7

An analysis of christian perspective on peace communication and conflict resolution in Nigeria

Harmona, Augustus Olusegun & Oyetoro, Taiwo Rebecca

Abstract

Religion is pivotal in shaping societal values, fostering communal harmony, and mediating conflicts. Although the Nigerian Constitution doesn't explicitly label religion as a tool for peace and conflict resolution, section 38 (1) of its provisions on religious freedom, non-discrimination, and the right to association create the legal and social space for religious actors to play this significant role within the nation's diverse context. Extant literature by Yinger and Talabi, has theorized on causes, triggers and management of conflict onset however, little attention has been beamed on the Christian perspective on peace communication as a management strategy. This study, therefore, explores the critical role religion plays in mitigating tensions and fostering reconciliation in a nation often marred by ethno-religious crises. The study adopts a qualitative research method to examine how religion, have mediated conflicts, promoted forgiveness, and helped to bridge cultural gaps. It identifies the role of religion in peace communication and conflict resolution, Peace communication in the Bible, challenges of religion in communicating peace and strategies involved in peace and conflict resolution. In spite of these challenges, the study shows how religious leaders and faith-based organisations have effectively resolved disputes in Nigeria, providing useful information for wider applications. This study advocates for deliberate efforts to promote interfaith dialogue, empower religious institutions in peacebuilding, and educate communities on tolerance and mutual respect. It asserts that religion when properly harnessed, remains a veritable instrument for promoting sustainable peace and resolving conflicts in Nigeria's diverse socio-political context.

Keywords: *Religion, Communication, Peace, Conflict and Conflict resolution.*

Introduction

Religion has always been a powerful and pervasive force in human history, shaping cultures, influencing governance, and providing moral guidance. In Nigeria, a country celebrated for its rich diversity in ethnicities, languages, and religious beliefs, religion occupies a central place in the lives of its citi-

zens.(Oluwadele et al., 2023) Religion occupies a central place in the lives of Nigerians, influencing their values, behaviours, and perceptions of societal issues.Religionconstitutes the second nature of the Nigerian people, it affects everything we do.The nation's two dominant religions—Christianity and Islam—coexist alongside various traditional African religions, contributing to the country's dynamic religious landscape. This plurality of faiths has made religion a cornerstone of Nigerian society, capable of both uniting and dividing its people.

Despite religion's potential as a unifying force, religious extremists in Nigeria have often been the pioneers of religious conflicts, especially in regions marked by ethnic and socio-political tensions. The misuse of religious identity to fuel divisions, perpetuate stereotypes, and incite violence has, at times, overshadowed its peace-promoting teachings. Yet, religion also offers invaluable resources for conflict resolution, including doctrines of love, forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation. Religious leaders and institutions have historically played significant roles in mediating disputes, fostering dialogue, and restoring peace in communities torn apart by violence.

Mordi and Onovughe in their study on *Religion: A Veritable Tool for National Security and Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria*, assert that religious crisis, cultural or ethnic conflicts, political agitations arising from the feeling ofmarginalization, tribal or ethnic politicking whose result is always negative and anti-unity,kidnap activities across, the nation, armed robbery and the Fulani herdsmen brutality have become themost recurrent security challenges in the Nigerian society.Hence there is a need for security toenhance peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

Given Nigeria's history of ethno-religious crises, which have led to loss of life, displacement, and increased divisions within society, it is especially crucial to utilize religion as a means of peacebuilding and resolving conflicts. For example, the repeated conflicts between farmers and herders, the Boko Haram insurgencies, and the strains between Christian and Muslim communities all emphasize the necessity of long-term solutions to conflict. These issues, often worsened by political exploitation and socio-economic disparities, have shown that tackling Nigeria's problems demands not only political or economic measures but also engagement with spiritual and ethical values.

From a Christian perspective, this study aims to explore how religion functions in communicating peace and resolving conflict within Nigeria, specifically investigating the potential of its doctrines, organizations, and leaders to promote unity and harmony. Ultimately, this research highlights the significant capacity of religion to act as a driver for lasting peace in a

nation where faith holds a profound place in its people's identity.

