

# Conflicts in Nigeria: Christian Contributions to Peace Making.

By

Paul Oyeleye,

B.A; B.Th.; MA, PhD in view.

[Pauloyeleye4life@yahoo.com](mailto:Pauloyeleye4life@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

Nigeria is a Nation greatly blessed and endowed by God with both human and natural resources. Nigeria is supposed to be one of the greatest countries in the world. However, reverse is the case, several crises have characterized the experience of this country.

Every day comes with threats on lives and property. Insecurity and fear are in the minds of most people of the Northern part of the country; millions killed, many disabled, children left without parents and parents lost their precious children. Several millions are living as refugees in their own country. Property worth millions of Naira lost because of the various religious crises that have struck Nigeria.

The Boko Haram Insurgence is the most recent of them all. This Islamic sect has caused enormous havocs across northern part of Nigeria; it has launched attacks on government offices, the United Nations Building, Car Parks, several churches and recently mosques. This has threatened the peace and unity of the Country much more than any other religious crisis has done in recent past. The group's motives and plans especially for the Church remain a matter of great concern to people.

The focuses of this paper include; what is the mission of this group? What are the motivations of individuals behind the various unrest in the Nation? Who/ what is the main target of these people; the Church, western education, political policies or the government of Nigeria? What are the effects of these conflicts on the Nation Nigeria? What are the ways this insecurity can be stopped? What are the roles of Christians in the pursuit of peace, unity and security of lives and properties in Nigeria?

These are major questions in the minds of thousands of Nigerians. Well researched, provided answers will be a great lip toward peace and security in the nation. It will also

open the eyes of Christians to the roles they have to play to bring a state of peace and security in the Nation.

### Conceptual Clarification

#### 1. Conflict

According to Hogan (1994:3),<sup>1</sup> conflict is defined as “direct and conscious struggle between individuals or groups for the same goal.” Hogan strongly opines that conflicts arise when two people or two groups of people have interest in the same goal or values. Akin to this definition is the definition of A. O. Ezeon<sup>2</sup> who puts conflict as a phenomena struggle produced by a clash of values, interest or opinions between two or more parties.

Stagner<sup>3</sup> defines conflict as “... a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals which they perceive as being attainable by one or the other but not by both.” Shawchurck (1997: 17)<sup>4</sup> has a very similar definition. He says “conflict is two or more objects aggressively trying to occupy the same space at the same time... two persons each trying to have his own way regarding an important decision.”

Obviously, conflict has to do with two or more people with their mind set on or focused on the same thing at the same time and either of the two is not ready to allow the other have it or have it first. The focus of the conflict may be a desired goal, an entity, a position, fund, person, place or location, treasure, belief, core value held so dearly by a person or group of persons; at any time another person or group of persons also have interest or interfere with any of these, the result is a clash of interest which is called conflict.

Shawchuck (1997)<sup>5</sup> also believes that conflict arises when “...the actions of one party threaten the values, goals, or behavior of another party.” Perry<sup>6</sup> having similar opinion supports that assertion by saying, “conflict occurs anytime there is a disturbance in the equilibrium and security of a protective environment.” Whenever a person or group of persons threatens the equilibrium or the security of a given society the corresponding reaction of the other party who has their mind and interest on the existing condition is a stern objection to whatever the actions that disturb the equilibrium or the security of the given society. This often results into conflicts if not well managed.

Conflict is the struggle, tension or disagreement and exchange of unpleasant words and obnoxious actions between two people or group of people, society, community with the view to providing a point or achieving a particular goal.

Awojobi, Peter (2013: 45)<sup>7</sup> sees conflict as a state of disharmony or discord with oneself, between a person and another or a person and a group or a group within itself or with another group or a community within itself or with another community, or a nation within itself, with another nation or conflict among nations, all arising from a misunderstanding or misinterpretation or misrepresentation of an intention or an action, occasioned either by genuine error of commission or omission or by a deliberate, mischief and or aggression, usually motivated by selfish reasons.

