E-ISSN: 1116 - 2619 P-ISSN: 3026-8524
MPRI-JHLAR | INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, LITERATURE AND ART RESEARCH
VOL. 04 NO. 6 – APRIL, 2024

STRATEGIES FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AMONG RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN PLATEAU STATE: A STUDY OF JOS CITY AND ENVIRONS

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Abstract

The challenge of inter-religious co-existence in Nigeria is on the increase with different factors motivating the ill-relationship among the religious groups in the country. Plateau is one of the states that suffer grossly from the effects of the religiously motivated crisis. The focus of the study is pragmatic in approach as it aimed at making contribution towards addressing the challenge of the inter-religious co-existence in Plateau state. The research argues strategies for peaceful co-existence among the religious groups. Therefore, the study considers a historical, theological, and social approach to X-ray the problem of lack of peaceful coexistence among the adherents of different religions in Jos City in particular and Plateau State in general and how such can be addressed. The research combines both literature review and oral interviews and utilizing Frustration-aggression theory and appreciative inquiry. The research found out that the residents of Jos want to live in peace despite their diversity and differences like they lived before 2001. The deep-seated mistrust of adherents of other religions due to years of conflicts remains a major barrier. However, the residents of Jos desire to work towards achieving peace for meaningful

Keywords: Peace-Making, Peace-Keeping, Peace-Building, Religion, Tribalism, Crisis

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human development. Historically Jos city was peaceful until 2001; factors responsible for the peace in Jos were identified. Reasons for the lack of peaceful living as well as strategies for peace-building in Jos and Plateau State were identified. This paper proposes that religion can be turned into a means for peace-building in Jos City.

Introduction

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed" (UNESCO). Peace is believed to be the most essential commodity for human development and progress in life. There is a Hausa adage that says "zaman lafiya ta fi zaman dan sarki", meaning living in peace is (more) preferred (than) to being a prince. In the absence of peace, no meaningful human development or progress can happen. This paper is concerned with how the many religions in Plateau state can coexist peacefully in harmony, contextual way(s) of making, keeping, and building peace among the religious groups in Plateau state. The UNESCO document on the culture of peace rightly observed that "In many regions of the world, peace remains fragile and tenuous" (UNESCO, 2015). This is very true of Plateau state, especially the city of Jos. How can the fragile and tenuous peace in Jos be reversed, how can we restore peaceful living among members of different religious groups in Jos?

The paper takes a social, historical, and theological approach as a method in seeking to understand how peace can be restored and sustained in Jos City and Plateau state and its implication to social integration and cohesion. A mixed method of empirical research utilizing qualitative data analysis is utilized using frustration-aggregation theory for the preliminary literature review to establish the background and context of the problem of lack of peaceful coexistence among religious groups in Plateau state. Both library research and interviews were conducted for data gathering. Grounded theory and appreciative inquiry were used for field data collection through verbal interviews. The population of this paper is the city of Jos, but sampling was done both randomly and purposively. All the persons interviewed are in Jos city. The sampling was random because some of the persons were simply picked randomly but it was purposive because the researcher was deliberate in interviewing both Christians and Muslims. One Christian cleric and one Muslim Scholar were purposively chosen for the interview.

The paper limits itself to religion and peace-building in Plateau State with emphasis on Jos City with a focus on the two major religions in Jos and Plateau State being Christianity and Islam. The paper approached the topic from a Judeo-Christian perspective. Some of the delimitations of the paper included the challenge of having people willing to talk especially Muslims to talk to the researcher who is a Christian especially when they hear the researcher is a seminarian. The researcher would have loved to interview more people, but the limitations of time and resources prevented that. Some organizations would have been interviewed such as Search for common ground and TEKAN peace desk who have been involved in peace-building in Jos city for decades now, but time and resources did not allow for such to be done. In all, 8 people formed the sample out of which 3 are females (2 Christians and 1 Muslim) and 5 are males (2 Christians and 3 Muslims one of the three Christian males is a clergy, and one of the 2 Muslim males has an Master of Arts in contemporary religion). The youngest person interviewed is 30 years and the oldest is 55 years. All have lived in Jos before 2001 and are still living in Jos.

