

# **Moral and Ethical Leadership, Human Rights and Conflict Resolution**

**-African and Global Contexts**

Obiora F. Ike

Globethics.net Co-Publications Series

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# Introduction

## *Virtue Based Moral and Ethical Leadership as a Collaborative Analysis*

One thing that science has in common with the arts is that experimentation and reasoning require great patience before significant results can be achieved, and perseverance in the method as a condition of all honest and serious research. The pianist knows that he/she has to go back to the piano technique even if becoming a piano virtuoso is difficult and remote, because everyone knows what it means to play the piano, and because it takes just two minutes to convince yourself that someone is ignoring it. Working on piano technique is hard, it takes energy and the result is not always assured if you plan to give an audition. One thing is sure though, without practising over and over your technique, you will never improve.

When introducing this collection of essays by Obiora Ike, *Moral and Ethical Leadership*, I realize that there are important characteristics of method, which are clear and worth presenting, reminding the reader that as for music and arts, might be essential conditions for excellence, and which are at the centre of this book. Such distinctive features of the author's method will be exposed in order to give a service to the reader and we will attempt to do so by proposing a valuable comparison.

*Non scholae, sed vitae discendum est* (“We must learn not for school but for life”) It is following this motto that we dare the comparison of Pascal Engel’s analytic method and Obiora’s eclectic practice in transposing the core of a method across disciplines, because rigorous thinking and practice in ethics has only value for life. Life is not only the professional framework in which we are placed, day after day, each person in a given economic and social sector, but economic activity and the specifics of the professional framework are a central part of our human existence. Let me present the three central assumptions of our comparison.

*First* we shall explain the method of common, argumentative and collaborative analysis in moral and ethical thinking and practice: as underestimated but crucially important methodological aspects of applying ethics in an analytical way: i.e. focusing on the essential technical components of ethics, and leaving aside all unnecessary contexts and historical perspectives.

*Second* we propose truth and epistemic virtue as central ways of understanding the core of ethical thinking and practice.

*Third*, we present Obiora’s work on *Moral and Ethical Leadership* built, as we will argue on a wide common framework of Christian virtues. The method is then deployed on the fields of various disciplines (into Economics, Politics, Religion and Moral philosophy). This project is built on the central assumption that ethics as truth should be widely understood and applied, as part of the overall definition of analytical method in ethics below.

Why is it important to build on the value of truth, or to have some precise notions on what makes the correctness of beliefs? Why is empirically observable knowledge a part of applying ethics

in life? Why are ordinary language and common understanding essential for communicating issues related to ethics (e.g. in the professional fields of human activities)?

These are the crucial questions that this book aims to answer. It is not based on a complicated speculative system that Obiora Ike proceeds to present his solution, nor on moral sentimentalism, introspection or self-consolation. The central claim—which in a strict sense justifies the comparison with the work of the analytic philosopher Pascal Engel—is that we should rather tackle bad habits, which deflate our pretention for truth and ethical values, instead of indoctrinating and seeking direct comprehension.

Let's look at Engel's proposition very briefly.

We find by P. Engel a good presentation in three points of some minimal conditions for addressing ethical issues in an analytical way. In order to fit to the comparison, we have adapted to ethics and applied ethics, what Engel is proposing about philosophical analysis. P. Engel completed with his *Vices of Knowledge (Les vices du savoir: essai d'éthique intellectuelle, 2019)* the ethical facets of this enquiry into philosophical knowledge, but which would need a separate attention. The three central conditions for being analytically performant are:

(1) *Moral and ethical philosophy, theology and practice, "like science, is a common enterprise."* What moral and ethical philosophers and theologians say "has to be discussed, criticized, argued about, and no moral and ethical philosopher can expect to produce good arguments or

good theories without the help and sanction of other researchers.”

(2) “*There can be progress*” in moral and ethical philosophy, as in any applied ethical discipline “(although not in the sense of scientific progress), provided *everyone tries to be clear and argumentative*. ‘Truth emerges more readily out of error than from confusion’. ‘Do not write so that you can be understood, but so that you cannot be misunderstood’ (Quintillian).”

(3) “Not everybody is a genius, but as Peirce said, ‘in order to be deep it is sometimes necessary to be dull.’” *Moral and ethical philosophers can be technical discipline’s “co-workers”* without being engaged in the construction of “large philosophical systems”, and without encompassing the whole range of philosophical and theological problems and of the history of their discipline. There can be good professional and technical thinking: this is condition for good moral and ethical philosophy as well as applied ethical progress.

The success of moral and ethical thinking and practice can be presented as following very simple conditions, which are, in short, that of *analytic thinking and practice*. It implies that technical theoretical or intellectual ethical thinking and practical dimensions are analysed in a careful way as partly separate and condition for a

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<sup>1</sup> Engel, Pascal (1987): “Continental Insularity: Contemporary French Analytical Philosophy”, *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, March 1987, p. 1-3, DOI: 10.1017/S0957042X00003448

variety of scientific findings. It involves engaging in research and teaching, in such a way that:

“many people can share these beliefs without agreeing on any philosophical opinion or theory”. “They can even be co-workers while sustaining philosophically antagonist doctrines, provided that they share this general attitude. This attitude is just the scientific attitude, even though [moral and ethical philosophy is not one of the sciences, or, better, it is the rationalistic attitude. This is not to say that every philosopher in the analytic community adopts this attitude, but, and by large, it serves as a regulative ideal. It is also [...] an institutional attitude, the academic attitude, and it is better carried out through the channels of the academic institutions than through any other institution.”

A purely technical but highly demanding moral and ethical intellectual and practical perspective is a promising approach, we argue, which can be spread across professional disciplines easily, because of the methodological power of clear demonstrations and argumentations, the openness to common understanding and sharing, and the simple truth that professional collaborations is bringing ethics out of school back to life. The impact of ethical models of practice should be without complication, purified from its historical framework of unnecessary systematic or historic explanations.

But if our comparison is sound, faith and religion may have to go hand in hand, against the assumption of self-sufficient conditions given in the programme of philosophically enlightened ethics. Why is it so?

One reason might be that religion, as philosophy provides a meta-ethical entry for defining the truth and reality of our reasons to enter in any activity, or firm ground for establishing the values associated somehow with these reasons.

Obiora shows explicitly that:

“the projects of scientific findings ... challenged dogmatic stands of religion and the conservative order which belong to the scope of many religions and cultural leaders as preservers of tradition. Finding the balance remains the question. Modern inventions in medicine, automobiles, space travel, social media, informatics, engineering, architecture, automation and intercultural relations opened the debate for a world for all which was previously foreclosed to all.”

In fact, the science and the technological development, indirectly correlated in various, intertwined manners to rigorous science, has gone so far that, in a sudden and curious postmodernist jolt, it shackled deeply the groundings of the whole human edifice, on a wide continental or even global level. This challenge, which has no precedent, has a good unattended consequence highlighted by Engel. In his dialogue with R. Rorty, on the very strict limitations of pragmatism and postmodern way of life, we read it in the form of an ironic but deep and central question:

“On one hand, there has never been so much distrust of the values of rationality, scientific progress, truth, and objectivity, either in advanced intellectual circles or in the media and society generally. On the other, never has the impression that we are being deceived by the authorities (political and scientific) that are supposed to guarantee

precisely these values, and the need for trust, been so great. Why, if we no longer believe in truth, is there such a longing for it?<sup>2</sup>”

Most of us, who believe this observation is correct, agree with the core value of truth for very simple but convincing reasons. The very aim of good education could be seen as directly related to a closer proximity to truth with Goodman and subsequent attempts to address the value of truth in education<sup>3</sup>.

Great religions share the belief with moral philosophers and with most of common people of the value of truth. Anyone who stands up in the morning and goes to work, knows that the *everyday truth* such as the correctness of our bank balance, the need to keep your feet dry (in the Northern countries), or the importance of having healthy children and stable family life, etc., has something in common with truth being spoken out in Churches, at the University and that when we meet a lawyer or a dentist truth has some value (even if in this case truth might also bear some heavy costs).

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Rorty and Pascal Engel (2007): "Main Statement by Pascal Engel", *What is the Use of Truth*, transl. W. McCunig, New York: Columbia University Press, 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Goldman, Alvin (1999): *Knowledge in a Social World*, Oxford: OUP. See also: Buckland, Luke A. "Social epistemology and the aim(s) of education" *South African Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 35, No 1. Also: Marabini, Alessia, Moretti, Luca (2020): "Goldman and Siegel on the Epistemic Aims of Education". *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12398>

The alternative to truth is indoctrination and brainwashing, as Bailey shows well, and who reminds us that the transmission of doctrines and beliefs, which could be seen as part of the very aim of education institutions, is very different from focusing on critical and well-founded beliefs<sup>4</sup>.

There are excellent reasons for ethics and truth based education made very explicit by Obiora Ike's book, extending the question of the quality of education and ethical knowledge to disciplines such as business, human rights education, conflict resolution, social work, social teaching of the Church and wealth management in Nigeria, etc.

The broad scope of Obiora's eclectically structured approach shows how truth is challenging various social problems, which are first gathered across ordinary technical disciplines, second invited to dialogue with *a perspective from beyond* the field of professionals, convinced that scientific and ethical knowledge bring added value to professional practices. The deep analytic tendency, we argue, of Obiora's theology and philosophy of religion and education, is not to seek to oppose to problematic doctrines as disagreements about what the logical forms of those doctrines really are. Obiora Ike is not interested by ahistorical philosophical transformation of openly received religious dogmas, but much more concerned by the effectiveness of a limited number of *cardinal virtues*, great religions as Christianity has in common with philosophical ethics, and he is using philosophy as

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<sup>4</sup> Also: Bailer, R.P. (2001): "Overcoming veriphobia – learning to love truth again", *British Journal of Educational Studies* 49(2): 159–72. doi: 10.1111/1467-8527.t01-1-00169

practical aim for better inviting for value and reason oriented actions.

Based on the *virtue of hope* he thinks the very essence of fair conditions for education as transformative education (Ch. 2). Deriving from the *virtue of justice*, we find a firm foundation for peace research and reconciliation programmes (Ch. 6). *Courage and productivity* are in a judicious manner related to the value of work (Ch. 7). *Trust, and the virtue of love* and common good are matter of the management of natural and economic resources. As we discover each chapter after the other, the whole work is grounded on a hierarchy of virtues (Ch. 8, 9).

These perspectives, relate not only to a broad sense of Christian catholic and Greek or Latin classical philosophy (we find cardinal virtues by Plato, Seneca, etc.) but show that consistent work can be carried out, not in disagreement with the aims of the Enlightenment ideal of autonomy and human freedom, along lines common to the Catholic Church's body of social teaching (as for example referring to the medium of encyclical letters), but always we find at the basis of the method, the praising and applying, in clarity and precision, the consequent analytic method. Along these lines, enlightened leadership prevents us from a widespread tendency based on “non-evidential and non-critical style of belief that makes open-mindedness and autonomy unattainable”.

Geneva, February 2020,

Ignace Haaz, *Managing Editor, PhD.*



## Chapter 1

# Moral and Ethical Leadership of Businesses for Sustainable Development in Africa

### Introduction

Nigeria shares responsibility, with other prominent African nations, to take on economic and political leadership and service for the African continent. As humanity enters a new stage, with accelerated processes of transition to a new period in world history, we are all acquainted with the new buzzword since the late 1990s of the phenomenon of *Globalisation*. Globalisation refers to the phenomenon of increasing integration of nation-states through economic exchange, political configuration, technological advancement, borderless financial transaction and cultural influence.

This reality has made us increasingly aware of Africa's place within the global community, to a degree of social inequality and poverty, which is both unwanted and harmful, to the poor and to the human and structural perpetrators of this poverty. There is an agreed global village but the majority of citizens, particularly from Africa, do not have a door to enter into this global space. And this is what must change.

African countries can collaborate to bring about this much-desired change for the better, within their own countries, as well

as in sub-regional zones within the African continent. The role of business as a calling and a practical activity could provide the much-desired moral leadership for sustainable development that Africa needs.

My mind goes to the scenes most of us have been witnessing, brought to us through the means of modern communication, the internet and television, showing live witness accounts of the dramatic events taking place in Northern Africa and the growing uprisings of people in these regions, through a generally peaceful revolution for change in Tunisia and Egypt and a struggling attempt for same in the entire Arab world and the Middle East, led by the people, particularly with women and youth at the centre.

These events correspond to the much-researched results of the influence of ideas on history. People themselves are rising up to take their own destinies into their hands because their perceived leaders have misled, abused and denied them these rights for far too long. People everywhere have a desire to share the fruits of globalisation; such as human rights and freedom, and participation in managing their own decisions and democratic ideals within the space of their nations. People everywhere wish for better standards and quality of life, where freedom is possible, but have been eluded for far too long.

The time has come, therefore, for partnerships and collaborations beyond boundaries to be built, to avoid what negative consequences could take place if such omissions continue. *For*

*instance, the recent event of the launch of the Centre for Business in Society which took place in South Africa is one step in the right direction. It offers the participants and the society at large a platform to think of a future of sustainability and to act ethically in thought and policy, which is the guarantee for moral leadership and the common good.*

As a Nigerian teacher who participated in that event and addressed a South African academic, NGO and business audience, my desire is that the relationship between our countries on mutually beneficial business relations along many fronts, and on items known and even unknown, may intensify. As far as Nigeria and South Africa are concerned, the known business areas between our countries stretch into oil and gas, agriculture, textiles, equipment leasing, infrastructural development, construction and consultancy services, ongoing educational opportunities and academic cooperation between institutions of higher learning, bilateral and multilateral trade and diplomatic ties on all fronts within the continent and beyond.

We are gratefully aware that of all the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and indeed within the Africa Union, South Africa and Nigeria stand as the undisputed economic and political leaders. This position imposes on our countries, including their academic, business and political leadership, therefore, enormous responsibilities to share their wealth and knowledge with the other brothers and sisters who still struggle to share the fruits of development within their countries, the sub-regions of the continent extending even to those in the diaspora.

I further wish to crave the indulgence of the reader to return to South Africa again, to single out three key areas for special mention in the collaboration among and between our countries. In the telecommunications industry, the South African giant MTN is the single largest provider of telephone services with the biggest GSM Network and provision in Africa, serving over 60 million people in Nigeria, which is more than the entire population of South Africa (its parent country and ownership parent), maintaining in Nigeria its largest business concerns, with enormous potential in income generation, job provision and wealth creation.

Food provision and equipment leasing and distribution is another area of collaboration. South Africa is the largest food supplier of food chains and household utensils and shopping malls to Nigeria with such large centers for food and equipment distribution in Lagos, Abuja and the over 50 cities of Nigeria including the coal city of Enugu where I reside, supplying virtually every item under the sun, of manufactured goods, trade materials, equipment and household utensils, and having large shopping malls in these cities of Nigeria, with capacities of modern market space of well over 5,000 buyers and sellers at the same time.

Banking and business services is yet another field, where South Africa, with its financial services sector engagements, including banking services provided by STANBIC International PLC; IBTC, ABSA and others has virtually entered the Nigerian banking industry with innovative business models, competitive enough to

act as successful within that large country and sharing an environment for business opportunities for mutual benefit, if well utilized.

### **The Question of Moral Leadership in Business**

This work deals directly with the topic of the moral leadership of the business community to create sustainable leadership within Africa. It deals with the role of business in society and the ethical ingredients, where captains of industry, manufacturers, providers of financial services and others must pursue and possess as imperatives for a sustainable future for all.

This is a topic of vast significance, for it complements the efforts and the moral leadership pronouncements of the Christian Churches, exemplified through the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church; Christian Social Principles of Personality, Subsidiarity, Solidarity, Human Dignity and the Common Good. It complements also the legal reasoning of African indigenous traditional societies and communities in their jurisprudence and community consciousness (Ubuntu; Umunna) for businesses as a basis for culturally rooted sustainable development.

The establishment of the Centre for Business in Society within the University of Stellenbosch and the USB-ED programmes come with expectations and answers to such questions. The scope, role and purpose and the ethical issues emerging from a proper and well understood *Sitz-im-Leben* of this theme, namely the concern of business in society, are important themes to consider. This is true, especially at a time of ethical relativism, selfish and egoistic

tendencies, large spread utilitarian philosophies, the syndrome of 'might is right' and belief in 'survival of the fittest', and the cliché that states "Business is Business". Whatever this might mean, devoid of its moral character and purpose, can be seen as the 'value' added in a modern society.

It is my own strong desire to add my humble opinion to the universal desire for the African voice to be heard. This will allow its much respected traditional and cultural values to be known, researched upon, and made subjects for teaching, training and research in universities within Africa today and indeed, worldwide. Humanity at its present historical epoch seems to have run out of comprehensive answers to the questions facing mankind at this time, questions that look at ideas of justice, fair play and a correct understanding of the dignity of the human person in a balanced and peaceful universe. The wars, tragedies and crisis which nation-states experience worldwide, are indicators of a vacuum in both thought patterns and action points, due to failures and gaps in the leadership of these nations - an ethical and moral vacuum in the world of business and the public sector. There is a yearning gap for available models that can guarantee a safer, enduringly happy and sustainable and healthy earth, for all the inhabitants of the world, both in the present and the future.

The leading Western philosophies and political practitioners, upon whom depended the destinies of peoples for the past five hundred years, and their collaborators in the Asian world, have led mankind, albeit falsely and therefore unjustly, from one

ideology to the next, all in the search of a new world order: (slavery, colonialism, capitalism, communism, racism, imperialism, socialism, fascism, fundamentalism, religious bigotry, and even atheism). They have all failed.

Recently, we have shared the consequences of the woeful failures, particularly in the developed industrialized countries of big businesses, banks and corporations due to a moral gap and the irresponsibility of the economic and political leadership in these countries. This has led to loss in jobs, investments and old peoples' retirement pension funds, shameful collapses of multinational companies, economic depression and worldwide financial meltdown, occasioned by fraudulent businessmen with Ponzi scheme mentalities like Bernard Madoff, ENRON and Lehman Brothers amongst many others. But what, or more appropriately, who, is to blame?

The ENRON debacle, for example, is not just the story of a company that failed. It is the story of a system that failed. And the system did not fall through carelessness or laziness; it was corrupt. ENRON provides an example of what happens when corruption leaks into and becomes part of the corporate culture. It showcases all that is bad and ugly in the capitalistic system known as the free market. The deeper meaning in this catastrophic collapses of large numbers of companies is the fact that any system or governing structure is only as good as the people who administer it. In the case of ENRON and others, the need for morally informed corporate governance, founded on solid ethical principles has been quite clear.

The macro and micro-economic survival of several nations, world over, has suffered under these situations and the poorest of the poor, particularly those living on the African continent, who did not cause these problems, have borne the brunt of the greatest negative consequences and effects of this crisis. Nations have gone bankrupt and the situations of Iceland, Greece and others continue to elicit wonder on how it could happen at all? In responding to the vocation of business and commerce, one assumes the obligations of moral leadership associated with that vocation. They include accountability, honesty and transparency in governing the corporation.

Abdicating such leadership in attempting to cover up poor management decisions is something that cannot stand if our society is to be free and virtuous. But the failures of many corporations recently, such as ENRON, are not an indictment of business, or even of big business as a whole. To the contrary, corporations have the potential to meet societal needs that no other entity - especially one that is taxpayer funded - is able to address. It is possible to be serious about being profitable and also serious about social responsibility, despite all the rhetoric on either side.

In setting up the Centre for Business in Society in the Cape Town region of South Africa earlier mentioned, one is passionate to expect authentic research efforts that expose and include, African cosmology and values applied to modern business concerns within society. Such results would contain the wisdom found in traditional society and the African spirit of inclusion, not

exclusion; communality, not individuality nor egotism; solidarity and subsidiarity principles; the acceptance of win-win-scenarios in inter-business relations; respect for the environment and preservation of the earth; the regard and introduction of the discipline of *Business Ethics* as the most pragmatic response to modern issues of sustainability and the corporate governance function, since business covers areas within both the private and public domain.

My contention is that the rediscovery of African ethical values and its interaction and re-introduction within the space of meltdown paradigms, would expand the scope of ongoing debate and bring to the fore of academic and practical discourse, values and information that could enhance humanity's search for pragmatic and moral leadership. These include wide-ranging topics, such as the entire dimension of ownership and management structures within the economy the place of our African traditional values applied to modern issues of economic sustainability; matters of business ethics which is key in any society; issues of justice; and the guidelines for corporate governance of institutions-whether private or public.

## **Guiding Principles for the Role of Business in Society - Responsibility and Sustainability**

### **I. Business Exists to be Sustainable**

It is normal for businesses to understand their fundamental role in society as working to help create wealth (prosperity) by making profitable investments in the short and long term. This aim is not

enough. It is suggested that sustainable wealth generation be made an aim by placing the human being at the centre. “Man is the author, the centre and the end of all social and economic life”, to quote the documents of the Catholic Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, No 2. This is enhanced by an understanding of development as integral, not simply as wealth generation, profit-making or increased shareholder value.

## **2. Companies are Part of Communities**

In local environments, wherever they operate, businesses and companies are part of communities. If they consider themselves “offshore” or transnational”; they act irresponsibly.

## **3. People Form the Basis for Sustainable Corporate Agenda**

Companies perform well if they have a ‘Market Focus’ that includes the PEOPLE as part of their business priorities. To make the primary mission of business ‘PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE’ is today no longer a sustainable corporate agenda. ‘Short Term Profit’ must not mean ‘Long Term Loss’. Corporations and businesses survive in a climate where they co-operate with communities in other areas of life.

## **4. Core Values**

Integrity, trust, rule of law, transparency and honesty remain virtues which corporations can and ought to adopt as CORE VALUES for long term business activities. Bribery and corruption are short-term without long-term gain. Support for dictators ends in a blind alley.

## **5. Minimize Harm, Maximize Business Corporate Culture**

Measures that provide a healthy workplace, environmental protection, safety standards and rights of employees ensure that the environmental impact of what is done is minimized. This is carried out through charitable activities, today known as corporate social philanthropy and responsibility, in areas such as medical science, including, but not limited to diseases control and cure HIV ARV drugs provision for infected persons.

## **6. New Technologies**

Businesses and corporations must engage in Research and further product development, with processes that guarantee higher value; affordability; ever better performance and greater consumer efficiency and benefits. New technologies can help societies in unimagined ways.

## **7. The Social Fabric**

Corporate citizenship involves contributions to the social fabric where a company operates through job creation, skills enhancement, knowledge transfer, education and capacity building of the host community to mention but a few. The measure of a business is in its 'Corporate Social Responsibility' culture and contribution to the social fabric. These include people's promotion and investments into the host community development programmes.

## **8. Corporate Citizenship**

Businesses are citizens wherever they operate with rights and duties. Corporate citizenship is freedom plus responsibility - a tall

order indeed - that helps a firm or business operate in such a way that maximises benefits and minimizes harms.

## **9. Ethics**

Businesses are founded on a sustainable path if they are ethical, that is rational in their options of short term benefits or long term survival with a good reputation, by following and internalizing the rules. Corporations need an ethical foundation to operate meaningfully, and these have to promote life, serve life and enhance life and promote solidarity, communal values, the shaping of attitudes towards the respect of human rights and dignity and the observance of fundamental freedoms.

## **10. Ability to Close Shop**

The rule must not be or remain “*If you cannot beat them join them*”. Rather, the rule must be “*If you cannot beat them, CLOSE SHOP*”. Companies must have the ability and moral audacity to withdraw from environments where they are prevented from being socially responsible. This is the real TALL ORDER, for many do not, and thus, they survive in the short term and collapse in the long term, having hurt humans and society and not having remained sustainable and ethical in the long term.

## Chapter 2

# Human Rights Education and Action

### Introduction

“To everything there is a season, and time to every purpose under the heaven;

A time to be born and a time to die;

A time to kill and a time to heal;

A time to break down and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together;

A time to get, and a time to cast away;

A time to tear, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate;

A time of war, and a time of peace.”

- Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3:1-8

### The Blessing and the Abuse via Apathy

I state categorically that we have a great country, richly endowed with human and material resources, a country with one of the great beauties of geography, aesthetics, cultures, traditions, varieties and multi plural ingredients which any modern great nation today has as its credentials. Unfortunately, Nigeria’s assets and blessings are turning as it were to a curse against its people.

We are not a nation of complainants more than any other people anywhere else in the world could also be described as being complainants; we are not a nation of thieves or dishonest people who are the worse in this business known to all children of Adam.