Afolabi (2003: 15), strongly believes that conflict is a phenomenon which was not just natural with man but also created by man due to differences in goals, interest, wants, needs and outcome of issues.<sup>8</sup> According to him, conflict is innate in man. As long as man exists, conflict will exist since the interest, aspirations, goals, wants as well as the needs of man cannot always be the same and no two persons will always see one thing in the same way. This is why Schmidt (2003: 12)<sup>9</sup> concludes that “conflict is inevitable in all human social relationship because of the pervasive nature of his phenomena....”

Building on the above submission, it is pertinent to note that some sociologists have come to strongly believe that since conflict is inevitable in human society, conflict is not totally a negative or bad phenomenon. It is believed that conflict is necessary for the society as well as its people to progress.<sup>10</sup> In the opinion of this sect of scholars, conflict should be allowed, but it should be properly managed. If conflict is properly managed, it will produce great beautiful results that the society and the people in it, will live to enjoy.

This paper, not totally ignoring the above point of view but strongly opines that conflict is better prevented, avoided than managed; either poorly or properly managed. This is basically as a result of the Nigerian experience.

Conflict has done more harm than good for the Nigerian Nation. Precious souls have been destroyed while treasures worth billions have also been lost. With such experience at the back of any person's mind, the submission will not differ from total avoidance of conflict.

However, Nigerian in conflicts already, Nigeria is in the pool of conflicts, Nigeria is drawing in the ocean of conflicts seeking a rescue. The focal issue for the Nigerian Nation is not the talk about avoidance (except for fresh ones) but how Nigeria can get out of conflict. What are the remedies, the solutions the way out of conflict and the path to undisturbed peace?

In the context of this paper, conflict is defined as a condition of social, political, ethnic, religious and societal uneasiness, unrest, turmoil, clashes, riot, disruption,

displacement as well as destruction of lives and properties provoked by selfishness, greed, inordinate desires and mismanagement of funds and persons by incompetent leaders at the expense of the most desired peace and calmness needed for the growth and development of a Nation.

## 2. The Nigerian Nation.

The name Nigeria was coined by Flora Shaw (who later married Baron Lugard). The origin of the name is actually traced to the Niger River that flows through the country.<sup>11</sup>

Nigeria is a greatly blessed nation. In spite of all the obnoxious occurrences in the country, Nigeria is still highly blessed with both natural and human endowments. Nigeria is often referred to as the “Giant of Africa.” This is basically because of her large population and vast economy.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa and shares boundaries with the Republic of Benin, in the west; Guinea in the south, along the Atlantic ocean; Chad and Cameroon in the east and Niger Republic in the North. With a land mass of 923,768km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of about 174 million. This stands Nigeria as the most populous nation in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world.<sup>12</sup>

Nigeria has over 500 ethnic groups with Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo being the three major ones. There are three major religious groups; Christianity, Islam, and the Traditional Religion. As at 2014, Nigeria has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$500 U.S. placing her the largest in Africa and 26th in the whole world.<sup>13</sup> No doubt, Nigeria is a great Nation. The Nation has crude oil, coal, Silver, Tin, Lead, diverse agricultural products, such as cocoa, palm oil, groundnut, and many more too numerous to mention.

Nigeria is a member of Commonwealth of Nations, The African Union, OPEC, the United Nations, and Global Growth Generators.

The Nation, Nigeria officially came into being in 1914 when a merger of the Southern and Northern protectorate was effected by the British Colonial Administrator.<sup>14</sup> Although the two protectorates were merged but they remained separate entities administratively and never related until 1947.<sup>15</sup> The relationship between these unfamiliar but one nation resulted to series of serious conflicts that have characterized the status and nature of this great country.

### 3. The Concept of Christianity.

The focus of this paper is basically to examine the contributions of Christians to peace making in Nigeria. This paper strongly believes that the needed peace and calmness in this nation can be achieved by the active participation, involvements and contributions of the Christians in Nigeria.

It is therefore expedient for us to clearly define who these set of people are, and why does this paper believe that they, Christians, can effect positive change in the pursuit of peace in Nigeria.

The term Christian is the name given to the followers of Jesus Christ. Those who have accepted in principle and in practice the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. They are the called out ones into the light of God to lighten the world for God.