Plateau State at a Glance and the Challenge of Co-existence

Jos City is the administrative and commercial capital city or administrative headquarters of Plateau State located in the middle belt of Nigeria[1]. Politically, Plateau State is part of the Northern Region and belongs to the North Central Zone with Jos as the capital city. Plateau state is composed of many small tribes that are very peaceful and hospitable. The peaceful and hospitable nature of the state is seen in the slogan 'Plateau State the home of peace and tourism'. Plateau people view themselves as the most peaceful and hospitable people in Nigeria and they take great pride in it. The state is made up of many endogenous tribes who were traditionalists but are now either Christians or Muslims. The capital city Jos has people from almost all over the world as residents.

The social and political life of Jos is shaped by the indigenous culture of the people of Jos, its colonial roots, the Hausa Fulani hegemony, and the two major religions Christianity and Islam. Independence and democracy came in 1960, the people of Plateau teamed up with their fellow ethnic minority tribes in the middle belt of Nigeria in order to gain freedom from what they consider the Hausa Fulani oppressive hegemony. This is key to the tenuous peace in Jos. Today the migration

[1] Plateau state is officially located in north central Nigeria, but the researchers call their location middle belt in this paper as that is what they prefer to call themselves and be called.

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and settlement of many nonindigenous tribes in Jos and Plateau State have introduced new political structures as well as many civic organizations, NGOs, CBOs, Labour Unions, and many more. The new political structures, religion, and tribalism are also responsible for violent religious conflicts in Jos. Prior to 2001 Jos city had a different demography with all tribes and religions happily living side by side, virtually all communities in Jos had churches and mosques. Everywhere people groups lived freely and enjoyed quality social interaction across tribes and religions. Inasmuch as there were a few areas that had a majority Christian and majority Muslim population, but it was not as a result of religious conflicts; so, it was not a problem. Sadly, today the city is largely divided into Christian and Muslim-dominated areas.

Economically Plateau indigenes are usually peasants engaged in small-scale subsistence farming and civil service and other paid jobs. They work as miners, technicians, and petty traders. Religious-wise, the African traditional region is the indigenous religion of the Plateau people, later came Islam introduced by Usman Dan Fodio Jihad[2] and Christianity introduced by Christian missionaries. The majority of the plateau indigenes found Christianity more appealing than Islam so despite the late arrival of Christianity with Christian missionaries (Turaki, 2017). The plateau people turned to Christianity in mass. Sadly, religion and tribalism/ethnicity are the main reasons for persistent conflicts in the city of Jos and Plateau state. The indigenes are largely Christians and some migrants or settlers from other states of the country and international residents. The Muslims are largely migrants from the Hausa Fulani ethnic group also known as the *Jasawa*, there are some indigenous Muslims, and some Muslim settlers from other states of Nigeria as while as immigrants from some countries. By this picture presented here, is clear this paper is a challenging one as it means walking on hot potatoes. What are the effects of continuous religious crises on the Plateau and how can such be addressed for lasting peace among adherents of different religions in the state?

Historically, there are root causes of ethno-religious, intolerance and crises in the city of Jos and environs. The historical development and causes of Jos crisis thus can be summarized in the historical, regional, and religious dimensions of the Jos crisis to which is crucial for understanding the protracted nature of the current

[2] However, the invasion was very unsuccessful as it was fiercely resisted by the plateau indigenes.

conflict situation. Jan Krause (2011) argues some reasons as root causes for religious crises in Jos as follows:

Human desire to dominate others

The history of ethno-religious intolerance and crises in Jos city is birth by the quest for dominance of one people group over the others using religion as a means and cover of the real motive. The history can only be best understood in the context of the wider ethno-religious intolerance and crises or violent conflicts in Northern Nigeria. Achi and Turaki in their respective books support this submission (Achi, 2021 and Turaki, 2017).