My guess is that Nigerians, and by this I mean the majority of the people, have by their apathy, lack of interest, lack of demand for responsible leadership, by acquiescence, by keeping quiet, by not shouting and crying foul, by not being involved, by keeping aloof and politically inactive, by giving room to that odd and notorious virus which makes it possible for semi-illiterates, mediocre, never-do-wells and their likes to emerge into the forefront of power. This is a nation that would assume its pride and dignity if the citizens of this great country wake up from their comatose disinterestedness in the political, social and general welfare of the nation at large and demand for their birthrights.

The context of Nigeria is that of a society in need of the ingredients of a modern nation within the comity of nations. We lack democratic government; we lack accountable government; we lack political virtues in many of our politicians, namely; prudence, justice, tolerance and patriotism; we lack sound economic and socio-political and fair environment for the competition of talents, goods and productive factors which are the basis at the moment to manage our affairs; we lack discipline and patience which the so-called Asian Tigers use to accelerate investments with functional socio-economic and socio-political climate for the benefit of the majority of its citizens.

The virtues of honesty and transparency seem not to be written in bold letters in the dictionary of those who have usurped power and the administration of this God blessed nation, called Nigeria. The case of Nigeria is bound up with disappointments and the failure of unfulfilled visions and unfulfilled dreams. But we cannot give up. Actually, this is the time to intensify the struggle.

### **Context and Focus**

This paper focuses on the necessary ingredients which guarantee the basic framework for a stable democracy with a good government within the African continent. For us in Nigeria, there is no viable option for people to move forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Looking beyond is part of the dream which many of us should engage in. Martin Luther King Jr., the black American non-violent activist did have a dream. Today, his dreams have become reality in the lives of millions of black Americans and other ethnic groups who had lost all hope of a dignifying existence in the 'new world'. Those who dream make things happen. Yet, for many of us in Africa, dreaming resembles an attempt to escape reality. But in real terms, our dreams are part of an optimism which stems truly from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that there shall be peace on earth and that God's kingdom shall reign, I believe that this 'adumbration', pre-shadow, is already foreseen in the pilgrim Church on earth.

No doubt, a lot of work still lies ahead. We have first of all to identify the direction of the current. And we do not know that the world and history are moving forward. We either join or get out. Joining the civilized and modern world is our ambition in this

global village. It is a task and a mandate for our generation. We shall succeed in establishing a stable democracy and a society where the rule of law and good governance are prevalent. I call on the readers to believe in their own strength and future. God, not man, is in charge. In the Bible of the ancients, it is recorded that Jesus the Lord challenged his disciples to a life of love and concern for others.

*By this shall all people know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another (John 15:17)*

The Second Ecumenical Council in the decree *Gaudium et Spes* of 1965 challenged the entire Church to; “consider the sign of the times and translate them in the light of the Gospel” (GS, No.2).

The document states that Christians engaged actively in modern economic and social progress and in the struggle for justice and charity; “*Must be convinced that they have much to contribute to the prosperity of mankind and to world peace*” (ibid No. 72).

Pope John Paul II, looking towards the year 2000, stated in his Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* and in the ‘1999 World message of Peace that’: “*The millennium is close at hand, and its approach has filled the hearts of many with hope for a more just and fraternal world. This is an aspiration which can, and indeed, must become a reality*”. He continues with the words:

*All are invited to walk the path of authentic conversion, which involves rejecting evil and making a positive choice for good.*

*On the threshold of the year 2000, it is our duty to renew our commitment at safeguarding the dignity of the poor and the marginalized, and to recognise in a practical way the rights of those who have no rights. Let us raise our voices on their behalf, by living in its fullness the mission, which Christ entrusted to his disciples. This is the spirit of the imminent Jubilee.*

The challenge is to be found in the granite fact that concrete action must be taken to rectify the anomaly of pauperised citizens all over the world in order to establish a more humane, equitable, fair and happy life for the majority of the world's peoples and citizens. In this way, we are able to interpret the Christian message within the context of those who are victims and have been denied an adequate opportunity for development; those who are stripped of their humanity, having been denied of the participation and enjoyment of the fruits of human, spiritual and material resources. Civil education assumes a fundamental role in this enterprise. This can be done if we articulate set objectives which empower the civil society and they include the agenda:

1. To develop a shared understanding of the meaning and content of civic and democracy education.
2. To raise awareness and improve the quality of civic education.
3. To encourage civic education in Nigeria by sharing experiences, materials and teaching methodologies.
4. To develop an action plan to make civic education a formal part of the curriculum of educational institutions.

5. To build a network to support the work of civic educators and others who are committed to the goals of civic education as the key to democracy development.
6. To encourage government, civil society and the private sector to collaborate for civic education.
7. To increase media participation in civic education efforts.

The issues include human rights and human dignity, development, justice and peace; gender equity; poverty alleviation; ecological balance; self-help project; educational empowerment etcetera. The various dimensions for strategic realisation are;

- The Civic Education Mandate
- Curriculum and Materials Development.
- Methodology and Training of Civic Educators
- Conflicts in Civic Education
- Institutional Cooperation and Partnerships between the Private Sector, NGOs Government
- Communications: Media, New Technologies and Resources Materials

With the above, we are able to mobilize ourselves for the tools of human rights education and action.

## Chapter 3

# Human Rights, Conflicts and Reconciliation: A Global Reckoning with Emphasis on Africa

### Reckoning with the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Now that we are well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and have seen the exit of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we owe ourselves a reckoning<sup>5</sup>. It does seem that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was history's bloodiest. It was also the most ideological. No other age had witnessed so many wars with such improved weapons of mass destruction, deceit, crisis, brutality and death as the twentieth century. In the new millennium, history dictates that we take notes and records to survey where we started, where we stand and where we are going. With a focus on Africa, the 20<sup>th</sup> century assumes the dimension of a holocaust. In spite of Africa's humanistic values and rich cultural heritage, history and spiritually, one wonders how the peoples of Africa have continued to suffer untold hardship caused often by outside influences through the slave trade,

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<sup>5</sup> Obiora Ike; speech on the occasion of receiving the Heinrich Pesch Prize in June 2010 for Eminence in "Social Thought and Action" presented by Prof. Dr. Lothar Roos in Cologne, Germany

colonialism and ongoing imperialistic exploitation, often camouflaged today as globalisation.

Where do the African people receive their strength and energy? Why has Africa refused to die? The difficult situation of enhancing and entrenching human rights and resolving conflicts on the African continent remains the same: Sierra Leone and Liberia have buried over ten percent of their population in the past decade and another thirty percent are refugees, maimed or completely shattered for life. The tragedy of Rwanda and Burundi is still fresh in our memories with its psychological trauma on the victims and on faraway television viewers. The Polisario in Mauritania, the Algerian civil war, the crisis between Libya and Chad over a decade, the Biafra - Nigerian civil war, Chad, Ethiopia and the entire Sahel region lasting well over two decades, shatter every human imagination and sensitivity. Africa has seen the worst of what human brutality could ever offer. Five hundred years of slave trade on black human beings who were exported in chains to Arabic countries, the Americas and to Europe left the continent depopulated and the African people in a diaspora of neither African nor alien.

Closely followed by the era of the colonial conquest of nation after nation, seeds of discord, foreign domination, external values, truncation of cultural lifestyles and the displacement and replacement of traditional ideas and systems at all levels gave room for a vacuum. This is the background for the present malaise facing the continent. With imposed rulers, the tyranny exhibited in the image of the brutal British-imposed Idi Amin

Dada over Uganda, one sees what virtually all the parts of the continent have to contend with to this day. Africa's rulers are appointed thousands of kilometres far away from their people by an international gang of those who 'call the shots' in Paris, London, Spain, Washington, or Saudi Arabia and are hardly elected in the continent itself. South Africa made an exit into freedom in 1994 with the world's greatest man of integrity; Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is Africa's true son, a sign of reconciliation and a symbol that the continent has still some glimmer of hope.

Bob Marley, the Reggae King did sing: "*We Africans will fight if we find it necessary, and we are confident in the victory...*" These conflicts colour AFRICA, the land known as the cradle of civilisation and the origin of *Homo Sapiens*. The wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with spillover into the 21<sup>st</sup>, have ravaged virtually every part of the continent and only a few families escaped from being victims. Apartheid, white racism and colonialism took over the reason for conflict in the southern parts of the continent, in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and the ongoing crisis in the two Congos involving the lake regions of Central and East Africa and leading to what the London Financial Times described as '*The First World War in Africa*'

This phenomenon of inhumanity and conflicts leading to wars, however, has been worldwide, not just limited to Africa. The 20<sup>th</sup> century left on its trails the first world war (1914 – 1917) which cost humanity over 20 million lives and the Communist Revolution in Russia stage-managed by Lenin and later Stalin claiming over 20 million lives. The Second World War (1939-

1945) proved more atrocious by brutally claiming the lives of more than a hundred million persons in Europe and elsewhere, rendering over 120 million people refugees and handicapped, resulting in 66 million prisoners who perished in the Soviet labour camps and scores of millions of others who died in Asia, Africa and other continents. Of these other continents, Latin America can write off the 1970s and part of the 1980s as the decades of wars, dictatorships and ideological antinomy. Of Asia, the worst tragedies happened in Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan to mention but a few. History books are replete with the details of how conflicts could be resolved by wars. The Old Romans did summarize it thus: “*Si vis pacem cole bellum*” (if you want peace, prepare for war).

No other century knew about the bomb, or even the Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, the SS 20's and 21's among all the most heinous arsenal of destructive weapons. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still fresh in our minds. The millions of massacred Jews and other minorities are daily recalled as a warning to those who care. And talking about children and women, many of them have been sent to early death through excruciating hunger, disease, tyranny, political instability, ignorance and homelessness. The United Nations statistics contain the facts and give us the data that daily 40,000 children, the majority living in Africa, die in our world due to situations of conflict, abuse of human rights, disease and hunger.

## The Century of Ideologies

Lacking faith, our age flourished with competing ideologies of economic, racial, colonial, cultural and social dimensions. The belief in ideologies led to the banishment of God and therefore of the truth among humans. By giving in to ideology, we lost the truth and our original orientation. False ideology blinds and becomes the atheist's substitute for faith. It was these false ideologies that misled humanity to believe and think that dictatorship is expedient, that freedom is a mirage. Ideologies made us believe that women are inferior to men, that black people are inferior to the white race, that all people may seemingly be equal but some are more equal than others. Ideology told us that lying is the rule. Ideologies sang the song of *Might is Right*: and that power is authority at the same time. That what you have is higher than what you are, in other words, having is more important than being. False ideologies gave us the idea that money is a world formula.

Same false ideologies made us believe that Capital is more important than the human being who produces it, and, that the absolute in creation is *Money, Power and Control*. Ideologies still persist today that teach us that war is the route to peace, that peace is possible without justice, that private property supersedes the common good and communal ownership in some form. In fact those other alternative theories like the *social market economy* or the idea that the “*universal destination of created goods*” destined for all is illusory. We have been told by ideologies that colour is more important than the human being who wears it, that racism is a new religion. That the majority carries the vote and that the

minority has no chance but to submit to the majority. Ideologies have been falsified to say that tradition is absolute and therefore that castes and so-called slaves have no equality with the freeborn, even if God created all.

These ideologies teach that people of other religions shall go to hell because they are not of our own denomination. Ideologies told us that intelligence is a racial property and the rest do not belong. Ideology taught us the class system. With these ideas, humanity allowed the emergence of such characters like Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, Idi Amin, Pinochet, Pop Pot, Papa Doc, Vorster, Ian Smith and the many African dictators all of whom *'neither feared God nor respected man'*. History today shows that their philosophical foundations were faulty. They failed and lied as we can now attest with the benefit of hindsight. This is my assessed background to the reality of conflicts worldwide and in Africa as we reckon with history and look into the twentieth century and the emergent new millennium.

### **The Century of Unlimited Possibilities**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen the invention and development of the aeroplane and of space travel. We have seen the widespread use of electricity, not just for lighting, heating and cooling, but also for making possible other revolutionary inventions like television and computers. The informatics and the telematics, the internet and satellite dish possibilities including the modern means of communication such as digital telephones have really reduced the entire world to a small village setting. Time and distance have been redefined. Regional cooperation has continued to increase

such as the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) and the USA-Asia-Pacific Alliance, for the mutual benefit of the stakeholders. Several wars and conflicts of recent dates are given global and regional solutions, a very positive development. The enthronement of democracy worldwide, the free market, the liberal society and the rule of law seem to assume dimensions that are very welcome and positive. Our century has conquered many diseases and through the discovery of the DNA began to understand many women and men and children of this planet. For us in Africa, malaria, fever and typhoid, dysentery and elephantiasis, tuberculosis and sickle cell anaemia, once diseases shrouded in our ignorance, stupor and superstition, have been brought into curative, explanatory and liberating medical practice. Children may not die again from an easily preventable ailment for which we gave the fortune tellers some yams and fowls to eat and blamed our ancestors and the gods for giving us a bad “*Chi*” (destiny)

The development of international organizations from 1899 and 1907 League conference which led to International Court of Justice, through the League of Nations to the United Nations, the UNESCO among others, have led to international cooperation and solidarity in many fields. Likewise of special mention are the modern Olympic Games and the International Football Federation, which has assisted the entire of humanity to a new form of relationship and collaboration via sports. Except for years 1916, 1940 and 1944, the Olympic Games have been held

regularly, demonstrating that the people of the planet can compete in friendship in spite of their many differences.

Slave trade, external colonialism and obnoxious forms of racism have been jettisoned in the law books and dismantled in many places. The acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the various international conventions, laws and practices on the worldwide scale encourages the people of the world to a faith in a new dawn for humanity. Of special relevance to Africa is the abrogation of the Trans-Atlantic, Trans-Indian and Trans-Saharan slave trade, which depopulated the continent for over four centuries, killing, maiming and depriving the black race of every remaining dignity which they had possessed.

The African soul, the African personality and the African psyche are yet to recover fully from this monumental disgrace. Our century has been supremely fruitful in its practical discoveries and in its magnificent institutions of political and economic liberty. It is hope in man and belief in the capacities and aspiration of entire humanity on the threshold of a new resolution. We are also able to increase our faith in the Church's ability and desire to become more and more, "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" in a more practical and concrete manner.

### **African Wisdom Calabashes**

In view of the problems caused by contending ideologies imbibed and internalized by people of all ages and places, with ideologies leading to the human predicament as we currently experience it in many places, one is forced to ask questions and search for

answers. Must this continue? What can we do? This is the scope of this paper. What should be our attitude to the conflicts around us? Should we take sides or must we always remain neutral? How do we show it? What chances of success do we have? Our questions and inquiry search for help and it does seem that local wisdom prevails, based on traditional reasoning and natural law. On the continent of Africa and among the Igbo of Nigeria, these answers are given in *Four African Wisdom Calabashes* as a seemingly necessary response. Can there be peace without justice? How did humanity come so low? What happened to our era in spite of the many avenues for peacebuilding and scientific possibilities available to humanity when compared to other epochs? How come that peaceful means were tried and exhausted before large portions of the people arrived at the painful conclusion that there was no avenue open for the peace and dignity of people than war, violence, confusion and anarchy? Why has it been difficult to achieve social justice, political participation, economic equality, cultural dignity and national liberation for the people? Why is it that our intellectuals and the elite praise and prefer models of political or economic experiments, which do not have roots in the context of their own people and history?

Why do we eulogize and accept systems that have continued to undermine the developmental prospects of our countries in Africa and elsewhere, be it the so-called wild fluctuation of the world market where unequal exchange takes place in comparison to industrial products of technologically advanced countries? Why do we accept the unbearable burden of external debts and even encourage further debt? How do we explain that until today in

the echelons and citadels of our academic and political processes, intelligent economists still believe that debt reduction and cancellation is not expedient and that the poor must die so that the rich may be richer? That in the zone of economic religion, the maximization of profit through money, power, monetarism and compound interest matter most? Finally, how come that despite the progress in humanity's technical and information machinery, with a new wealth of resources, both educational and industrial, humanity has not arrived at the new societal foundation with the four African wisdom Calabashes. The wisdom in these calabashes for the rebirth and renaissance of Africa are summarized thus:

### **Free and Mixed Enterprise Economy Calabash**

This is a liberal but socially responsible 'market economy' within an environment where people matter, where self-help is the best help; where subsidiary is complemented by solidarity and the common good; and finally where sustainable development is based on available resources that think cyclical to include the past, the present and the future.

### **Participatory Democracy and Political Pluralism Calabash**

This is consensus building and self-determination based on African wisdom of "*onye anwuna ma ibe ya efuna*" (*live and let live*) which is guaranteed by sustainable cultural values and the role of the elders, traditional institutions, social groups particularly those of women and youths.

### **Good Governance Calabash**

This based on principles of freedom, justice, peace, truth and international co-existence in a world where people have the ability to be original and authentic, yet linked to others without any external definition, manipulation or teleguidance.

### **Cultural Identity and Integrity Calabash**

This recognizes the dialogue of civilizations and cultures in a mutually enriching atmosphere, where respect for the Sacred in creation is assured, respect for life guaranteed, traditions of people which do not oppose life is protected and equality of all persons in a just and non-gender category promoted.

### **Conflicts, Promoting Human Rights and Reconciliation Challenges**

*No human right is safe if we fail to commit ourselves to safeguarding all of them. When the violation of any fundamental human right is accepted without reaction, all other rights are placed at risk. It is, therefore, essential that we should defend them. Only when a culture of human rights which respects different traditions becomes an integral part of humanity's moral patrimony, shall we be able to look to the future with serene confidence. How could there be war if every human right were respected? The culture of human rights cannot fail to be a culture of peace. Every violation of human rights carries within it the seeds of possible conflict... If one people are crushed to death by force, who will dare promise the rest of the world of security in a lasting peace?*

(Pope John Paul II wrote in his 1999 World day of Peace on 1st January 1999)

In this very powerful message titled '*Respect for Human Rights: the Secret of True Peace*', the Pope reflects in a profound manner on what the Church's role is and must be a sign to the nations. He points both to a prophetic model and a practice method, which lead the way of realizing a world without conflicts. In his reflection, the pontiff outlines the role and competence of the Church to teach the world and to witness this in her own. We summarize the foundations and meaning inherent in some of these rights hereunder:

- a) *Respect for Human Rights and the Heritage of Humanity.*
- b) *The Universality and Indivisibility of Human Rights as a Cross-Cultural Truth.*
- c) *The Right to Life, Foundation for all other Rights.*
- d) *Religious Freedom, the Heart of Human Rights.*
- e) *The Right to Participate, a Condition for the Exercise of Freedom.*
- f) *The Right of Minorities and other Discriminated Ethnic Groups as Sign of Progress.*
- g) *The Right to Self Fulfilment as a guide to True Freedom and Happiness.*
- h) *Global Progress in Solidarity the Guarantee for Lasting Peace.*
- i) *Responsibility for the Environment, a Basis for Sustainable future.*
- j) *The Right to Peace, founded on the Practice of Justice.*
- k) *A Culture of Human Rights as the Responsibility of all.*

All documents available in ancient cultures and civilizations, in literature and art, the fundamental values point to the nobility of peace as a basis for progress. Human right is that moment where people are human and authentically mysterious in “the image of their creator”. People must be enabled to manage, transform and reconcile conflicts and conflicting parties. Among the various reasons hindering the process of human rights and conflict management, ignorance and dishonesty stand eloquent. This remains our challenge in Africa and worldwide. In the Old Testament, the New Testament, the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, magisterial pronouncements, there is an insistence on building bridges across ethnic, religious, gender, language, racial, class or otherwise distinctions. This insistence corresponds to the signs of the time.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights of 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1948 is a document that posits the same tenets as a basis of peace and reconciliation for mankind. The African Church teaches that conversion implies conflict resolution and the building of communities of peace and justice. The entire philosophy of basic Christian communities and the *Ujamaa* experience are practical examples.

A resource pack for conflict transformation published in 1996 and edited by Lan Doucet gives us some data on these matters. Violent conflicts seem to be an endemic feature of human history. According to one estimate, there have been 14,500 wars during the last 5,600 years of human history. Another study argues that

there have been only 286 years of peace during the last 3,400 years of history. According to analysts, since 1945, there have been over 165 wars. In 1994 alone, there were 31 wars waged in 27 locations. If smaller armed conflicts are taken into account the total is much higher. Attempting a more detailed record of the incidence of armed conflict, the PLOOM Foundation, a non-partisan Dutch-based human rights research centre, listed a total of 160 violent and potentially violent conflicts in the single year of 1992, consisting of 32 wars, 69 low intensity armed conflicts in which the violence is more sporadic and less intense, and 59 serious disputes in which one of the parties has threatened the use of violence, deployed military troops or made a show of force. Many of these are frequently characterized as internal or civil wars, such as the Bauchi and Katsina riots and the Zangokataf riot. And what the United Nation Human Development Report 1994 makes disturbing is the human and social cost of such conflicts. Conservative estimates claim that between 1945 and 1989 there have been 21.8 million war deaths. Today, the vast majority of these are civilian rather than military, approximately 85%, up from about 50% in the 1950s. One report holds that:

Deaths are only a fraction of the human losses; many more people are injured and material losses further increase the loss of health or life in indirect, delayed ways. Just five wars of the 1980s (in Uganda, Mozambique, Angola, Afghanistan and Iraq/Iran) wars uprooted seventeen million people, over seven million of them driven or fleeing to foreign countries. Some countries have

virtually disintegrated as functioning societies... Others are on the verge of disintegration.

These statistics should make uncomfortable reading. They should also lead us to ask whether such levels of human suffering are necessary, and if there are better ways of managing and resolving the seemingly intractable differences which lie at the heart of many of these violent conflicts. Our attempt is to see beyond the complexity of human exigencies and the nature of conflict as a multidimensional social phenomenon and an integral feature of human existence. Rather, we must assert that though essential to the ongoing processes of history and social change, conflict can be overcome since humanity desires and yearns for transformation and peace. *“Our hearts are not at rest and shall not rest until they rest and find peace in thee O Lord”* (St. Augustine).

## **Conclusion:**

### **Towards Genuine Conflict Reconciliation and Human Rights Protection**

The Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) has in the last three decades spent considerable time and resources on human rights, conflict management, settlement and resolution. The impact on the lives of the peoples and the institutions within and without the territory of the Diocese of Enugu has been enormous. What CIDJAP is doing in Enugu, others can do elsewhere. CIDJAP's method is the theory of practice that is the basis of contextual theology. It is also incarnated in the Igbo worldview which believes in - *Ekwu Eme* -

(matching words with actions). Two methods are applied but they do not solve all the problems each time. These criteria are extremely demanding and few conflicts may be said to have been resolved

- **Conflict Settlement** means reaching an agreement on a particular aspect of the conflict rather than the conflict as a whole. It frequently addresses the interests of the parties without really addressing the underlying needs. It is most often characterized as a compromise solution involving surrendering 'a piece of the cake'. A successful compromise is when the 'cake' is divided so as to leave each party thinking it has the largest piece. Direct violence may end but the parties still remain dissatisfied because all their interests and needs were not fully addressed.

- **Conflict Resolution**, by contrast, is a comprehensive outcome, in which the underlying causes of the conflict are removed so that there are no latent, residual elements that may trigger a return to violence. Resolution entails integration of the parties' objectives so that neither side has had to compromise. Its aim is a non-hierarchical, non-coercive solution that focuses on the underlying causes of the conflict and the establishment of legitimate relationships between the parties. International alert has identified seven dimensions of genuine conflict resolution which are the best guarantee for permanent solutions. Upon the realisation and practice of these principles we could once again start the new world of our dreams, namely to renew the face of the earth. These principles are:

- **Completeness**, wherein issues in the conflict have disappeared or cease to be important
- **Acceptable** to all parties, not just to one or to their elites
- **Self-supporting** with no necessity for third-party sanctions to maintain the agreement
- **Satisfactory** to all, where parties perceive the outcome as just according to their value system
- **Uncompromising** and with no goals sacrificed in the form of compromise solutions
- **Innovativeness** in establishment of new, positive and legitimate relations for parties
- **Uncoerced** agreement arrived at without imposition by an outside force.

In implementing agreement towards a resolution of conflicts, two stages appear very important: *reconciliation and reconstruction*. The long term and structural nature of conflict resolution and transformation, including settlement, become clear when reconciliation and reconstruction in the aftermath of violent conflicts are considered. These two processes are mutually supportive and interconnected. The process leads to justice, to harmony, to order and, therefore, to human fulfilment and peace.