The Bible calls them the light of the world and the salt of the world. This is the very fact this paper strongly believes that true Christians, who are the light and salt of the earth are the solution to darkness and decay in Nigeria.

### 4. Concept of Peace.

The *Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary* defines peace as “ a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area.”

Peace is also seen as “is an occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviors and the freedom from fear of violence. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility and retribution”<sup>15</sup>

It should also be noted that peace suggests sincere attempts at reconciliation, the existence of healthy, intergroup or international relationships, the presence of prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and a working political order that serves the true interests of all.

Epicurus, a highly regarded philosopher strongly concludes that the most important need of a man is undisturbed peace. Peace is the mother of inspiration and innovation, peace aids developments, peace is needed by everyone, every society and nation. No meaningful achievement can be attained without peace. God is said to be the God of peace and Jesus Himself knowing the importance and value of peace did not leave the world without leaving peace for His followers.

The followers of Jesus should possess peace and are the custodians of peace. This is the reason why this paper strongly believes that for peace to have its course in Nigeria, the Christians have a major part to play. Only a person who has a thing can give that thing.

### **The History, Nature and Causes of Conflicts in Nigeria**

Depending on the root cause of conflict, conflict has different shapes of appearance in different places at different times in Nigeria.

Generally speaking, sociologists believe that conflict can be intra or inter personal as well as intra or inter-group. While intra personal or intra group relays the conflicts within an individual or within a particular group, inter-personal or inter-group conflict talks about conflict between two or more persons or two or more groups.<sup>16</sup>

However, other than the above aforementioned categories of conflicts, there are different types of conflicts in the Nigerian community. This is basically dependent on the causes of these conflicts. This paper gives attention to the various causes of conflicts in Nigeria which are fully explained as follows:

#### Causes of Conflict in Nigeria.

Nehi Igbinjesu (2013: 13) opines that “Nigerians have had to experience some of the most sordid tragedies arising from difference of opinions and distrust.”<sup>17</sup> According to him, there are five major causes of conflicts in Nigeria, which he identified as tribalism, resource control, religion, land disputes and trade related disputes.<sup>18</sup>

However, several scholars in the efforts to identify the root causes of conflict in Nigeria have traced the history of the Nation and have pointed out several other causes of conflict as the Nation develops.

Katy Hughes (2012: 4) says “The creation of the country called Nigeria by Britain in 1914 has led to over forty years of conflict and bloodshed.”<sup>19</sup> She sternly opines that “The instability and confusion of this region can only be understood by starting at the beginning of the story. This is not as it would seem, 1960 when Nigeria was granted independence from Britain. In fact, many of the conflicts which rage today have their roots in the events which took place whilst Nigeria was under British Colonial rule.”<sup>20</sup>

In total agreement with the above stand, Yusuf Turaki (2013; p. 4)<sup>21</sup> points out that “It is not possible for us to solve contemporary... clashes, riots conflicts and violence in

Nigeria without correcting the inherited primordial, religious and cultural, and colonial structures and Negative values... Legacies....”

Building on the above trusted premise, this paper wastes no time to trace the causes of conflicts that have so rocked and wrecked the great Nation, Nigeria.

### **Nigeria, Pre-colonial Period**

The country called Nigeria never existed at this period. However, over the huge vast land where diverse tribes and communities scattered all over the territory now called Nigeria.

These different and varied people group with different languages, cultures and political practices were all artificially brought together under the British rule. This artificial Nation was governed by the British Administrator for over fifty years as against their former traditional form of leadership.

However, before the independence, the Nation had two major protectorates; the Northern Nigeria protectorate and the Southern Nigeria protectorate. These two have existed separately until their amalgamation in 1914.<sup>22</sup> Even after the amalgamation, the two protectorates were administered separately with very little interactions between them. By the time the two protectorates were brought together at independence, the result has been incessant conflicts that have almost collapsed the Nation.