Methodology and Theory

The study adopts a qualitative research method to examine how religion have mediated conflicts, promoted forgiveness, and helped to bridge cultural gaps. It identifies the role of religion in peace communication and conflict resolution, Peace communication in the Bible, challenges of religion in communicating peace and strategies involved in peace and conflict resolution.

This research employs a Relational Restoration Theory (RRT), proposed by Hartigwith the Collective Restoration Theory in 2013. This theory posits that effective communication is essential for resolving conflicts in a way that restores relationships and promotes reconciliation, reflecting Christian values of love, forgiveness, and humility. It also vital in exploring Christian perspectives on communication as a tool for conflict resolution, emphasizing the importance of relational restoration and reconciliation.

Literature Review

Religion is a prominent feature in human society that cannot be simply ignored. It is as old as man on earth and will probably remain on earth as long as man remains in it. This phenomenon has no universally accepted definition thus, religion has been variously defined by different scholars. The sociologists see it as one of the social institutions of the society, while religious men and women see religion as a "Given". This means that religion is conceived as "extra-societal"(Onyeka 2009). In his definition of religion, Taylor(1985), said that religion is the belief in spiritual beings. Every religion believes in a being, higher and greater than man, who is the object of man's veneration and worship.

According to Nwangama(2019), in his paper titled *"Religion as Panacea for Peace, Conflict Resolution, Capacity Building and National Development In Nigeria"* opines that religion is the most important part of the life of man. From time immemorial man has prayed and worshipped God or gods. It is often said that no group of human beings has ever been discovered that did not have religious beliefs. Oyetoro and Talabi(2023), in their study on *Religious Tolerance: A Tool for National Development,* assert that religion is a universal institution in human society. It is found in all societies, past and present. All the preliterate societies known to us have religion. They further state that religion goes back to the beginning of the culture itself. It is a very ancient institution. There is no primitive society without religion.

Francolin (2000), conceived religion as the act of worship, propitiation

and recognition of power beyond man and superior to him, which he (man) believes to have control over the whole universe, the human person and the course of nature. For Uche (2011), religion is a reference to a set of beliefs, practices, norms and values relating man to God and his neighbour, irrespective of colour, nationality, creed and worldview. Egbeto (2016) noted that religion often serves as a final source of solace and intervention when human efforts fall short. Consequently, when conventional actions do not yield the desired outcomes, people often turn to religion for resolution. This explains the belief that religion unites individuals who share similar faiths, beliefs, and convictions, fostering a sense of social and spiritual solidarity for both immediate and future well-being.

The idea of Peace is multifaceted. Miller and King (2003) described Peace as a political state characterized by justice and social stability, maintained through both formal and informal systems, practices, and accepted standards. It is a significant oversimplification to equate the mere absence of war with the existence of peace. Furthermore, simply avoiding conflicts does not constitute peace; rather, it involves actively fulfilling certain conditions necessary to ensure peace within any society.

Galtung conceptualized Peace in two ways: Positive Peace and Negative Peace. Positive peace encompasses the absence of systemic forms of violence, such as exploitation, hunger, malnutrition, and corruption. Conversely, negative peace is defined by the absence of direct acts of violence, including wars between nations, civil wars, and physical harm. For Galtung, peace is also a mental state, a feeling of inner tranquillity that arises from external stability, resulting from the fulfilment of specific human aspirations.

Conflict in a layman's language is a strongdisagreement, a clash between opposing forces that

may arise when there are incompatible goals, issuesor contradictions which may eventually result in afight, battle, etc. The conflict could be political,religious, cultural, tribal, ethnic, economic, etc.Wilmot and Hocker(2001) define conflict as "an expressed strugglebetween at least two interdependent parties whoperceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, andinterference from others in achieving theirgoals". Conflict is an inevitable fact of life that has to bemanaged in such a way that it results in its resolutionin the shortest possible time.Thus, since conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in the entire relations of humans, the need for conflict resolution became paramount.

