the North East have resulted in high threats to lives and properties, death of many and displacement of several people. Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) round 41 reported in March 2022 identifies 2,197,824 IDPs across Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe States, with 3,228,000 displacement movements (DTM Nigeria 2023).

Communal clashes are another factor contributing to lack of peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Mausi (2014) reports that clashes between farmers and herdsmen over grazing lands in states such as Benue, Taraba, Zamfara and parts of Kaduna have left more than 1,000 people dead between 2013 and 2014. He maintains that *"The violence has been almost on a daily basis in some places like Benue State and in a few other places you've had it almost on a weekly basis".* Ojekunle (2018) reports that Nigeria's farmer-herder's conflicts claim 2,075 lives in 2018 alone, representing 57% of the total deaths in the last three years. Benue was the most affected state in Nigeria with more than 700 deaths. Other states with high number of deaths include Adamawa, Plateau and Zamfara (Ojekunle 2018).

The activities of Boko Haram and herder /farmer crises have led to displacement of huge population. As of December 31, 2021, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated that 3,228, 000 people forced to flee their homes in Nigeria were still living in internal displacement. This figure refers to people internally displaced by conflict and

violence in five areas: the North East region due to an 11 year-old insurgency; the Central region due to inter-communal violence; and the North West and North Central regions due to criminal and inter-communal violence; and, finally, Niger State, due to inter-communal violence. This figure was obtained from the IOM DTM baseline assessments conducted in the North East (Round 39) and in the North West and North Central regions (Round 8) and from Niger state government media.

This figure includes people displaced as a result of brutal attacks by the Islamist armed group Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria, the government-led counter-insurgency operations against the group, ongoing inter-communal clashes and natural hazard-induced disasters.

Conclusion

The purpose of this work was medico-diagnostic. It turned the searchlight to the exact roots of the enduring ethno-religious inferno that has almost engulfed the House that Lugard built (Fwatshak & Akinwumi, 2014) in 1914 with a bid to proffering a panacea to the lingering issue bordering on national cohesion. It suffices to say that the very consummation of Nigeria spelt the consumption and destruction of its nationhood. Thus, from the very birthing of its nationhood, the amalgamation and problems of nationhood have never ceased to raise their ugly heads and coarse voices. The series of manifestations of ethno-religious crises are only a resonating effect of the non-readiness and unwillingness of peoples of disparate beliefs and variegated cultures who were submerged in forceful amalgamation to live together to satisfy British administrative conveniences. The mistake of this forced marriage at 1914, a marriage of incompatible civilisation of

strange bed fellows, has been blamed by various writers, scholars and elites as the birthing of enduring ethno-religious violence that has engulfed the nation.

Undoubtedly, conflict is an inevitable and universal phenomenon. However, conflicts in a pluralistic, highly complex, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society are particularly enduring; probably on account of their vulnerability to explosion, given their variegated configuration. Perhaps the most prominent violent identity conflicts are those that have pitted Muslims against Christians in a dangerous convergence of religion, ethnicity and politics.

Given the afore-going analysis, therefore, after a century of forced integration, following the 1914 amalgamation, and decades of experimented federalism, Nigeria, perhaps, at best, still exists along ethnic and religious divides. It is, therefore, plausible to argue that Nigeria is still in the process of becoming, or worse still, failing to become a nation. Indeed, with all optimism, Nigeria is conceivably, at its best, a futuristic nation. It is on this premise that we make bold to conclude that the amalgamation of the northern and southern Nigeria was predicated upon a frail foundation, which only left the bubbles of the latent conflicts therefrom to explode afterwards, and so it was. However, the conundrum is "for how long will Nigerians continue to rehearse Walter Rodney's (1973) refrain: How Europe Underdeveloped Africa?"

 Recommendations

 In all fairness, several efforts have been made to manage the perennial conflict in Nigeria, but with little or no positive transformation. Extant researches have also put forward various proposals to bring an end to the enduring ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, such as the deployment of huge security operatives, peaceful dialogue amongst

religious groups (Aguh, n.d.), responsible peacekeeping, peacemaking and continuous

peacebuilding **(**Ugorji, 2016)**,**

> ...constitutional review; devolution of powers; fiscal federalism with revenue
> sharing; resource control and sharing formula; reforms of the public service;
> inclusive and participatory democracy; accountability and transparency;
> political parties and electoral systems reforms; coercive measures in the form
> of peacekeeping operations; the use of the judicial system in the prosecution
> and sentencing of perpetrators of violence; political will to fight terrorism and
> rehabilitate the victims of terrorist attacks; and finally, the creation of the
> Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) (See National Conference
> (2014, pp.47-59).