Several issues have generated from the above situation and have continued to cause conflicts in the country. Some of these are;

#### 1. Political issues as Cause of Conflicts:

The views of some Scholars is that the mismatched of the two strange regions at amalgamation and consequently at independence was the birth of political conflicts in Nigeria.<sup>23</sup>

However, all thorough the over 50 years of Nigerians' independence, the Nation has faced different kinds of politically induced conflicts. Barely six years after independence, precisely in 1966 January 14/15, Nigeria had her first Military Coup: Major General Aguiyi-Ironsi became the Head of State. TafawaBalewa and other prominent Nigerian leaders were killed. The imagination will definitely picture a strong political tension in the newly born country.

Just few months after, in July 29, 1966, Aguiyi-Ironsi was killed during the second Military Coup and Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon became the Head of States. This further generated several heats for the Nation. Several Easterners staying in the North were killed. Some fled their abode to the Eastern region.

Obviously this prompted another conflict for the Nation so much that in May 30 1967, Ojukwu who was the then Military Governor of the Eastern Region, declared the Eastern part of the Nation as a Republic, separate and independent. This was the Republic of Biafra. Exactly July 6, 1967 as a reaction to this, a Civil war broke out in Nigeria. About 1.5millionpeople were killed. The political stability of the Nation was threatened and tragedy loomed over the Nation till January 15, 1970 when Biafra finally surrendered.

The story continues when in 1976, February 13, Col. Dimka attempted to take over power, Murtala Mohammed was killed. The same became the Head of States. In 1986, another coup was attempted by Gen. Mamman Vatsa. This failed and the coup plotters were killed.

The political instability and conflicts continued basically with the military in power. With the intervention of foreign bodies, an election was conducted in June 12, 1993 where Abiola won over Tofa. Painfully, on June 23 1993, the then Head of States, General Ibrahim Babangida nullified the election. This led to serious upheaval and great conflict on the political scene of the Nation. To add to the existing conflict was the action of the president elect, Abiola in June 12, 1994 who declared himself the president of the Nation. He was arrested and put in prison and on the 7th of July, 1998 he died in the prison.

In 1995, a coup was again attempted but failed. 40 persons were imprisoned. In November 10, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others who were activists, demanding justice and fair treatment from the Government for the Ogoni people whose land the government had taken over to mine crude oil without enough care for the owners of the land. These activists were executed. Needless to say, this erupted a fresh dimension of conflict for the political leadership. This initiated the coming into limelight of the Niger Delta militant group which is a major actor in the political discomfort of the Nation.<sup>24</sup>

It should be said at this point that the major cause of conflict in Nigeria is rested on the political instability of the country, lack of good and capable governance and leadership. Most of the leaders are also corrupt this made it morally difficult for them to check corruption which is another cancer eating deep and destroying the Nation. Most of other conflicts hinge on the politically weak, distorted and unreliable platform.

## 2. Ethnicity as Cause of Conflicts.

Nigeria has over 500 ethnical groups. Though there are three major tribes but much more than the three are others. There have been several ethnic clashes in Nigeria; the nation has had several intra-ethnic group conflict as well as inter-ethnic group conflicts.

Nehi (2013) observes that “from as early as the 1950s, the avid desire to favour members of one’s tribe surfaced among the ruling class of Nigeria.... Politicians and top civil servants favoured their kith and kin when it came to appointments, contracts awards and National politicking. Merit seemed to lose appeal in the face of ethnocentrism when decisions bordered on overall national interest.”<sup>25</sup>

The political conflict that erupted in 1967 and the civil war that followed when Ojukwu declared “Republic of Biafra” had its roots premised on ethnic bias. The declaration was because of the maltreatments given to the Easterners living in the North. The Igbo people were severally singled out in the Northern part of Nigeria and killed. This degenerated very bad blood between people of the two ethnic groups.

Several “ethnic militant groups” were formed to defend the rights of their ethnic groups; e.g. Oodua People’s Congress (OPC); Arewa Youth Forum (AYF); Bakassi Boys, the MASSOB, and several others. O’Neil, (2004: 14) notes that “These sectional groups engage security forces in armed confrontation, leading to the casualty and destruction to property.”<sup>26</sup>

All the above mentioned, have not helped peace in Nigeria. The situation has further divided the Nation into conflict zones.