British Colonization

The British colonial masters used indirect rule in Northern Nigeria and rely on the Hausa Fulani emirs and Sokoto caliphate (Jana Krause, 2011) to rule the vast geographical terrain called Northern Nigeria. The caliphate and emirates were given more political powers in their favour against the tribes in Northern Nigeria including the tribes in Plateau state (Turaki, 2017; Achi, 2021). What made the British Colonial legacy a reason for the current religious intolerance in Nigeria is the indirect rule introduced by the British colonial masters. The Hausa Fulanis were made to rule the other tribes who did not share much cultural affinity with the Hausa Fulanis. The tribes fund themselves as servants of both the external (British) and internal (Hausa Fulani) colonizers. The Hausa Fulani were predominantly Muslims, and the tribes were predominantly adherents of African Traditional Religion and Christianity.

The encounter between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria

According to Kuka (2003) African traditional religion was very accommodating and tolerant of other religions but sadly Islam and Christianity have not replicated this kind gesture. Thus, it can be argued that in Nigeria particularly Plateau state issues that results to misunderstanding and crisis has always been between two religions – Christianity and Islam. Consequentially, the two missionary religions, Islam introduced by the Arabs to the North of Nigeria through the desert and Christianity by Europeans to the West of Nigeria through the sea have changed the religious lands scape of Nigeria thereby introducing serious intolerance (Best, 2016). The North Central of Nigeria being the middle of Nigeria happened to be

the main meeting and clashing ground of the two religions on the basis of proselytization. Kuka (2003) asserts that "Islam and Christianity are straddled across the Nigerian polity, each no longer knocking and pleading to be admitted, but seeking to take over the architectural design and construction of the Nigerian polity. In matters of religion and political competition, despite the claims to democratic procedures as spelt out in the legal and political documents, the realities belie this claim". It can be affirmed that both Christianity and Islam are guilty of the Kuka's charge. The seeds of the religious conflicts being witnessed today across Northern Nigeria were sown by the Usman Danfodio jihad and British Colonial masters through the indirect rule in Northern Nigeria. Thus, today we are harvesting what was sown long ago.

Contest of ownership of Jos city

According to Jana Krause (2011), "the ownership of Jos and claims to 'indigene' status are fiercely contested between the native tribes and the Hausa. She asserts that there have been small skirmishes in the past about who own Jos as agitation for an emirate aligns with the issue of ownership of Jos. The trouble was the Indigenous tribes feeling marginalized in favour of the Hausa Fulanis. The Indigenous tribes perceived that, to ensure the subjugation of the plateau Indigenous people, majority of the governors sent to Jos were mostly Muslims who ensured the few Hausa Fulani Muslims in Jos city are protected and enjoyed good social amenities. Federal government amenities were usually located in the Hausa Fulani areas. Examples of such imbalance in citing federal institutions are the Jos University teaching hospital back then, the Jos main market, and the University of Jos. Unlike the Jasawa, politically the indigenes do not have a common rallying ground and are poor in the game of politics as missionary legacy did not bequeath politics, governance, and economy to them (Achi 2021, and Turaki 2017). At the heart of these conflicts is the indigene versus settlers divide. The indigenes are fiercely opposed to the idea of an emirate in Jos City, as they view the Hausa Fulani as settlers, not indigenes. This lack of acceptance of the Hausa Fulani as indigenes by the tribes and the refusal of the Hausa Fulani to see themselves as settlers on the plateau to the researcher is the primary reason for the crises and conflicts in Jos and Bukuru metropolis with religion and tribalism often used as a common rallying ground to aroused sympathy and gather support.