This is the *summum bonum* of the philosophers, that if people would be taught the truth that human beings are fundamentally equal, if people would agree to the basic guidelines of justice which insists on 'to each his or her due', if humanity would learn to respect one another on the basis of the ontology of the 'imago

*dei*, if all sorts of bias whether cultural or historical were given up or at least reduced to a minimally tolerable level allowable for mutual co-existence and the guarantee of basic rights, if fundamental respect for the dignity of each being would be re-echoed and made an educational foundation for every child in this world, that conflicts may reduce. But above all truth must prevail. Most conflicts take place because truth has been ejected and lies have taken over. Jesus once told his followers: “*Only the Truth shall set you free*”. As Michael Novak, the 24<sup>th</sup> recipient of the Temptation Address of 1994 delivered in the London, Abbey wrote:

*To obey the truth is to be free, and in certain extremities nothing is more clear to the tormented mind, nothing more vital to the survival of self-respect, nothing so important to one’s sense of remaining a worthy human being of being no one’s cog, part of no one’s machine, and resister against the kingdom of lies nothing is so dear as to hold to truth. In fidelity to truth lies human dignity.*

Pope John Paul II, looking towards the year 2000, states in his Apostolic Letter ‘*Tertio Millenio Adveniente*’ and in the 1999 World Message of Peace, that:

*The new millennium has filled the hearts of many with hope for a more just and fraternal world. This is an aspiration which can, and indeed, must become a reality. All are invited to walk the path of authentic conversion, which involves rejecting evil and making a positive choice for good. On the threshold of the year*

*2000, it is our duty to renew our commitment to safeguarding the dignity of the poor and the marginalised, and to recognize in a practical way the rights of those who have no rights. Let us raise our voices on their behalf, by living in its fullness the mission which Christ entrusted to his disciples! This is the spirit of the now imminent Jubilee.*



## Chapter 4

# Addressing Issues of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in the Church and in the World

*“One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism”  
(Ephesians 4:5)*

### **Gratitude and Reckoning:**

It is a great honour and privilege to be invited to address the entire faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, a diocese that is home to many of us<sup>6</sup>. I share and bring sentiments of joy, prayers and well wishes of the people of God in Enugu during this momentous occasion of the celebration (within 20 years of its erection), of the First Synod of Nsukka Diocese under the broad theme: **‘One Lord, One faith, One Baptism’** (Ephesians 4:5). With Nsukka and its Church and people, we are one. I have come to share my reflections in all humility, taking the language of the Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI expressed in *Caritas in Veritate* to address you on issues of **reconciliation, justice and peace**. I shall specifically apply these to the concrete realities and the daily excruciating experiences of the people of God in the ecclesiastical circumscription of Nsukka Diocese, often torn between hope and

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<sup>6</sup> Presented at the First Nsukka Catholic Diocesan Synod on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 2010.

hopelessness, faith and doubt, ambitions and challenges, wishes and reality, vision and despair, abandonment and encouragement. Like St. Paul, we are invited in the Spirit to become: **“One Body called to Peace, in Christ”** (Colossians 3:15). My fraternal respects and gratitude go to the principal organizers of the Synod under His Lordship, Most Reverend Francis Okobo, Bishop of Nsukka, who, together with the clergy, religious and lay faithful have continued to give credible witness to the Faith we all have received and continue to nurture in these parts since 1990. This date from the available records circulated in the *‘Instrumentum Laboris’* and the *‘Lineamenta’* prepared by the Nsukka Diocesan Synod Committee marks the historical beginning of evangelisation in the Northern parts of the Igbo nation including the territory of the Catholic Diocese of Enugu, mother of Nsukka Diocese where we have our historical ancestry starting from the *Eke Mission* with the arrival of the first missionaries on our shores.

Their coming was heralded and promoted by a man who refused to be baptized as a Christian since he was strongly anchored in the faith and essence of his ancestors in traditional religion, yet accepted and respected the human qualities and developmental potentials which Christianity brought with it, thus, acknowledging the Christian value and message of Christ for a people torn between the past, present and future. Paramount Chief Onyeama of Eke, through a mysterious wise clinging to Christian education brought by the European Catholic missionaries, opened a new gateway for his sons, daughters and people, thus, leaving posterity to inherit Catholicism, modernity, humanity, health services and development potentials as veritable tools linked with the Gospel

of Jesus Christ in Igbo land. He becomes, therefore, a pioneer and paradox for evangelisation, although a 'pagan', who ushers in a new missionary era, the Catholic brand, a remote but truly historical background to the Synod event which we celebrate these days here in the Diocese of Nsukka. We may add that this courage, daring, confrontation and prominent role of the paramount Chief Onyeama of Eke and many other notable personalities from the Agbaja and Nsukka areas of Northern Igbo land in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gives us the foundation and the realisation upon which we can make our expression in the 'One Faith, One Lord, One baptism' under the Spirit, by the mystery of the incarnation, the "*Word made Flesh who dwelt among us*" (John 1: 14). Since history cannot be divided into watertight compartments, one event follows another in continuity of past-present-future. Our gratitude must go out to these uncountable predecessors as we recall their memory with respect and adulation.

They, the European and indigenous missionaries handed over to us what they had themselves received in the universality of the 'One Faith' founded on Peter the Rock by the master Jesus Christ himself, truly human and truly Godlike in a faith shared within a Church that the Catechism tells us is "*One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic*". Thus today, the good news of Christ has found its way into our hearts and souls, huts and village squares, families and homes, feasts and artefacts, works and religion, economy and thought patterns, philosophy, symbols, language and cultural idiosyncrasies. This news characterizes our ambitions and aspirations and has become our actual destiny. This good news

was made possible because of the co-operation of human elements including many great ancestors, catechists, local chiefs, teachers, missionary religious men and women, great people, many of whom have gone before us, “*marked with the sign of faith*” (St. John, Book of Revelations). Those great men from the western hemisphere, mainly from Germany, France, Ireland and other European nations, who were all early missionaries, celebrated the word of God on our soil, broke bread in the Eucharist and gave us the education, civilisation, health services and human developmental qualities upon which we as a people, an indigenous, African, republican Igbo tribe today sing the *Te Deum* and the *Exultet* in our native tongue. We have by His Grace become the ‘*primus inter pare’s* and the largest provider of missionary vocations amongst the many tribes and peoples within Africa and the Universal Church, becoming by His Grace, the first in position, quantity and quality when compared with any of our peers within the entire continent of Africa made up of 54 countries. The Igbo Church with Nsukka at its northern boundaries has an added advantage to contribute their talents and gifts to a world that is hungry and thirsty for the Word of God and eager to receive the reconciliation of all of creation in Christ, “*through Him, with Him and in Him*” (Doxology at the Liturgy of the Holy mass after Consecration).

Nsukka Diocesans like many others, have joined this emerging global village, even when things seemed to fall apart with the gradual intrusion of new values linked to nationalisation, westernisation and modernisation challenging traditional values and cultures and in some ways, purifying and complementing the

natural faith of our ancestors with a new faith and lifestyle and newness that could only be said to be complete in Christ, the perfect human being. May the Holy Spirit of God enrich and lead us all to a deeper awareness of the mysteries we cherish and the fruits of this *Syn hodós* (walking and working together) for God's greater glory and honour Amen. The Second Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa was convoked in the Vatican by Pope Benedict XVI and took place from 4<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009. The theme chosen was "The Church in Africa in service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). The Synod followed upon the first Synod which was held in the year 2004 on the theme of Evangelization wherein it identified five thematic areas for the practice of evangelisation, namely: proclamation, enculturation, dialogue, justice and peace and the means of social communications. The fruit of that Synod has not been adequately digested by the Church in Africa.

Permit me to x-ray these issues, my Lord Bishop, brother priests, dear brothers and sisters gathered at this Synod and to provoke your thoughts to critique our fear, lethargy and lack of courage on issues of reconciliation, justice and peace within our Church today, our country Nigeria, the African continent and the world at large. Our submission is that Faith in the resurrected Lord, who died and suffered, liberates and only in this liberation that has truth and charity as ingredients would justice and peace be found. This is the foundation for a true reconciliation that is both sustainable and *Christocentric*. "*You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32).

Reconciliation in God gives believers, including those in Nsukka diocese access to the power of the Holy Spirit so they can be reconciled to others. The work of reconciliation goes beyond relations among persons and peoples and extends itself to all creation (cf. Romans 8:19). In fact, through Jesus Christ, God the Father has reconciled all things to himself, the things of heaven and the things of earth (cf. Col 1:20). If the Church is to fulfill well the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to her by the Lord Jesus, she herself must become more and more a reconciled community, a place where reconciliation is proclaimed to all people of good will. *“For thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15). Jesus Christ, in insisting that he be baptised by St. John the Baptist, wished to do what was just before the Father, thus fulfilling his will. Because of this, he received heaven’s approval. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and the Father acknowledged his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased (cf. Mt 3:16 - 17). Obedience to God’s will, flows from justice toward one’s neighbour, a fact also indicated among other things, in the Decalogue (cf. Exodus 20: 2 - 17).

The rights of God come before and serve as the basis for the rights of individuals and peoples. Jesus Christ himself promised that God will readily give justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night (cf. Luke 18: 6- 8). Seen among the vast numbers of the elect are the infirm, the poor, the enslaved, widows, migrants and persons in the periphery of society. These are the very recipients of God’s preferential love, so much so that he Lord

identifies himself with them: “as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40). In particular, Jesus Christ declares blessed those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake (cf. Matthew 5: 10). He himself is the example par excellence of God’s righteous and gentle servant who justifies many (cf. Mt 12: 18 - 21; Isaiah 40: 1-4; and 53:11). Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the justice of Christians goes beyond that of the Pharisees (cf. Mt 21:32) and becomes mercy (cf. Mt 9: 13; 13:7). Even penitent sinners, who believe in God and do his will, as did the publican and prostitute, have a place in the Kingdom of justice and peace (cf. Mt: 21:32). Retributive justice must be integrated with reparative justice, in Nsukka Diocese, in Africa and everywhere in the world. Jesus Christ “came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near” (Ephesians 2:17). The Church never tires in proclaiming the blessedness of reconciliation, justice and peace in the oftentimes-unsure paths taken by the world and in the agonizing moments of history. In doing so, the Church is faithful to her Lord who went about all cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity” (Mt 9:33). Jesus Christ, while clearly affirming that his Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), gave many signs of it in the course of his life on earth by coming to the aid of people in spiritual and material need. The full realization of the Kingdom will come about in heaven, when the elect, those reconciled to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, will live the fullness of justice and peace in the communion of all the saints, among whom the Blessed Virgin Mary occupies a special place.

### **The Africa Synod on Reconciliation Justice and Peace**

*“Be reconciled to God”* (2 Corinthians 5:20). This pressing invitation to the Christians of Corinth and the whole world addressed in a special way to Christ’s Faithful and all people of good will in Africa including Nsukka Diocesans. Our situation shows manifold social and religious divisions, inequities and poverty, all due to the personal sins committed with negative ramifications caused by humans in society. At the same time, they display the urgent character of the work of reconciliation to God and neighbour. God the Father, in his infinite goodness and never-ending mercy, initiates the process of reconciliation through the workings of the Holy Spirit. He has reconciled us to himself through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who has entrusted to his Church the ministry of reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor. 5:19). To accomplish this task, the Risen Lord gave his Holy Spirit to his disciples for the forgiveness of sins (Cf. John 20: 23). Central to the reconciliation between God and humanity is the pierced heart of the crucified Lord, from which blood and water continue to flow (cf. John 19:34) in the Sacrament of our salvation. Through the Cross, Jesus Christ has reconciled two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, destroying hostility between them and making them one body (cf. Ephesians 3: 14 - 16).

Unfortunately, not everyone accepts Jesus and the gifts of his peace. In his battle with the darkness of sin and death, the Lord himself became a sign of contradiction (Lk. 2: 34). He cried over the fate of Jerusalem because he did not know the way of peace (cf. Luke 19:42). Despite the trials, Christ’s Faithful have received the promises of the Lord’s peace, because he overcame the world

(cf. John 16:33). We exchange the Lord's peace during the Eucharistic Liturgy, before proceeding to receive Holy Communion. "*Peace to this house!*" (Luke 10:5). In following the Lord Jesus, Christ's Faithful are called to be peacemakers. Those who do this work will be blessed and called children of God (Mt. 5:9). Peace is the great gift, that Christ's disciples must proclaim to everyone, according to the mandate received from the Father (cf. John 20:21). This mission of peace has never been timelier in Africa because of her conflicts, wars and violence. Seeking peace requires various honourable relations. Peace has personal, familial and communitarian aspects. To the sinful, penitent woman, the Lord offers forgiveness and peace (cf. Luke 7:50). The disciples bring peace to the people they visited in their homes (cf. Mt. 10:13; Luke 10:5- 6). Peace is destined in every way for everyone, starting with the disciples themselves: "*Be at peace with one another*" (cf. Mt. 9:50).

### **Practical Applications**

The tasks to be accomplished are enormous and I mention just a few of the following aspects for consideration by this Synod with reference to the practical applications of the theme of reconciliation, justice and peace:

- The family which is the first Church and the foundation of society;
- The dignity of women in both Church and society which needs to be fostered and elevated, integrated and better promoted and protected;
- Self-sufficiency of the Local Church, of its peoples and of structures through the guarantee of financial and material

wherewithal for the fight against poverty, disease, ignorance, superstition and oppression; One would think in this context of the establishment of micro-finance and income generation projects that benefit the people;

- Political and social liberty whereby people are enabled to regain their dignity and human rights to self-determination and originality; This includes all efforts towards legitimate political representation, electoral reforms, civic duties of voting and being voted into positions and mobilization of people to be constructively engaged;
- Prophetic mission whereby the Church remains the advocate and voice of the voiceless through its Justice and Peace Commissions, the Caritas Organs and all other forms of charitable organizations where human development and human potentials are championed;
- The promotion of a culture of dialogue within the Church and the larger society whereby between the clergy, the Lay Faithful and the hierarchy, there is openness, forgiveness, union, mutual respect and access to shared information, equal and fair hearing, justice and charity.

May the signs of the Kingdom be increasingly multiplied for the good of the Catholic Church in Nsukka Diocese; may this Synod usher in a new beginning, a *Syn-hodos*, (walking and working together) for the re-awakening and the '*adumbratio*' mentioned in the prophets showing "*the already begun, but not yet fulfilled kingdom, the pre-shadow*" of the reconciliation, justice and peace which is the common human aspiration for Nsukka Diocesans, its peoples and neighbourhood, particularly at this time.

## Chapter 5

# Ethics, Morality and Moral Philosophy

### What is Ethics?

As its simplest, ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. The term is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means custom, habit, character or disposition.

Ethics covers the following dilemmas:

- How to live a good life
- Our rights and responsibilities
- The language of right and wrong
- Moral decisions – what is good and bad?

Our concepts of ethics have been derived from religion, philosophy and cultures. They infuse debates on topics like abortion, human rights and professional conduct.

### Approaches to Ethics

Philosophers nowadays tend to divide ethical theories into three areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics.

- Meta-ethics deals with the nature of moral judgment. It looks at the origins and meaning of ethical principles.
- Normative ethics is concerned with the content of moral judgments and the criteria for what is right or wrong.
- Applied ethics looks at controversial topics like war, animal rights and capital punishment.

### **Introduction:**

Professor Father Austin Fagothey, in his book *Right and Reason*, has reviewed the science of ethics in theory and practice and has done extensive work on giving morality a scientific basis. Reference to his work based on the Thomistic natural law tradition and the Greek Aristotelian philosophy is herewith acknowledged profoundly.

Every distinct branch of learning must have a subject matter that it studies from a more or less definite aspect or point of view. The subject matter of Morality, Moral Philosophy and Ethics is simply HUMAN CONDUCTS. Human conducts are those actions that a person performs consciously and willfully and for which he or she is held accountable. The aspect or point of view from which ethics and morality studies human conduct is that of its rightness or wrongness, its 'oughtness', if we may manufacture a noun corresponding to the ethical verb 'ought'.

Ethics is not interested in what a person does, except to compare it with what that person ought to do. We call such actions that a person ought to do right. We call such actions that a person ought not to do wrong. Teachers and students of ethics, that is of

moral philosophy, no matter of what shade, agree that the investigation of the 'OUGHT' is the distinctive feature of ethics; the one thing that separates it from every other study or discipline. Ethics then is both a practical and a normative science that discovers, explains and demonstrates the principles and rules of right conduct.

The point of views of the 'ought' is the moral point of view. 'Moral' cannot be defined in the sense that something else could that is a species or instance of some more generic reality. 'Morals' and 'Morality' can only be described. Moral means human in the sense of ought, the sense of being normative (should), so we can say that moral means 'normatively human' or what the human being ought to be. What humans ought not to do is considered 'Immoral'. What they ought to do is 'Moral'. Morality and Moral Philosophy are terms that refer to the principles that govern, or should govern, the conduct of human beings and the rational actions of persons, in their peculiar circumstances of life, according to good conscience, reason, common sense and divine law. Whereas, Moral Theology judges and advises on the morality of actions and of agents in the light of man's true and last end which is the vision of God, Moral Philosophy on the other hand judges and advises on the morality of actions based on rational behaviour called 'Ethics'.

Ethics as the history of philosophy portrays, has for its purpose, the interpretation of this fact of human life-the acknowledgement of right and wrong in human conduct. This fact that people do make judgments of right and wrong is the basic fact of experience

from which ethics takes its start. The person who does whatever he or she wants, with no regard for what he or she ought to do, is outlawed from society and hunted down like a wild beast. Philosophy, as an interpretation of human life, cannot afford to overlook so widespread an experience but must investigate it and explore all that it involves. If people are correct in distinguishing right from wrong, we need to know why and on what grounds this judgment is justified.

We find throughout the human race, a tendency to judge that there are three kinds of acts:

- Those that a person ought to do
- Those that a person ought not to do
- Those that a person may either do or not do

### **The Origin of Ethics**

Where did ethics come from? Is it a human invention or something we owe to our pre-human ancestors? We need to put aside some myths that still obscure our thinking on these matters - the myth that society is an artificial construct and the myth that nature is red in tooth and claw. Then we can look at what we now know about the social lives of other animals, especially other mammals, and by this means, find clues to the origins of human ethics.

### **Ethics in Small - Scale Societies**

Early human beings lived in small nomadic groups. Examining the ethical systems of contemporary small-scale societies, such as the

traditional Africans, helps us to understand why and to what extent, some ethical values and principles are universal, or nearly so, among human beings, while others are subject to wide variations.

### **Ancient Ethics and the Great Ethical Traditions**

The earliest surviving documents related to ethics were written by the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, around five thousand years ago. They shed light on the initial development of ethics in settled societies. Other early ethical writings show the nature of ethics in ancient Egypt and in early Hebrew civilization. There are many ethical traditions to which people living in those areas looked to for guidance in their actions. What is distinctive about these traditions? Do they teach what is right? What is the ultimate criterion of right actions?

This question is responded to in various traditions of humanity such as found in the following:

- Indian Ethics – Hinduism – everything essential for people, the world and nature to exist and prosper together in harmony;
- Buddhist Ethics – the enlightened perspective of the Buddha with five rules and seven virtues - generosity, proper conduct, renunciation, transcendental wisdom, energy, tolerant patience and honesty;
- Classical Chinese Ethics – around the topics of: what is the best way; how does one make ethical choices; what can a

State do to create a just society; and what we should concretely do;

- Jewish Ethics – Judaism – normative ethics found in the Torah (Ten Commandments) - the laws and its fulfilment;
- African ethics – Life – community, nature in harmony of body and spirit;
- Christian Ethics – love;
- Islamic Ethics – the Laws fulfilled;
- Inka Latin American indigenous worldviews – the cyclical natural life of doing good.

The summary of all these traditions is the belief and practice that the common Good precedes individual Good and that Morality, Ethics and doing the Right are interconnected with the Good Life.

### **Western Philosophical Ethics**

The dominant position of Western civilization today suggests that the Western tradition of philosophical thinking about ethics exerts a strong influence on all contemporary discussions of ethics.

*In short reference we consider the following schools of thought:*

- Ethics in Ancient Greece
- Medieval and Renaissance Ethics
- Modern Moral Philosophy

How ought I to live?

The fundamental practical questions of ethics - what ought I to do and how ought I to live - make up theories, and are the more abstract part of which is known as normative ethics. Normative is concerned with guiding action towards the right thing to do. We can examine this in the following schools of thought:

- **Natural Law**

Natural law teaches how ought I to live in accordance with human nature.

- **Kantian Ethics**

Kant's claim that all rational beings ought to obey a 'categorical imperative' derived from a universal law of reason has been much acclaimed. Do the thing because it is right.

- **The Social Contract Tradition**

Can morality be thought of as an implicit agreement we make with our fellow human beings in order to gain the benefits of a co-operative social life? This initially attractive view must face several variations on the idea of the social contract as it was developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

- **Egoism**

Egoism tells us to live so as to further our own interests. Psychological egoists think that we all do this anyway. And so, it scarcely needs to be advocated. Other philosophical egoists advocate the pursuit of one's own interest as the rational and even ethical way to live. Despite doubts as to whether egoism is

properly classified as an ethical theory, it does provide a challenging answer to the fundamental practical questions of how we ought to live.

### - **Contemporary Deontology**

Deontological theories of ethics tell us that the most important aspects of how we ought to live are governed by moral rules that ought not to be broken, even when breaking them might have better consequences. To assess such a view, we need to understand how the rules are to be framed and what acts are to count as a breach of them. Exploring these questions leads us to a need to distinguish between intention and foresight, and raises doubts about the coherence of the common notion of obedience to a rule.

### - **An Ethic of Prima - Facie Duties**

An ethic of prima - facie duties is based on a distinctive notion of what it is to have a duty. Prima facie duties may in particular circumstances, yield to other duties. Thus, they avoid some of the harsher consequences of a more rigid deontological ethic. But they encounter other objections.

### - **Consequentialism**

Utilitarianism is an example of the consequentialist theory. It tells us that we ought always to do whatever has the best consequences. In the case of classical utilitarianism, 'best consequences' is understood in terms of the greatest possible increase of pleasure over pain while other theories may share the view that we ought to do what has the best consequence, while

dissenting from the classical utilitarian view that pleasure is the sole intrinsic good; and pain the only intrinsic evil.

### - **Utility and the Good**

It is a duty and imposes an obligation to promote good. What things are good in themselves? Utilitarianism suggests that only pleasure is good in itself. But subsequent versions of utilitarianism have suggested different and perhaps more convincing answers.

### - **Virtue theory**

Perhaps what I ought to do is the wrong question to ask. We might ask instead: what kind of person should I be? Virtue theory focuses on this latter question and on the virtues that make up good character.

### - **Rights**

Some hold that morality can be based on rights. Others regard them as derivatives from a more fundamental moral principle or set of principles. Whatever the view taken on this question, it is widely thought that at least a partial answer to the question of how we ought to live is given by the injunction to respect the rights of others.

### - **Application of Moral Philosophy and Morality**

These theories can be applied in the situations of world poverty, environmental rights, euthanasia, abortion, sexual moral questions, personal relationships, equality, discrimination and preferential treatment, animal care, business ethics, punishment, politics and the problems of dirty hands, war and peace.

The Nature of Ethics is found in concrete phenomena and life situations considered under Realism, Intuitionism, Naturalism, Subjectivism, Relativism, Universal Prescriptivism.

### **Conclusion:**

The debate about morality and agreeable and acceptable rational behaviour continues worldwide. On virtually every item under heaven, there are many opinions.

We cannot shy away from the fact that morality and ethical demands accompany us daily in both private life and the public domain. Often, we live quiet private lives that contradict what we stand for in public life. There is a growing demand that people's private and public lives, and indeed, beliefs, are congruous and identical.

It is important to conclude that Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher and moral philosopher of all time gave humanity an injunction that summarizes all that we have tried above to summarize and explicate.

Jesus said: Virtue, Ethics and Morality is found fully in the love of God and love of neighbour, the love of God above all things and the love of one's neighbour as oneself. This according to him is the fulfilment of the law and the prophets.

## Chapter 6

# One Body called to Peace – Signs of the Times

The dramatic and tragic events around the world during which we hold this international meeting, considering the terrorist attacks in various countries, expose the fragile foundations upon which states, nations and people have built their hopes<sup>7</sup>. With thousands of innocent victims, dead, and many more maimed, wounded, traumatized or affected by the loss of dear ones and relations, a full circle of moaning, rage, sorrow, pains and groaning in the land has been created. We express deep sympathies to the victims of this madness and ask in prayer that the deceased may rest in God's peace. Amen.

The interconnectedness of our world has been manifested. People living in faraway lands in Asia, Africa and in remote villages have experienced, via modern communication networks in print, audio and visual media, these terrorizing and catastrophic events in the USA. Their lives have been affected in many ways. Airlines have suspended flights for some time in some countries or tightened security, disrupting people's plans and peaceful movements of passengers. Events long planned worldwide have been cancelled.