## 3. Economic as Cause of Conflict.

Nigeria is heavily blessed by God. It is noted that Nigeria should not have any economic challenge. “Nigeria is expected to become one of the world’s top 20 economies by 2050.”<sup>27</sup>The country has a steady growth in economy. The oil reserves are enough to feed the nation, however, there are several other avenues of wealth for the Nation which are not maximized e.g. Agriculture, other mineral resources like tin, gold, silver, lead etc.

Knowing that the Nation is enormously blessed, Nigerians find it difficult to harmonize in their mind why in spite of the wealth Nigerians are still very poor. Skilled personnel have no employment; those employed are poorly paid. Those who have served the Nation under meager allowances could not get their entitlement at retirement.<sup>27</sup>

These economic contentious issues have caused several industrial conflicts as a protest against the economic policies of the government. Unfortunately, as Ola (2004: 2) puts it, “the government, even under a democratic dispensation, lacks proactive strategies and skills in managing such crises until they escalate unto uncontrollable violent....”<sup>28</sup>

On the 23rd of February, 1966, Adaka Boro with other militia group gave a protest as Niger Delta Volunteer Force against the government because of resource control.

Several Ogoni activists in the quest for resource control lost their lives in November 10, 1995. This was the reason for the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth of Nations in 2001.

On the other hand, financially many of the youth are very low. Those behind the Nigerian conflicts prey on this using the opportunity to use the youth for their goals. If the youth are financially empowered, those involved in conflicts for financial reason will not risk their lives. Anyone who is gainfully employed will not be involved in such national menace.

#### 4. Land/Region as Cause of Conflicts

In spite of the vast mass of land Nigeria has, land dispute is one of the major causes of conflict in the country. Across the country there have been several land disputes.

The land dispute between the Aguleri and Umuleri people of Anambra state; the conflict between the Barss and Nembe communities of Bayelsa and River states, the May 1992, Zango Kataf, in Kaduna State started a communal conflict and even the international land dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon are notable land issues that have caused conflict in the nation.

Different individuals, ethnic group, community and region protect their land with such passion that is somehow strange. Some have expressed a desire to rather die than part with their parcel of land. People have done dangerous things to protect or recover their territories. It should be noted that several people have been killed, and several valuable property destroyed because of land disputes.

#### 5. Religion as a Cause of Conflict.

A religious person is supposed to be a person who fears God and has regards for God and the things god created. It is expected that religion should promote peaceful coexistence among people but the story is different for the Nigerian context. Religion has

been a strong ground of conflicts. Basically, Nigeria has three main religions; Christianity, Islam and the Traditional Religion.

There have been several conflicts on religious ground especially between the Christian and the Islamic group. These conflicts have also led to the destruction of lives and property worth billion over the years.

Notable among the religious conflicts is the December 1980 Kano Riot erupted by the Maitatsine sect where sadly not fewer than 4, 177 people were reportedly killed. The same sect also ensue conflict in Maiduguri, Borno state between 29th and 30th October, 1982 which left 118 people dead.

February 27 to March 5 in 1984, in Yola, Gongola state, 568 people were killed. The same sect killed 105 people in Gombe, Bauchi state between 26 and 28 of April, 1985. Several churches and mosques were burnt, Christian programs disrupted and property wasted.

The most recent of the religious conflict is the “Boko haram” insurgence which presently has received international intervention because Nigerian government could not handle them.

This sect of Islamic militant group on the night of 14/15 April attacked a government Girls’ Secondary School in Chibok, Borno State and took away with them over 200 school girls. In the effort, they shot the school guard and killed a soldier. Till date, the Nation does not know exactly where they abducted girls are. There have been agitations and great demands from the parents of the abducted girls. The situation is not peaceful for Nigeria.

In 1978 some Northern Nigerian Muslim delegates in a constitutional conference which had Christians in attendance sought to extend Sharia law beyond family law. This agenda from the Islamic group met with hot protests from the Christians. The Sharia debate put the conference into chaos and almost tore the meeting apart. At the end of the meeting, a compromise was that all states with majority or significant Muslim populations were to set up Islamic courts.