The return to democracy and civilian rule in 1999

On 29th May 1999 democratic rule returned with power obviously shifted(ing) to the indigenes of Plateau state so, the Hausa Fulani Muslims in Jos city found themselves without power and control of resources or direct access to such in Plateau state but still have strong connections to the Sokoto caliphate and the federal government. The shift of power now meant the Hausa Fulanis also perceived they too were being marginalized. Is not surprising that in 2001 barely two years of the return to democracy, a severe ethno-religious crisis brook out in Jos city and remained sustained till date with only intermittent moments of peace spread far in between (Jana Krause, 2011). Therefore, the ethno-religious intolerance and crises engulfing Jos city did not just happen, it developed over a long period of time and in stages.

The amalgamation of Nigerian in 1914

The religious intolerance in Jos city can be traced back to the amalgamation of Nigeria's North and South into one country without the consent of the people. As Achi (2021) observed, the amalgamation of 1914 by the British colonial masters through the indirect rule zoned Islam to the North and Christianity to the south. By this singular act Britain sow the seeds of the ethno-religious intolerance that has become a big problem all over Northern Nigeria today and Jos city is not an exception to this Challenge.

The global terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism

The current spree of religious crises and violent conflicts in Northern Nigeria cannot be free of the international security challenges posed by jihadists and fundamentalists' Islamic militia terrorist movements. Such terrorist organizations are represented by Boko Haram, ISWAP, and Fulani Militia/herdsmen. Since the rise of the likes of Osama Bin Laden, radical Islam has spread across the world and found fertile soil for growth in the Maghreb and West Africa. It is unfortunate that religion which is supposedly meant to make humans better species and the world a better place has been used to make the world a violent place. This has made people view religion negatively when it comes to issues of peace-building (Hayward, 2012). Religion is implicated in majority of conflicts in the world in history and in contemporary times. Jos City is no exception to the negative contribution of religion to peaceful coexistence and lack of peace among

adherents of the various religions in Jos City. Thus, in virtually every conflict in Jos city since 2001 religion was implicated negatively.

Need for Peaceful Coexistence in Jos City, Plateau State

Since the end of the Second World War, peace became a serious global business, development workers, NGOs, religious bodies, the military, governments and major world bodies like the United Nations and various regional bodies like the ECOWAS, as well as scholars became interested in peace study. Peace study, conflict management, peace-building, and so on have become issues for serious intellectual investigation especially in the last three decades. Many scholars have written on peace. This section is just a peep into the corridor of academic writings on peace. It is by no means in-depth or exhaustive. Peace studies in recent years have given birth to many ideas and notions that are beyond the scope of this paper to treat. Such terms and concepts include national ownership, post-conflict peace-building, bridge-building conflict management.

Peace: Its Meaning, Implication, and Relevance to the Discourse.

Peace happened to be a topic that has generated so much interest globally since the end of the Second World War. This resulted in the formation of the United Nations (UN) because world leaders realized the need and value of peace and the need for peaceful coexistence among people of all religions, tribes, and cultures. This interest in the subject of peace has resulted in lots of studies and many writings on peace. But what is peace? Our understanding of peace must be predicated on the UN Charter for Human Rights. Peace is an essential and fundamental human right for all persons living on earth. Many people have defined peace in different ways depending on their interests and angle of approach. There are many understandings of peace such as the instrumentalist and functionalist interpretations of peace, there is a philosophical, sociological, and political definition of peace (Best, 2016). Koichiro Matsuura sees peace as an urgent need for now and the future and must be characterized by justice and equity. Matsuura said "Peace is more than an absence of war. It means justice and equity for all as the basis for living together in harmony and free from violence, now, but even more so for our children and succeeding generations" (UNESCO, 2015). Justice, equity, and equal rights must characterize peace. This definition has a big implication for the peaceful coexistence of the adherents of different

religions in Jos City and Plateau State. Peace is when all diversities are managed in a manner that diverse groups are still able to peacefully cohabit in a given geopolitical space without violence both now and in the future. Peace is also "a political condition that makes justice possible" (Best, 2016). In recent times the concept of restorative justice as compared to retributive justice has been introduced to peace study and largely experimented with in Rwanda and South Africa. According to Thesnaar (2008), retributive justice very seldom contributes to reconciliation, peace and healing, however in preference to restorative Justice which has become popular in the field of peace study, he argues that it addresses and invites all parties together to resolve their conflicts in a way that justice is not aborted, but peace and reconciliation is achieved.