Albert(2001), asserts that conflict resolution is the perspective that talks about mediation, negotiation and arbitration. These processes encouraged the use of neutral third parties to facilitate the process of peacemaking. The

processes could be applied to inter and intra-personal and group conflicts. These processes can bestudied and practised independently. Agreements reached with these processes can be binding and, therefore enforceable in the court of law.

However, the Christian understanding of peace, as a holistic "shalom" encompassing social harmony, justice, and right relationships, directly connects to the question of whether religion is primarily a social reality or a matter of individual spirituality. Their faith compels them to pursue justice, reconciliation, and well-being for all within society. Therefore, while their personal relationship with God (spirituality) is foundational, it inevitably drives them towards concrete actions and relationships within the social fabric of Lagos, making their religion a lived social reality aimed at fostering communal peace. The pursuit of "shalom" necessitates both an inner transformation and an outward engagement with the world.

Religion; a Social Reality or Spirituality?

Religion as a Social Order has been a topic of discussion for decades of years. It is regarded as a social institution because it includes beliefs and practices that serve the needs of society. Religion is also an example of a cultural universal because it is found in all societies in one form or another. Religion can be regarded as a societal reality that impacts a bunch of people. Because it is seen as a place of worship everywhere in society and has vivid imagery of sections of the population gathered in devotion, praise, and music within these local religious sites, this is perhaps the most visible physical aspect. (Haque and Jahan 2023) It entails a set of ideals and has definite practices. The word "religion" is everywhere in the society.

Religious conflict may develop out of intolerance of other religions and discrimination against members of other religions, religious war, intellectual conflict and conflict between religious organisations and the state. Such conflicts are harmful to the overall credibility of religion and may cause religious apathy or disintegration. It may arise in the attempt to religiously convert ethnic society and may result in ethnic disintegration and loss of cultural heritage.

Religious conflict emerges from divergences in religious doctrines or customs, ranging from minor disputes within local areas to significant wars between countries. Oguntola-Laguda & Talabi (2024) noted that several elements can instigate religious conflict, such as a lack of religious tolerance and rivalry over resources, as well as political or economic motivations. Issues like poverty, unemployment, and limited educational opportunities can also exacerbate such conflicts. It's crucial to recognize that religious conflict is not

invariably rooted in religious differences alone but can often be intertwined with struggles for power, resources, and social standing.

Another factor that complicates the resolution of religious conflict is its frequent entanglement with deeply ingrained beliefs and values. Individuals may be prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for their convictions, making it exceptionally challenging to find areas of agreement. As a consequence, intricate structures of communication arise, in each person's behaviour affecting the actions of everyone in a variety of nuanced ways. (Talabi 2022) They create social interactions, social systems, and organisations as a by-product of such resulting personality traits— in other words, social reality.

Conversely, spirituality has gained prominence, particularly in Western societies, often serving as an alternative to traditional religion. Notably, recent works by respected religious thinkers such as; J.M. Yinger(1961), D.O Laguda and M.J Talabi(2024) have explored spiritual values not merely as components of religions but as distinct entities. The spirituality movement is characterized by its grassroots nature, making it vulnerable to commercialization and self-serving agendas. Religion can be seen as a constantly adapting system of dialogue, learning, and action centred around understanding spirituality, enacting its principles, and harnessing its power for the dual benefit of individual and communal growth.

By continually adapting and conveying these spiritual discoveries within the "ever-changing realms of social reality," religion can actively engage in addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting understanding, and building harmonious communities. Its established structures, teachings, and ability to mobilize people provide a platform for disseminating peace-oriented values and facilitating reconciliation processes, thus making peacebuilding a natural and necessary extension of its core function.