As these appear not to be producing the desired results, there is therefore the

pressing need to embrace the medico-diagnostic approach, which seeks to address the

roots of the matter in a bid to understanding the nature of the menace. We hereby

recommend:

First and foremost is the obliteration of the colonial divisive ideology based on the

practice of judging known as 'othering' which divides the society between 'us' (the

civilised) and 'them' (the 'others', the 'savages') (Ugorji, 2016). The need to obliterate every

colonial divisive ideology, drawing from the duo of ethnicity and religion, therefore

becomes imperative. The attendant challenge of the indigene-settler dichotomy, with the

convergence of other markers of identity such as ethnicity and religion, has largely

balkanised and polarised people in terms of access to power, resources, appointments and

other privileges. The 'bold' proposal currently making the waves for any Nigerian, who has

lived in an area for ten years, to be able to claim citizenship of that place could be

thoroughly scrutinised by policy makers, implementers and all necessary stakeholders for

possible consideration with a bid to dealing with the problem 'once and for all'. This is in

tandem with the Bill for an Act sponsored in the House of Representatives by Hon. Sama'ila

Mohammed (ANPP, Plateau State) in 2010, which would give Nigerians the right to be indigenes of any local government area in Nigeria if that person or the person's parents migrated to that Local Government area before October 1 1960.

In addition, constitutional change is advocated. There is an urgent need for the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at addressing the lop-sidedness inherent in political office holding which seems to favour one religion and one section of the country over and above others. Reducing or removing the link between religious and ethnic affiliation, and access to political, economic and social resources would really prove that Nigeria belongs to us all. Similarly, the Impunity Clause should also be deemphasised by prosecuting those responsible for the crises rocking the country.

More importantly is the factor of Good Governance: There is no alternative to good governance as our medico-diagnosis has revealed, among other things. Bad governance, rising economic gap, sustained economic hardship and systemic corruption has been the main root cause of all ethno-religious crises. An in-depth structural adjustment, achievable through an all-inclusive national conference and total re-orientation of people's mindsets in order to foster peaceful co-existence, among ethno-religious groups, is non-negotiable.

Furthermore, this study suggests a Declaration of a State of Emergency on the Proposed Cattle Colony Idea: The recent announcement of the Federal Government's plan to establish cattle colonies as a way of checking the incessant herdsmen/farmers clashes by Chief Audu Ogbeh, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, would only make Nigeria, which seems to be at the verge of a precipice already to crash land speedily into the abyss of history. While most states in the south have openly rejected the policy, some

governors in the north were readily receptive to the idea, although some, who earlier endorsed the idea, have backed out already (The Vanguard 2018). The proposed Cattle Colony (Onyekakeyah 2018), which requires people to relinquish their ancestral lands to be used by herdsmen across the federation is already generating palpable fears of some sinister intentions, and therefore needs to be shelved.

Also, the revolution of the Proletariat is proposed. Karl Marx believed that religion's enduring appeal, which he referred to as "the opium of the masses", had a materialistic foundation in an oppressive setting. Against this backdrop, the revolution of the proletariat, as advocated by Karl Marx, becomes imminent. To him, 'the history of hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles', between the bourgeois and the proletariat. Karl Marx's words in the concluding remark of his Communist Manifesto are instructive: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletariats have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. The proletariat must win (Wolfson & Peter, 1848).

Moreso, the issue of restructuring has been on the table for long. All the ills presently plaguing Nigeria are arguably somehow linked with the anti-federalist twirl Nigeria made in 1966, which violated the foundational Federal constitution structure encapsulated in the 1960 independence constitution to which all Nigerians subscribed. Under the 1963 Federal Constitution framework, each region controlled its resources, retained a good deal of 50 per cent of the income generated, contributed 30 per cent to the Federal Government, and 20 per cent to the common pool, which the existing regions shared (Ibrahim, 2015). From this arrangement, each region was able to develop at its own pace. Such diversified economic model, however, became truncated with negative

development and resource course concepts that attended the discovery of crude oil

(Aghalino & Aboyeji, 2017). While the ongoing national clamour for restructuring and

devolution of powers may not provide all the answers to all our nagging developmental

challenges, however, if well-handled, it could be the first right step towards the right

direction.

Identifying the 'real enemy' to peaceful co-existence in Nigeria is another

suggestion. Today, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa and the Western powers are

sceptical of the big economies that threaten them. In her own case, China has been able to

resist US concerted efforts at breaking China. Nigeria and Nigerians must also be wise

enough to identify the big enemy without and the gluttonous elite class—the enemy within,

rather than use ethno-religious sentiments to cripple and obliterate the poor Nigerian

masses.

Above all, sincere love, loyalty and patriotism for the country is a prerequisite for

Nigeria's progress. Although Harold Smith appears sincere enough to confess and apologise

for all the evil done to Nigeria, he also makes bold to state that: "...it was my duty to carry

out all of the above and I was loyal to my country. Nigerians should try to be loyal to their

country, leaders and followers alike" (Adefolaju, 2014, 31-32).

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