Peace is also a philosophical concept. Thus, there is that state of human affairs referred to as peaceful, this state or condition is "pristine, perfect, ordered, and tranquil" (Best, 2016). This is akin to the biblical concept of shalom which in summary means man at peace with God, his neighbours, his environment, and himself. It is expected of every Christian not only to desire shalom but to work toward the realization of shalom on earth. Both in Christian tradition and scripture, the pursuit of peace is a mandatory duty of Christians. The pursuit of peace is also the imitation of Jesus Christ who is known as the prince of peace. Jesus lived and modelled Shalom for his followers here on earth. There are certain concepts that nuanced a better understanding of peace. These concepts may include peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building, and sustaining peace. All these assume and point clearly towards one thing. That is peace does not just happen, the diverse ethno-religious groups in Jos City must work at ensuring and sustaining peace. It means peace is a by-product of certain things done and not done or done either rightly or wrongly by people in a given context. These concepts naturally arise when it comes to discussing peace (peace-keeping, peace-making, peace-building, and sustaining peace) are the commonest among others. In the 1970s and 1980s peace-keeping by way of military interventions was popular with UN and continental and sub-regional organizations such as OAU now AU and ECOWAS as main actors in peace-keeping; with ECOMOG as ECOWAS' best example of success story mainly in Liberia (Best, 2016). It can be argued that peace gotten by the barrel of the gun through military intervention is not peace is just the cessation of violence or hostilities but not the end of violence, because violence is still in the hearts of the people. Lately scholars have argued in favour of peace-making the

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need of which arises when conflicts are high but with viable opportunities for negotiation for peace (Best, 2016). Peace-building is utilized when conflict is low and prospect for peace talks are high (Best, 2016). Commenting about peace-building, Mahmoud and Makoond (2018) said "Although conceived as a comprehensive process, peace-building has come to be narrowly interpreted as time-bound, exogenous interventions that take place 'after the guns fall silent' in fragile or conflict-affected states". The main weakness of peace-building lies in the fact that it is violent driven or dependent as Mahmoud and Makoond rightly observed "peace-building has up until now been confined to the narrower end of the spectrum; it tends to be perceived as relevant solely to contexts where conflict is manifest or proximate". This means the starting and ending point of peace-building is conflict and in the absence of a manifest conflict there is no need to talk about peace or work for peace. But the advocates of sustaining peace feel the best time to start talking about and working for peace is when there is no obvious conflict to manage (Mahmoud and Makoond, 2018). Peace-making and sustaining peace are intertwined. Is one thing to achieve or attain peace and another for the peace to remain. The idea of sustaining peace was adopted as a resolution in the UN general assembly in April 2016 (Mahmoud and Makoond, 2018). Since then, the idea has gained traction of interest and studied by scholars and practitioners of peace and conflict management. The processes and activities that support the preservation of peace are termed sustaining peace or conflict prevention (Best, 2016). Activities for making and sustaining peace may include advocacy, nonviolence activism, human rights protection, peace awareness, peace rallies, and campaigns. This has big implications for our topic of peace among the various religions living in Jos City and Plateau State.

Christians and Peaceful Coexistence

Christians are admonished in Romans 12:17-18 never to pay back evil with evil but to do all they can to live in peace with everyone. Furthermore, in Mark 12:31Christians are admonished to love their neighbours, loving your neighbour naturally translates to peace. This is regardless of the faith of the other persons. The Bible also said in Hebrews 12:14 "Make every effort to live in peace with everyone". This goes a long way to show us that the Bible values peace and encourages a peaceful coexistence between people across all diversities of life including religious diversities. The Biblical concept of peace is sourced from the

Old Testament's understanding of peace known as shalom which has been elaborated already. Shalom and the pursuit of shalom is a deeply enshrined tenet in the Old Testament as seen in Jeremiah 29:7 the Jews even though in exile to Babylon were admonished to pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon. In the Ten Commandments given to Israel by God, peaceful coexistence between Israel and their neighbours was emphasized by God from Exodus 20:1-18, we note from verses 13-18 that five of the commandments have to do with peaceful living with neighbours. The summary is to be good to neighbours and living in peace is good neighbourliness. Peace to the Jews is Shalom.