Peace Communication and Conflict Resolution in the Bible

Peace is an essential core teaching of most religions in the world. It is one of the fundamental doctrines of major religions in the world. In the Scriptures, the concept of peacedoes not just include the absence of conflict or war; the concept has a broader meaning that covers many aspects of life.In this context, conflict represents the breakdown of peace, the point at which harmony is disrupted and opposing forces clash.

The Bible, serving as a foundational text for both Judaism and Christianity, offers profound insights and practical guidance on the concepts of peace and the resolution of conflict. Its teachings extend beyond a mere absence of strife, emphasizing the presence of wholeness, justice, and reconciliation within relationships encompassing God, fellow human beings,

and the individual self. An examination of both the Old and New Testaments reveals a consistent and compelling call towards peacemaking, accompanied by various principles and illustrative examples for navigating disagreements.

Within the Old Testament, the Hebrew term "*shalom*" holds a central position in understanding peace. Its meaning transcends the simple cessation of hostilities, encompassing well-being, harmony, completeness, security, and justice. *Shalom* in the Hebrew Bible refers to the relationship between people (Gen 34:21), nation (I Kings 5:12) and God (Psalm 85:8). Peace is regarded as the ultimate gift from God (Isaiah 45:7).It has both physical and spiritual implications. Peace is a promise of God to his people, this is evident in Leviticus 26:6. "I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beast and sword will not go through your land". The picture here is peace as the absence of war. The same can be said in Numbers 6:24 -26."The Lord bless you and keep you... The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace". In this regard, peace is born out of the gracious act of God. To be in peace is to experience a wholesome external and internal joy that flows from God.

The New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the prophesied "Prince of Peace," and his teachings and actions form the cornerstone of its perspective on peace and conflict resolution. Jesus' ministry both begins and concludes with a message of peace, offering a peace that surpasses earthly comprehension, one that endures even amidst trials and tribulations. A central tenet of his teachings is the call to peacemaking, elevated to a divine blessing for those who actively work to resolve conflict and foster harmony. In the New Testament, the Greek word for peace is *eirene*. It has a similar meaning to *shalom* in the Hebrew Bible. Jesus in the Gospel of John speaks of peace in his final discourse to his disciples. "Peace I live with you; the peace I give to you" (14:27). This corroborates the description of Jesus by the prophet Isaiah as the" prince of Peace". In his sermon on the mountain, he pronounced "Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called the sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). This shows how important "peace-building" is to the Christian faith.

The understanding that the Bible, through both its Old and New Testaments, provides a rich foundation of teachings and examples emphasizing the active pursuit of peace, rooted in justice, love, and forgiveness. The understanding that religion, despite its complexities, offers substantial resources for peacebuilding through its ethical frameworks, community reach, interfaith potential, and examples of peace and conflict resolution found within its foundational texts, such as the Bible. If religious traditions hold such transformative power for fostering peace in societies, then exploring the core tenets and narratives related to peace and conflict resolution within

these traditions, as exemplified by the Bible, becomes a crucial next step in understanding how these principles are articulated and applied.

The Role of Christian Religion in Communicating Peace

Religion, as a vital institution for communicating ethical and moral principles to both individual and communal life, possesses a significant and multifaceted role in peacebuilding. Its influence stems from its capacity to shape values, mobilize communities, and provide frameworks for reconciliation and justice. In societies grappling with conflict, religious institutions and leaders can act as crucial catalysts for fostering understanding, healing divisions, and constructing sustainable peace.

Despite its limitations, religion remains a potent force for peacebuilding and management. Amunnadi (2016) supported this view, stating that "Religion, though significantly misused throughout history, both ancient and modern, still holds immense potential, when positively utilized, as a crucial force in fostering peace at individual, national, and global levels." There is little question that religion encourages ethical behaviour. Omoregbe (1993) argued that the most significant value and achievement of religion lies in its capacity to promote morality within society. Similarly, Kant, as cited by Paterson (1928), believed that the role of religion was "to support and to complete the moral life."