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<sup>7</sup> Obiora Ike; delivered at the International Prisons Chaplains Association (IPCA) Worldwide Conference held in Kroonstad, South Africa in 2000.

The entire world economy is traumatised and some markets have been exposed to bankruptcy and disruption. The consequences are not foreseeable at all. Social and political events show new alliances or disruptions. The threat of *war is real*, but there is no real *war front* as we used to know it. Fear exists in the world, in society, in Church and in individual people's lives. Questions are asked but answers are very slow in coming, or they are altogether insufficient. *"To whom shall we go?" (John Chapter 6).*

How did humanity come so low? What has happened to universally accepted values and modes of behaviour? Why these senseless killings, and now, not only in the USA but also in Nigeria, of victims of religious fanaticism in Jos with more than 500 dead, due to Islamic aggression against Christians and indigents of Jos area. What of the continued massacres, suicide bombings and unending civil strife taking place in Israel, in Palestine and elsewhere?

Who can explain these worldwide phenomena, beyond wars and civil strife of other forms of aggression, brutality, human wickedness, abandoned children, abuse of men and women and poverty-stricken faces worldwide in the midst of plenty, wounded families, unemployed youth in cities prone to crime, and, the cheating and injustices of sorts that characterize the human condition and the human predicament, indicating disaster whichever way one turns to?

## **The Dilemma**

What seems a senseless ideology is that these perpetrators of crimes, injustices, terrorisms, abuses and killings believe to act in the name of religion, and in fact in the name of God. But they act in the faith and belief of their own cause and agenda including acceptance to die for their cause. This is the dilemma faced by Israelites of old who created false gods and placed them side by side with Yahweh to worship. The Old Testament Injunction seems to be true, even till date;

*“Thou shall not have false gods but me”  
(Deuteronomy 5: Exodus 20)*

Have we not created false gods and deities and turned them into our objects of worship, leading to mass error, confusion of values, disorientation, distortion, false lives and irrational preponderance of human values? It has come to the extent that individualism, selfishness, mistrust, disbelief, greed, avarice, power drunkenness, survival, money and dishonour have been turned into new gods and values, new ethics and acceptable standards of behaviours, objects of our worship. All in the name of globalisation. Where do we go from here?

## **The Consequence**

Talking about these situations of conflict and crisis in individual, social and national events, we notice further the abject poverty and general misery presently facing our peoples in various continents traceable to human factors and structures of injustice; bad governance, mismanagement of scarce resources; corruption;

ethnic bigotry; religious fanaticism; and burdens resulting from international debts and unjust economic world order. We also observe with sadness, value disorientation, the collapse of social and traditional values and the emergence of decadent welfare systems, which continue to undermine the quality of life and standard of living of our peoples. The gradual ongoing breakdown and erosion of our cultural values creates a vacuum, resulting in selfishness, unbridled materialism, consumerism, ostentatious lifestyle, greed, pride and opportunism, all in the name of progress, development and modernity.

A group of youth has emerged who do not have much regard for moral value, as they have not learnt them from society, and neither from their parents. They indulge in armed robbery, cheating, drug addiction, violence and lack of respect for the sanctity of human life. The disrespect of the dignity and fundamental human rights of people continues unabated and women, children and minorities suffer the great burden. These are aspects of the predicament.

### **Justice: The Foundation for Peace**

Pope Paul VI in 1967, while inaugurating a pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, recalled an old adage of Rome: *If you want peace prepare for war (Si vis pacem para bellum)* and changed this slogan for all times thus: *“If you want peace cultivate justice” (Si vis pacem cole Institia)*.

The rich teachings found in the sacred scriptures, the traditional teachings of the Church, the human experience and history

proves that peace is the fruit of justice and its new name is human integral development.<sup>8</sup>

John Paul II in his *New Year World Message* of 1990 announced: “*Peace with God, Peace with all Creation*” as a new agenda. Peace is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies, nor is brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice. Peace results from that order structured into human society by its divine founder, and actualized by men as they thirst for greater justice. The common good of humanity finds its ultimate meaning in the eternal law. But since the concrete demands of these common goods are constantly changing as time goes on, peace is never attained once and for all, but must be built up ceaselessly. Moreover, since the human will is unsteady and wounded by sin, the achievement of peace requires a constant mastering of passions and the vigilance of lawful authority. But this is not enough. This peace on earth cannot be obtained unless personal well-being is safeguarded and men freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their inner spirits and their talents.

*A firm determination to respect other peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood is absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace. Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide. That earthly peace which arises from love of neighbour*

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<sup>8</sup> Populorum Progression, Paul VI, 1969

*symbolizes and results from the peace of Christ, which radiates from God the Father for by the Cross the Incarnate Son, the Prince of Peace reconciled all men with God. By this restoring all men to the unity of people and one body, he slew hatred in his own flesh and after being lifted high by his resurrection, he poured forth the spirit of love into the hearts of men. For this reason, all Christians are summoned to do in love what the truth requires and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about. Motivated by this same spirit, we cannot fail to praise those who renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights and who resort to methods of defence which are otherwise available to weaker parties too, provided this can be done without injury to the rights and duties, of the community itself.*<sup>9</sup>

Respect for and development of human life requires peace. Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of power between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is “*the tranquillity of order*” (St. Augustine, *De civitas. Dei IX 13.1*). Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity (CCC. N. 2304).

Injustice, excessive economic or social inequalities, envy, distrust, and pride raging among men and nations constantly threaten

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<sup>9</sup> *Gaudium et Spes. N 78*

peace and cause wars. Everything done to overcome these disorders contributes to building up peace and avoiding war.

*Insofar as men are sinners, the threat of war hangs over them and will so continue until Christ comes again, but insofar as they can vanquish sin by coming together in charity, violence itself will be vanquished and these words will be fulfilled: they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hook; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (GS. n.78: cf; Is. 2:4) (CCC. N. 2317).*

### **Peace is Possible but only on the Condition of Justice**

Justice in itself is a much-misunderstood philosophical concept and in practice much abused. David Hume had maintained that;

*“No human society could survive without Justice” and St. Augustine in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century did write: “without justice, are states not but a band of robbers enlarged”.*

Justice, which is another word for righteousness, holiness and virtue, prescribes to each his or her due. But what is one’s due? Here lies the crux of the matter

### **One Body Called to Peace**

This is a topic of very wide significance and meaning as it derives its major concern to make peace our watchword and our vocation. Called to peace is an expression of the entire biblical invitation to “Peace with God, peace with all creation” (Genesis 1;

Luke 2) *“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill”*.

Called to peace implies obedience to the caller and stewardship and good service to the terms of reference. Called to Peace also implies the practice of justice, which can be identified thus:

- The world and all that is in it exist because God so desired;
- The human person, created in the image of God, is in a distinctive relation with the rest of creation, of which she or he, however, remains part;
- The human person is to have dominion over all other living beings and over the earth itself, in a sense of responsibility, of making fruitful, of caring with holiness and righteousness. In other words, this dominion over the earth is a sacred trust.
- While individually responsible for his or her acts, the human person exists in relation to others and cannot seek his or her own good alone, but rather seek the good of all; the common good.

### **The Root Cause of Injustice**

From the creation account in the book of Genesis, *“God saw that Creation was good” “And so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them”*. (Gen. 1:26).

This is of fundamental importance, for the human person is, in fact, created in relation - first with God, then with other persons and finally with the rest of creation. The human person is not alone and consequently, no one can act as if he or she were an end in itself. Noteworthy is also the fact that in contrast to all other created beings; the human person is immediately given responsibility for the rest of creation. The totality of creation is good. The root cause of all our problems, characterised by strife, conflict, human misery and depression is sin, a fundamentally theological and moral concept. Sin is the distortion by the free human person of God's good creation and the manipulation of orders for selfish reasons. It is the first of disobedience to God's good creation. It is the fruit of disobedience to God's goodwill. Cain killed his brother Abel. Adam and Eve consumed of the forbidden fruit. And the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Moses and the Decalogue, of the Golden Calf, of the confrontation between man's will and God's will throughout history, indicated nothing less than a deliberate violation of God's plan for creation.

Thus, not only are relations between man and woman troubled. God says to man; "*Cursed is the ground because of you*" (Gen. 3:17). The human heart has been wounded by sin; "*All men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God*". They are found in the demons of pride, vendetta, greed for power and wealth, etc. This situation has made the ministry of reconciliation an urgent one in our lands. St. Paul says:

*God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's fault against them. We are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is, be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:19-20).*

### **Self-Concern and Renewal**

This process of reconciliation can be achieved only by self-purification, for one who desires to preach justice to others must first of all be seen to be just. We must also engage ourselves in constant renewal and conversion. We must change our mentality and attitudes and re-order our value systems so that we can be witnesses in word and in act. When we have first reconciled ourselves with God and with one another, our ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation of Christ, and our peace to the wider society will be more effective.

### **Teachers of Reconciliation**

As agents of reconciliation, we cannot be tired of teaching that every moral offence, be it wanton destruction of life and property or racism, is first and foremost a sin against God. To deny sin is to increase social discontent. To deny God is to deny man. An offender must be convinced of the need to seek reconciliation with God with a contrite heart. God's mercy and pardon are attracted to offenders, who admit their guilt in humility and, where necessary, are truly resolved to make amendments in the form of restitution and compensation as Zacheus did.

## **The Definitive Covenant in Christ**

One body called to peace (Col. 3:1-7) means that God's plan for creation is an unfolding one culminating in God becoming one of us. In doing so, Jesus established a radically new identity for the human person (Rom. 8, 16-17; Gal. 4:7), and restored our relations with the rest of creation. We can no longer plead ignorance of God's plan:

*For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Ephesians 1:9-10).*

It is only in and through Christ that we can know and follow this plan. How carefully then we must discern it, reading its signs in the world around us. As sin has affected all the creation, so the coming of Christ has restored all things. All of creation is waiting in a mysterious way to be set free and to obtain glorious liberty together with all God's children (Rom. 8:20).

*For in him (Christ) all the fullness of God, was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of the cross (Col. 1:19-20).*

Christ's blood has been poured out as an act of a new covenant. It is no longer the rainbow that is the sign of God's fidelity and love, now, it is Christ himself, one of us in all things but Sin (Heb. 1:5; 1 Pet. 2:22). He is the covenant. This is the definitive answer

with regards to the relationship between our sinfulness and the wholeness of creation. We have been reconciled with God in Christ together with all things. The past is over. With Christ, we no longer look back to the Garden of Eden, to some paradise lost, as it were. Rather, we turn to the future, to the end time. He is our peace, one body called to peace.

## Chapter 7

# Productivity and Competitiveness - Determinants for National Economic Transformation

### I. Addressing the Topic

‘Productivity and Competitiveness - Determinants for National Economic Transformation’ as a topic for discussion at this occasion of National Productivity Day, offers a comprehensive opportunity to address the situation of the *Giant of Africa which lies prostrate before the global community*<sup>10</sup>. With the launch of the spaceship Apollo I in 1968, the world moved on to a space era that is characterised by nanotechnology, informatics, telematics, aviation technology, business without boundaries, cutting edge technology and high profile economic engagements. For those who still consider productivity as determined by the traditional factors of land, labour and capital are overtaken by such events.

The multiple achievements for humanity since the Age of Enlightenment, the Renaissance and modern times, identified through science and technology, medical advancements and communications, military and computer software, agricultural innovations, revolutions in industry, human management,

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<sup>10</sup> Obiora Ike; delivered at a Conference organized by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), CIDJAP and the Growing Business Foundation at Eko Hotels & Suites in 2004

transportation, and banking and corporate organizations showcase clearly competitiveness as the result of productivity, productivity as a result of efficiency, efficiency as a result of innovativeness and innovativeness as a result of freedom and justice, which allows enterprise to flourish.

In many countries of the world, malaria and typhoid fever have been banished. Standards of life have increased. Quality of life has improved. Access to housing, work, decent livelihoods, basic rights, leisure and environmental sanity have increased. Is this the situation in our country? They point to the fact that traditional methods of doing things, eloquent as they were, portray a gap in catching up with the mainstream of modernity. It is no longer business as usual since a new world order has dawned.

These challenges, therefore, provide the platform for engaging the reader on this critical topic on 'Productivity and Competitiveness - Determinants for National Economic Transformation.

## **2. What is Competitiveness?**

Competitiveness, which is part of our topic, comes from the Latin word *compitenza*. It refers to an ability which we call competence. It is another word for originality, profiling, branding and identity. Competitiveness refers to our comparative advantage to stand and be recognised, amidst equals, seniors and juniors alike. Competitiveness is not word but an action. For a people without shame, i.e., lacking in value orientation, in cultural integrity, determination and distinctive belief in hard work, such a people are behind the lines. In the context of Nigeria, competitiveness

was slowed down due to several factors. One of them has been the many years of military incursion and aberrations in the public domain.

The military with a central command system, did not allow innovativeness, competence, individual ability, progressive ideas, freedom, and private sector engagements, thus, truncating the civil service, the public service and overall natural justice which respects the philosophy of *suum cuique* (to each one's due, to each according to one's merits). Competitiveness was buried by political intrigues of balancing the national equation by unjust means, thus, the preponderance of systems, the cult of mediocrity, nepotism, the disregard for excellence, tribalism, corruption, the lack of vision and basic goodwill, all of which placed the giant of Africa far behind its peers and contemporaries, both within Africa and in the global space.

### **3. Productivity as Efficiency at Work**

Taking a look at productivity, human work is central to the theme of production. Not to work is to deny or to be denied contribution to human society. Human work is key and central to the labour question. It is a fundamental activity through which basic existence is guaranteed (food production). Human work binds a family, since only through work does the family exist and depend on another. Furthermore, work unites the nation, the clan and the international community by a process of collective contributions to the human pool, which is the basis for civilisation. Work also elevates the productive factor of the individual or community, giving creation, meaning and value. To work is to be

human and makes production possible. In discussing productivity, therefore, central is the theme of work which is a human activity that makes it unique.

The facts on ground in Nigeria, as elsewhere, depict a situation where the labourer, who, as a human person, is relegated to the background and made less important than capital. Another factor of production, in fact, the least, capital, has assumed a monstrous position and the labourer is not important, and his work is purchased and can be disregarded at will. The productive sector of the economy in Nigeria collapsed over the last 40 years because of the absolute neglect and disregard for the human person whose ingenuity in the first place made production possible. To neglect the human person in the world of work is to undermine the dignity of work and the human rights of the labourer.

#### **4. Building Human Capacity**

This study deals with the human person as producer, and the competitiveness of productive factors show that youth unemployment, lack of training, failure in educational parameters, absence of basic equipment and skills, the resort to violence and the overall inability of public officials responsible for governance to stem the trend of decadence are the bane of the Nigerian society today.

## **5. Awakening from Nihilism - Living for Something and Dying for Something**

I wish to make a clarion call with a prophetic voice for our people to awake from nihilism. Nihilism is a philosophy propounded by modern philosophers, such as the German Friedrich Nietzsche of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, who popularized Nothingness which is *living for nothing and dying for nothing as a way of life*. Nihilism gained short term popularity but long term failure, as it is unsustainable and meaningless. A certain cult of nihilism is still found in the Nigerian public and civil service, in government and houses of assembly, encouraging laziness, lateness to work, apathy, absenteeism, bribery, corruption, lethargy and mediocrity as a way of life.

Awakening from nihilism invites the Nigerian worker, the employer, the employee, the consumer, government, civil society, captains of industry, bankers and financial services providers, youth, women, security forces and indeed, all stakeholders to rise to the challenge of taking the Nigerian project seriously. This challenge has an alternative, which is found in failure and disaster. It has failed everywhere in which it was practiced.

How can a people progress when they do not distinguish between a truth and a lie? How can there be civilisation for a people who do not work hard, are not productive, and are not competitive? And how can a citizen who is a state minister, civil servant or public servant distinguish between oneself and one's nations in such statements as "*me I go die for Nigeria?*, I de do government work, no be my own". Such a mental attitude leads to a split of

personality, loyalty, focus and service to the nation. It reduces productivity and competitiveness.

## **6. The Human Person is Central to the Economy**

Let it be said as loudly and clearly as our Christian religion teaches that every man and woman is made in the image and likeness of Almighty God. Human beings, therefore, merit respect, fundamental rights, freedoms and the space to express their capabilities.

## **7. Transparent Budgetary Processes and Government Responsibility**

In making productivity and competitiveness high on the Nigerian social agenda, efforts must be made to channel resources in a transparent manner. The national and state budgets define the parameters upon which national and state income is exercised. In so doing, budgetary provisions which should have a participatory process by civil servants, ministries and responsible agents need an environment for practice. If resources are not allocated according to needs and priorities, failure is predetermined. Respect for the budget is an important criteria for productivity and competitiveness.

## **8. Pursuing the Common Good as Ethical Value in the Modern Economy**

The common good embraces the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men and women are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection. In a country as big as Nigeria, with all the available resources of human, natural and

ecological capacity, there is a blessing which the country has. It is the past heritage of values, customs and traditions which contain ethical principles that promote life, respect, hard work, religion, spiritual reality, protection of people's property, the large family, regard for children and elders, protection of the environment, communal harmony and the philosophy of *live and let live*.

In this situation, ethical reasoning projects the political community existing for the common good. This is made possible through acceptance and practice of the principles of solidarity (*igwe bu ike*), subsidiarity (*onye kwe chi ya ekwe*) and the integrity of creation. It allows for participation by all stakeholders, including civil servants and governments, in the ownership management structures of the economy. Every attempt to undermine the common good undercuts productivity and competitiveness of Nigeria and Nigerians.

## **9. Repositioning Nigeria towards increasing Productivity and Competitiveness through Hard Work, Honesty and Innovativeness**

The following guidelines towards improving productivity and competitiveness have been proposed:

- a. **Respect for human dignity**, especially of the labourers, appreciates their worth and helps in their productivity.
- b. **Training and exposure of personnel** in the skills and methods of the international economy for competitiveness.

- c. **Reward and encouragement of hard work**, which implies certain social responsibility.
- d. **Encouraging the value of entrepreneurial skill** through stakeholder orientation.
- e. **Reducing the distinction in the term 'employee - employer'** since all are co-workers.
- f. **Creating social support** within the firm and ministries, for increased human relationships and mutual trust.
- g. **Stakeholder orientation of work** makes it possible for as many people as possible to participate and contribute to the overall productive process.
- h. **Focusing on government as a good listener and servant of the people.**
- i. **Channeling capital and private sector resources** towards building sustainable enterprises.
- j. **Promoting competitiveness** in the society by creating just institutions, meritocracy, appreciation for hard work and where promotion of persons not based on political affiliation, but on basic rights.
- k. **Creating a level playing ground** for all citizens of Nigeria, on the basis of justice and banishing tribalism, mediocrity and ethnicism.
- l. **Maximizing the role and use of media for information sharing**
- m. **Creating employment opportunities** for youth and working population, including women and men, and involving all stakeholders including the Church and Civil Society.

## Chapter 8

# The Mission of Social Work

### Introduction

I have accepted the kind invitation extended to me by Dr. C. P. Ekpe and colleagues to deliver a keynote address at this occasion with joy and respect for three simple reasons<sup>11</sup>:

Firstly, the subject and discipline fall into the world of the social sciences where I am academically at home myself. I am, therefore, naturally interested and motivated.

Secondly, many of your teachers are my friends and some of them (like Msgr. Dr. Akukwe and Revd. Dr. Fr. Osmund Anigbo) were my teachers while I was as young as you are. Their discipline, interest, hard work and relationship with me over the years made me what I am today. I consider my presence, therefore, that of solidarity and gratitude with a desire to give further what I have received.

Thirdly, I desire by my presence to encourage you both in your study, your research and your ambitions to solidify your

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<sup>11</sup> Keynote Address presented to the Social Work Unit of the University of Nigeria Nsukka on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 1996, at Nsukka, Enugu, Nigeria.

knowledge in the area of study as I am deeply convinced of its utility, efficiency and contextual relevance in a dynamic but contradictory developing society like Nigeria. As you very well know, we live in a pluralistic society, imbued with cultural diversities, aspirations, potentials and actual needs. It is my belief that knowledge of 'social thought' must necessarily lead to 'social action' which has the power to change our world.

Permit me to postulate three statements which I consider three reasons for the deepening of study in social thought and action. These postulations in the context of this paper are the assumptions for our point of departure, namely:

I want to assume that most of us here present share a common unwillingness or even inability to accept the world as it is because we believe that it was meant to be different.

I want secondly to presume that most of you would wish that the world you met upon entry be changed for the better.

I want to finally assume that you are convinced that social work would make a difference in the lives of people as it is the art and skill for change and development. I assume therefore that you are consciously willing to accept and champion this theoretical but most practical discipline to effect change in our world.

### **Gratitude**

Permit me at this juncture to extend profound thanks and gratitude to the initiators and organisers of this grand occasion. I have in special focus to the Chairman of the Central Working

Committee Dr. C. P. Ekpe and his able members at the unit under the department, the Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the UNN, Professor Obikeze; the coordinator of programme Msgr. Dr, Francis Akukwe, and all your lecturers, students and staff on this social work training programme who cooperate in the professional and scientific training of social workers. The university has been a pioneer of sorts in Nigeria. The social work unit is one of them.

My wish is that your ambitions and scholarly call to participate in change and the re-ordering of our structural, mental and social environment for integral development walk across the 'Red Sea' of uncertainties in this land bounteously blessed but sometimes ruthlessly and recklessly managed by retrogressive elements.

### **The Topic**

I have been asked to speak on "the mission of social work". This is in my guess, an assignment that is direct even if multidimensional in approach. Articulating such a response in detail gives us room to expand the scope of the given, to initiate and generate new thoughts, to determine the teleology of social work, reconstruct new methods, strategies and technologies necessary as response in this vast but most relevant area of study and finally to develop new themes which are adaptable and contextual and link them all up within the intellectual/academic criteriology which make for a systematic study with a practical orientation that make all theory credible. In the words of Immanuel Kant, the famous German transcendental philosopher of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, "there is nothing as practical as a good

theory". This assignment, I guess would be mine with you in the time scheduled for this speech.

You will, however, agree with me ladies and gentleman, that this task, though direct, is not easy, and the time at our disposal inadequate.

I shall try, though not exhaustively and not necessarily in order of importance, to outline in a cursory manner what the mission of social work will have to be as we look forward to the next millennium, a few years hence. As you know, the year 2000 will be the magic year of sorts: Health for all by the year 2000; Water for all by the year 2000; Housing for all by the year 2000; Education for all by the year 2000; Poverty eradication by the year 2000; etc.

## **CONTEXT:**

### **i. Our context in the world and in Nigeria is first of all that of contradictions**

- Technological advancement in a primitive world
- So much wasted wealth amidst poverty, modernization, enlightenment and Civilisation, even amidst permissivity and negative development
- New lifestyles and immense possibilities contradicted by cultural rigidity and orthodox refusal to change.
- Our age witnessed the contradictions of liberal democracy versus communist fascism, liberal capita; economy versus

socialism, intellectual freedom versus militant aggressive religious fundamentalism

- Plurality of opinions and worldviews including ideological, sociological, cultural, economic and political options even as we witness conservatism, orthodoxy and fanaticism bordering almost on madness

- A wealth of values, whether social, cultural or religious versus family instability, drug abuse and criminality

The contradictions are many and one could go on and on. It is in the context of these contradictions that we are called to define the scope of the mission of social work. I must, however, assert, as a thesis and postulation, that social work can only exist in the setting and context of contradictions. If time could come when social work may become irrelevant and therefore disappear because we have achieved all positive human values, have wealth for everybody, education for all, health for all, jobs for all, and life in abundance for all, that time would be when polarities and contradictions in human exigencies might cease to exist. When such a time comes, (and we often pray that it comes soon), social work would become irrelevant and would cease to exist or have any mission at all. If contradictions however continue, (and it does seem to me that they are not coming to an end), the discipline of social work would not only grow in strength but also in scope, method and target group.

Ladies and gentlemen. Unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, the facts on ground considered from a rational and comparative analysis, do not give any alternative speculation or chance,

(despite all our optimism) to expect 'the sudden or near death' or even the extinction of social work in human societies, for everywhere, conflicts, polarities tensions and contradictions exist. Though young as a discipline, Social Work has come to stay because human beings have desired to predicate their actions on the antinomy of pluralities, polarities and contradictions.