In the New Testament, peace is more than just a philosophy or concept is not just a state or condition of affairs. Peace means more than just serenity, tranquillity, and the absence of violence or conflicts. Peace is a person and that is Jesus Christ, He is known as the prince of peace. History shows Christ as a man of peace and Christians are followers of Christ's peaceful example. They are expected therefore to live in peace with their neighbours. The early church inherited the notion of peace from Judaism. Peace formed part of the standard salutation of the saints in the early church as evidenced in the epistles of Paul in the Bible, he opened all his epistles with greetings (Rom. 1:7; 1Cor. 1:3 Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2).

Empirical Survey of the Factors Responsible for Harmonious Inter-Religious Living in Jos Prior 2001

The researcher inquired through interview what became responsible for peace in Jos city before 2001. The following themes emerged from the responses:

1 People in Jos city were united.
2 There was genuine love among neighbours; one's religion did not matter back then.
3 The people took pride in the expression 'plateau the home of peace and tourism'.
4 There were little or less religious, tribal, and political sentiments.
5 There was some level of justice, fairness, and equity.
6 Residents in Jos city were very open to receiving and welcoming visitors.
7 There were good elders who had things under their control.
8 There was no religious extremism.
9 Politics and politicians were more nationalists with little religious or tribal influence.

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10 The military regime did not allow room for freedom of expression.

The above are some of the things the residents of Jos consider as reasons for peaceful coexistence in Jos before 2001.

Causes of Religious Conflicts in Jos City and Plateau State

There are several factors responsible for the lack of peaceful coexistence among adherents of different religions in Jos City and Plateau State. Understanding the causes is key to finding solutions to the problem. As to what might be responsible for the dysfunctional inter-religious relationship in Jos City and Plateau State, the following themes emerged from the responses through the interview:

1 Ethnicity/indigene-settler divide
2 Religious provocative sermons by clerics
3 Introducing tribalism and religion into politics and governance.
4 Lack of democratic awareness and education
5 The clamour for ownership of Jos
6 The struggle for political power, and control of resources
7 Lack of respect and value for the sanctity of human life
8 Politicization and tribalization of security agencies who take sides during conflicts
9 Lack of political will by traditional, community, and political leaders
10 Failure of the justice system, and delays in prosecution
11 Failure to be proactive after early warning signs of crises
12 Crises in Jos and Plateau State are connected to global terrorism and insecurity
13 Government policies are designed and directed to favour one side or group of people
14 Not compensating victims of religious crises for their losses
15 The desire for an emirate by the Jasawa and perceived marginalization from the indigenes
16 The creation of Jos North Local government to favour the Jasawas.
17 Indigenes verses settler divide especially over issues of indigene certificates.
18 Economic oppression by the Hausa Muslims stemming from Usman Danfodio jihad and colonial indirect rule in Northern Nigeria

19 Need for land for expansion by the Jasawa
20 The Introduction of militant jihadists and Islamic Fundamentalism.
21 Locating almost all Federal Government infrastructures in the Muslim-dominated areas of Jos.
22 Poverty, joblessness, and illiteracy

Strategies for Peace-making and Peace-keeping in Contemporary Times

Many scholars have devoted years of research to the subject of peaceful coexistence among different religions. Issues of religion are often very sensitive and complex. Religion is an integral part of Africa. As Mbiti (1969) rightly pointed out that Africans are notoriously religious and "do not know how to exist without religion". It is this incurableness of religion in us that makes Africa so prune to all kinds of religious crises and violent conflicts. Religion in Africa is very marketable and the religious market in Africa is very busy and making great gains expanding from everywhere to everywhere. Particularly Islam and Christianity, almost wherever they meet in Africa conflicts are bound to arise. As strategies for ensuring peaceful coexistence among adherents of different faiths scholars have advocated the followings:

The use of religious dialogue

Tuduks (2017) has discussed extensively on the concept and practice of religious dialogue. He argued for the reframing of religious dialogue in favour of Co-pathy because "Despite the fact that the use of dialogue has been commended in its efforts to deal with the challenge of Christian/Muslim relationships, its result has not yet been effective" (Tuduks, 2015).

Invitational forgiveness

Invitational forgiveness can also be used as a strategy for achieving peaceful coexistence among adherents of different religions, especially where violent conflicts have already happened like in the case of the city of Jos. Forgiveness can be unilateral when one party does the forgiveness or bilateral when both the disputing parties do the forgiveness. Invitational forgiveness is done for the purpose of giving the offender a chance to realize their mistake and hopefully to seek for amend (Govier and Hirano, 2008). Forgiveness refers to a change in the

attitude of the victim toward their offender, it is a positive shift away from anger, bitterness, and resentment to the opposite (Govier and Hirano, 2008).

The use of the African Concept of Community

A better definition of community is needed, today in the city of Jos the definition of community is homogenous just 'we' or 'us' as against 'they' or 'them' instead of heterogeneous. From an African perspective, in a community no individual is an highland as whoever one is, is as a result of others. This is expressed in Mbiti's African philosophy "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am'" (Mbiti, 1969).

Restorative justice

As argued above the effectiveness of the application of justice from a restorative perspective over retributive, parties involved in crisis are given opportunities to tell their stories and be listened. The goal is not punitive but restoration; however, is not a restoration that aborts justice. Restorative justice ensures justice, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration of broken relationships. Restorative justice addresses the lapses or weaknesses of litigation and amnesty.

Religious tolerance

Religious tolerance as a strategy for peaceful co-existence can be strengthened through learning from each group's tradition and beliefs. By so doing, tolerance becomes feasible because one knows what he or she is tolerating which helps in bringing about peaceful coexistence between members of different religions in the same community. Other things that can help restore peaceful coexistence is Reframing the narrative of religious conflict in Jos City to that of peace. Peace mediation, negotiation and advocacy are also some other means of building peace in Jos among different religious groups.

The empirical response from the residents to the question of what suggestions would they give for restoring peace in Jos City, the following themes emerged:

1 Punish offenders of crimes against humanity no matter who they are
2 People whose properties were grabbed are still aggrieved, they should be restored
3 There is need for mass social reorientation of citizens on social values, peace, and tolerance.

4 Need for improvement in the security architecture of Nigeria
5 Government needs to wake up to good governance of ensuring peace and order, justice
6 Peace commissions: like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa

Conclusion

The paper looked at Plateau State as a geopolitical and social entity in Nigeria. The historical background and context of ethno-religious conflicts in Jos City were traced. Some causes of conflicts and how such can be managed for the healing of Jos city and restoration of peace in Plateaus state were identified. Findings show that residents of Jos want peace and are willing to work for the restoration of peace in Jos City and Plateau State. However, the level of deep-seated mistrust among the different religious groups remains the major barrier. The pragmatic contribution arrived at arguing the following strategies for Peace-making and Peace-keeping in Jos City and Plateau state as a whole: the use of religious dialogue; application of invitational forgiveness; the use and practice of the African concept of communality; preference of restorative justice over retributive justice; and the practice of religious tolerance. The paper however argued those strategies as ways of healing and restoration of peace among members of the various religions in Jos City and Plateau State. Areas for further studies in this direction may include an investigation of various peace intervention initiatives in Jos and reasons for their success or failure, the religious topography and demography of Jos and their implications to peaceful coexistence, and how can religion be used to build peace in Jos City and Plateau State.

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