One of the primary contributions of religion to peacebuilding lies in its ethical and moral teachings. Most faiths espouse core values such as compassion, forgiveness, empathy, and the sanctity of human life. These principles provide a moral compass that can guide individuals and communities away from violence and towards peaceful coexistence. (Abubakar, 2021)For example, the Christian doctrine of *"love your neighbour as yourself"* (Mark 12:31) and the Islamic principle of "peace be upon you" *(As-SalamuAlaikum)* underscore the importance of harmony and mutual respect. Religion's role as charactermoulder, builder and restorer of justice and humandignity is as clear as crystal in the eyes of allNigerians.

B.O.S. Udezo, a scholar of the New Testament, posits that conflict resolution entails embracing diverse viewpoints to thoroughly address disputes through productive problem-solving, setting it apart from conflict management or transformation. Conflict management focuses on establishing ways to coexist with and handle conflict in a manner that reduces negative impacts and enables peaceful interaction. It involves a friendly settlement of disagreements between parties, aiming to address the specific points of contention. In the realm of religious conflict, conflict management includes approaches like dialogue, negotiation, and mediation. It is crucial to note

that conflict management differs from conflict resolution, which is the comprehensive process of fully resolving a conflict. (Oguntola-Laguda & Talabi 2024)

Interfaith dialogue and collaboration represent another vital avenue through which religion contributes to peacebuilding. When leaders and adherents of different faiths come together in mutual respect and understanding, they can challenge stereotypes, build trust, and identify shared values that underpin peaceful coexistence. Interfaith initiatives can foster empathy and cooperation on issues of common concern, such as poverty alleviation, social justice, and environmental protection, thereby addressing some of the root causes of conflict.

Yusuf (2024) highlighted the potential for communication to both escalate and effectively manage conflict. The biblical account of Matthew Kinilam versus Komolam illustrates the use of non-verbal communication and avoidance as a means to de-escalate a tense situation involving a woman caught in conflict. A 2024 publication by Yusuf also emphasized that proficiency in communication is crucial for the success of most alternative dispute resolution methods. This aligns with Albert's view that communication is integral to all five conflict handling styles. A aju's work noted Peter's use of verbal communication to reduce tension when addressing a crowd. In contrast, the Gospel of John recounts Peter resorting to violence, drawing his sword – an act often seen as confrontation in conflict theory. However, as Albert suggests, employing a combination of styles can achieve desired outcomes, provided communication is skillfully applied. Jesus' interaction with Peter, where he verbally intervened to defuse a violent situation, underscores the foundational role of communication in conflict resolution within biblical narratives. Therefore, communication emerges as a well-established and multifaceted concept for resolving disputes in the Bible.

The Relational Restoration Theory offers a valuable framework for understanding the role of communication in conflict resolution from a Christian perspective. As James 1:19 advises, "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry," active listening is a crucial component of this theory (Kaiser, 2015). By prioritizing active listening, empathetic understanding, clear and honest communication, and forgiveness and reconciliation, Christians can effectively resolve conflicts and restore relationships (Lederach, 2003). This approach is grounded in Christian principles of love and compassion (Mark 12:31), humility and servanthood (Philippians 2:3-8), and forgiveness and mercy (Matthew 6:14-15).

Empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the Relational Restoration Theory in various contexts. For example, a study by Kraft

(2015) found that Christians who practiced active listening and empathetic understanding in conflict situations were more likely to achieve reconciliation and restore relationships. However, critics argue that this approach may be limited by its emphasis on individual relationships, neglecting broader structural and systemic issues that contribute to conflict (Gopin, 2000). Nevertheless, the Relational Restoration Theory remains a valuable framework for understanding the role of communication in conflict resolution, and its principles can be applied in various contexts, from interpersonal conflicts to global peacebuilding efforts (Appleby, 2000). However, the key components are:

  a. Active Listening: Christians should prioritize active listening, seeking to understand others' perspectives and emotions, as exemplified in James 1:19.

  b. Empathetic Understanding: Christians should strive to understand others' experiences and feelings, reflecting God's love and compassion (Colossians 3:12-14).

  c. Clear and Honest Communication: Christians should communicate clearly and honestly, while also being mindful of their tone and words, as encouraged in Ephesians 4:15.

  d. Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Christians should prioritize forgiveness and reconciliation, seeking to restore relationships and promote healing, as modeled in Matthew 18:21-22.