## **AN ATTITUDINAL CHANGE FROM INDIVIDUAL TO COMMON GOOD**

ii **Second postulation:** Focusing on people at the centre

With the benefit of hindsight in the future, the aim of social work to me might and it does seem so, must undergo a radical re-appraisal of its final, not intermediate goals, namely SOCIETY, and undertake an inward self-recovery and self-exploration to return to its original point of departure. This, in my view, is also its life and meaning, namely, concentrating on people and helping them to become what their creator initially made them to be: 'Social Being'. Aristotle had long asserted that man is a '*Homo socialis*' and this view was long held until the capitalist era of the 19th century when individualism set in with Adam Smith. The Industrial Revolution and onset of capitalism set the stage that was to reverse society. It is important to note that the human person, as an individual is, '*individuus*', Latin for 'indivisible'; 'an entity existing as a distinct unity incapable of being divided actually or conceptually without losing its identity; a particular, a single thing; opposite to general, universal; person, self, ego;" (Ref: Angels, P. Dictionary of philosophy, Barnes and Noble books; NY, 1981,

p. 131). Individualism, therefore, whether as a philosophical school of thought or a political theory refers to:

a) The theory that the principal concern of all political and social groupings is to preserve the rights, guarantee the independence and enhance the development of the individual person. The state is the means used by individuals in the attainment of these goals and is never an end in itself. Society exists for the sake of its individual members.

b) Government must never interfere with the individual's pursuit of his wishes unless this can be shown to produce harm to other individuals.

c) All governments must stem from the self-directing and self-regulating powers of individuals and must not be imposed by regulations and external coercion. It is such thoughts that lead to the metaphysical conception of the world which elevates an individual over the corporate body and individualises, that is, discriminates, distinguishes, singles out, identifies from among others a class or species, determines the individual from its universal or general type and elevates it above others. This individualism which is hydra-headed believes in 'I before others'; selfishness, grabbing, ethnicism, clannishness, egocentric, and anti-social, anti-human anti-communal behaviour.

The scourge of all human societies is the vice of individualism which leads to loneliness, atomisation, particularisation and isolation. The contradictions of atrocious wealth versus

excruciating poverty, oppression and injustice, various forms of domination, quota system syndrome and mediocrity, unemployment and planlessness, which are noticeable problems in various human societies today, are traceable to the lack of a 'Social Education' and 'Social Conscience'. Catholic Social Teachings assert that "*there can be no genuine personhood in isolation from other persons*". Even though the border is a fluid one, Professor Mbiti's postulation may be useful here for us Africans:

*"I am because we are and since we are, I am".*

Today, the great ethical problems and also the great threats and evils have a social character or even an international one, caused by individuals for selfish and myopic reasons. War is the greatest of all these threats. Race rivalry (ethnicism) comes not far behind. Poverty is still another. Marginalization and exclusions follow. With the Industrial Revolution and the concentration of people in conurbations and the abolition of distance, all human life is more and more dominated by large - scale social structures, including national departments, governments, commercial corporations, international organizations trade unions, public media, etc. Unless we refocus on people and society from a value orientation, and not simply of "goods and services perspective", problems will continue. This, in my guess, is one of the missions of social work as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This is in spite of all the supremely fruitful discoveries of mankind of magnificent institutions, telematics, informatics, the invention of the airplane and the engine, spaceship and aeronautic attempts,

etc. This age has been spectacularly wrong in its underlying philosophy of life. An age wrong about GOD is almost certain to be wrong about MAN.

iii. **THE TASKS BEFORE US:**

Now I come to the "should" propositions of my paper which prepares us for the situation of tomorrow:

i. Every child should find itself as a member of a family housed with decency and dignity, so that it may grow up as a member of that basic community, in a happy fellowship unspoilt by underfeeding or overcrowding, by dirty and drab surroundings or by mechanical monotony of environment.

ii. Every child should have the opportunity of an education till years of maturity, so planned as to allow for his peculiar attitudes and make possible full development. This education should throughout be inspired by faith in God or whatever dignifying essential value one finds as a focus in worship.

iii. Every citizen should be secure in possession of such income as will enable him to maintain a home and bring up children in such environment already described.

iv. These ladies and gentlemen are some of the outstanding tasks of the future. Every citizen should have sufficient daily leisure, and if an employee, some leave and holidays to enable him enjoy a full personal life with such interests and activities as tasks and talents may direct.

v. Every citizen should have a voice in the conduct of the business or industry which is carried on by means of his labour, entrepreneur or capital. It must be clear also that these contributions benefit the entire community, be it socially, economically, politically, religiously or culturally.

vi. Every citizen should have assured liberty in the form of freedom of worship, of speech, of assembly and of association for special purposes.

As you can see, Social Work has a mission and a future. To this we have all been called.

## Chapter 9

# The Social Teaching of the Church and the Management of Oil and Gas Wealth in Nigeria

*Making Oil and Gas Wealth Serve the Common Good*

### 1. Introduction

This contribution explores Catholic Social Thought and Action in Nigeria<sup>12</sup>. It has its starting point in a statement of confidence in Christianity which teaches the dignity and worth of each human being created in the image of Almighty God<sup>13</sup>. It intends to emphasise the influence of history on ideas, and argues that despite the many limitations we find in the inability of the Nigerian people and the elite to find a lasting solution to its social and political problems thus far, Christian Social Principles contain useful guidelines and values that would surely help in the search for solutions to the Nigerian problem. It gives hope founded on solid ethical orientation and sustainable African wisdom and human values that challenge all to accept the principle of "live and let live"<sup>14</sup> as a sure basis for a faith that does justice.

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<sup>12</sup> Obiora Ike; presented at DRACC to the Bishops Conference of Nigeria Directorate on 'Church and Society' at a Stakeholders Conference in 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1: 27.

<sup>14</sup> 'Suum Cuique' – St Thomas Aquinas.

This is the surest guarantee of peace amongst humans on earth. Individual human beings, acting alone with principles founded on social doctrine and ethics, or in collaboration with others within society as stakeholders can make this happen. It is not just the state that is called to action. Each individual human person and all the agents within the social-political and economic forum within Nigeria are stakeholders to collaborate in this agenda - the Church and the Christian Faithful. Our citizens include Civil Society Groups, the Niger Delta Development Commission, the international community, communities in the oil producing areas, oil and gas operating companies, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, the Department of Petroleum Resources, Federal Inland Revenue Services, Local Government Councils, State Houses of Assembly, State Governments, the National Assembly and the Federal Government. This is the basis for the desired social change that guarantees the proposed end of making oil and gas wealth and to serve the common good, promote peace and generate social harmony for all Nigerians.

It is obvious that the '*grave aroma*' of the contemporary world is caused by the numerous threats that often accompany human progress and cannot leave anyone indifferent. In a context of worldwide plurality, competing claims and confusion arising out of subjective interpretations of history and man's place and role within it, the desire to share one's beliefs in truth and in charity, as found in Christian values, correspond to the challenges facing social thought, universally and locally today.

About this reality, Pope John Paul II writes:

*Today, Social Doctrine is called upon with increasingly greater urgency to make its own specific contribution to evangelization; to dialogue with the world; to the Christian interpretation of reality and to the guidelines for pastoral action, in order to enlighten the various initiatives on the temporal plane with sound principles. Indeed, economic, social, political and cultural structures are experiencing profound and rapid transformations which put the very future of human society at stake and thus they need a sure orientation. It is a matter of promoting real social progress, which, in order to effectively ensure the common good of all people, requires a just organization of these structures. If this is not done, there will be a return of great multitudes towards that situation of a "quasi-servile-yoke" which Leo XIII spoke about in **Rerum Novarum**<sup>15</sup>.*

## **2. Key Issues in Re-Engineering Action for the Common Good**

There is no shortage of pronouncements that we are now at a key point in human history, as far as Africa and the extractive industries, including oil are concerned. This critical moment has several defining moments but I submit some key points at this onset for reflection. The attempt to focus on the knowledge and spread of principles of Catholic Social Thought and Action as they relate and could be applied to "NIGERIA: MAKING OIL AND GAS WEALTH SERVE THE COMMON GOOD", raise fundamental issues

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<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, 1988.

of justice as the foundation of peace and the public good, which is the basis for integral development and progress.

a. The scramble and partition for Africa which took place in Berlin around 1884/1885, was a first phase in the exploitation of Africa in the past. In present times, however, the scramble and partition of Africa has continued in a more intense and scandalous manner with all its negative consequences on the dignity, value and worth of the human person, and society and the environment in general. The Gulf of Guinea region, covering West and Central Africa, is generally viewed by the oil industry as the world's premier "hotspot" and a new "El Dorado" soon to become the leading global deep water offshore oil production centre. Sub Saharan Africa is home to eight oil exporters - Nigeria, Angola, Congo- Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. A powerful convergence of interests between African governments, international oil companies, international financial institutions and northern governments, is propelling the rush to exploit Africa's oil reserves. *The question to ask while this 'oil boom' lasts is whether there is actually an opportunity to create a policy environment for turning oil wealth into viable post-oil economies aimed at permanent poverty reduction.* What the global big players do during this period is critical for determining whether oil riches will benefit the poor or further impoverish the continent (CRS Doc,2003).

b. Building transparent and accountable 'petro-states' focused on reducing poverty and building viable post-oil future is one of the

key challenges facing Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. How can the oil boom contribute to poverty alleviation? *The primary responsibility for this task lies with Africa's governments. But many governments within Africa, including Nigeria, 'have their hands tied' and seem to lack incentives to change without a more transparent and accountable international policy environment for revenue management.*

These governments are only a web of interests and relationships involved in this 'oil boom business'. Other key actors, and ones with often overwhelming clout, are foreign oil companies, international financial institutions (especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and northern governments which are home to multinational oil companies. *Unless these actors work together to make specific policy changes, Africa's oil boom is unlikely to foster any significant poverty reduction and may instead, contribute to increased corruption, mismanagement, environmental destruction and human rights violations.*

c. The "paradox of plenty" generally referred to as 'poverty in the midst of plenitude' remains the bane of Nigeria and many developing nations. The country is rich but the people are poor. It is the paradox of wealth generation. The surge for industrialisation, the growing exploitation of mineral and natural resources and the attendant improvement in scientific and technical knowledge continues to encourage unbridled tendencies on the part of local actors, global players, governments and corporations. *The dominance of extractive*

*industries in Nigeria's trade relationships means that it is vital for the country and indeed, African nations to make the best use of its oil. As the records show, more than 50 percent of Africa's exports and 65 percent of all foreign direct investment during the 1990s, are dominated by 'extractive industries' especially the oil, gas and mining businesses<sup>16</sup>. However, over dependence on petroleum for development is dangerous. This is the reality in many countries, including Nigeria, which has performed worse in terms of basic social indicators. Having received over USD 350 billion in oil revenues over 25 years, per capita income is less than \$1 a day. Yet, the challenge is making oil and gas wealth to serve the common good. If this is not achieved, the consequences would be destabilisation, decline and perhaps, war, which in turn will degenerate to more human and environmental disasters characteristic of failed states. God forbid!*

- d. The questions contained in the statement by the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in the document titled '*Nigeria- The travesty of Oil and Gas*' are revealing: "*How come the huge wealth derived from these God-given resources has failed to foster economic development and has, in effect, led to a deterioration of the rest of the Nigerian economy and by implication, the lives of Nigerian people? How come these God-given resources have not been harnessed to create long term, sustainable development? To what extent have the activities in the oil and gas sector been open, transparent and accountable? What has been responsible for the*

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<sup>16</sup> Bottom of the Barrel, CRS Document, 2003, p. 5.

*enthronement of the so-called ‘resources curse’ on a nation so abundantly blessed by God? Why is it that petroleum activities have brought so much destruction and devastation of the environment and has so far remained largely unchecked? Why is it that there are so much conflict, violence, loss of life in circumstances associated with the exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources? Are there legal, regulatory policy changes that need to be put in place to promote the efficient management and fair allocation of oil and gas revenues in a manner that serves the common good? Why is there so much misery, poverty and anguish in the nation amidst plenty?”*

Answers to these questions are attempted in my effort here, and the Social Teaching of the Church is asked to offer guidelines based on Christian moral thought and practice of solidarity, sustainable development, common good principles, the preferential option for the poor and preservation of creation as an ethical obligation for environmental protection.

- e. The fact of value disorientation and a missing emphasis on the public good known as the common good calls for urgent reflection, as to what are those critical ingredients that make it possible for a society to be founded and oriented on sustainable human and ethical values. It calls for the establishment of rational foundations and moral principles to provide light for social harmony, communal living, sharing of wealth and why eating alone is bad eating in a Nigerian and universal culture at this crucial time. It is certainly clear from our experience of history and enlightened observation of worldwide trends that technological prowess alone is not the basis of civilisations

today. While the title of Pope John Paul II's 1990 World day of Peace Message, "*Peace with God-Peace with All of Creation*" seems almost a slogan meant to be easily remembered, it actually goes to the very heart of the environmental challenges that we are facing today. These complex problems are not actually environmental in the first place, nor are they primarily technological or economic. They are rather theological and moral". Actually, quoting from a document of the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, the Vatican, authored by Sr. Marjorie Keenan RSHM "*the search for solutions to the present ecological crisis cannot be separated from our basic worldview: from our understanding of the human person, of relations among persons and peoples, and of our relationship to all creation.*"<sup>17</sup>

Throughout the Bible, there are references to God's creation that help us understand why and how we are to promote a sound and healthy environment for all. The most basic values of the social teachings of the Church also points directly to the moral obligation to care for the environment. In addition, an environmental crisis knows no borders. It touches a large number of people, governments, communities, corporations, churches and other religious bodies. The consequence, therefore, is that the foundations upon which nations and industries are building worldwide may not work without a strong value and moral orientation that considers the common good and the preservation of the earth. And this is the crux of the matter. What does seem clear is that at present, industrialisation will continue unabated. Desirable though it may

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<sup>17</sup> Care for Creation- Human Activity and the Environment, 2000, p. 13.

be, can we think of an industrialisation that has sustainable bases with criteria that give it content founded on human, social and universal ethical values? This brings me to the critical need to share thoughts on the social teaching of the Church and the management of oil and gas wealth.

### **3. Catholic Social Thought: Relevance and Context**

The Social Teaching of the Church is an application of theology and other relevant scientific disciplines, especially of moral theology and social ethics, to the questions raised by human beings and societies, and the principles for their solution. While its sources are in revelation (Bible) and the tradition of the Church from the earliest times, as an organised body of doctrine, it dates from 1891 with Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. While this teaching has long been an integral part of the Catholic heritage, John Paul II, like no other before him, has raised the issues addressed by Social Thought to a new level of applicability<sup>18</sup>.

However astonishing it may appear, it is probably true or at least difficult to deny that the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church, together with their interpretation and development in the last 100 years has attracted (especially since the Vatican Council, 1962 - 1965) worldwide attention and interest. Whether it is in the numerous papal encyclicals beginning with the 'Condition of Workers' authored by Pope Leo XIII 'Rerum Novarum' of 1891 or in Latin America, with the debate on 'liberation theologies', or more recently in the United States of America with some pastoral

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<sup>18</sup> Apostolic Letter: *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, 1994, No. 36.

documents of the Catholic Bishops Conference, such as the "*A Call to Solidarity with Africa*" (2001) and "*Catholic Social Teaching and the US economy*" (1983) to mention but a few, or still in the large body of Episcopal Statements and Social Thought contained in the document "*The Voice of the Voiceless 1960 - 2002*", of the Nigerian Bishops Conference, one is convinced that the Social Doctrine of the Church has become more than ever, an intellectual force with a universal ethical appeal and standard to reckon with, gaining more and more in vitality and influence within and outside of the Church.

There is urgent and continued need for the knowledge and spread of this teaching, progressively drawn from biblical insights, the tradition of the early Fathers, theological reflection and contemporary experience. In it, we experience the irreplaceable evangelizing presence of the Church in the complex world of temporal realities which condition the destiny of mankind. Christianity developed out of Jewish culture and religion and the ministry of Jesus was exercised in this context. The central message of the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth was the kingdom of God, which had social, cultural, economic and religious implications. Care for the environment is ultimately a call to respect all of creation and to assure that human activity while transforming the earth, does not destroy the dynamic balance which exists among all living things that depend or turn on land, air and water for their very existence. The environmental issue has become central to the social, economic and political thought, precisely because of the growing degradation, which often strikes in a particularly severe way around the poorer sectors of society.

The Nigerian context and the reality of the devastation of the lives of the people of the Niger Delta, with the growing number of natural and man-made disasters affecting the entire nation, call into question the present course of the nation. The justice question seen in the ever-growing gap between the rich and poor cannot leave anyone indifferent, nor can the over-use of the resources of the earth and accelerating loss of species. The degradation of the environment affects all life on earth. Its solution, therefore, calls for the collaboration of all. It is a matter of opening the eyes of mind, heart and spirit to see the relationship between care for all creation, as well as material goods and our fundamental relationship in and with God. To proclaim the goodness of God's creation and our obligation to care for it is ultimately to call to change, to conversion, and to care for the least and the poorest.

A reflection on God's creation and our use of its goods is a powerful integrating force in life and action, both individual and social. The guiding thread could well be an integrated approach to justice and peace within the context of the promotion of a sound and healthy environment for all. This is our scope for it is the responsibility of the Christian to engage in a world of injustice and ensure justice and peace and global change. As Pope John XXIII says of the importance of each human person in making an input for social change:

*Individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution. That is necessarily so for people*

*are by nature social beings. This fact must be recognised as also the fact that they are raised in the plan of providence to an order of reality which is above nature.*<sup>19</sup>

#### **4. Relevant Economic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine**

- a. One of the primary principles which govern our approach to environmental questions is: *THERE IS AN ORDER IN THE UNIVERSE WHICH MUST BE RESPECTED*. The accounts in the Old Testament book of Genesis, chapters one to three, which are so rich in their imagery and rhythm is the root for this belief. It is a paradigm, replicated in many other cultures and traditions of the world. First of all, creation belongs to God, all of it. Secondly, creation is a work of harmony and beauty that forms a whole in diversity. There is, in fact, an existential bond among everything that exists from the very fact of its having been created by God.

One creature stands out, however - the human person. Created in the image and likeness of the Creator and utterly dependent on him, this person exists essentially in relationship. This principle not only sets limits to human activity, it also directs it towards a careful and reverent use of the earth. When the human person or human societies ignore or consciously violate this order, an imbalance is provoked that has inevitable consequences in several fields. Let us simply think of

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<sup>19</sup> John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*; No 219.

uncontrolled industrialisation and the resulting pollution of air, land and water. The summary of the relevant points from the Bible that find an echo in the Social Teaching are:

- *All of creation is fundamentally good;*
- *God's plan and creation is one of harmony and order;*
- *Creation forms a whole, a cosmos;*
- *Within creation, the human person enjoys a consummate dignity;*
- *Inherent to this dignity is that of exercising wise and just stewardship over the rest of creation;*
- *Sin brought division into the entire world. Its effect is felt not only within and between human persons - they also affect the earth;*
- *In a mysterious way, Christ's redemptive mission extends to all of creation.*

b. A second principle is no less essential: the human person occupies a distinctive place within creation. *"Man is the author, the centre and the end of all social and economic life. Economic developments must remain under man's direction"*<sup>20</sup>. There is a tendency today to deny this centrality of the human person and to place human beings on the same level as other beings with regards to care for the environment. The reasons for this are complex. One pretext is that an anthropocentric approach to the environment has resulted in its destructions. This argument ignores, among others, the relationship of the human person to

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<sup>20</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 63.

God. It can also lead to a dangerous negation of human responsibility. Without a doubt, human persons and, indeed, entire societies, have abused the environment with impunity. We all see the result. Without a doubt, it is by heightening the centrality of the human person and not by denying it. It is by stressing the responsibility of the human person for creation and not by ignoring it, that we all shall be better able to promote and preserve a sound environment for all.

- c. Another ethical principle with immediate application to the environment is that of the *inalienable dignity of the human person*. The promotion of this dignity is "*the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic, industrial or scientific development*"<sup>21</sup>. Inordinate depletion of resources without thinking of the needs of others, reckless land use and exploitative industrial practices are only some of the modern phenomena that are contrary to this principle. Today, there is a rather widespread anthropological error that also directly affects the relationship between the human person and the environment. The modern person, fascinated by the capability of the human mind, can set himself or herself up in the place of God (John Paul II, *Centesimus Annos*, no 37).

The person effectively becomes the centre of a universe built in his or her own image. Everything is judged in relation to the individual, whose needs, often artificially created, must be met at all costs. In the thirst for profit, modern society often uses

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<sup>21</sup> Pope John Paul II, Message on World Day of Peace, 1990, No. 7.

and abuses the goods of this world with little thought for others, and still less for future generations. Entire societies built on such a consumer-oriented system can suffer from this anthropological error. *"The purpose of economics is the service of people, their material needs and those of their moral, spiritual and religious life. Economic activity is to be carried out accordingly to its own methods and laws, but within the limits of morality"* <sup>22</sup>

- d. Concerning the teaching of property, the distribution of wealth, ownership and service, working for the common good and the universal destination of created goods, Catholic Social Teaching has come out with relevant principles that give to us a sure guide towards social reconstruction and harmony, if followed. The principles it advocates are of universal application and can be followed by all. The Gospel frequently tells us that the possession of goods is as fleeting as life itself, and the usual Catholic moral teaching on ownership is that man can only expect to 'use' goods which he or she owns. Man is only a steward<sup>23</sup>. *"All property has a social mortgage. All people are to respect and share the resources of the earth. By our work, we are co-creators in the continuing development of the earth"*<sup>24</sup>. St. Thomas Aquinas's explanations of ownership begin with the assertion that the natural law primarily dictates the common ownership of goods. But he says that *private ownership is not against the natural law because the apportioning of ownership is done by*

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<sup>22</sup> GS 69.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.

*particular agreements, which are not precisely a part of natural law which deals in generalities* <sup>25</sup>.

It is noticeable that natural resources, as well as human factors such as capital and enterprise which will make them available, are very unevenly distributed. Much of human effort must be applied to the redistribution of goods and they should be distributed as between people who have a real respect for each other. "*Created goods should flow freely to all, regulated by justice and accompanied by charity*". Everybody has a right to a share of the earth's goods sufficient for himself and his family". There is a Christian duty to give to those in need. In times past, this duty was expressed in terms of almsgiving. It has now become very largely a social and institutional service, more concentrated where the country is economically developed.

The Vatican Council compared the methods of distributing wealth in developing and developed countries and made some comments. It said that these countries often have their "*own customary and traditional ways of ensuring that goods are distributed, so that each member receives what he absolutely needs. Customs should not be regarded as unchangeable if they no longer answer to present-day requirements, but neither should they be rashly discarded, if they can still be so adapted as to remain useful*". As for the advanced countries, the Council recognised that social security services can play a legitimate part in bringing about the redistribution of wealth. It stresses the need for further

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<sup>25</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II - II, 62 - 2 and 1.

development of support for the family, and also for services assisting education and culture. Pope Paul VI did not hesitate to state in his famous document *Populorum Progressio* that “*the goods of the earth, including those produced by human activity, are ultimately destined for the benefit of all, not of just the few. All other rights whatsoever, including those of property and of free commerce, are to be subordinated to this principle*”<sup>26</sup>.

Known as the universal destination of all earthly goods, this principle has continued to lead to a right understanding of the mystery of creation, where humans are only stewards of created good and not absolute owners in an extreme sense. Consequently, all peoples and all countries must have access to those goods - natural, technological, intellectual and spiritual - that assure their integral development, that is, a development that promotes the good of the whole person and of the entire human community.

- e. In clear text, the human person alone, among all other creatures on this earth, is *morally responsible* for his or her actions which must be oriented towards the **good of self, of others**, and of **the very earth**, and of all that is in and on it. *These three form an inseparable whole. This affirmation is the keystone of a sound approach to the environment over and against one based on sentiment, on a vague nostalgia for a nonexistent ‘paradise lost’ or on a pseudo-religious exaltation of nature*<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> *Populorum Progressio*, 1967, no. 22

<sup>27</sup> *Ref. Care for Creation*. op. cit, p. 52

The concept of responsibility can also be translated into the language of *identifiable RIGHTS AND DUTIES*. These, in turn, can, and often do, find expression in juridical instruments that regulate relationships between and among peoples and groups, as well as between and among states, regarding the environment. Structures can be set in places that assure the observance of such defined rights and duties. The concept of responsibility concerns not only individual behaviour, but also relates to entire societies and to the international community as well.

- f. Talking about the Common Good, Pope John XXIII stated that *"the common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social living- economic, political, cultural-which will make it possible for women and men to readily and fully achieve the perfection of their humanity. Individual rights are always experienced within the context of promotion of the common good"* (*Mater et Magistra*, no. 65). The implication of this teaching was further stressed by John Paul II in the famous Encyclical Letter '*Laborem Exercens*' where he writes: *"The economy is for the people and the resources of the earth are to be equally shared by all. Human work is the key to contemporary social question. Labour takes precedence over both capital and technology in the production process. Just wages and the rights of workers to form trade unions are to be respected. Women and disabled people, migrants and unemployed share fully in the profits of the production process in solidarity"* (John Paul, LE, 1981).