Consequently, religious issues became a major topic of national political debates, with each religious community pushing increasingly adversarial agendas to prove a point. Whenever a negative response is given by the government to agenda a conflict erupts. In Northern Nigeria, clashes between Muslim groups and the Christian have almost become a monthly affair, with devastating consequences. In such a tensed and charged environment people

live within the tension and carefully mind what they say and how they say it, what they wear and how they wear it even what they eat what where they eat it. The atmosphere is extremely volatile.

### Effects of Conflicts in Nigeria

The implications, effects and cost of conflict across the Nation, Nigeria are not just multi-dimensional but also multi-faceted. Conflicts have affected all parts of human life of the people of Nigeria.

Conflict has touched all aspects of the Nigerian Nation. It has greatly affected all that Nigeria is and stands for. This paper among several others effects, highlights the following as the major effects of conflict in the prevailing situation of Nigeria.

#### 1. Loss of Human Lives:

The soul of man is precious. However, several millions of lives have been lost as a result of conflict in Nigeria. The civil war that started in 1967 which lasted three years claimed not less than two million lives.<sup>29</sup> Nigeria has lost great minds, intellectuals, business gurus, young and promising individuals who would have been of a blessing not only to Nigeria but also to the whole world.

The *Maitatsine* conflicts alone claimed several thousands of lives. People die almost on daily basis as a result of one conflict or the other. The people that have died as a result of conflicts are more than what natural death has killed in Nigeria. Some individuals believe that the situation is like a war situation. This must not continue.

#### 2. Economic Effects:

Several billions of Naira have been lost as a result of conflicts. Properties worth billions were destroyed during conflicts. Government' revenue generation is often greatly affected negatively during conflicts. Adeniyi et al, (2005:21) quoted by Afagbua, says that the industrial strike of 1993 by civil servants across the nation cost the Nation about 720 million Naira.<sup>30</sup> The Nigerian government losses revenue whenever there is a crisis. Ajakaiye (2000:21), points out that whenever there is conflicts, tax charges and rates that are levied on local governments cannot be collected. This means a great loss of revenue for development. The revenue generation capacity of the government is being greatly affected.

The individual capacity to generate revenue is also affected during conflict thereby consequently affecting the nation.

Loss of human lives also has great implications for the nation's economy as the killings have reduced man power and expertise. The Niger-Delta conflicts robbed Nigeria of hundreds of lives who were oil workers and expatriates. (O'Neil, 2004).<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the above, Conflict is a great discouragement for Foreign Investments. No investor will desire to invest in an area where insecurity, instability, uncertainty and an area that is prone to incessant conflict.

#### 4. Political effects.

Nigeria has known no political peace since independence. Several factors have been responsible for this. The different ethnic, social-cultural groups, different religious groups, different regional and ideological differences have continued to affect the political view points of the nation.

Several political decisions are based on the above platforms and not on merits or competence. The nation on this note has experienced political instabilities. Every political decision is an opportunity to vent anger and revenge. Several political issues are turned to either religious, ethical or regional issue or thereby disallowing political stability.

The question in the minds of most Nigerians is with all these factors, can we have political peace in Nigeria?

5. Educational Effects. Education is the bedrock of any Nation's development. The various conflicts Nigeria has experienced have left negative impacts on the educational sector of the Nation. In the course of the repeated conflicts, several academic activities have been affected, properties belonging to Schools and Colleges have been destroyed. Several brilliant individuals have been killed. Some of these are lecturers at the Universities.

The 2014 abduction of over 200 girls in Borno state has made several parents in the Northern part of the country to withdraw their children/wards from school. Those who still attend school, do that with great fear and many concentrations on the safety of their lives much more than academic excellence.

## **Christian Contributions to Peace-Making in Nigeria**

This paper strongly believes that Christians are the representatives of God. God is a God of peace and his children should exhibit the attitude of their God, not just loving peace but also bring down peace wherever they are.

The Bible calls believers the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13), salt goes with sweetness, conflicts results into bitterness. The solution to bitterness is introduction of sweetness. Believers, who are called salt, should be the solution to the bitter experiences of the Nation Nigeria.