Application:

  a. Interpersonal Conflict: Christians can apply relational restoration theory in personal relationships, such as family, friendships, or workplace conflicts.

  b. Community Conflict: Christians can apply relational restoration theory in community settings, such as churches or community organizations.

  c. Global Conflict: Christians can apply relational restoration theory in global conflicts, promoting peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts.

While these sacred texts and theory offers a powerful vision and principles for peacemaking, the application of these ideals in complex societal contexts, particularly in religiously diverse nations like Nigeria, often encounters significant hurdles. The very human interpretation and implementation of religious doctrines can sometimes deviate from these core peaceful tenets, leading to complexities and challenges in leveraging religion effectively for conflict resolution in the real world.

Challenges of Christian Religion in Peace Communication and Conflict Resolution

Despite religion's inherent potential to foster peace, religion in Nigeria has regrettably been exploited to exacerbate societal divisions. The manipulation of religious affiliations for political advantage has significantly heightened tensions and fueled violent conflicts. Furthermore, the rise of religious extremism, exemplified by groups like Boko Haram, has actively undermined the constructive role religion could play in peacebuilding. The devastating consequences of religious prejudice and hatred are starkly evident, both within Nigeria and in global conflicts such as those in the Middle East. This reality has led some, like Nwangama (2008), to observe a growing scepticism towards religion's positive influence on society due to its negative manifestations.

Another significant obstacle lies in the pervasive mistrust that exists between different religious groups. Historical grievances and ingrained stereotypes have created substantial barriers to meaningful collaboration, hindering the ability of communities to unite and work towards shared objectives. Moreover, the limited availability of well-established platforms for interfaith dialogue restricts opportunities for fostering mutual understanding and effectively resolving conflicts.

However, despite these detrimental aspects, religions still possess considerable potential as a force for global peace. As Andrews (2015) points out, religion is not the sole instigator of conflict; nations and individuals also engage in hostilities over ideology, territory, and resources, as well as perceived differences in identity and demographic pressures.

Brian D. Lepard, as cited in Sharma (2011), suggests that despite their shortcomings, world religions can and must become dedicated proponents of world peace, arguing that a lasting and profound global peace cannot be achieved without respect for and adherence to the fundamental moral teachings shared across all faiths. He contends that religion-inspired conflict stems from religious prejudice and fanaticism, which contradict the core tenets of world religions as articulated in their most revered scriptures, where significant commonalities offer moral hope in a divided and traumatized world.

Indeed, most religions fundamentally do not endorse violence and war as means of settling disputes. Hill (2013) notes that while religions have a history of conflict over political and religious differences, the majority today strongly oppose violence and actively advocate for peace. Concepts like "ahimsa" or "non-harm" have long been central to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The Hebrew Prophets frequently called for peace among their

people. Jesus advocated loving enemies and non-retaliation, even instructing his disciples to lay down their weapons. Muhammad promoted peace among Arab tribes, permitting violence only in self-defence.

The recognition that religion possesses a dual capacity, capable of both fostering peace and exacerbating conflict, underscores the critical importance of the Role of Religious Leaders in Mediating Conflicts. Given this inherent duality, the influence and actions of religious leaders become paramount in guiding their communities towards peace and actively mitigating the potential for religion to be used as a tool for division.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This analysis has explored the Christian perspective on peace communication and conflict resolution within the complex socio-religious landscape of Nigeria. It has revealed that Christian theology offers a robust framework for understanding and actively pursuing peace, rooted in the concepts of *shalom*, reconciliation, justice, love, and forgiveness as exemplified by Jesus Christ and articulated throughout the Old and New Testaments. These principles provide a strong moral and spiritual foundation for fostering harmonious relationships and addressing the multifaceted conflicts that plague Nigerian society.