Concerning solidarity, a term that is used by all and sundry to mean varied and different things, Paul VI argued that *"we belong*

*to one human family and as such, have mutual obligations to promote the development of all people across the world. In particular, the rich nations have responsibilities towards the poor nations and the structures of the international order must reflect justice”* (Populorum Progressio, 1967). To promote justice, therefore, is to transform structures which block love. This is the challenge facing Nigeria in the search for credible and adaptable methods for making sure that oil and gas wealth serve the common good. The knowledge is there, but the will is lacking. It is time to challenge all those who have the means and ability to make sure that where there is a will, there is a way. The common good must remain the priority for this engagement.

## **5. Conclusion**

With the realisation that Catholic Social Teaching is not just a set of rules for one political party, nation or group, it behoves on us therefore to see these principles as a guiding thread with wisdom and direction and help mankind find solutions to problems it faces daily in social cohesion. *"The Church's Social teaching has an important interdisciplinary dimension. In order to incarnate the one truth about man in different and constantly changing social economic and political contexts, this teaching enters into dialogue with the various disciplines concerned with man"*<sup>28</sup>.

Despite the time that has elapsed, the message of Pope Pius XII to the world during (at the height of) the Second World War (Christmas message 1942), retains its validity and even reflects our situation in Nigeria and indeed, worldwide today:

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<sup>28</sup> *Centesimus Annus*, 1991, No 59

*Never has it been so capitally important to understand clearly the true foundations of all social life as in these days when humanity, diseased by the poison of social errors, and tossed by a fever of conflicting desires, doctrine and aims, has become the unhappy prey of disorders created by itself, and experiencing the disruptive effects of false social theories that neglect and contravene the laws of God. The original and essential purpose of social life is to preserve and perfect the human person...Reason enlightened by faith assigns to each person and to each particular association in the social organism, a definite and noble place. Above all, it tells us that the purpose of the whole of the State's activity, political and economic, is the permanent realisation of the common good: that is to say, the provision of those external conditions which are needful to citizens as a whole for the development of their qualities and the fulfilment of their duties in every sphere of life, material, intellectual and spiritual.<sup>29</sup>*

With the words of this Christmas Message of Pope Pius XII, I conclude this chapter, inviting all stakeholders to work for justice as the foundation for any lasting peace in Nigeria. *"The ultimate, deep - rooted principle which lies at the foundation of society cannot be abolished by any effort of human ingenuity; they may be denied, ignored, disregarded or disobeyed, but they can never be deprived of their juridical validity."*

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<sup>29</sup> Radio message of Pope Pius XII, published in *Acta Apostolica Sedis*, January, 1943

## Chapter 10

# Global Conflicts, Africa and the Future of Growth - Ethics and Values and the Limits of Growth

### **I. Power - the Dominating Factor in World History**

Global conflicts continue to escalate at all levels - political, social, economic, technological, cultural and religious<sup>30</sup>. These issues challenge the consciences of people everywhere. Africa remains the greatest theatre where human history has shown the dominance of power by the powerful over the powerless. Experience and the wisdom of the ancients have also shown that power is driven by greed and selfish interest. Africa's relationship with Europe and America since 1472, when the British slave dealer John Hawkins landed on the shores of Guinea and took black slaves off the coast of West Africa has remained that of conquest, slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, exploitation and all these have been cloaked as civilisation and modernisation.

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<sup>30</sup> Obiora Ike; delivered at the Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum in Bonn, Germany in 2012.

## **2. Energy and the Drive for Resources - the Reason for the Conquest of Africa**

The drive for energy and resources from Africa and elsewhere for Europe's use was guaranteed through the forced slave labour of millions of blacks to work in the plantations of the white masters in the West, the Indies and the Americas. Over 10 million slaves were exported out of the African continent from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. With the abolition of the slave trade and the arrival of the Industrial Revolution of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in England, the necessary resources required for powering the engines of locomotives and industrial machines were available in Africa. This discovery formed the beginnings of colonialism to exploit mineral resources including, cotton, uranium, cocoa, palm oil, palm nuts, potassium, feather, zinc, coal, iron, oil, gold and silver to feed the needs of the factories of Europe. This made the scramble and partitioning of the African continent possible as the 1885 Berlin conference prescribed.

## **3. The era of African Independence Movements and the Beginnings of Globalisation**

With the end of the Second World War in the mid-1940s and the traumatic challenges faced by the European nations, and indeed worldwide, a new climate of accommodation forced respect of people's rights. This initiated the birth of the United Nations Universal Charter for Human Rights and Freedoms in 1948 for all peoples. This global need for international security, world peace, conflict resolution among nations and the entrenchment of human rights and respects for people's dignity became a mandate. Thus, the sudden but unprepared decolonisation process of the post

war period led to the independence of many African countries from nations from colonial rule powered by France, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Germany. In the new circumstance, challenges to economic growth, competitiveness, the cold war, energy policies and political interests led to new grave conflicts in many cases for Africa, but also in a Europe itself, in Latin America, Asia, the Pacific and the far regions of the world. The wars since the last fifty years in the Congo, Biafra, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Guinea, Mali, Angola, Mozambique, Sudan and Uganda may be given other labels, deep-seated however are their reasons founded on the need for energy drive, resources control, exploitation, economic growth and spheres of influence. These ambitions as backgrounds are useful to know the origins of some of these conflicts which turmoil aggravate national interests. In most cases, unfortunately, the Media has been used as a cover for blackmail, sabotage, diversion, outright misinformation and even lies in the service of political, corporate and economic interests.

#### **4. The Club of Rome and Challenges to the Limits of Growth**

The Club of Rome, founded in 1972 as the conscience of the world at a time of unbridled exploitation of natural and mineral resources entered the centre stage to demonstrate that current worldwide trends are not sustainable. Its warnings published in the book **LIMITS TO GROWTH** remain valid. The outstanding feature of this club are the clear questions to the dominant tendencies which promote capitalism, short termism in economic planning which puts profits before people, unbridled population and the destruction of the planet. Using the language of the

“global revolution”, a term first used by the Club of Rome as early as 1972, described the phenomenon to which the following facts and aspects are particularly relevant:

- Rapid changes in production methods, technologies, social and political organization, culture, human values and the natural environment have taken place. We seem to be in a philosophical crisis and Pope Francis in the Vatican says it clearly in his book *Laudatory Si*: “our common home is in grave danger”.

- These changes are experienced in different ways by individuals and social groups depending on the level of development of the community in which they live. Frequently the transformation process affects only some aspects of social systems, especially when it is induced from outside.

- It can be said that often in history, major social upheavals have always been preceded by philosophical-moral ideas, but during the evolution of industrial societies, technical innovations have clearly generated some momentum of their own which the human awareness, our morals and values and our political and institutional systems have difficulty keeping up with.

- Analysing the philosophical crisis, it does seem clear from various works of research (Ref. Ernst Ulrich von Weiszacker and Anders Wijkman - *Come On - A Report of the club of Rome*, Springer, 2018) "that a balance is urgently needed between humans and nature, as well as a balance between markets and the State, and the short versus long term". Empirical evidence can be

furnished to show that this need bridges the discrepancy which otherwise, becomes especially problematic when technology is transferred, usually only partially to other social systems.

- This “simultaneousness of things not genuinely simultaneous” in a world becoming increasingly networked in the technical sense leads to an overall situation that is highly sensitive to irrational actions and could spell the system's total collapse. The very real danger of ecological disaster is a palpable example of this (K. Mannheim).

## **5. The Crisis of Values is at the Centre of the Present Global Problematique**

Let it be said clearly and boldly that the present-day critical and ever lamented situations time and again are clearly not the result of economic crises in the traditional sense of the term but a global "crisis of values" and flaws in the whole social system and corresponding defects in control mechanisms. As has been aptly demonstrated by the group of experts on World Economy and Social Ethics to which they belonged far back in 1994 and which was supported by the German and African Bishops at a Symposium in Yaoundé agreed: "The demand for natural resources which poses a threat to the whole of mankind is chiefly the result of three interdependent processes, viz

- a horrendous waste of non-renewable resources in the industrialized societies,
- the still largely unbridled population growth, for the most part in the agricultural regions of the Third World, which is exacerbating

the already delicate balance between man and resources in those regions, and

- the dramatic, excessive burden on the environment's capacity to absorb pollution which is causing manifest damage to the ecological balance on a global scale.

## **6. Incompatibilities of Traditional Values and Technological Logic**

These problems arise primarily from the fact that traditional value concepts and notions of living standards and consumer behaviour are no longer consistent with the strategies of a "civilisation permeated with science". This means that technologies, forms of social organization and inter-human relations seem no longer to function in systems. Thus, the main objective of a crisis management strategy must be to minimize such incompatibilities by enhancing the awareness of individuals and groups and by correcting deficiencies of system control on an international scale. Such adjustments should, where possible, be consistent with market requirements.

The present ecological crisis has two main sources:

- One is the still prevalent view that man can exploit nature without restraint and that all things technically feasible should be put into practice. From the scientific, political and socio-ethical point of view, these arguments have long been challenged, yet without this change of attitude having yet had sufficient impact on economic and social policy.

- The other is the survival of structures and modes of conduct that were considered quite rational in one context but have lost their meaning as a result of endogenous or exogenous changes in other parts of the system. This applies, for instance, in efforts to maximize production at any price, which is understandable in a deficient society. The desire to have large numbers of children, too, was rational before the revolutionary advances in the field of hygiene and medicine. But if people still cherish that desire when circumstances have changed, continuing population growth represents a direct ecological threat. Adequate control of the system must primarily serve to reduce the contradictions between the rationality of the individual and that of society as a whole.

## **7. Social-ethical Conclusions and the Levels of Responsibility**

It is necessary to draw from our analysis of these problems and our socio-ethical deliberations some conclusions for the different levels of responsibility in the community. In doing so, the general approach is not characterised by a radical rejection of technology and economic growth as at times called for. Without the many achievements in the field of engineering and without the development of a productive market economy, it would not have been possible for many people today to live without fear of the deformities of nature that pose an immediate threat to their existence.

Without technological advancement and economic growth, it would not have been possible for humankind to multiply and

benefit from their biological life instead of dying prematurely of starvation or diseases which could have been be combated. The following conclusions favouring the further development of economic and social institutions as well as technology lead to a community life that is more compatible with the environment which are based on these ethical deliberations.

### **8. Conflicts are Pre-determined when Ethical Values are not Included**

It cannot be assumed, however, that agreement on new global institutions and the introduction of necessary structural changes in the industrial and developing countries are possible without conflict. Conflicts over short-term versus long-term economic advantages and over who bears the cost of basing the economy on ecologically sound principles are unavoidable. This also applies to conflicts ensuing from the necessary dismantling of the political and economic monopolies of privileged groups in developing countries. What is required are procedures for the rational settlement of conflicts within the framework of the democratic institutions of a country which respects the rule of law.

### **9. Virtue and Values do not Need Police Action - they are Entrenched in Responsible Leadership Decisions**

Ecological problems cannot be mastered with the police-state methods of an "eco-dictatorship", quite apart from such other considerable ethical misgivings such as human rights. It is essential that the majority of the population voluntarily appreciate the necessity of changing the general conditions and systems of incentives and that they are willing to carry out such changes in

their own lives. The social teaching and ethical principles guiding Christianity and some of the world's leading religions can help by, on the one hand, making people aware of the problem and, on the other, urging that conflicts be settled by peaceful means.

## **10. Ethical Values and Agreements Applied on the International Level**

(a) In the case of some resources ("goods common to mankind") which might be jeopardized through unrestrained economic activity (extinction of certain animal and plant species, climate stability), international agreements are necessary to impose constraints on their use. Existing agreements must be implemented at a faster rate, the verification of their observance approved, and these must be extended to new areas.

(b) In the case of resources which up to now have been used without restriction but which in fact are scarce and thus likely to be overexploited (e.g. fish stocks), international agreements (on catch quotas for instance) are needed to limit their exploitation. At the same time, monitoring systems must be created to thwart attempts by certain countries to circumvent such agreements (whale hunting, ostensibly for research purposes only).

(c) Transboundary pollutants (for instance, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, CFCs) must be made the subject of global agreements which commit the countries causing the pollution to keep their emissions within prescribed limits.

(d) Up to now the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has contained no reference to "the environment", which shows how little people were aware of such problems when the agreement was signed in 1947. But since a member of GATT may resort to environment-friendly measures that affect international trade only when the ecological impact is felt in its own country (e.g. a ban on imports of toxic waste), and since choosing trading partners according to their environmental protection standards (for instance, exploitation without reforestation) is inconsistent with GATT, new international rules are needed to tackle these problems. These could include agreements to ensure the observance of minimum ecological standards during production. It would then be less attractive to companies in industrial countries merely to switch production abroad on account of the lower environmental protection costs.

Since the aim of sustainable development has been incorporated in the preamble of the treaty establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO) following the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, the WTO is now called upon to adopt binding directives for "trade and environment". It will have to take account of the risk of industrial nations using such ecological standards as yet another excuse for protectionist measures to the detriment of developing countries. This danger must be counteracted by means of impartial procedures for interpreting the rules.

## **II. Ethical Values Applied to Industrial Economies**

Owing to the extent to which natural resources are currently being consumed and the ensuing ecological burden, but also in view of the technological capabilities of the modern industrial countries and the economic options available to them, these countries must be required to adopt production methods that are more in keeping with ecological requirements, and they must lead the way by restructuring their industries along these lines.

(a) In this process, it is necessary to eliminate the kind of market activity which places a heavy burden on the environment (for instance, incentives to European or American farmers to produce more, irrespective of the scarcity of resources or the subsidizing of energy production which is conducive to waste). Since there is a demand for environmental preservation measures in industrial countries, there is also some support for the idea of paying farmers to engage in activities which protect the landscape. For some of them, this may be compensation for loss of earnings resulting from a reorientation of farm policy, but it can also give them the feeling that they are providing services for which there is a demand, which is an important factor for their integration into the community.

(b) In many areas, external costs have not yet been sufficiently internalized. In the case of air and water pollution as well as waste disposal, attempts must be made to offset the costs in a way which will gradually reduce the degree of pollution and damage.

(c) Owing to the expected impact of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the climate, further increases in this substance in the industrial countries must first be stopped as quickly as possible and then reduced. Technical requirements, certificates allowing CO<sub>2</sub> to be emitted in annually declining quantities, as well as a charge for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (a "CO<sub>2</sub> tax") would be useful instruments for this purpose.

A CO<sub>2</sub> tax would only have an impact on the environment if fossil fuels were taxed according to the actual CO<sub>2</sub> burden caused and thus made considerably more expensive, but without unjustified exemptions (for instance, to save miners' jobs) or additional burdens resulting from the use of non-CO<sub>2</sub> sources of energy (wind, water, solar and nuclear energy). In order to avoid distortions in the use of energy, steps will have to be taken to ensure that in the case of non-CO<sub>2</sub> sources, too, the external costs are internalized. All the big industrial nations (EU countries, Japan, United States) must be involved in such measures. This is the only way to prevent distortions of competition and keep the global effects actually measurable.

(d) In the field of energy, all possibilities of using regenerative sources (i.e. those which do not cause CO<sub>2</sub> pollution) must be resorted to and every feasible economy made. This may require us to accept drastic changes to some of our habits in the long term (i.e. as regards production methods, housing, work, transport). The question of retaining nuclear power or phasing it out must also largely be assessed in terms not only of reactor safety and the disposal of nuclear fuel but of the possible

consequences of larger CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. One also has to take into account the effects of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and of the waste heat generated through the installation and operation of nuclear power stations.

(e) Transport, especially individual transport, is a major environmental problem in highly industrialised countries. The cost of petrol (measured in working minutes) is today lower than it was prior to the first oil price explosion in 1973. For this, but also for other reasons (the growing number of families with second and third cars), the numbers of cars (per thousand inhabitants) and the degree of motorization have increased in recent years. On ecological grounds, this trend cannot be continued. The following steps will have to be taken to restrict it. Public transport systems are usually too ponderous to be able to operate economically and offer customer-friendly services. They will, therefore, have to be made more attractive economically. This is essential if they are to become more acceptable ecologically and energy-saving. These improvements cannot be achieved without further deregulation and privatisation. Furthermore, various measures (e.g. technical conditions together with a pollution-related car tax, an increase in mineral oil tax, speed limits, and proof that garage space is available) will have to be introduced to make individual transport less attractive. These would be good incentives for resorting to known technologies that are less of a burden on the environment and developing them further.

(f) Industrial countries should not pass on their ecological problems to other nations (e.g. by exporting [toxic] waste) who agree to take such products because of their ignorance of the possible long-term consequences or because of their dire economic circumstances. International agreements such as the Lome IV Convention, under which the EU countries have undertaken not to export toxic waste to ACP countries should be extended and effectively implemented.

(g) To the extent that industrial countries, as a result of positive external effects, profit from tropical rainforests, they are under obligation to pay compensation to developing countries to preserve them. The countries receiving such payments would for their part be obliged to allow controls to be carried out by external agencies. The payments would be made in instalments and adjusted from time to time depending on the extent to which the countries concerned have met their obligations.

(h) The industrial nations should assist the developing countries in the following areas of environmental protection within the framework of economic cooperation:

- Introducing environmentally acceptable technologies, particularly alternative sources of energy that are easy to operate and service (solar energy stations and wind farms, small hydroelectric power stations);
- Providing know-how in the establishment of environmental protection agencies, drafting environmental legislation and ensuring its effective implementation; and

- Setting up ecological research establishments to promote, for instance, environmentally acceptable farming methods and forest management.

In these areas, the bilateral would be preferable to the multilateral approach because decentralisation is conducive to broader experimentation and thus the testing of more options. There could be an exchange of experience at a later date.

(i) Ecologically acceptable economic activity can be expected to develop to the extent that it proves possible to pass on the cost of environmental protection. Thus, for instance, the use of cars for leisure (about 50% of all car journeys) can become dearer, which suggests that people should use their leisure time differently. By internalising external costs, it is possible to dispense with jobs in branches of the economy that are a burden on the environment while allowing new ones to be created in environmentally acceptable areas of production (e.g. the service sector).

(j) But such consideration for the environment presupposes that the necessary adjustments are tolerated. Where the social impact is considerable, it will be necessary to provide assistance for such adjustments. It is still necessary for nations to agree to waive some of their national sovereignty within the framework of international agreements. It is the task of the associations, the political parties, and above all the Christian Churches on account of their universal structure stemming from their faith, to promote public awareness of this necessity.

## **12. Ethical Values Applied to Developing and Emerging Countries**

### **(a) Reform social institutions:**

Owing to the systemic links between different problems areas (ecology, poverty, population trends) it is necessary to reform social institutions in the developing countries and create new ones, and to foster the culture, value-concepts and so on that are a prerequisite for both reform and the proper functioning of new institutions. In this connection, it has to be remembered that there existed in the traditional culture of many peoples both elements of respect for nature and rules for political leaders to apply for the benefit of the community as a whole. It is therefore essential to draw on such value-concepts and to use them creatively in establishing the new cultural, political and economic conditions for a global society.

### **(b) Establish rules and coordination mechanisms:**

The fundamental problem of many developing societies lies in the fact that their social order is not a system of cooperation for the mutual benefit of all. That is to say, there are no rules, institutions and values that serve the common weal. On the contrary, the uncoordinated pursuit of selfish short-term aims eventually cause damage to the community. Thus, if only to protect their long-term collective interests, developing countries ought themselves to be the first to take an interest in safeguarding and preserving their ecological assets, for overexploitation reduces the sustainability of those assets or, in extreme cases, destroys them altogether. Their aim should be, through cooperation with others and the restructuring of their own social institutions, to ensure

that uncoordinated individual behaviour on the one hand and selfish short-term interests of minorities on the other do not prejudice their common interests in the long term. The following aspects would seem to have considerable bearing on efforts to cope with the interdependence of the problems of poverty, population and environment.

(c) Run governments on Constitutionality:

It must be realist that if there exists a constitutional state with a democratically elected parliament, an independent judiciary and an administration that is committed to the public good (that is to say one that is not arbitrary but free from corruption) it is possible to stipulate exact individual and group property rights (e.g. by means of a land survey office, agricultural reforms) to ensure that they are reliably upheld, but also to bind society to effective rules (e.g. laws which provide for reforestation) and the protection of nature parks, etc. For only owners whose property rights are secured in the long term will take care of their natural resources, will preserve them and try to sustain their use. Moreover, the installation of such democratic institutions meets the wishes of large sections of the population in developing countries who, after all, have a feeling for the fair administration of justice and government action.

(d) Democratic Principles which respect the Will of the People:

Conditions of democracy benefit the poorest sections of the population, most of all since they are then no longer exposed to the dictatorial attitudes of officials or those wielding physical, social, political and economic power. Only where the rule of law

prevails do poor people have the chance to enjoy the fruits of their labour themselves and are no longer open to the danger of their property being acquired by outsiders. Democratic conditions are also prerequisites for reducing population growth, however, because in such a society and given monetary stability it is possible to make provision for 'old age by forming monetary and material assets instead of relying solely on one's descendants. And again, it is only in a democratic society that confidence in collective forms of old age provision, i.e. social security, can develop.

(e) Justice and Communitarian Practices - the Foundation for Peace:

But democratic stability is only sustainable if the social system is accepted by the community as a whole. Rights of ownership protected by the rule of law will not be accepted by the majority if the distribution of, say, landed property is extremely unequal, that is, there is a small group of large landowners and a large group of landless people who, apart from having no land, also have no access to other forms of ownership (human capital, means of production, housing etc.). Social acceptance of democratic institutions has to be promoted by government redistribution policies (land reform, education for all, social housing programme, etc). In the conditions prevailing in many developing countries, capital-formation schemes serve to increase efficiency in broad sections of the community, especially where non-performance-related pensions are absorbed by increased competition, factor quality is improved (education) and factor use increased through larger sections of the population having better

access to land (redistribution of land, improved leasing arrangements).



## Chapter 11

# Challenges of Corruption and the Role of the Church

### I. Corruption - a Deadly Vice that Manifests Integrity Deficiency

The United Nations Manual on Anti-Corruption Policy defines corruption as ***“the misuse of power for private gain is a phenomenon endemic everywhere and in virtually all countries of the world”*** (May, 2001)<sup>31</sup>. In fact, it has been observed that corruption is *‘the most practised vice’* found in every single African country. Shockingly, however, corruption is also found and practised in every other country of the world. Worldwide, it has gradually become an accepted fact by many that ***‘corruption is a deadly vice’***.

**Corruption is an enigma in every system and organization** - Recent corruption cases exposed in the World Bank, the United Nations, governments across the world, transnational and multinational corporations, the private sector, banks, educational institutions, churches and religious organizations, civil society and non-governmental agencies,

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<sup>31</sup> Delivered at the 8<sup>th</sup> Theological Institute and the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) under the Theme “Respecting the Dignity and God’s image in every human being” (Gen I:27-28) in Kigali, Rwanda, 24<sup>th</sup> June – 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

regulators and accounting firms and the big scandals of large global players such as even the International Football Federation Association (FIFA) have shown that the misuse of public power for private gain remains an enigma and can occur in any system, society, organisation or private zone, even where there are well laid-out checks and balances.

**Corruption is one of the greatest threats to human progress** - Therefore, it can be rightly concluded that corruption poses one of the greatest threats to the advancement of humanity in the fight against poverty, the progress of people, the establishment of justice, peace and equity for humanity and for the environment to flourish. It has a potentially damaging effect on the welfare of entire nations, therefore there is a need for an understanding of its insidious nature.

**Corruption undermines the SDG's, growth and stability** - Corruption is an issue of grave concern and a serious obstacle to economic growth, democratic culture, national and international stability, good governance and effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the various constitutions, laws and statutes that guide nations and peoples. Because of corruption, poverty is widespread globally. But its face in Africa is quite ugly. Unemployment is high and the youth and women are the first victims, without hope, refuge or solutions. Standards of life are eroding in quality for the majority of people.

**Corruption is a cause for migration and displacement of peoples** - As crimes increase, the human and natural ecology and

environment are damaged. Migrations of peoples remain staggering both within nations - from the rural to urban areas, but also internationally - from the less industrialised nations to the more developed and industrialised economies. Traditional support found in cultures with their wealth of human values is fast diminishing due to the invasion of closed societies by new technologies, modernity and migration, despite many positive efforts to the contrary.