The Bible also calls believers light of the world (Matt. 5:14). Conflict arises when two parties do not see same way. That is a darky situation, a shady situation that needs light. Only light can conquer darkness. Christians in Nigeria must see themselves in the light of the scripture and be light indeed so that the horror of darkness manifesting though the various conflicts will be done away with as soon as possible.

How then can Christians in Nigeria be a major contributing factor of positive change for peace in Nigeria? What are the expectations of God, the world, the people of Nigeria and the church on the believers in Nigeria to bring about peace?

1. **Spiritual Contributory Approach:** Nigeria needs Mercy from God. This paper strongly believes that if Christians come to the fact that it is only mercy that can save Nigeria and diligently seek God's mercy for this Nation that will be a good starting point. The Bible says "if my people that are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and turn from their weekend way..." God says he will turn to them and heal them and their land. The healing of Nigeria must start with a cry for God's mercy which this paper believes can better be handled only by the Christians.

Part of spiritual contribution is prayer. We are to pray for the peace of our Jerusalem. When Christians pray, God will hear and act (math 7:7, John 14:14).

Christians are the custodians of the Word of God. The word of God must be introduced into the system and structure of the nation. Genesis 1: 1ff reveals a state of conflict on the earth. The first thing god did was to speak his word to the situation. Christian must use every opportunity to introduce God's word to the nature of Nigeria. The word of God must be entrenched and applied into personal, family and communal living.

2. **Academic contributory Approach:** Christians have access to multitude of Nigerians. There are not less than fifty percent of Nigerians that are Christians. If half of these are properly educated on the methods and ways to achieve peace in this nation the situation will definitely change for good.

With such opportunity and access to such vast mind Christian should organize seminars, lectures, and further research into solutions. Awareness must be created, the media should be used to promote peace, print of flyers to educate believers on their roles in peace making in Nigeria. Churches should be encouraged to use their various platforms to preach peace.

3. **Financial contributory approach:** Believers must be ready to commit money into the search for peace in Nigeria Millions dollars are being spent to put Nigeria into chaos, the children of peace must also be ready to spend money to secure peace in this Nation. Believers should be made to see this as a worthwhile investment. Wealth and riches are only important when there is life. When there is no life these are meaningless.

4. **Psychological contributory approach:** Several of the conflicts in the Nation are traceable to youth who have wrong up bring and by so have psychological issues. Majority of them in the bid to ease their mental tensions stir up issues among fellow youth. This has led to several conflicts in the Nation. Most of the conflicts in our Tertiary Institutions are born out of issues similar to the above. Creating a psychologically conducive environment for young people will go a long way to alleviate such situation. Also well Bible based counseling for the youth and adults alike will also help to broker peace.

5. **Moral contributory approach:** Christians must take a revolutionary stand for peace and pass on same to incoming generation. Every Christian in Nigeria must live a life of honesty, integrity, purity, and peaceful coexistence. Believers must life a sin free life. Sin can also cause conflict. Most of the conflicts in the Bible are as a result of sin. Intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup or intergroup conflict is caused by sin. Christians in Nigeria must run away from sin and spread the gospel of purity.

6. **Political contributory approach:** Christians should be encouraged to go into politics. This paper recommends that all believers should actively participate in politics. The helm of power should not be left to unbelievers. Christians should prepare themselves for politics, and be actively involved in politics. Christians should obey constituted authorities and be honest and faithful models when given opportunity to lead. It is noted that the heavier cause of conflict in Nigeria is the problem of leadership. If conflict erupts from other source and will have competent as well as God fearing leaders who have the Spirit of God, the management of the to-be conflict will be well handled and this will help the Nation greatly in her search for peace.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria is a great Nation and greatly blessed by God. Nigeria cannot attain full greatness in the face of all the conflicts that plague her; Nigeria cannot fully enjoy all the God-given endowments in the midst of chaos and unrest. It is only in the situation of peace that Nigeria can attain greatness and enjoy her God given blessings. Christians have been given the responsibility to impact peace into their world by being the salt (solution), and the light (direction) of Nigeria (Matt 5:13,16). This paper passionately appeals to Christians everywhere especially in Nigeria to be part of the contributions to peace making in Nigeria.

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