Ultimately, this study underscores that while Christian teachings offer a powerful vision for peace and reconciliation, their translation into tangible peace within Nigeria requires a conscious and concerted effort to overcome these challenges. By actively promoting the core values of their faith and engaging constructively with other religious and secular actors, Christians in Nigeria can contribute significantly to building a more just, harmonious, and peaceful society.

Based on the findings of this analysis, the following recommendations are:

- **Strengthen Theological Education on Peace and Justice:** Christian theological institutions should prioritize comprehensive education on biblical principles of peace, justice, reconciliation, and non-violence. Equipping future religious leaders with a deep understanding of these teachings will empower them to articulate and promote a consistent theology of peace within their congregations and communities.
- **Invest in Training for Christian Leaders in Conflict Resolution:** Pastors, church elders, and other Christian leaders should receive specialized training in conflict mediation, dialogue facilitation, and trauma healing. This will provide them with practical skills

to effectively intervene in disputes, promote reconciliation, and support individuals and communities affected by conflict.

- **Integrate Peace Education into Church Ministries:** Churches should incorporate peace education and the teaching of non-violent conflict resolution skills into their various ministries, including Sunday school, youth groups, and adult education programs. This will cultivate a culture of peace within Christian communities and equip individuals with the tools to navigate conflict constructively in their daily lives.

- **Utilize Christian Media for Peace Communication:** Christian media outlets (radio, television, online platforms) should be strategically used to disseminate messages of peace, reconciliation, forgiveness, and tolerance. These platforms can also provide spaces for dialogue and storytelling that promote understanding and empathy across religious and ethnic divides.

- **Model Peaceful Conflict Resolution within Christian Communities:** Churches and Christian organizations should strive to be exemplary models of peaceful conflict resolution within their own structures and among their members. Demonstrating a commitment to resolving disagreements through dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation can serve as a powerful witness to the wider society.

REFERENCES

Abubakar, A. (2021). Role Of Religion In Peacebuilding And Social Cohesion In Borno State, Nigeria. *Open Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, *2*(2), 40.

Alechenu, J. (2008). Ethno-Religious Conflict and Civil Society: The Case of Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Sociology*, *14*(1), 131-145.

Albert, I. O. (2001). Introduction to Third Party Peaceful Transformation Forum Intervention. In *Community Conflicts* (p. 43). John Archers Publisher Limited.

Amunnadi, C. A. (2016). *Religion, Peace and National Development: A Reflection* (p. 21). His Glory Publications.

Andrews, J. (2015). *The World in Conflict: Understanding the World's Troublespots* (p. 56). Profile Books Ltd.

Anna, S. Y. (2011). Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Old Testament. *Journal of Biblical Hermeneutics*, *5*(3), 91-120.

Egbeto, D. O. (2016). Religion: An instrument for Enhancing National Security and Harmonious Existence in Nigeria. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal*, *20*.

Francolin, E. O. (2000). *Objectives of Religion* (p. 356). Routledge.

Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (pp. 10-13). PRIO/Sage.

Haque, F., & Jahan, A. M. (2023). *Religion as social construction*. ResearchGate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/368646057_Religion_as_social_construction

Hartig, T. (n.d.). *Restoration in Nature: Beyond the Conventional Narrative in Nature and Psychology*.

Herbst, J., & Mills, G. (2004). *Conflict and Peace building in Africa*. Zed Books.

Hill, B. R. (2013). *World Religions and Contemporary Issues*. New London, CT.

Lepard, B. D. (2011). World Religions and World Peace: Toward a New Partnership. In A. Sharma (Ed.), *The World's Religions: A Contemporary Reader* (pp. 75-76). Fortress Press.

Lumanze, O. (2021). Esau and Jacob Reconciliation Episode (Genesis 33): A model for interpersonal Conflict Resolution. *Journal of Biblical Theology*, *22*(8), 35-55.