### **Corruption Index by Transparency Agencies is still high -**

Transparency International, which has gained a global reputation in presenting an annual corruption index, ranks countries accordingly. And the statistics are staggering. The 2018 result of the Corruption Perceived Index highlights that the “*majority of countries are making little or no progress in ending corruption...*”. The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people, and uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. In 2018, the index found that more than two-thirds of countries score below 50, with an average score of 43. Unfortunately, compared to recent years, this poor performance is nothing new.

**Pretenders encourage and profit from corruption -** Even where people pretend and doubt its preponderance in their societies, paradoxically, these same people and institutions practice it in the secrecy of their closets and share in its ill-gotten rewards. This involves engaging in practices that encourage the spread of corruption whether willingly or by coercion, covering

acts of corruption with justifications of philanthropy to feel good and morally justified, redefining corruption to exclude their nefarious conducts, benefiting from acts of corruption in its manifold forms and, therefore, helping underline one common characteristic that classifies practitioners of corruption everywhere as persons or institutions or systems suffering from ***integrity deficiency***.

## **2. Fighting Corruption is not with Indifference or Apathy**

### **Corruption is not fought with indifference and apathy -**

With these many efforts by governments and individuals and the preachings of religious leaders, corruption seems to be on the increase and is too slow at being eradicated. Archbishop John Onayiekan, Catholic Metropolitan of Abuja, Nigeria put it bluntly in an interview publication saying, "*there is a growing sense of cynicism in the land almost to the level of despair that nothing can be done about our unenviable credentials of corruption. Transparency International has always rated us very low in their scale. Whether one agrees with their criteria or not, the fact remains that we really have little to be proud about as a nation in terms of honesty and integrity in our land*"<sup>32</sup>. (*Endemic Corruption in Nigeria - Any way out? ICPC Monograph Series, No. 8, 2001 p.4*). And this judgment is applicable in many countries of Africa.

**Christian Churches among many voices against corruption** - The unprecedented increase in the notable voices

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<sup>32</sup> Onayiekan, J; *Endemic Corruption in Nigeria; Any way out? ICPC Monograph Series, No.8 2007, p. 4*

from virtually all continents to raise awareness of the negative effects of corruption is a laudable and bold initiative. Noticeable efforts have been undertaken by governments, security agencies, Christian Churches and thought leaders of religion and culture, non-governmental organizations, Transparency International, civil society organizations, corporations and rating agencies, social responsibility institutions, the academia, local, national, international and multilateral agencies, interest groups and even personalities around the globe. It is indeed a matter of concern to people who are engaged with morality in the public domain, that the most damaging hazard around the topic of corruption is the growing sense of despair and cynicism in many countries that nothing can be done to eradicate corruption completely. This general indifference of the populace to the “*virtue of integrity*” or their helplessness at manifestations of its lack, too numerous to mention, but the consequences of which are most damaging, have their impact on the economic, social, cultural and political domains.

**Best Practices against corruption are lacking in some African nations** - In the case of many African nations, corruption is the failure of them to entrench the rule of law, promote the principle of the separation of powers effectively along global best practices of governance to promote balance and transparency, encourage the democratic and electoral process to produce credible free and fair election results, uphold the tenets of the Will of the People enshrined in their constitutions and produce values-driven thought leadership to manage the affairs of people.

### **3. Definitions of Corruption and Historical Facts around Corruption**

**Definition of corruption is difficult** - There is no generally accepted definition of corruption. The attempt made here is to look straight at the reality without any pretentious lenses to clarify the essence of corruption. By adopting this empirical approach, one arrives at a wider consensus as to which acts are intrinsically harmful to society, and should, therefore, be prevented and punished. Indeed, the lack of consensus on what types of behaviour or conduct should be considered as questionable, illegal and corrupt differ.

**Corruption has so many names and faces** - The UN Anti-Corruption Tool Kit accepts this lack of a universal definition where it states that *“Conventional wisdom is that there is no single, comprehensive, universally accepted definition of corruption... Attempts to develop a definition of corruption invariably encounter legal, criminological and, in many countries, political problems. It was reported that when the negotiations of the United Nations Convention against corruption began early in 2002, one option under consideration was not to define corruption at all but to test specific types of acts of corruption”*<sup>33</sup>

**Corrupt practices are many** - In its Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the UN outlines some of the elements that make up for what must generally be understood as

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<sup>33</sup> UN Anti Corruption Tool Kit P. III.

corrupt practices, therefore, qualifying for a sort of definition under the following, as:

- (i) *the promise, offering or giving to a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her functions;*
- (ii) *Solicitation or acceptance by a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or another entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her function* <sup>34</sup>.

The Global Programme against Corruption (GPAC) held a session of the Group of Experts on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2000 in Vienna and prepared a **UN Anti-Corruption Tool Kit** which summarised the many definitions of corruption as simply "*the misuse of (public) power for private gain*"<sup>35</sup>.

- **Bribery** - *the promise, offer or giving of any benefit that improperly affects the actions or decisions of a public official;*
- **Embezzlement** - *theft of resources by persons entrusted with authority and control over anything of value;*
- **Fraud** - *behaviour designed to trick or fool another person or*

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. UN Anti Corruption Tool Kit, p. 10

<sup>35</sup> The GPAC identified Corruption as an action that materializes in different forms and includes the following (cf pages 10 - 12)

entity for one's own or third party's benefit;

- **Extortion** - forcing a person to pay money or other valuables in exchange for acting or failing to act. This coercion can be under the threat of physical harm, violence or restraint';
- **Abuse of Power** - using one's vested authority to give undue preferential treatment to any group or individual or to discriminate against any group or individual;
- **Exploiting a Conflict of Interest/Insider trading** - engaging in transactions or acquiring a position or commercial interest that is incompatible with one's official role and duties for the purpose of illegal enrichment;
- **Receiving an unlawful gratuity, favour or illegal commission** - a public official receiving anything of value from others wishing to do business with the government;
- **Favouritism** - the assignment of services or resources according to family ties, party affiliation, tribe, religion, sect and other preferential groupings;
- **Nepotism** - a form of favouritism whereby an office holder with the right to make appointments prefers to nominate his/her relatives for positions within the public administration;
- **Illegal contributions** - occurs when political parties or governments in power receive money in exchange for non-interference with the entity or group making the contribution. It is closely related to bribery.

#### **4. Adam - Where are you? Towards a Theology of Corruption**

*“The Lord God took a handful of soil from the ground and formed a man from it... He breathed the breath of life into the*

*man's nostrils, and the man became a living person" (Genesis 2:7)".*

**The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak** - Philosophically and theologically x-rayed, the topic of corruption assumes a *metaphysical dimension*. Corruption is identified as indicative of *"the human condition of decadence" (taken from the sand) - humus - earth or clay therefore breakable)* which shows the weakness of the human flesh and mind against the spirit. Of this Jesus Christ said: *"the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak"* (Mark: 14 37/38). Daily, the contradiction of rational choices vis-a-vis easier alternatives as in the biblical *"fallen Adam"*<sup>36</sup> gives a picture of the human being as made of earth, and therefore breakable, fragile, decadent and of weakness in nature: *"All men have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God"* (St Paul to the Romans 3: 23 - 24). It is this aspect of a weak human nature that searches for a life made easy, for irrational actions that shortcut procedures and lead to cheap wealth, fame and positions, often achieved through breaking of the rule of law, and indeed, acting outside of the moral, natural and supernatural laws which govern the universe.

These are only but a limited version of the many definitions of the faces of corruption. With this knowledge, we arrive at the conclusion that *acting 'outside of the law, human beings show proneness to weaknesses, such that irrational behavioural patterns occur and are contemplated upon. These undermine due process, negate virtue, promote egoistic and selfish behaviour which lead to*

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<sup>36</sup> Genesis chapter 2:7

*decadence and ultimately to what society describes as corruption*<sup>37</sup>. One can however generally agree that from the many voices of cultures, traditional wisdom and the lessons of history, *corruption is a universal disease*. Since a country's public institutions and agencies do not work in isolation, there is a need for an integrated and transparent system of checks and balances designed to achieve accountability amusing the various arms of government, disperse power and limit opportunities for conflicts of interests and abuse of power for gain. Without public confidence in the anti-corruption policies and measures, many genuine efforts at curbing this vice may be viewed as mere political showcasing.<sup>38</sup>

## **5. Corruption and the Role of the Churches**

“Go teach all Nations...” (Matthew chapter 28 vs 25) is one of the commands bequeathed to his followers during his ascension and departure from this earth by the founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ himself. This mandate retains its validity and relevance to this day and the face of brazen corruption which stands in direct contradiction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands of a Church response and efforts at its eradication and elimination.

They include prayer and awareness through teaching and healing, raising the prophetic voice for the voiceless, collaboration between Church and State in dialogue programs and joint efforts with activities for anti-corruption efforts, zero tolerance for

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<sup>37</sup> Ike, O. unpublished paper at international conference on 40 Years of Gaudium et Spes, Enugu, 2005

<sup>38</sup> Peter Langseth, Helping Member States Build Integrity to Fight Corruption, Vienna 2001

corruption through ethics education for values-driven leadership, leading through example and being the model, “Light for the World and Salt for the earth” (Matthew chapter 5). This is a call for a Church that is corruption free. It is necessary to protect whistleblowers and encourage whistleblowing by standing on integrity, educating the youth and children with their families on the evil effects of corruption and promoting initiatives that serve justice and peace. The Churches are called to be places that have initiatives for freedom, transparency, accountability and the nurturing of responsible leaders of society, particularly the public servants, judges and the judiciary for fairness and integrity.

## **6. Corruption in Biblical Perspective**

Professor Christoph Stueckelberger, in a recently published documentation on “*African Church Assets Handbook - Good Stewardship for Sustainable Impact*”, Geneva, June 2018, outlines in a very systematic, convincing and elaborate manner the following points which for the sake of depth we render in their entirety hereunder. Stueckelberger starts by stating that “*Mismanagement of entrusted assets is also a topic known throughout the Bible. Especially corruption is reported and condemned without exception in the whole Holy Scripture. Corruption - defined as the abuse of entrusted public or private power for personal interests - is a widespread form of abuse of entrusted assets*”.

## **7. Campaign against Corruption in the Old Testament**

“The oldest reference to corruption in the *Old Testament* seems to be found in the book of Exodus, only three chapters after the Ten Commandments (Kleiner, 1992, 101ff): ‘*You shall take no*

*bribe, for a bribe blinds the officials, and subverts the cause of those who are in the right.* (Ex 23:8, similar Proverbs 17:23) This prohibition of corruption dates back to the times before the kings. It is not accidental that it instructs judges not to accept bribes. The unbiased administration of justice is vital for every legal system.

In the environment of the Old Testament, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the phenomenon of corruption was also known, but here in the book of Exodus, a law against corruption has already been drawn up! It is also important to see what the ethical justification is for prohibiting corruption. It is truth and justice, and, in particular, the legal protection of the poor, as is shown in other verses: *'Ah, you... who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of their rights!'* (Isaiah 5:23) The goal of fighting corruption is to protect the poor and the weak from the corrupt practices of the powerful. But at the same time, the corrupt practices of poor people are also condemned and not justified. *'You shall not side with the majority so as to pervert justice; nor shall you be partial to the poor in a lawsuit.'* (Ex. 23:2-3). One cannot justify corruption because it is a result of poverty.

The responsible selection of leaders was always key to a corruption-free society. His father-in-law instructed Moses to select as leaders *'men who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain.'* (Ex. 18:21) Even before the time of the kings, it is mentioned that the sons of Samuel accepted bribes for their own benefit (1 Sam. 8:3). In the book of Kings, it becomes clear that corruption was also used in external affairs and in military

matters: allies of the adversary were offered bribes to turn their weapons against him (*1 Kings 15:19; 2 Kings 16:8*).

The prophets are also very clear about the effects of corruption - corruption kills. Corruption destroys life. *'In you, they take bribes to shed blood; you take both advance interest and accrued interest and make gain of your neighbours by extortion.'* (*Ezek. 22:12*) Similar in Psalm 15: *'O Lord, who may abide in your tent? ... [Those] who do not lend money at interest and do not take a bribe against the innocent.'* (*Ps. 15:1,5*). The prophet and the psalm both mention in the same verse usury and corruption! The effect is the same: exploitation, reduction of life expectancy and violation of just distribution. Wealth must be rooted in good performance and not based on exploitation: *'better is a little with righteousness than large income with injustice.'* (*Prov. 16:8*) The prophet Amos (*5:12, 15*) criticises the corrupt judges: *"You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts. ... Hate evil, love good, maintains justice in the courts."* Unjust leaders can destroy a country, as the collective experience of the proverbs says: *'By justice a king gives stability to the land, but one who makes heavy exactions ruins it.'* (*Prov. 29:4*).

The prophet Micah, during the 8<sup>th</sup> century before Christ, and at the same time as the prophet Isaiah, attacked not only the corrupt legal system, but also the corruption of religious leaders: *'Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priests teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and say, 'Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us.' Therefore because of you Zion shall be ploughed as a field; Jerusalem*

*shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height.*’ (Micah 3:11-12)<sup>39</sup> The expectation of God is clear: justice, trust in God and modesty: ‘*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*’ (Micah 6:8)

The theological justification of refusing corruption becomes clear in particular with the prophets. Yahweh God is incorruptible, as he is justice and right himself. This is why he is not trying to bribe King Cyrus when he repatriates his people from exile to their land (as some individuals among the people may have proposed). Corruption destroys communities. Whoever uses the evil of bribery is called pagan and is thus called as being excluded from the community with God. Devout are they who do not take bribes (Ps. 26:11).

## **8. Campaign against Corruption in the New Testament**

In the *New Testament*, corruption is even more dramatic: *corruption kills lives*. In connection to the events around Passion and Easter, it is reported that Judas was bribed by the high priests (Mark 14:10f. par.) The elites of the Roman Empire under Pontius Pilate were heavily corrupt. And Pilate in cooperation with the Jewish authorities (Synhedrium) killed Jesus.

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<sup>39</sup> Alagbada, Nicodème, Un message prophétique contre la corruption. Essai d’une relecture de Michée 3:1-12, pré-thèse pour la DETA, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 2004, manuscript

Corruption kills in a double sense. It killed Jesus of Nazareth, and Judas hanged himself (Matt. 27:5) because he lost all self-respect through corruption. The high priests and elders also paid bribes to the soldiers so that they spread the lie that the body of Christ was not resurrected but stolen. (Whether these passages are historical is controversial but it is besides the present point.) The Acts of the Apostles report how Ananias and Saphira committed fraud in selling their land without respecting the rules of sharing of the Christian community (Act 5:1-11).

Judges and governors were bribed: the governor Felix wanted some money from Paul to sentence him less severely (Acts 24:26f), but Paul resisted. It is also documented that the customs, controlled by the Romans, were corrupt at the time of Jesus. This is also shown by the story of chief tax collector Zacchaeus and his illegally acquired goods and how he later gave half of his belongings to the poor (Luke 19:1-10).

The corruptibility of the spirit is probably the most dangerous form of corruption. The magician Simon offers money to the apostles Peter and John, thus trying to buy the power so that anyone he places his hands on will receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:8-24). Peter sharply sent Simon away and called his attempt devilish, which means the opposite of God's will. Because of the magician Simon, this form of sinful corruption is called *simony* which means the attempt to buy spiritual power and functions.

To draw a moral from this story, it shows that what is an inalienable power of God cannot be acquired by underhand

dealings. Greed is seen as a root cause of corruption in the biblical texts: *'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.'* (Luke 12:15) The notion of accountability is in the core of the relationship between believers and God and between human beings.

Greed is seen as one core root of corruption. Greed in the New Testament Greek word (*phil-argyria*) means literally 'loving money': *'The love of money is a root of all kind of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.'* (1 Tim. 6:10).

The relevance of these biblical insights are mostly conveyed in narrative stories. The ethics of fighting corruption lies in the fact that the stories reflect images of a successful life and of a society that fights corruption. There is no single verse in the Bible that justifies corruption! But many verses have a very clear analysis of the effects of corruption and very clear values of a corruption-free society, which can be summarised as follows:

*Corruption kills and destroys life - God wants life*

*Corruption denies the rights of the poor - God wants justice*

*Corruption hinders economic performance - God wants honest wealth*

*Corruption destroys trust and confidence - God wants community*

*Corruption strengthens violence - God wants peace*

*Corruption destroys integrity/credibility - God wants dignity*

## 9. Liberation from isms: Nepotism, Favouritism, Denominationalism, Ethnicism, Sexism

Abuse of entrusted assets for personal interests is often rooted in and linked to *nepotism*, *favouritism*, *ethnicism*, *clientelism*, *denominationalism*, *sexism*, *racism*. They can be called *grey corruption*. The common characteristics of these -isms is that they give a preferential advantage to a person or a group of persons-based relations and group belongings which can discriminate other persons and are a violation of the human right of equality of each human being. There may not be a direct payment or receiving of a monetary bribe but to give an advantage to a person which is not based on performance, but on other criteria.

*Reasons* for these -isms are manifold. It is a very complex phenomenon with social, cultural, economic, political, religious, historical and personal factors. A few reasons can be mentioned:

- Prejudices:** groups of people are seen by lenses which do not reflect reality
- Lack of trust:** persons from other groups are not trusted, often based on prejudices
- Power:** increasing own power by securing loyalty by selection based on these -isms
- Greed:** personal advantage from a selection of persons based on these -isms
- Poverty:** give or get a job by preferring/discriminating some groups of people

- Family:** the pressure from the wider family to prefer clan members for a position
- Tradition:** customs which prefer groups for positions, e.g. men before women
- Religion:** believers of the same faith are preferred above love for all human beings
- Security:** security (linked to trust) is more important than performance
- Culture:** relations are more important than rules and laws
- Arbitrariness:** lack of defined procedures and rules leads to arbitrary decisions and impunity
- Mainstream:** political correctness which leads to selection as accepted by the mainstream
- Individuum:** the character and mindset of a person lead to discriminatory selection.

*Reasons to overcome* these -isms are mainly due to Human Rights, which in their core are based on the equality and therefore equal rights of all human beings independent from their age, sex, race, status, colour, religion, ethnic group, intelligence, physical constitution etc.

***What are the solutions? How can these -isms be avoided?***

Let us take the same points which lead to discrimination which can be corrected to overcome these -isms:

*From prejudice to experience: enable the experience of the quality of persons seen as strangers;*

*From mistrust to trust: encounters, cooperation and ethical education can build trust;*

*From power to integrity: not loyalty and relations, but performance is the benchmark;*

*From greed to responsibility: chose not what serves oneself, but what serves best the community;*

*From poverty to jobs: create more jobs by a better performing economy;*

*From family to community: see the community as the broader “family”;*

*From tradition to innovation: conserve humane traditions, and transform inhumane traditions;*

*From religion to faith: from religious tradition to the faithful love of all human beings;*

*From old to new security: the new security from rules-based procedures and transparent standards;*

*From old to new culture: combine the importance of relations and of state of law/rules;*

*From arbitrariness to rules: transparent, impartial procedures and monitoring of selection;*

*From mainstream to ethics: do what is ethical and not what the majority does;*

*From weak to strong personality: courageous leaders in implementing integrity and justice;*

To avoid these **-isms** does not mean that these selection criteria cannot be justified in specific cases: e.g. in a protestant institution, some Catholics may be employed, but it can be justified that a majority should be Protestants. In a team of 90% male persons, it

may be justified to look specifically for female new staff and to exclude male candidates as a step towards gender balance. Quota systems can be justified to protect and support minorities. But in most cases, these -isms undermine the integrity, credibility and performance of institutions. Especially in asset management, where high performance, credibility and transparency is needed, they have to be avoided.

### **10. Liberation from Addictions**

Mismanagement and abuse of assets are not only linked to lack of competence or bad will, but are sometimes also the result of addiction. Addiction is an attitude and action where free will is restricted and replaced by inner compulsion. There are many forms of addictions. Those most relevant in our context of asset management are the addiction to *money, power, alcohol/drugs and sex*.

Addiction to money is also called greed. Even if more money is not needed for a life of dignity, some people are addicted to get more and more when they smell money and see an opportunity. Abuse of assets for personal interest can happen when the control and double control and rules are not clear. Others are addicted to power, for example, in a leadership position which they do not want to leave at the end of the Monday. Then they manipulate elections or change constitutions in order to stay in power. Addiction to alcohol or other drugs are often not visible, but can lead to a hidden need for money to buy drugs or to abusive loyalty of employees in order not to be discovered as addicted or violent. Addiction to sex or extramarital relations is

often a reason for corruption. This praxis, again, needs money which has to be earned in the Eden way which can lead to abuse of entrusted resources. A survey among public officials some years ago on the motivations for accepting bribes showed that the majority of public officials and policemen, mainly males, indicated that sex affairs and extramarital relations have been the main motivation for earning money through bribes.

Such observations show that managing assets in a transparent and ethical way needs to discuss, observe and correct potential or real addictive behaviour of persons in decision-making positions. As it is a sensitive topic it needs the courage of supervisory bodies such as councils, auditors, executive committees in trusted friends and pastors to approach addicted persons in the pastoral, and if necessary, therapeutic or even legal way. (*Christoph Stueckelberger, African Church Assets Handbook - Good Stewardship for Sustainable Impact*, Geneva, June 2018)

## **II. Integrated Strategy to Combat Corruption is Required by Churches**

The belief that corruption can be eradicated quickly, easily and permanently inevitably leads to false expectations that result in disappointment and distrust. It must be understood, therefore, that curbing corruption requires political will, public confidence, adequate time, resources, dedication and integrity. Moreover, efforts cannot stop once corruption has been identified and controlled. Localities will have to continue to build integrity and to maintain vigilance. Thus, fighting corruption will become a

continuous feature of civil societies, national institutions, communities and private agencies.

Solutions to the problems of corruption which lead to poverty and underdevelopment cannot be achieved solely through laws, education, poverty alleviation measures or even punishments of culprits if they do not touch the base of the human soul and heart. This is where religion, conscience and the role of the Churches come in fully. Without a broader, integrated and holistic strategy for change, corruption shall continue under various other guises.

## **12. Raising Awareness about Corruption**

Furthermore, it must be asserted that if left unchecked, corruption will openly increase, spreading like ugly and deadly cancer and make the poorest and least educated even poorer. Where personal risk and punishment are minimal, the risk of corruption naturally increases. Therefore, raising awareness without adequate and visible enforcement will lead to cynicism among the citizenry and possibly increase the incidence of corruption.

## **13. Integrity is Key**

Of all the virtues that edify and build up a nation, integrity is the foremost, for it is an all-round virtue. Fidelity to law, observance of due process and respect for the rule of law are common indices that show a '*culture of integrity*' for which the Christian Churches and religious groups and the traditional, pre-colonial African societies were known to excel in their observations. In

pre-colonial societies, the customary laws received through the ancestors made acts of corruption limited due mainly to their intact nearness to the earth and the presence of the '*divine milieu*' in daily life. In modern societies, however, the space of religion and cultural values bound to tradition are being secularised. Yet, the fight against corruption is one that is to be totally confronted by all. This responsibility stands fully as one of the roles of the Church on the African continent.

#### **14. Prayer Needed for without God Humankind can do Little**

The Bishops of Ghana and Nigeria in 1998 amongst others on the continent have since composed prayers against bribery and corruption, said in all churches by believers. In the face of human failure to stop all forms of corruption, having exhausted available human effort in the fight against this virus, they now need divine intervention to the finiteness of their human condition seeking the face of the divine in helping with the required solution. This religious and pastoral effort has turned out to be a great moral and ethical revolution, as it has created awareness and the evils of corruption. All citizens - Christians, politicians, believers and even non-believers - know of the impact of this prayer that attacks corruption - *a deadly vice that manifests integrity deficiency.*

#### **15. Cultivating Integrity and Virtue through Education in Ethics**

In the words of the Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC): 'A nation's fidelity to law can be measured by the level of its respect for its

*Constitution, the extent to which it practices constitutionality in governance and the degree of alertness of the people in guarding the Constitution. Using these as benchmarks, it cannot be confidently asserted that in Nigeria, there is a culture of fidelity to law<sup>40</sup>.*

Otherwise, how else do we explain the lack of integrity at the slightest opportunity where people sell their votes for food and money, making nonsense of the democratic process? How can one explain the vandalism of national infrastructure that is essential to the welfare and for the benefit of all? How do we understand or explain examination malpractices, sexual harassment, bribery and inducement, an entrenched settlement for favours and the abuse of public position for private gain? How do we explain the shielding by people of corrupt leaders whenever such are accused of corruption? To put it mildly, this attitude of indifference to lack of integrity issues may well be a side-wind as corporations, peoples, nations and governments the world over are faced with this vice, of which corruption is now the most popular manifestation.

The damage corruption does and the viciousness of its effect on society are too numerous to enumerate. Lawlessness is a manifestation of lack of integrity. Often, many do not realize that integrity starts with a spirit of obedience to laws. Corrupt

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<sup>40</sup> Honourable Justice Emmanuel O. Ayoola, Many Facets of Corruption, ICPC Monograph Series, No 3, Abuja, Jan 2007, p. 6.

practices often are in breach of the law of the land, be it traditional customs and practices or even legislations and edicts passed by governments. Disregard of due process is a manifestation of lack of integrity, just as the lack of commitment to values is another symptom of lack of integrity.

## **16. Corruption in Africa - Threat to Democracy and Market Economy**

Poverty in Africa or indeed elsewhere is not a God determined phenomenon. Poverty is man-made and much of it is due to the consequences of integrity deficiency manifested through systems of '*centralised and democratised corruption*' - a cliché for official and in-official corruption within states, nations and internationally.

For these reasons, there is increased interest and need for coordinated national and international anti-corruption legislation, as well as policies and measures that are multidisciplinary and action-oriented to reduce corruption to the bare minimum, and thereby at least to curb the '*culture of impunity*' imposed on humanity by the practitioners and beneficiaries of corruption.

The available statistics according to the UNDP Human Development Index has consistently shown that with per capita income falling significantly to about USD300 between 1960 and 2000 (well below the Sub-Saharan average of USD 450), 53.6 percent of Nigeria's population lives below currently universally acceptable figures of the poverty line (UNDP Studies). It is an obvious fact that Nigeria has been bedevilled with weak economic and political governance failures, the major cause of which is

CORRUPTION, that has resulted in some of the highest levels of poverty in the world. Indeed, it is a known fact that corruption, which manifests itself in weak governance and patronage-based politics, has fuelled unproductive public spending and investment in the education, health and agricultural sectors and therefore threatens the attainment of any goals of the world community, including the Millennium Development Goals for the year 2015.

### **17. The Wealth of Africa and the Horrendous Poverty of the Majority**

The paradox is that many African countries have huge human, natural and financial resources and yet suffer from horrendous poverty. Africa's largest populated country, Nigeria, in thirty years (1975 - 2005), generated an estimated USD 320 billion from oil revenues, some of which was invested in infrastructure and services provision without a commensurate boost in the real sector. The reality is that much of the funds went to nurture corruption, feeding into private pockets and of course, fledging the owner countries and entering secret foreign accounts and safe havens overseas.

### **18. Expenditures on Wasteful Military Hardware in Peaceful Countries**

International stakeholders, particularly military and soft /hardware dealers in the USA, Russia, China and other western and military-hardware-dependent economies manipulate, and indeed, force African nations to purchase military hardware and push up defense spending that make the expenditure on defense the

highest in many African countries, even at peace times when the country is not at war and has no neighbours threatening it.

Meanwhile, expenditure on education, health, social services and agriculture continue to rate low on the budget. Governments officials who refuse to comply are removed from office either through a military coup or other thumped up conspiracy charges. Thus, military equipment is purchased and yet, not used, not needed and not a priority for the nation at a time when poverty and corruption continue to thrive in the country.

### **19. Diversion of Local Peoples Funds into Foreign Banks**

Access to safe drinking water is a mirage for millions of Africans. Yet, it has been shown that much of the funds sunk into water projects were diverted due to corrupt practices and the product was never delivered to the people. These corrupt monies are saved in European, American and Arabian banks safely whilst the country continues to suffer. Indeed, attempts to recover funds stolen by the Abacha Government, as in the case of Nigeria, have lasted in wasted decades of legal and protracted deliberations between the Government and Swiss Banks. The same can be said of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya and indeed of every African country.

**20. Education Gaps** - The facts on ground show that millions of African school-age children are out of school and many of them are girls, whilst, large percentages cannot read or write (60 percent of these are women). The Human Development Index shows that several countries within the continent missed the

2005 gender MDG disparity in the enrolment of school children and we now face the SDG 2030 agenda. There is not enough light to show that the targets shall be met, except for a few rare exceptions. Compared to boys, girls face many constraints in their attempt to access and benefit from education. The ratio is still as high as 1:3 in the states of northern Nigeria.

### **21. Infant Mortality and Maternal Deaths High -**

Furthermore, infant mortality is very high in many parts of the continent as one out of every child dies before the age of five, while 704 out of 100,000 Nigerian women die during childbirth. The seroprevalence rate of the HIV/AIDS infection is 4.5 percent and women are the more vulnerable to the pandemics they often care for their sick parents, family members and consequently are absent from school or drop out altogether.

**22. Annual Budgets** which are hardly tracked keep on repeating the same items annually for even a decade and people hardly ask. Agriculture is grossly neglected and farmers in rural areas can neither purchase equipment nor obtain fertilizers to produce food. Yet, Corruption Watch has unveiled the fact that for the supply of fertilizer in 2008 alone, only 3 companies out of 327 were licensed to import and distribute 650,000 metric tons of fertilizers worth naira 63 billion to farmers across the country. It has since been discovered that these 3 companies lacked the capacities to deliver, and the Minister in charge of Agriculture well went ahead to qualify them. This action of a public official jeopardises farmers' productivity and makes the nation import food. It threatens sustainable livelihoods of people and by

extension, the food security programme of Nigeria, besides throwing many into poverty. The Minister is still active on his desk and has not had to answer for this.

**23. Infrastructure Corruption** - Current in the news is the scandal and corruption in the Energy and Power sector. The National Assembly and the Presidency have made it known that a sum of USD 16 billion was purportedly spent on power generation and equipment between 1999 and 2007. Yet there is no corresponding result to show for it as thousands of businesses and people still suffer under erratic and non-functional electrical supplies. Of course, the energy scam is the result of corruption and one of the companies benefiting from the payments for undelivered services is a German firm - an indication that corruption and its dimensions are both transnational and transcultural. To a large extent, Africa's corruption is encouraged by dubious international collaborators who keep the stolen monies in their safe bank accounts knowing fully too well that they are stolen assets, abetting such activities, covertly and overtly encouraging public officials to steal and supply goods and equipment that are overvalued, with contracts over-inflated, and jobs not executed and paid out far beyond contractual agreements.

**25. Money Laundering:** In the context of Nigeria and the dimensions of how corruption affects the market and the economy, one must mention the effect of money laundering. Money laundering and corruption seem to be treated as different problems. The media frequently links '*money laundering*' to illicit

drugs sales, tax evasion, gambling and other criminal activity. When politicians accept the idea that lack of opportunity and deterrence are major factors helping to reduce corruption, it follows that when ill-gotten gains are difficult to hide, the level of deterrence is raised and the risk of corruption is reduced.

We can draw an anatomy of corruption and circle its reality around four key areas in Nigeria and by extension in Africa generally and these include:

- a) '**Outright Stealing**' which is a universal phenomenon for which there is the fifth commandment, "Thou shall not steal" in the Bible. Here, people try to take what does not belong to them;
- b) '**Official Corruption**' where public funds are misappropriated and embezzled by civil servants and public officials through, for example, inflated contracts in collaboration with both foreign and local firms and other players, following 'due process' yet undermining the system and the people's wealth;
- c) '**Bribery**', given to receive services that are not deserved, and bribery that is forced out of a victim (extortion) pursuing legitimate rights;
- d) '**Political corruption**' where rules and regulations are laid aside political office holders, misusing and abusing their office to enrich themselves and their parties and cronies with public wealth and often, impunity.

## **26. Going Back to the Roots - the Way out**

### **a) Traditional values in African cultures did not condone corruption**

It must be mentioned that various traditional cultures in African nations generally abhor stealing, damage to the common good and acts of corruption. The moral norms of traditional and indigenous people used a set of taboos and religious sanctions to discipline groups or persons who flouted the common good and engaged in corrupt practices in their communities. These codes still exist today in many villages and corruption is seen to be least in villages and more as one enters the townships, so that the more modern the settings are, the more corruption there seems to be. If corruption was abhorred in traditional society and considered a vice, punished as it were with stringent measures, there is a need to re-visit cultural values and family systems that seem to guarantee a virtuous society.

### **b) The role of moral and values-driven education from the family**

It is in the family, the village and the structures of governance in traditional societies that lessons about ethical conduct, wisdom, anti-corruption cultures were taught and practised through religious institutions and local leadership, all of which need to be re-visited. What stops obligatory classes for all children in schools and higher education institutions from ethics and civics classes with certification examinations? These roles promoted adherence to the laws and customs of the rural communities which served virtuous life and worked because they were

founded on community thinking and the common good. Therefore, the first way out of the culture of corruption is to reinforce and reinvigorate traditional and cultural values that encourage good behaviour in private and public life.

### **c) Denouncing corruption goes with credible lifestyles**

Furthermore, there is a need for leaders of political, religious, cultural and social groups to denounce corruption and show some decency of belief and lifestyle that would establish the much-needed good example for a virtuous society to thrive. Recently, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua in a widely publicised newspaper said,

*"Our goal is to make it apparent to all Nigerians that from the President to the lowest official, nobody can disregard the law and get away with it: Our problem has never been laws or regulations on issues of corruption. The problem has been the enforcement of these laws and regulations. We reached a situation where disrespect for laws and established regulations became a status symbol, but I am now insisting that whether you are a president, governor or a mere office clerk, all your actions must flow from the laws that govern your office. We must root out the culture of impunity by obeying the rule of law at all levels and for all persons."<sup>41</sup>*

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<sup>41</sup> Daily Sun, Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 2008

**d) Leading by example for the political elite**

This is the type of position by the Head of State of a nation like Nigeria, which if meant seriously, is the type of statement that initiates a revolution that helps anti-corruption efforts. It makes clear the fact that in fighting corruption, therefore, one is effectively fighting one of the known root causes of poverty in Nigeria which is a threat to a stable political environment and a market economy. Fighting corruption in all its manifestations becomes an agenda for the survival of a nation and also of the common good in both its local and international linkages.

**e) African nations establish anti-corruption agencies and strong institutions**

This explains why it must be stated that there are positive and encouraging efforts as in Nigeria to tackle corruption headlong. The Federal Government has set up Agencies to fight corruption and established them by law. One of them is the "INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES COMMISSION" (ICPC) which has been legislated upon by the national house of Assembly and passed into law known as the "*The corrupt practices and other related offences Act 2000*". Other Agencies are the CODE OF CONDUCT BUREAU; the "ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRIMES COMMISSION" (EFCC) and other CIVIL SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS set up to equally tackle corruption at all levels. There is the Judiciary, the Police, Agencies of the Secret Service and Intelligence Services all set up to complement other efforts by government, the civil society, churches and religious groups, the traditional communities and well-meaning Nigerians on the

negative consequences of corruption and the need to fight it jointly. This is what must become a system in all African countries and globally.

#### **f) Threats to effective corruption eradication in African countries**

The greatest threats however to an effective fight against corruption in African countries and therefore poverty eradication on the continent include low political will, misplaced priorities by various levels of government, poor management of resources, lack of transparency and accountability, weak industrial base, lack of trade justice, limited and conditional aids packages by industrialized nations and strict compliance by the government to the conditionality imposed by international finance institutions, to mention but a few.

### **27. Conclusion**

The following conclusions which have also been made by the United Nations Anti-Corruption Policy as contained in the Anti-Corruption Tool Kit (p. 16) need to be repeated here as they concretely respond to the facts of anti-corruption policies and actions by governments and peoples:

- I. **'It takes integrity to fight corruption.** Any successful anti-corruption effort must be based on integrity and credibility. Where there is no integrity in the very system designed to detect and combat corruption, the risk of detection and punishment to a corrupt regime will not be meaningfully increased. Complainants will likely not come forward if they

perceive that reporting corrupt activity exposes them to personal risk.

2. **Building integrity and credibility takes time and consistency.** It is fair to say that, in the eyes of the public, most international agencies have not demonstrated sufficient integrity to fight corruption. These agencies have not accepted that integrity and credibility must be earned based upon “*walk rather than talk*”. The true judges of whether or not an agency has integrity and credibility are not the international agencies themselves but rather the public in the recipient country.
3. **It is important to involve the victims of corruption in any plan** aimed at reduction. Most donor-supported anti-corruption initiatives primarily involve only the people who are paid to fight corruption. Very few initiatives involve the people suffering from the effects of corruption. It is therefore critical to do more or what International Commission against Corruption ICAC in Hong Kong has done over the past years. For example, the ICAC holds face to face awareness raising workshops with almost 1 percent of the population every year (Cf. [www.icac.org](http://www.icac.org))
4. **Identifying and recovering stolen assets is not enough.** According to the New York Times (February 7<sup>th</sup> 2001), as much as USD 1 trillion in criminal proceeds are laundered through banks worldwide each year, with about half flowing through USA banks. In developing countries such as Nigeria, this can be translated into USD 100 Billion stolen by corrupt

regimes over the last 15 years. Even if our African countries receive the necessary help to recover stolen assets, reasonable people would be hard pressed to advocate its return back into a systemically corrupt environment without trying to first increase the risk, cost and uncertainty to corrupt politicians who might again try to loot the national treasury.

Finally, all eyes must be at alert, for the old Latin proverb has it stated thus:

**“*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*” meaning,  
“*Who is going to watch the – watchmen*”**

### **Prayer Against Bribery and Corruption in Nigeria**

*Father in Heaven you always provide for all your creatures so that all may live as you have willed. You have blessed our country Nigeria with rich human and natural resources to be used to your honour and glory and for the well-being of every Nigerian. We are deeply sorry for the wrong use of these your gifts and blessings through acts of injustice, bribery and corruption as a result of which many of our people are hungry, sick, ignorant and defenceless. Father, you alone can heal us and our nation of this sickness. We beg you, touch our lives and the lives of our leaders and people so that we may all realize the evil of bribery and corruption and work hard to eliminate it. Raise up for us God-fearing people and leaders who care for us and who will lead us in the path of peace, prosperity and progress. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.*

## Chapter 12

# Reflections on the Role of Religion in a Divided and Multicultural World, Challenges of Post Modernism and New Opportunities for Inter-Religious Dialogue

### **I. Background History to Postmodernism**

Human history has undergone its various historical epochs and historians give them dates and names<sup>42</sup>. After the dark ages with the fall of the Roman Empire in the 4th century, it took some time for the western world to recover from the ravages of such a civilisation. In the last four hundred years, humanity has witnessed the reformation which had on its toll, the deaths of thousands of peoples due to religious wars in Europe, the abuse of power and its justification through religious leaders, which saw to divisions of a once flourishing Christendom with Protestant and reformed groups splitting into various sects to this day.

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<sup>42</sup> Obiora Ike: paper presented at the 2018 International Symposium on Religious Life (ISRL) organized by the Government of Indonesia with Development Partners held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The same situation had happened with Islam which explains the various schools of thought within the believers and the power blocks moved by religiously dominated political centres, thus the Sunni, Shiites, Wahabis and the many groups often living under suspicion and alienation.

The era of the Renaissance in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was swiftly followed by the period of Enlightenment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, colonialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the decolonising periods of the second part of the twentieth century which era got the appellation, 'modern times'.

On the eve of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the era known as the postmodern era has emerged, challenging and rejecting the religious domination of world affairs and pushing them into the private sphere, eulogising atheism, and to some extent placing human freedom above the laws. This era of postmodernism had been made possible through the works of interpretations of several Western European dominated thinkers and philosophers, scientific developments and the dawn of the empirical era.

Following the transcendental schools of thought led by the categorical imperative in the critique of pure reason of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, the rationalist school of thought in France led by Rene Descartes which somehow prepared the way for Napoleon Bonaparte, the thinking in Italy with romantic philosophies and even the schools of pragmatism represented by John Dewey in the USA, the Frankfurt school of Max Horkheimer, Adorno and Herbert Marcuse in the period

after the second world war with their various challenges to humanity to emerge and reclaim their freedom and autonomy, religion, culture and tradition was placed on the defence. The modern woman and man had emerged.

In the writings of the existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the thoughts of the English philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, of John Hick and Bertrand Russel, among many others, had provided reasons to doubt the space of faith and religious beliefs. One may recall that the communist manifesto and the writings of Karl Marx had given stuff to atheistic materialism, leading to ideologies of communism, the formation of nations and states to discredit religion as the “Opium of the people”, scientific knowledge, technical advancements, space travel and geographic discoveries, which explained away many things of the past attributed to religious faith and the divine milieu.

## **2. The Challenges of Post Modernism to Society, Culture, Religion and Tradition**

Postmodernism positions challenged religious faiths, cultures, traditions and previously held belief systems by projecting to reclaim human freedom in politics, society, economy and education, and giving them back to the individual human person for his or her own happiness and fulfilment, thus:

- I. Postmodernism drives the global agenda for Freedom and Liberty as an absolute and inalienable right for all human beings, so that it found its way into the Universal Charter of

Human Rights signed by the United Nations in 1948 as basic standard to guide all nations, prevent wars, provide security and peace for all human beings, created in equality and made in the image of one creator. Thus, all human beings are born free and equal.

2. It promotes a culture of individualism and personal choice to guide happiness and personal action beyond the watch of community constraints, ancient laws of religions and traditions which take place in the public space.
3. Acceptance of democracy and participation as a way of life and norm, thus the new way to manage human affairs in every society. Through democracy, no matter how imperfect, each voice is heard and no one is left behind, challenging and undermining various forms of previously held traditional authority, which did not come from the people and was established by consent of the people themselves in a plebiscite, vote or agreeable voting system. Thereby, the religious leadership of traditional or cultural heritage including monarchies, princedoms, dictatorships, lordships and even the divine authority was questioned if and where basic participation was clearly lacking.
4. The urge for tolerance and gradual acceptance by the majority of the philosophical and practical reasons for atheism allowed private conscience to be respected without force, duress or enforcement which bind people to a set of codes or dogma and beliefs without proof. Postmodernism even urged that

disbelief be tolerated and minorities of conscience in religious matters be guaranteed protection and not persecuted.

5. The role of women in postmodernism is championed through legal, civil, economic, social and cultural equality with men, urging that women who in various societies in the past were wrongfully treated and badly misunderstood be granted their rightful place alongside men as co-equals, co-persons and co-dignity and identical, offered their human rights and protected in their quest for self-fulfilment and the fulfilment of the common good of the society.
6. The removal of all forms of discrimination based on gender, class, ethnic groups, beliefs, colour, race, nationality or background.
7. Access to education and empowerment through knowledge of the sciences, the arts and humanities and of practical daily life skills, thus the opening of access to all - men, women and youth - to culture, art, technical, educational and skills acquisition without bias or prejudice.
8. Justice, equity and social inclusion to address issues of marriage, ownership of property, heritage laws and rights, finance, workspace, sexuality and such issues of multiculturalism, identity and authenticity in a globalised and dominant world hijacked by a few in authority or with financial, cultural, political or religious influence.

9. Postmodernism challenged and sought to redefine the dominant face of morality and the moral order moving it from dogma to ethics; from teaching to witness of life; from religiosity and ritualism to spirituality and piety of life that is exemplary; from pretense to audacious and humble acceptance of the self as human and breakable.
  
10. Postmodernism allowed the space provided by science and technology to increase the human capacity for knowledge, freedom, advancement thus invading the space of religion through the projects of scientific findings which at times challenged dogmatic stands of religion and the conservative order which belong to the scope of many religions and cultural leaders as preservers of tradition. Finding the balance remains the question. Modern inventions in medicine, automobiles, space travel, social media, informatics, engineering, architecture, automation and intercultural relations opened the debate for a WORLD FOR ALL which was previously foreclosed to all.

### **3. The Scope and Space of Religion as Origin, Centre and Hope for Human Civilization**

- a) Religion has answers to the challenges of postmodernism through insisting on an ecology that serves and promotes human life and all life. The human person is the centre of the entire creation and has a responsibility to preserve creation.
- b) Religion has a clear role in the preservation of culture, community, family and culture.
- c) Religion is at the service of Peace.

- d) Religion can be the hope for humankind at the crossroads.
- e) Interreligious dialogue is the basis for religious justification in the postmodern era.
- f) Religion has space in dialogue with society and technology, and gives it humanity.
- g) Religion has an essence in the promotion of ethics, practical virtues and character formation.
- h) Religion and education as a vehicle for the progress of society.
- i) Religion in the service of justice and peace brings humanity together and establishes truth.
- j) Culture and tradition are servants, not masters of the human person.
- k) The call of religion is to teach by example and love, not by hate, ignorance or prejudice.
- l) Religious education is meant to transmit values and ethical guides that promote character, respect, integrity, inclusion which serves the common good.

### **Reflections on Religious Life and the Contemporary Challenges of Postmodernism: The African Reality of Religious Fundamentalism and Possible Solutions for World Peace**

#### The need for Interreligious dialogue as primary Panacea for Extreme Fundamentalism:

- Fundamentalism as divisive in Nigeria and anywhere.
- The importance of religion for Humanity, at all times, since God has made all people in his own image and likeness.

- Religious misunderstanding and killings are unfortunate / Friday, October 30 2018, 1000 Shiites shot by the army on the streets of Abuja, Nigeria, while demonstrating for the release from prison of their leader, Sheikh El Zakzaky.
- El-Zakzaky does not believe in a secular-form state Nigeria but in a sharia-conform and strict Islamic country under Allah.
- From 1986 until 2018, a period of 30 years, Nigeria has lost near to 300,000 people due to issues of ethnic and religious intolerance.
- A once peaceful and tolerant country, Nigeria has become the centre for fundamentalism and anti-modernism in the name of religious intolerance and manipulations.
- The role of international powers, since early 1986, when Saudi Arabia asked it to join the Organization of Islamic countries. The surge of Islamic religious Wahhabi teachings, lack of dialogue and fundamentalist positions, intolerance, new sects, assertive groupings and new forms of religious ideologies to confront modernism, postmodernism, technologies and globalisation.
- Government involvement in undermining the constitution of Nigeria (1960; 1979) which stated that Nigeria is not a mono-religious country but a pluralistic, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious country. The introduction of sharia in 12 northern states (out of 36) in 2000 fueled the crisis which led is same year to 20,000 deaths.
- The Government of Mr. Babangida, a military president, allowed the country to be dragged with the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) for the first time - unleashed religions sentiments, debates, and contentions for withdrawal.

- Nigeria, which has a population of 200 million (40% Muslims, 40% Christians, and 20% traditional African religion), was a British colony until 1960 and was declared a Republic in 1963.
- Radicalism fuels religious fundamentalism with wrong interpretations of the Holy Books by religious leaders in some cases.
- Unemployment and socio-economic problems leading people to religiosity, extreme forms of bigotry and abuse of feels.
- Ignorance of religious content and texts are part of the problem due to wrong understanding and interpretations.
- Often, ethnic tensions are translated into a religious conflict which it originally was not.
- Instrumentalisation of religion for political purposes and abuse of religious sentiments by politicians for own purposes.
- The instrumental influence of radical Islam and terrorist affiliations contrary to moderate Islam.
- USA and Western policies with wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya triggered off ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and new terrorist groupings such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, which are all in the name of Islam.
- Religion as an instrument for peace and harmonious collaboration, not for war.
- The Holy Books call for peace, love, understanding, truth and salvation of the human soul, not for radical interpretations.
- Leaders of religious groups are challenged to preach peace and love for good and balanced leadership, not bigotry.
- International rhetoric and discrimination of religious minorities and ever exclusion to stop.

- The challenge of modernity, globalisation, and technological progress, including atheism, secularism, and morality today stare religious teachers and practitioners at the face. Sentiments and fabricated piety - thus the invasion of the quiet religious space - make people of faith push hard or respond - sometimes negatively and aggressively.
- The culture of dialogue spaces and makes room for all voices to speak. More dialogues.

### **Conclusion:**

- Need for an increased effort of leaders at all levels for dialogue programs through continuous meetings, conferences and forms of agreements at local and international levels to agree on the role and place of religious society even in a post-modern society.
- The urgency of education-balanced formation and training of the young on the role of religion to advance values, tolerance, peace building, respect for the other, collaboration and to promote the essential teachings of religions which serve unity, salvation, and human dignity.
- National and government departments to regulate state relations with religious groups to promote religious harmony, justice, and equality of all citizens.
- The modern secular state needs structures to respect religious freedom and space.
- Sanctions necessary for those who fan religious intolerance. Also, the need to build religious peace through modern means of communication and public education media, drama, art,

journals, social and community, towards religious diversity and respect for others.

- Standing the challenge of integrity, ethics and values promoted by religious faiths. Need also to promote tolerance, freedom and respect for all through constitutional, protection of minorities - ethnic, racial, political or religious, and the establishment of a just order that guarantees global peace, UN and international conventions plus initiatives for religious groups in postmodern society.

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