Maupeu, H. (2001). Religious Conflicts and the Management of Diverse Identities in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, *31*(1), 36-55.

Mbiti, J. S. (1985). *African Religion and Philosophy* (p. 1). Heinemann.

Miller, C., & King, M. (2003). *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies* (p. 56). University for Peace.

Mordi, J. F., & Onovughe, S. (2020). Religion: A Veritable Tool for National Security and Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria. *International Journal of Religious and Cultural*, *5*(1), 2.

Nwangama, E. U. (2019). Religion as Panacea for Peace, Conflict Resolution, Capacity Building and National Development In Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, *10*(6), 382-390.

Nwangama, E. U. (n.d.). Religion as Panacea for Peace, Conflict Resolution, Capacity Building and National Development In Nigeria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, *10*(6), 384.

Nwangama, E. U. (n.d.). Religion as Panacea for Peace, Conflict Resolution, Capacity Building and National Development In Nigeria. *Journal of*

Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, *10*(6), 385.

Oguntola-Laguda, D., & Talabi, J. M. (2024). Conflict, Religion and Mediation in African Traditional Society: A Case Of Conflict Between Muslims and Traditionalists in Epe, Lagos State. In *Law, Religion and Reconciliation in Africa* (pp. 158-159). African Sun Media.

Ojo, E., & Ekpo, F. (2009). *Religion, Ethnicity and Violent Conflict in Nigeria* (p. 77). University of Oxford.

Olaogun, M. S., Oluwadele, L., & Adediran, A. (2023). Ethnic and cultural diversity in Nigeria: A panacea for national development or decapitation? *Integrity Journal of Arts and Humanities*, *4*(4), 64.

Omoregbe, J. (1993). *A Philosophical Look at Religion* (pp. 23-28). Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd.

Omoteso, & R. Saka (Eds.), *A Compendium of General Nigeria Studies* (pp. 571-579). Lagos State University Centre for General Nigerian Studies.

Onyeka, O. D. (2009). *Origins of Religion* (p. 25). Progress Prints Ltd.

Osaghae, E. (2006). *Peace and Conflict Studies in Nigeria: Theories, Processes and Institutions* (p. 59). Malthouse Press.

Oyetoro, T. R., & Talabi, J. M. (2023). Religious Tolerance: A Tool For National Development. *International Council for Education Research and Training*, *1*(1), 35.

Paterson, W. P. (1928). *Nature of Religion* (p. 205). Hodder ad Stoughton Ltd.

Rummel, R. J. (1975-1979). *Understanding Conflict and War* (pp. 1-4). Sage Publications.

Talabi, M. J. (2022). The Politics of Religious Conflict in Nigeria: The Northern Nigeria in Perspective. *Crawford Journal of Politics*, *3*(1), 50.

Taylor, E. B. (1985). Religion. In R. Barnyards et al. (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (p. 987). Routledge.

Uche, O. C. (2011). Religion and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: A functionalist approach. In A. B. C. Chiegbo et al. (Eds.), *The Humanities and Sustainable Development* (p. 351). RexCharles and particle Ltd.

Udezo, B. O. S. (n.d.). Concepts and Methods of Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: Imperatives for Religious Leaders in Nigeria. *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, *1*(2), 146.

Wani, H. A. (2017). Understanding Conflict Resolution. *Journal of Peace Research*, *2*(4), 120-134.

Wilmot, W. W., & Hocker, J. L. (2001). *Interpersonal Conflict*. McGraw-Hill.

Yusuf, O. L. (2024). *Concepts of Peace, Conflict and Security in a Multi-Ethnic*

Society. In *Multi-ethnic Society. A Compendium of General Nigeria Studies.* Eds. M.O.B. Mohammed, S. O. Makinde, K. O. Paramole, T. O. Afisi, P. Akhimien, J. A. Falode, O., Omoteso & R. Saka. Lagos: Lagos State University Centre for General Nigeria Studies.571-581